

VIGIE

STRATEGIC AND PROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS BULLETIN



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Special Issue



Refugees and displaced in the Lake Chad Basin Conflict Systems



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A publication of the International School of Security Forces (EIFORCES)

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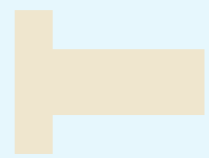
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Commander-in-Chief of Army Forces



Mr. YANG Philémon

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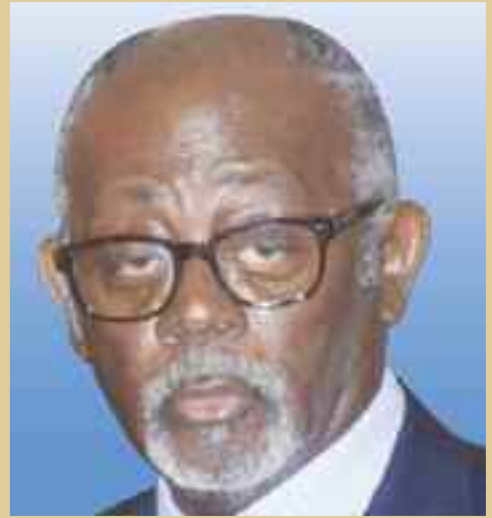


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EDITORIAL

CAMEROON TO THE TEST OF MIGRATIONS CRISES: INSIGHTS INTO A NEW SECURITY DILEMMA

Since 1978, year in which Equatorial Guinean refugees fleeing Macias Nguema's regime started flooding into the country, Cameroon has offered asylum to nationals of several countries in crisis not only from its perimeter of priority solidarity which is constituted by ECCAS countries, but also from elsewhere. Actually, that year was confirmed as pivotal with the country's recognition by the United Nations as a haven for refugees, as evidenced by the signing of a Host Country Agreement between the Government of Cameroon and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Since then, refugees from Central Africa in particular have continued to converge



Pr Wullson Mvomo Ela
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toward, settle in, or transit through Cameroon. There have been Chadians, Central Africans, Rwandans, Burundians, Congolese and, more recently, Nigerians.

With the rising tide of violent extremism, the trends of population movements within and across Cameroonian borders have been increasing. The speed and extent challenge and confronts national authorities and international partners with the imperative of a demographic governance that is proof against crisis migration and the ensuing insecurity spectrum.

Indeed, more than 400 000 refugees are currently registered in Cameroon. For the most

part, they stem from the crises besetting Nigeria and the Central African Republic. The main host sites are located in the Adamawa, East, North and Far North regions. They are mostly (but not only) Muslim populations from Fulani/Mbororo, Kanuri, Choa Arab and Kotoko communities, among others. As large as that number may seem, it only partially reflects the reality on the ground, since the persistence of border grey zones tends to reduce the control of the migrations flows and its scope.

The circumstances of these populations' exile are certainly partly related to religious considerations (targeted violence by Boko Haram from a pan-Islamic perspective, interfaith clashes against the backdrop of dispute over power in CAR). However, they are more associated with political and strategic stakes, terrorism and violent extremism being above all strategies of the weak to the strong implemented in an effort to achieve political goals.

Until now, Cameroon has remained true to its tradition of hospitality, respectful as ever of its international commitments thereto pertaining. However, the increasingly massive presence of refugees and internally displaced persons in the camps and other sites that have been more or less earmarked raises new concerns that go far beyond purely humanitarian and ethical considerations. Among these issues, high priorities include peace, security and the stability of border areas, both in places of UNHCR camps implantation and elsewhere.

The humanitarian crisis caused by Boko Haram has depopulated border areas. Recurrent attacks, abductions, cattle raids, house burnings, murders, continuous psychosis have caused, in the most affected divisions

(Logone and Chari, Mayo-Sava, Mayo Tsanaga), the exodus of nearly 100,000 people who are henceforth internally displaced. Many Cameroonians who had settled in Nigeria and CAR in a long-term perspective for economic or social reasons have either been repatriated or retreated on their own initiative.

Most of them have left behind the achievements of many years of work in terms of lifestyles, socio-professional integration, cultural and community, or even identity, landmarks. To this picture is added the psychological burden arising from the trauma that these refugees and IDPs may spread in Cameroon's Hinterland.

On the path of its growth as a centre of excellence in Central Africa in the fields of training and fundamental research on security and peacekeeping, the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) in general, and its Research and Documentation Centre (RDC) in particular, propose to take up what might appear as the "new security dilemma" in the framework of this double issue of its Strategic Forecasting Analyses bulletin.

The overall purpose is structured around retrospective, critical and prospective objectification of the hosting, by Cameroon, of refugees and IDPs resulting from security crises in Central Africa and, more broadly, in the Lake Chad Basin. Specifically, the aim will be, while underlining the humanitarian, ethical, social, economic, political, diplomatic, security and, more fully, strategic implications that these flows cause, to identify areas of priority actions for an effective management which can both resolve immediate security emergencies and be relevant in terms of sustainability.

EIFORCES IN BRIEF

EIFORCES

The EIFORCES is a public institution under Cameroonian law, with legal personality and financial autonomy.

Localisation

Headquarter : Yaounde/Ngousso
Telephone : +237 222 218 002

Institutional Texts

Decree n°2008/179 of may 2008 laying the basis of the EIFORCES ;
Decree n° 2012/307 of june 2012 on the organization and operational modality.



Missions

Providing **training and facilitating research** in the areas of Security and Peace Support.

Structure

A board of Directors chaired by the Minister of Defence.

Members : the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State in charge of the National Gendarmerie, the Delegate General for National Security, the Representatives of the Présidency of the République, partners countries and international organisations (UN, European Union, African Union, ECCAS, UEMOA...).

A General Management:.. Headed by a Director General working with an Assistant Director, Technical Advisors, Directors, and Heads of Divisions...

And Advisory bodies.

PARTNERS



Cameroon



China



USA



France



Japan



African Union



European Union



CEEAC



United Nation

EIFORCES: « *A tool at the service of Peace and Security to the African Continent* »

EIFORCES IN BRIEF

TRAINING

Fundamental and Operational Level

Public Order

Formed Police Units Training
Trainers' Trainers Training in Public Order
Advanced Training of Operational Commanders
Protection of High Dignitaries
Neutralisation/Destruction of Explosive Devices

Judicial Police

Mobilisable Teams of Investigation Experts
Command of Operational Units
Accompanying Police

Intermediate Level

Individual Police Training
Trans-Level Seminars in Civil Protection and Governance

Strategic Level

Security Forces Staff Diploma
Higher Security Studies Degree



EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCES OF EIFORCES

The members of the Board of the International School Security Forces (EIFORCES) gathered at the end of December 2015 in Yaounde, in a meeting presided by His Excellence Joseph Beti Assomo, Chairman of the Board of this institution.

On December 10, 2015, Members of the Board of the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) were in a private meeting at the Yaoundé Hilton Hotel to simultaneously review the institution's activities and performance for both 2014 and 2015.

The said Council, chaired by its president, Joseph Beti Assomo, also Minister Delegate at the Presidency in Charge of Defence (MINDEF), was aimed primarily to present a balance sheet of the activities of the institution and its performance for 2014-2015 financial years.

This private meeting was also aimed at considering and adopting the report of the performance of the school from

2014 to February 2015, as well as validating the administrative accounts and management for 2014.

The Deputy Director General of EIFORCES, Commissioner of Police Oyono been born Thom Cecilia of the Cameroon National Police, presented the report of the first quarter of the 2015 fiscal year and also that of the execution of the same period.

The Council also reviewed and adopted the resolution to increase the budget of EIFORCES. Other issues were addressed during the said Council amongst which was the review of documents for staff recruitment adopted by EIFORCES and presented to the Board for its visible actions.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FACED WITH THE THREAT OF TERRORISM

Sourcing Reflections from All Directions to Secure the Sub-Regional Area of Middle Africa, in the Face of Rising Threats.

“WHAT GLOBAL GOVERNANCE WITH THE RISE OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN MIDDLE AFRICA?” This was the theme on which eminent experts reflected at the Yaoundé Congress Hall from the 14th-15th January 2016.

This happened to be the third of such exercise organized by EIFORCES since the first edition in December 2013 duped **"A Critical Retrospective and Perspective of Peace Support Operations in Central Africa"** and that of November 2014 on the theme **"What Peace, What security and what Sustainable Development for the Central African Republic?."**

This gathering, which had **a high international impact, co-organized by the African Centre for Training and Administrative Research for Development (CAFRAD)** and the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES), was attended by members from European and Central, Eastern and Western African countries. Its main goal was to strengthen the capacity of African States in preventing terrorist acts.

This international project was coordinated by Professor Mvomo Ela Wullson, Head of the Research and Documentation at EIFORCES, under the supervision of Commissioner of Police Oyono been born Thom Cecilia,

Deputy Director General of this eminent institution which is at the service of peace and security in Africa.

Presided by the Secretary of State for Defense in charge of the National Gendarmerie, Jean Baptiste Bokam, sitting in for the Board Chair of EIFORCES, the Minister in Charge of Defence at the Presidency, Mr. Joseph Beti Assomo, this scientific exercise pulled hundreds of senior officials of the National Police, the Gendarmerie and a host of other senior officials of the government of Cameroon, especially personnel from the Ministry of External Relations.

Participants were able to reflect on the pressing reality of the complex and multifaceted nature of violent extremism threat in Africa. They did not just limiting their thoughts and discussions to the Boko Haram sect, but touched on a variety of other actors and "entrepreneurs of violence" whose actions have profound consequences. The experts also explored the many challenges that violent extremism constitute to countries of the sub-region and their institutions at the security, political, economic or social levels.

While subsequently reiterating the importance of international cooperation in overcoming this global challenge, the experts made a number of proposals to address this threat.



CLOSING CEREMONY OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES OF EIFORCES FOR THE SECOND BATCH OF THE HOMELAND SECURITY CERTIFICATE (HSC) AND FIFTH BATCH OF THE SECURITY FORCES STAFF DIPLOMA (SFSD)

A New Step in the Rise of the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES).

The ceremony to mark the end of training programmes for the second batch of the Homeland Security Certificate (HSC) programme and fifth batch of the Security Forces Staff Diploma (SFSD) programme of the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES), took place on the 2nd of September 2015 at the Yaounde Congress Hall under the auspices of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo.

A sum total of thirty six Gendarmerie Officers and Senior Police Officers with the rank of a commissioner from eleven Central and West African countries received their end of training certificates from EIFORCES; thus indicating their aptitude for the designed functions

within any command staff in peace time or crisis moment, especially in the headquarters of the "Police" component within peace support operations.

Presiding over the certificate award ceremony, the sitting Foreign Minister, Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo speaking on behalf of the chairperson of the Board of EIFORCES recalled the context in which these officers completed their training; a context marked by several new threats to states which, in the main, include terrorism, cybercrime, border crime and many others. These challenges and threats, he said, is a call for concern to the graduating officers who are more than equipped for the task.



SENSITAZATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPTS AND PROCEDURES FOR FOMAC POLICE IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS (PSO)

In the context of the rise of the components of FOMAC in accordance with the recommendations of the African Union and the Council of Peace and Security of Central Africa, a workshop was held from 31 March to 02 April 2015 in Yaoundé, titled "Sensitization On the Development Of Concepts And Procedures for FOMAC Police in Peace Support Operations.

This seminar co-organized by the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) and the Police and Gendarmerie component of ECCAS / EMR brought together experts from ECCAS / EMR, officers from EIFORCES and experts from all Member States except members from Angola and DRC who unable to attend.

Speaking in his opening speech, the Regional Chief of Staff for FOMAC thanked His Excellency Paul Biya, President of the Republic, Head of State, Chief of the Armed Forces and Supreme Chief of Cameroon's Police, for having accepted this workshop to take place in Yaounde, the political capital of Cameroon. Having reviewed the geopolitical and security situation in the sub region, characterized by new forms of threat, he reiterated that the objective of this seminar was to integrate the operationalization process of the Peace and Security Architecture of the AU in general and that of ECCAS in particular. The goal was to provide the Police / Gendarmerie personnel of FOMAC the necessary tools for effective and efficient participation in multinational and multidimensional peacekeeping missions.

To achieve this goal, several conferences were held on diverse themes with the aim of enabling the police component of FOMAC fully take its place in the Early Warning system and fully play its role within the different Peace Support Operations missions.

During the closing ceremony the participants expressed their gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of Cameroon, and to the Government and people of Cameroon for their renewed and legendary hospitality.

The Recommendations at the End of the Seminar To the African Union

- > The general recommendation was to sensitize States and seek strategic partnerships to secure funding for the smooth functioning of AFRIPOL.

To ECCAS:

- Accompany EIFORCES in its training and certification process with the AU and the UN;
- Translate all working documents in all ECCAS languages (French, English, Spanish and Portuguese)
- Streamline security cooperation structures through a federation / organization in charge of security matters at continental and regional levels.
- Advocate within COPAX bodies for the effective participation of all chiefs of police / gendarmerie member states in statutory meetings;
- Educate police / gendarmerie chiefs on the need to participate in meetings within COPAX bodies.
- Establish a pool of experts ready to be deployed depending on the vacancies within the civilian component;
- Reinforce PLANELM police and gendarmes staffing at the continental and regional levels
- Harmonize the staff and material endowments of FOMAC to the standards of the AU and the UN.

To Member States:

- Harmonize the police and gendarmerie grades beginning with qualification-based criteria, professional experience and seniority.
- Become more involved in UN Peacekeeping Missions.
- Comply with UN and African Union standards in its training offer in order to facilitate its training and certification process;
- Strengthen collaboration between EIFORCES and APSTA in the development of curricula and the contents of their training;
- Constitute and send an application file to the AU and the UN for the certification of trainings with the support of FIS.

END OF COURSE ON TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC POLICE AND THE TRAINING COURSE ON DEPLOYABLE TEAMS EXPERTS IN INVESTIGATION (DTEI)

The twin ceremony that marked the end of the Technical and Scientific Police (PTS) course and the training on Deployable Teams Experts in Investigation took place on Friday, November 20, 2015 at EIFORCES in its AWAE campuses in Yaounde, Cameroon.

Twenty six trainees , including thirteen non Gendemerie officers of Police and thirteen police officials , all from the active units of the Judicial Police were trained in Technical and Scientific Police in a project put in place by France to support the training of security forces.

Supervised by a French legal expert, the training course on Deployable Team Experts in Investigation (DTEI), on its part, lasted for five weeks and had nine trained Directors of investigations at the Gendarmerie and police officers level, ten investigators and ten forensic procedural identification technicians, all non Gendamerie officers and Police inspectors.

These training-of-trainers courses, conducted almost simultaneously in a high spirited atmos-phere, was structured around high profiled simulation exercises, namely: operations to discover hidden weapons,



intervention on a mass grave and reaction to a bomb attack.



THE VISIT OF MR. BERNARD CAZENEUVE, FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTER TO THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

The French Minister of Interior, Mr. Bernard Cazeneuve, paid an official visit to Cameroon on Friday May 15, 2015. He seized the opportunity to visit the EIFORCES's campus at Awae in Mefou Afamba.

On his arrival at midday at the Nsimalen International Airport located south of Yaounde, Mr. Bernard Cazeneuve was warmly welcomed by Mr. René Sadi, Cameroon's Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization.

The French minister and his entourage did not only point to the quality of training disseminated to the Cameroon security forces in this institution, but also to the excellent Franco-Cameroonian international cooperation that exists on twofold; the finances granted by France to the school and the contribution of French technical experts seconded in this school for coaching in the field of forensic science and public order.

The French Minister of Interior, accompanied by the Ambassador of France to Cameroon, Christine Robichon, as well as three other members of the French delegation then headed to the presidential palace for an hour discussion with the President of the Republic of Cameroon, Paul Biya.

The meeting with the Cameroonian Head of State was also an opportunity to discuss the possibility of joining resources in fighting against international criminal organizations.

Following this visit, it was then the opportunity for Mr. Bernard Cazeneuve to visit the Awae Campus of the International School of Security Forces, situated about sixty kilometers south-east and in a suburb in Yaoundé.

The guest was hosted by the then Minister of Defense Mr. Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o.

The French minister and his entourage did not only point to the quality of training disseminated to the Cameroon security forces in this institution but also to the excellent Franco-Cameroonian international cooperation that exists on twofold; the finances granted by France to the school and the contribution of French technical experts seconded in this school for coaching in the field of forensic science and public order.

On the occasion, the trainees made a dynamic simulation of an intervention in a riot situation following the discovery of a mass grave.

Commenting on this, Mr. Bernard Cazeneuve pointed out that Cameroon, like France, is committed to the fight against terrorism and expressed his satisfaction with the quality of teaching at EIFORCES in these words: "I want to seize this opportunity to say how impressed I was by the quality of education that is provided" He particularly expressed his satisfaction with the commitment of the Cameroonian government to make EIFORCES "a school of excellence for Cameroon as well as the trainees from the regional level which EIFORCES accommodates." He said it is "an exemplary school based on the quality of instructors and teaching provided."



PEACEKEEPING IN THE ECCAS ZONE: AFRICAN GENDAMERIE AND POLICE OFFICERS TRAINED ON PLANNING IN CRISIS MOMENTS

To establish the vision and major strategies for the training of personnel and training components to meet the objectives of COPAX, to generate a sub-regional capacity in the service of peace, security and stability.

In partnership with ECCAS and with the financial support of the European Union under the framework of "PAPS II", an international seminar for the training of Planners at the Strategic Level for Peace Support Operations/Governance was held from Monday 23rd to Friday 27 2015 in Yaounde, under the aegis of the International

School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) in partnership with ECCAS.

The pedagogical coordination of this seminar was provided by Colonel Engolo ELLA Thomas, Director of Studies at EIFORCES, under the general supervision of the General Directorate of EIFORCES.

PEACEKEEPING IN THE ECCAS ZONE: SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF POLICE AND AFRICAN GENDAMERIE OFFICERS INITIATED IN PLANNING DURING CRISIS MOMENTS

This international seminar took place at a time when Africa is facing a challenge: that to mobilize on time and on the African soil, a rapid intervention force to prevent or curb such attacks.

An international seminar to train Planners of Peace Support Operations at the Operation Level that brought in participants from eight Central African countries including Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, and Burundi ended on Thursday, May 14, 2015 at the Deputy Hotel in Yaoundé.

For over ten days, among others issues, the training was aimed at training thirteen police officers, gendarmes and civil (staff of international organizations, non-governmental organizations, diplomats) able to serve as planners within an Integrated Peace Support Operations of the Council of Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

Four modules were dispatched to students ranging from

the general context of peacekeeping, strategy and operational art and the consolidation of peace and post-conflict reconstruction. These lessons were taught by a college of tutors and senior officers of the Cameroonian defense forces.

As a way reminder, provisions were made for early warning mechanism, conflict prevention and management within the ECCAS of the COPAX. This international seminar provided participants with skills and knowledge to serve as designers, managers, planners and experts within structures or in Integrated Peace Support Operations at the strategic and operational levels. By receiving the scrolls given to them, participants were empowered to claim the status of experts in designing, planning, and in implementing policies to promote peace in COPAX.



EFFECTIVE KICK-OFF FOR THE 2016 ACADEMIC YEAR AT EIFORCES

Thirteen senior Gendarmerie officers and five Police Officials from twelve African nationalities arrived at the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES) on Monday, January 15, 2016, to undertake the Homeland Security Certificate (HSC) programme. One month later, on the 15 February 2016 and at eight o'clock to be more precise, twenty four officers of the sixth batch of the Security Forces Staff Diploma (SFSD) coming from nine African countries joined the eighteen interns of the Homeland Security Certificate programme. Both the interns of the third Homeland Security Certificate and those of the sixth batch of the Security Forces Staff Diploma are citizens from the following ten African countries: Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Congo Brazzaville, Gabon, Mali, Chad, Togo, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Those coming from other African countries most of whom are in Cameroon for their very first time were amazed to discover the mystery of EIFORCES, which just a few years after its creation has been able to imposed itself internationally as one of ECCAS Centre of Excellence which is aimed at building the capacity of African security forces in peacekeeping.

Warmly welcomed by a committed and motivated coaching and teaching staff, these security officers were with great pleasure happy to see their classroom, a place par excellence for knowledge exchange and dissemination and where these Gendarmerie Officers and Police Commissioners from various African countries are drilled and equipped with knowledge and notions on global security as well as on issues of geopolitics and strategy; knowledge and skills which will enable each one of them enrich their already acquired personal knowledge and professional experiences.

How time flies! The countdown continues for a beautiful 10-month adventure for the future graduates of the 3rd Homeland Security Certificate (HSC) and five months for the

twenty four trainees of the 6th batch of the Security Forces Staff Diploma (SFSD), a period which at first seems long but over time will prove to be short, If not to say very short.

This training on Homeland Security Certificate which will end in October 2016, will in ten months prepare these trainees/interns for high-level command positions within groups of security forces, Peace Support Operations and Command Staff. It is a tertiary level education that comprises of five study areas including; the continental collective security of people and goods, the operational command of a group of force, planning at the strategic and operational levels and specific knowledge on security forces. To crown it all, a Masters of Arts Degree in International Security is delivered in partnership with the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC) to the interns.

On their part, interns of the Security Forces Staff Diploma will in five months receive training articulated on three fields of study: the environment of a staff officer major, the Assistant Operational Officer and general knowledge on inter-departmental issues. This Diploma Course aims at preparing Officers to occupy positions of Command Staff within the security forces (gendarmerie or police) either at a uni-dimensional or multidimensional level (national and international context). Since 2013, three Homeland Security Certificate programme one of which is in progress has been organized by EIFORCES and has benefited fifty two trainees from fifteen African nationalities.



Focus : Refugees and displaced

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INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF CRISES: CHALLENGES ON THE GROUND WITH THE GOVERNOR OF THE EASTERN REGION

How did the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons globally present itself in your Command unit in late 2015, especially in terms of numbers and scope?

Let me start by clarifying that there are no internally displaced persons in the Eastern region. As for refugees, the number of those registered by the UNHCR then was 177 000. To this number should be added about 10 000 who, for diverse reasons, have declined UNHCR assistance. 62 000 refugees from The Central African Republic (CAR) live in 8 camps, and the rest with host communities.

The situation has significantly evolved since the beginning of this year. Due to political changes in CAR and the betterment of the security environment in border zones, we have been witnessing the return home of some CAR citizens. Those spontaneous returns however are small in scope for the time being.

What are the political and economic stakes of this situation?

The arrival of tens of thousands of refugees from CAR in the region of the rising sun has had many consequences. The question of taking weapons that some were keeping was one of the most dire on the outset. Competition for access to basic resources such as grazing areas, farmland and water escalated. Banditry and crime went on the rise in cities as well as rural areas. Those challenges were globally met by the Government which, to that end, received the multifaceted support of our fellow countrymen and the international community.



Grégoire MVONGO

The socioeconomic stakes are certainly important as well. What are your perceptions and experience in that regard?

At the peak of the crisis, the region's population rose about 20%. We had to urgently endeavour to house, feed and treat all those people. Concurrently, a solution had to be found to the sensitive issue of children education. With the support of the international community and the expertise of such institutions as the UNHCR, solutions were gradually found.

What constraints do these human displacements generate for governance and what are the measures put in place?

The main constraints for governance are on several planes:

- In terms of security, the circulation of light and small calibre weapons remains a serious matter of concern;
- Funding for the aforementioned operations remains insufficient;
- Cooperation between the UNHCR, its partners and Cameroon's administrative services could be enhanced to increased effectiveness;
- The resilience of refugees and host populations is not yet strong enough to help them face the eventual reduction of traditional donors' support;
- The return of refugees is not yet organized.

To meet these challenges, consultations are being carried out within Cameroonian administrative services, as well as between our Government, representatives of the CAR and the UNHCR.

REFUGEES, A CATEGORY BETWEEN HOSPITALITY, ETHICS AND HUMAN SECURITY: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS FOR CAMEROON

BASILE NGONO

Border interference, globalization and geopolitical crises are constant threats and challenges to our traditions, hospitality and capacity to receive and accommodate others. To the extent that the issue of hospitality has become quite challenging as many people, beginning with politicians, tend to consider hospitality at best as a purely private matter and therefore optional and occasional, or worst still, as the survival of an archaic practice, viewed as nothing but the remnants of a bygone age.

Wherever there had been a border crisis, be it within Europe, the former Yugoslavia, or even in Russia and former Soviet Union, and Africa, a hospitality deficiency has often been made manifest. Rene Scherer, a philosopher captures this crisis and disorientation. In his words: "Hospitality, the most urgent and yet most misunderstood thing, it is the most violated today. Everywhere, it is only refusal of hospitality, be it amongst individuals, States with respect to individuals, or state against each other. War is another element that has exacerbated this refusal".



Precarious conditions in Minawao refugees camp

It is as though globalization has placed communities with alternatives: hospitality or war. However, hospitality remains a fundamental to Cameroon, despite the security implications and imperatives at a time when Boko Haram remains a thorn the mind and body of every Cameroonian. Refugees are a category of people who can not leave any one indifferent. This paper is first an attempt to understand the problem of refugees in the context of Cameroon, currently under attack by a band of barbarians. Secondly, it seeks to find a balance between the principle of hospitality and security in a principle and philosophical perspective. In doing this, we shall make use of the reflections of some philosophers like Kant, Derrida, Levinas and Ricoeur, to show that hospitality is an ontological category to our common humanity, while also raising the issue of the reconciliation of 'security imperative that remains pending in Cameroon- a land of legendary hospitality found in an Africa in great turmoil.

The presentation will be divided into four parts: first we will present the image of refugee as an avatar of globalization. We shall proceed by reviewing the concept of hospitality through the ideas and reflections of some philosophers and finally we will consider the case of Cameroon faced with the imperatives of reconciling the duty of hospitality and irreducible principle of security, We will put in question form the right / duty of hospitality as a basis for Cameroon's home land policy and finally we consider the principle of security in a conflict-generating context.

Refugees: An Avatar of Globalization.

The concept of "refugee" is consubstantial to that of "refuge" and as well as the word "escape" or "to flee" (from Latin, *fugam*). A refugee is one who has to escape, or flee. Compelled, flight obliges the individual to find refuge and thus turns the individual into a refugee. Reasons that compel a refugee to flee can be varied; but there are characterized by structural, political, economic or cultural violence. A refuge is always at the limits of the state, that is, the threshold border of law. The refugee is forced to survive within these limits, the threshold is paradoxical the contradictions that bind law and human life. As a new inhabitant with limits, the refugee survives as a remnant: a state that represents what remains of the human condition when a person is forced to live within the law in border areas where the exception becomes the norm and the countryside operates as a control device for biopolitics.

Refugees and those on exile dominate the world. Their presence is increasing becoming a global phenomenon without our institutions being capable of preventing this forced human condition from existing. The number of migrants and refugees exploded in the 21st century. In 2005, there were 19.4 million refugees worldwide - not including returnees, returning home after a period of exile. In early 2015, they were 52.9 million refugees².

A UNHRC report presents a terrifying panorama of the 21st century that shows the dark side of globalization, the economic model thereof and its various political interests. If "there is no monument of culture that is not a monument of barbarism," as Walter Benjamin captured in his thesis entitled VIII, the concept of History, then the invisibility of refugees and those in exile is a way to hide the barbarism of structures and the economic and political decisions that produce them³.

This brief and insufficient fresco of the current situation shows that the condition of refugees and exiles is much more than little "missteps" of the global context, or a single individual error of a well planned globalization. Their massive presence, but mainly their human condition, questions the economic model that generates them; capitalism, the legal status and current policies of international law, the dominant type of state. Their presence also puts to test and checks the existing international organizations. The presence of refugees and exiled persons appear as a call for concern to the established world and international order. These losers and victims of our current age pose ethical and political interrogations to our world.

The reality of refugees and exiles can be analyzed from different perspectives; from a sociological point of view, with its empirical and statistical implications; from a legal point of view, analyzing the legal frameworks, or a political point of view by focusing on pertinent decisions of each case. All these views are necessary and complementary, hence the need to contribute to this vast and uncompleted debate and thereby establish a reflection from a philosophical perspective.

Far from being a simple marginal fact and an exception in the system, refugees and exile persons through their conditions of exclusion, become epistemological and ethical elements that reassess the ethical and political validity of the established order. Refugees and exiles, as victims of countless injustices, are the criteria for a new perspective of justice.

1-See Zeus Hospital . Praise to Hospitality, Paris, Round Table 2005, p.137 .

2-The number of Migrants and Refugees exploded in the 21st Century , Le Monde, 18th December 2015.

3-Walter Benjamin , Theses on the Philosophy of History, Paris , Denoël, 1971
Translation Gandillac Mauritius , Paris , Denoël, 1971 .

Refugees in their various versions are unwanted set of people who must be controlled, monitored and deported. In some cases, the perspective of the policy of extermination remains present. The refugees live in camps and are victims of the living condition in the camps. The camp is the space where citizenship is not recognized and where the rights granted to citizens are only humanitarian and not political. The citizenship vacuum that exists in the camps reflects the vulnerability of its inhabitants. The vacuum of political rights inherent in the camps is compensated by administrative decisions that govern the camp in a sovereign manner, the same way business enterprises are administered⁴.

We must therefore agree with Hannah Arendt⁵, Giorgio Agamben⁶ and others that a refugee is a human being who lives in the boundaries of a country. That does not only make him a part of humanity, but also places him in an ethical and political category or position. It is true that living in the boundaries of countries, a refugee shows the threshold of an externality that the categories of the established order do not perceive. A refugee being a resident of an order that does not recognize him as a full citizen has an ethical and political power to challenge that order. The latter is a victim of structural violence that

sees its uniqueness not only being denied but also exacerbated to the point of breaking any rapprochement with selfhood. Justifying hospitality, this stranger factor equally justifies hostility, including violence, whose potential is never throttled, even in the heart of the most perfect hospitality and wounded dignity. In this condition, the victim of injustice, the refugee perceives as ethical criterion, the ability to judge the biopolitical devices from which such violence ensue. This reflection is conducted in the western area since the end of World War II and recently with the influx of Middle and Near East refugees trying to pitch their tents in an entire Europe which is confused and in search of its identity.

Understanding Hospitality

For many thinkers⁷, hospitality is often seen as a virtue exercised to those living abroad⁸. Godbout defines it as "the place where the human race lives abroad." We often talk only about hospitality of otherness. It is the place of live donation, the test of social community between us and the unknown stranger. Hospitality is also about receiving others in your home and being received by anyone at home, that is, in the same geographical



Refugees from CAR wait to be settled

4-Arbitrary fashion and increasingly often the use of exception as an instrument of the government, led Giorgio Agamben to defend the following thesis : " the state of exception tends ever more to present itself as a dominant paradigm of government of modern politics "(state of emergency , Homo sacer , Paris , Editions du Cerf, 2003 , p.18) .

5-The Origins of Totalitarianism . Eichmann in Jerusalem, Paris , Gallimard, " Quarto collection " , 2002 , 448 p.

6-Giorgio Agamben , op. cit ..

7-Paul Ricoeur, Emmanuel Levinas , Agamben, Jacques Derrida, Hannah Arendt , Charles Taylor, Daniel Innerarity .

8-Jacques Godbout, "Receiving is Giving" Communications, Hospitality, № 65, 1977 pp . 35-48.

space. The "home" here can be a city or region or country. This is known as territorial hospitality.

Philosophers have long regarded hospitality as the virtue of a great soul, often seen even as a duty. Kant⁹ proposes a radical vision of hospitality which he sees as a natural right. His perpetual peace project envisages "under the law of common ownership of the earth's surface. [...] the establishment of a right of foreigners to enter the soil of other states without being treated as enemies. It is therefore necessary that men support one another, as originally no one had the right to settle to any place¹⁰." On his part, Michel Roy sees hospitality as a value essentially found in the Judeo-Christian and Muslim civilization¹¹. To Paul Ricoeur¹², hospitality is sharing with us the pooling of the act and art of living. Hospitality is part of the moral root of living together. It involves generosity on the part of those who practice it and many authors argue that the idea of hospitality is necessarily free. They see it as fundamental to social life. For sociologists, hospitality is considered as a social fait, a societal product necessary to respond to a specific situation, a rite of passage and a ritual of crossing a geographic and psychical space. It is how to humanely occupy the surface of the earth. It is about living together.

For us but obviously, hospitality is a human reality - inter-human - complex, crossing ambiguities, risks of welcoming and being welcomed. Whoever receives can impose his or her rules and worldview beyond the humanitarian requirements, because he who welcomes needs to ensure his security and integrity. Whoever is hosted may be devoured by his or her demands or invading ways of behaving¹³. Hospitality is also a founding human reality; signs of civilization and humanity and even as historians put it, the origin of human cultures and the most essential forms of socialization of individuals and corporate life. Hospitality certifies that the world is not limited to our possession which is often used especially for protection against the unknown and fear of the unknown¹⁴.

Finally in the context of war as is the case in Cameroon and in neighbouring countries, hospitality can also be considered a security attribute and in that sense it would be a form of catharsis¹⁵. For giving a warm welcome to a refugee has a healing power capable of exorcising violence. Moreover, hospitality is both an input

but also an output in the dynamics of security, preservation, consolidation and peacekeeping, which is itself, a fundamental freedom. Finally hospitality could also be seen as a medium and as a carrier of the message of peace. In this case, it could play an important role in the geo / strategic and security dimensions.

The Right / Duty of Hospitality as the Basis for Cameroon's Homeland Policy?

We will now address the central argument of our reflection: how does one reconcile hospitality and security implications while Cameroon remains the target of the barbarism of Boko Haram, knowing fully well that between man and citizen, there is the enemy? This is a question that should not be ignored: in war we can not ignore the limits and paradoxes of the practice of citizenship and by extension the hospitality of today's world. If the duty of hospitality was, from the beginning, to guarantee the possibility of living together and with each other, how do we make it a base of policy and not the source of its disintegration? Should we think in terms of thresholds (we can not accommodate everyone) and run the risk of failing to principle?

Does this objective not reveal obsolete in the era of globalization, which involves primarily the freedom of movement? It is about exposing this dilemma in all its complexity. It is this issue that Derrida raises without resolving the discussion on hospitality in both its imperative and practical dimensions. To him, radical hospitality has three characters: radical openness to the other, absolute and permanent openness, and the will to take up the challenge of the impossible. Thus unconditional hospitality is a gift to the other. We are guided by it to emphasize two points. First, the duty of hospitality as a moral imperative in Cameroon, a country historically recognized for its hospitality towards refugees. Secondly, the security issue as an ethical imperative in the sense that protecting its people is now a matter of principle.

On the first point, the President of the Republic has said it bluntly that, to Cameroon, hospitality is a duty of humanity, therefore a categorical imperative. Cameroon hosts 251,000 Central African refugees of a rich socioeconomic diversity ranging from officials, ranchers,

9-Perpetual Peace. Philosophical Sketch [trans. J. Gibelin] Paris , J. Vrin , 2002 .
10-Ibid.

11-Michel Roy, "The pretense of institutional hospitality social purpose " in Matandon Alain (ed.), Lieux- Hospices , Hospital, Hostellerie , Clermont-Ferrand , Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2001, pp . 371-382 .

12-« Etranger, moi-même » in les Semaines Sociales de France, L'immigration, défis et richesses, Paris, Bayard Editions, 1998, pp. 93-106.

Basile Ngono , " Hospital and hospitality. The Foundations of an Indissoluble bond ", in International Journal of Bioethics and Ethics of Science, December 2014, vol.25 , № 2, p. 18 .

14-Ibid.

15-Jim Hepple, Michael Kipps and James Thomson, « The Concept of Hospitality and an Evaluation of its Applicability to the Experience of Hospital patients », International Journal of Hospitality Management, Vol.9, No. 4, pp.305-318.

farmers, traders, students, diamond miners and traders, etc. This massive influx of people poses social, economic and security challenges. In the camps, it translates to community tensions and outside, by competition to grab resources and agro-pastoral conflicts, often exacerbated by the heavy traffic of small arms across borders. This may get worse by the presence of breeders, the Peuls and Bororo, whose cattle devastate the crops of the indigenous peoples, thereby generating more competition for access to resources.

Other challenges arise from the fact the Central African refugees are scattered not only in the seven camps run by UNHCR but also in multiple host communities. The majority of refugees do not have identity papers. Unlike Chad, Cameroon has not signed a tripartite agreement to implement operational measures for the registration of Central Africans. This reduces our effectiveness in the combination of the humanitarian and security management of refugees, knowing fully well that since the 1980s, the Central African Republic is affected by a strong Islamic revival movement under the influence of new ulema (oulémas) trained in Sudan, Egypt or Saudi Arabia.

At the regional level, African countries are affected by an exponential rise of violent Islamic extremism. The various crises in Darfur, Sudan, Mali, Nigeria and Cameroon have allowed radical groups to expand into these areas, taking advantage of the porous border and perhaps of their hospitality. Rebel groups which also participated in these conflicts were able to find refuge in the Central African Republic. So many Muslims in the ex-Seleka were in fact mercenaries of Sudanese and Chadian nationality, who had participated in previous conflicts.

Moreover the exponential influx in the number of refugees has increased dramatically overwhelming the capacity of local authorities and presenting especially to Cameroon the risk of insecurity. In this context, the humanitarian must never lose sight that amongst these refugees could be potential human bombs on the Cameroonian soil. It is from here that the issue of reconciling hospitality and the principle of security emanates. In welcoming refugees, Cameroon assumes not only its humanitarian responsibility but its wartime duty as is currently the case. The principle of security is equally an emphatic imperative.

Among the waves of refugees that come to Cameroon, are found several types of individuals. They are those arriving with women, children, luggage and fortunes to settle in Cameroon. Are they also refugees? However, those who risk their lives and arrive without luggage, women, and children and are penniless deserve

our compassion and hospitality. Criminal radical Islamists, war criminals and ordinary criminals inevitably mingle among those. This therefore calls for discernment and vigilance during reception of refugees. The recurrence of war and the ambiguous nature of refugee status make Cameroon a country surrounded by warrior communities in a configuration that is conflict-generating. Even when she was concerned with the humanitarian point of view, she is now overwhelmed and this is probably going to be for a long time. That's why I think the security principle should become a categorical imperative in Cameroon. This is because security is a fundamental right. It is part of what other ethicists call other basic goods.

The Principle of Security in a Conflict-Generating Context

Why talk about security principle in a conflict-generating context? While being hospitable, the State of Cameroon must make security a humanitarian duty too. This is captured in the human security notion which states that:

"Human security is an approach focused on individuals and their security, which recognizes that lasting stability, not only states but also the communities they represent, is impossible as long as human security is not guaranteed. Human security refers to both the rights of citizens to live in a safe environment and the existence of political, social, religious and economic activities in each community free of organized violence."

Unlike the contexts in which excesses of the security obsession seems to be made manifest especially as stigmatized by Agamben, it is important that the Cameroonian security policy be backed with security measures. The security measures are not related to any offense, they simply relate to the "dangerous state". There is therefore no fault. The aim of these measures is solely to protect society by making specific provisions, thereby preventing such recidivism. In this context, we do not speak of punishment but of prevention. These include rehabilitation of the offender or delinquent into the society through rehabilitation or internment. In the context where Boko Haram has opted for barbarism in all its exuberance, a "Patriot Act in Cameroon" can be considered: *Salus publica suprema lex* ("The salvation of the people is the supreme law").

The boundary condition in which a refugee resides appears as a threshold from which it is necessary to think a new law and a new policy in which the bio-political instrumentalization of human life would be reversed. Human life acquires political power to challenge the

structures that sentenced him to retreat to its limit. From this limit, we advance the need for a new policy and a new subsidiary right to life of all human conditions. In the practical limitations of the refugee, human life and the security issue are revealed as the new ethical referent of political action.

In a context where the infiltrators could benefit from the hospitality in an attempt to destabilize host countries or turn into human bombs, the "traditional security concept must evolve today" The concept of human security should encompass human rights, good governance, access to education and health care. A national security strategy must be the foundation of Cameroon's strategy. This must be holistic, that is to say, overall, addressing cross-cutting issues such as the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, refugee issues at the regional level as well as gender, terrorism, cybercrime, corruption, management of human resources in the security institutions. Security and strengthening the rule of law should be the goal of this strategy.

This new approach implies the need to expand the concept of security. Faced with an enemy that can even be near than welcome, we need to invest at the political level with the drafting of the White Paper on defense and national security and the enactment of a law on military programming; and logistically by investing on instruments

and structures such as the Rapid Intervention Brigade; on intelligence and on civic education that will integrate the concepts of war, peace and hospitality as a value.

Finally, to win the challenge thrown to us by this barbarism in a globalized and interdependent world, Cameroon should incorporate the values below which are consistent with the security, hospitality and duty to humanity:

Identity Associated with Diversity; Combining national sovereignty and pride, independence and diversity of cultures and contexts, so to avoid the pitfalls of ethnic purity and populism.

Peace and Security: Keeping the monopoly of state violence and managing conflicts by use of regulated force, encouraging self-regulation, supporting a culture of peace, of respect, of dialogue, of reciprocal commitment and reconciliation.

Responsibility and Freedom; Targeting the interactions between liberty and responsibility, promoting initiative and risk-taking, recognizing human rights and the pledge to report openly.

Equity: By complying with the rule of law, promoting equitable access to resources, information and influence, combating any tendency to reinforce privileges or discriminations.



A view of the Minawao camp

Solidarity: Developing equitable mechanisms of cooperation with vulnerable regions and minorities or underprivileged groups, without paternalism and without creating lasting dependency.

Durability: Assuming an effective respect for land and the future by not over-exploiting natural resources, limiting environmental damage by punishing polluters, prudently managing public assets and seeking a reasonable compromise between short, medium and long term interest.

Political vision: Governing by norms and rules.

Strategic vision: Putting in place prudential vision, one which is based in the phronesis, practical wisdom.

Conclusion

To feel alive, to be recognized, to persist in a stable identity, to be able to point clearly a state of life, to have a place of reference, to have a membership that is not occasional and to hold up in existence amongst other existing beings have become either very difficult or unreliable. The solidarity that is shying away from the communities of globalization is also failing amongst

individuals. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman, the season of "solid" communities is past, we are now in that of "liquid" modernity: new relationships with time and space, territoriality, upset relations between people, between states and their representatives, between nations and regional groups, new relationships abroad: general fluidity makes of existence a diverse and random trajectories. It is in this global context that Cameroon subscribes to the logic of hospitality as a humanitarian duty. The principle of security which is also a duty of humanity is not incompatible with hospitality. Hence the need to reconcile the two principles to address the current security challenges. The Cameroonian hospital posture, if based on a prudential theory is a critique of an ambient atavistic nationalism in the world. It also raises, beyond humanism, the basis for a policy of humanity.

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INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR HOSTING REFUGEES IN CAMEROON

ALLAWADI BIAVO BIAVO

The general legal principle that all human beings should, without discrimination, enjoy the human rights and fundamental freedoms is enshrined in virtually all international instruments for human rights protection. In line with this principle, all human beings must be regarded as world citizens with the same rights and privileges regardless of their place of birth, domicile or habitual residence or nationality.

Although still considered the cornerstone of the international system for human rights protection, the principle that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, however stumbles on obstacles of several kinds. These obstacles could be of a legal and / or institutional order, at the international and national levels. To illustrate, while the universal ideal would have been to oblige States to consider foreigners, including a unique category of them known as "refugees", as their own citizens, in terms of recognition of their rights and freedoms, each state has, unfortunately, come to distinguish between nationals and foreigners, and to enact laws and regulations concerning the entry of the later, as well as terms and conditions of their stay in its territory¹⁻²



Refugees lined up for repatriation

Faced with this situation imposed by State practice towards foreigners in general and refugees in particular, and given the vulnerable character, by definition, of refugees, the international community felt obliged to protect their status through a number of legal instruments and institutions.

Considered, by virtue of its geographical location and abundance of natural resources, as a haven of peace in sub-Saharan Africa, undermined, as elsewhere, by diverse forms of conflicts, Cameroon now hosts hundreds of thousands of refugees, mainly from CAR and Nigeria. This situation beckoned prompt national and international humanitarian responses, including the development of legal management tools³. It becomes imperative to interrogate the legal and institutional arrangement for refugee protection in Cameroon. Based on the actual institutional implementation on the ground, can this framework be considered satisfactory by international standards for refugee protection?

The review of the legal framework for refugees protection in Cameroon (I) and an appraisal of the outcome their effective protection by institutional mechanisms (II) would allow for a better investigation of our subject of analysis.

I- The Legal and regulatory framework for hosting refugees.

It is important to successively examine the international instruments for refugee protection duly ratified by Cameroon and considered part of its national legal arsenal (A) as well as its specific national legislation for refugees (B).

A) The international instruments for the protection of refugees in effect in Cameroon

First of all it should be recalled that in addition to international instruments for human right protection in general, the international legal arsenal specifically



Nigerian refugees well secured in Cameroon

1-cf. universal declaration of human rights of 10 December 1948, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 16 December 1966, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2-cf. article of the declaration of human rights of stateless persons, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, resolutions 471/44 of 13 December 1985.

3-cf. report of June 2015 of Humanitarian Aide and Civilian Protection by the European Commission.

devoted to the cause of refugees is made up of the Geneva Convention of July 28, 1951 relating to the status of Refugees, and the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967 also relating to the Status of Refugees. Thus, according to the combined provisions of Article I of the Convention as amended by the aforementioned Protocol, The term "refugee" applies to any person who [...]owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." Thus defined, the refugee status is different from that of a migrant who is any person who voluntarily leaves his country to settle in another country in search of work or better living conditions.

That said, the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967 constitute the keystone of the international system for refugee protection, and obliges States Parties to take both positive and negative measures in favour of refugees. In compliance with its positive obligations, all States Parties to the Geneva Convention and the New York Protocol must recognize the refugees' rights and freedoms granted to them by the Convention and the Protocol on the one hand and secondly to ensure, through an appropriate mechanism, the effective exercise of such rights and freedoms.

As for the negative obligations, States parties to the Geneva Convention and the Protocol of New York, are obliged to refrain from expelling or returning refugees to the frontiers a refugee their territory in any manner whatsoever⁴.

Recognizing, like many other states, the social and humanitarian nature of any action on behalf of refugees, Cameroon has made ownership of the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the Protocol of New York 1967 by integrating them in its internal legal order, respectively by means of succession on 23 October 1961 to the Convention and, by means of accession, on September 19, 1967 to the Protocol of New York. Having established, its consent to be bound by these two international treaties for the protection of refugees at the international level, Cameroon, like other state parties, has also committed to receive refugees and asylum seekers to its territory and to ensure their enjoyment of

the rights and freedoms granted to them by these two international instruments governing their status.

It should be recalled that, once acceded by Cameroon, the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967 became immediately applicable and have direct effect in Cameroon. This means that the provisions of these two international instruments of refugee protection may be invoked, by any person before any administrative body and / or judicial in Cameroon. This means that under the provisions of the Convention and the Protocol mentioned above, Cameroon must accord refugees treatment no less favourable than that accorded to nationals with regards to the recognition in their favour, of the rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined granted them by the Convention and its Additional Protocol.

More concretely, by virtue of its status at as contracting state to the above mentioned Convention and the Protocol, Cameroon has committed to ensuring the respect of the legal status of refugees by facilitating, as much as possible, access to mobile, immobile, intellectual and industrial properties in accordance with its legislation. It is also required, pursuant to the provisions of the Convention, to guarantee freedom of association to refugees, under the same conditions as for foreigners in Cameroon. Similarly, under Article 16 of the Convention, a refugee in Cameroon is, in principle, entitled to enjoy the same treatment as a national of Cameroon with regard to access to the courts, including legal assistance and exemption from *iudicatum solvi*.

In the same vein, refugees in Cameroon are in principle entitled to a gainful employment of their choice, be it in an employed, self-employed or liberal profession⁵.

As to the question of the welfare of refugees, Cameroon is committed to the provisions of the Convention, to provide refugees with access to housing and education. As such, section 22 (2) of the Convention provides that: « The Contracting States shall accord to refugees treatment as favourable as possible, and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens generally in the same circumstances, with respect to education other than elementary education and, in particular, as regards access to studies, the recognition of foreign school certificates, diplomas and degrees, the remission of fees and charges and the award of scholarships. »

4-cf. Article 33 of the 1951 Convention relating the status of refugees

5-cf. article 17, 18 and 19 of the 1951 Convention relating the status of refugees

In sum, it can be considered that the acceptance by Cameroon of both the Geneva Convention of 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967 relating to the Status of Refugees is, in general, its commitment to recognize and ensure to them all the rights and fundamental freedoms accorded them by these two international instruments for the protection of their legal status, and this, regardless of the framework of its internal legal order.

B) The national legislative and regulatory framework for hosting refugees

More than 30 years since its accession to the Geneva Convention of 1951 to the Protocol of New York of 1967, Cameroon has adopted a specific law on the status of refugees. This is Law No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon. It is a text of four (4) chapters and twenty (20) articles in total. Chapter 1 deals with the general provisions of the law. The refugee definition mirrors that of the above mentioned international instruments.

However, according to Cameroonian law, a refugee is someone who leaves his country because of aggression, foreign occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or the country of his nationality. However, as per Article 3, the refugee status cannot be applicable to any person who has committed various crimes including war crimes, against humanity and against peace.

Chapter 3 of the Law deals with the rights and obligations of refugees. Article 9 lists these rights as: non-discrimination, freedom of religion, the right to property, to courts, to work, to education, to housing, assistance social and public, freedom of association, movement, the right to obtain identity papers and travel documents, transfer of assets, for naturalization. With regard to the exercise of paid or unpaid employment, access to education, school and university registration fees, refugees enjoy the same treatment as nationals. Every refugee recognized by the Cameroonian State receives a refugee card, the period of validity and renewal terms are set by decree. Refugees, however, are subject to certain obligations. As per article 12 of the Law, every refugee is required to comply with laws and regulations in the same manner as nationals. Furthermore, the refugee should not, undertake destabilizing activities against the Cameroonian State or any other State.

As for the eventual expulsion of a refugee, this is only permitted for reasons of national security. Such expulsion, which must be pursuant to a decision made in accordance with the procedure provided by law. The

decision must notify the person concerned and the High Commissioner of United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR), which is responsible to find a country of asylum for the refugee within 72 hours. Paragraph 4 of the article further stipulates that expulsion automatically entail the withdrawal of the refugee card; and that no refugee, by any means whatsoever, may be extradited to the frontiers of another State.

In sum, the Cameroonian legislator opted for a definition which combines the approach of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967 and that the Convention OAU governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, signed in Addis Ababa on September 10, 1969. However, is this legal framework consistent with the implementing mechanisms in Cameroon?

II. The Institutional Framework for Hosting Refugees in Cameroon

This goal here is to respectively analyze public (A) and Private (B) institutions responsible for the management of refugees in Cameroon.

A) The role of Public institutions and Organs Assisting Refugees

First of all, it should be emphasized that generally, all ministerial departments work in synergy and intervene directly or indirectly in the management of refugees in Cameroon, each in its assigned domain of competence as stipulated by the regulations concerning their respective organization. As such, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization, in conjunction with the Ministry of External Relations, daily deploys its central and decentralized services for the determination of different refugee sites spread across the territory; and for the actual installation of the latter on those sites. This is also the case, for instance, of the Ministries of Health, the Basic Education, which, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other Non-Governmental Organizations and Cameroonian associations, are also at work to cover the needs of refugees in the areas of health and education, all within the limits of the human, material and financial resources made available to them by the government. In addition to these public institutions generally involved in the reception of refugees, Cameroon established regulatory and statutory organs responsible for the management of refugees.

Thus, in application of Law No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon, a Commission of eligibility for refugee status and a refugee Appeals Commission was established under the Ministry for External Relations by Decree No. 2011/389 of 28 November 2011.

Composed of eight (08) members from the relevant public and private administrations, the Eligibility Committee is seized of any application for eligibility and decides, in first instance, on the granting or refusal of refugee status to the asylum seeker. All requests for asylum are addressed to the president of this Commission, and it is received by its Technical Secretariat. The applications filed at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees are transmitted to the Technical Secretariat. Upon reception of an asylum application, the UNHCR may assist the applicant in completing the formalities related thereto. After registration of the application at the Technical Secretariat, the case is heard and transmitted to the

President of the eligibility committee. In view of investigating the case, the asylum seeker is summoned to the Technical Secretariat for meeting with a duly authorized officer to conduct all necessary inquiries and collect all useful additional information on his/her situation. The invitation is sent at least two weeks to the interview date.

Following subsequent investigations, a report on the asylum application is made. It contains the statement of facts, legal analysis based on instruments relating to refugee status and an assessment of the social situation of the asylum seeker. Before the transfer of the file to the president of the eligibility committee, the technical the technical secretariat disposes of a period of (02) months renewable three (03) times to make informed recommendations. Upon receiving the file, accompanied by the recommendations and the report of the technical secretariat of the asylum application, the eligibility commission has a maximum period of two (02) months to decide. This period is renewable once. Under Article



Doctor Without Borders providing care to CAR refugees

12 of the aforementioned decree, in case of influx of people seeking asylum, particularly due to the physical impossibility of determining their status on individual basis, the eligibility committee can decide to recognize their prima facie refugee status, subject to subsequent verification on an individual basis.

Regarding the competence of the Appeals Board, Article 13 of the afore mentioned Decree provides that any contestation to the decision of the eligibility commission is brought before the Board of Appeal for a final decision. The appeal is submitted to the Technical Secretariat, directly or through the UN High Commissioner for Refugees office. The Board of Appeals shall decide within a period of two (02) months after referral. The appeal shall contain a statement of the new facts and a copy of the decision of the eligibility commission involved. The submission of an appeal suspends all measures of national expulsion. It also precises that the proceedings before the two commissions mentioned above are free, and that the time for appeal is thirty (30) days from the notification.

At the end of the procedure, and upon recognition of refugee status, the technical secretariat delivers, to the beneficiary and to all the major and minor family members pursuant to Article 5 of the Law of 27 July 2005, refugee certificates that will enable them to obtain refugee cards from the competent authorities as per Article 13 paragraph 1 of the Law. The refugee card validity period is two (02) years, automatically renewable on expiry following regulations.

In case of loss or denial of refugee status, unless for compelling reasons of national security, a six (06) months deadline is granted to the applicant to find a host country. Anyone who has lost a refugee status or failed to obtain one and have not left the territory within the period of six (06) months, except in extenuating circumstances, is considered an illegal alien in accordance the provisions of law No. 97/012 of 10 January 1997 laying down the conditions of entry, stay and exit of foreigners in Cameroon.

Moreover, on the side-lines of Eligibility and Appeal Commissions, an ad hoc inter-ministerial committee of the management of emergency situations for refugees in Cameroon was created by a Presidential Decree⁶- No. 269 of 13 March 2014. Placed under the authority of

the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, this Committee is charged with examining humanitarian, socio-economic, health and safety challenges arising from the massive presence of refugees in Cameroon ; and to propose commensurate measures on how these could be addressed by the government. It also serves as a framework for dialogue between the government and international institutions for a smooth management of the refugee situation, taking due account of the legitimate concerns of local host communities and propose any other appropriate measures for the urgent \management of the refugee in Cameroon. Following this institutional set up created by the above mentioned decree, it can be stated that, despite the political goodwill of the Cameroon government, support to the increasing number of refugees by its own national institutions and organs, is far from optimal. Thus, the additional combined action of UNHCR and Non- Governmental Organizations.

B. The Actions of UNHCR Cameroon and Non-Governmental Organizations in the management of refugees

Since its creation by Resolution No. 428 (V) of the United Nations General Assembly on 14 December 1950, UNHCR was tasked by the international community with a mandate to undertake the functions of protection of refugees, and in collaboration with States, to seek permanent solutions to the challenges refugees face. Thus, as per paragraph 8 of the UNHCR Statute and Article 35 of the 1951 Convention, this international institution of refugee protection monitors the implementation actions of States Parties to the 1951 Convention⁷. This means that the standard for international action on behalf of refugees was established by the United Nations and was consecrated by the adoption of a number of international instruments and institutions among which UNHCR⁸.

It is against the backdrop of this role, inherent in its status, that it has been rightly opined that "for the 50 million people forced into exile in the world and for the hundreds of non-governmental organizations working towards these people, but also for specialized or general press, as well as for States, UNHCR is now the key public authority ". Intergovernmental agency, it is at the heart

6-cf. written observations of the UNHCR before the European Human Rights Courts in the case of IMC/ France, File number n° 9152/09.

7-cf. Guiline procedures and criteria for the determination of refugee status accring to the 1951 convention and the 1967 Protocol 1967 relating to the status of refugees ; HR C1P/4/FRE/REV/1 UNHCR 1979, reissued, Geneva, january 1992.

8-cf. VALLUY, 2007, cited by Agathe Etienne, in « the UNHCR in the framework and network of hosting refugees in sub Saharan Africa : Stakes and Assistance to Cairo"pp30 »

of complex devices humanitarian government and many of the most dramatic situations in the world, it is the main government exiles and their destiny.

With regard to its actions in Cameroon, UNHCR has been working for several years to offer protection and assistance to Central African and Nigerian refugees living in over 300 locations scattered in the eastern regions of Adamawa and the Far North. It attaches priority to improving the population's health status, to ensure access to education and to increase or maintain water supplies to refugees. As for refugees and asylum seekers living in urban areas, UNHCR's main objectives are to improve access to health facilities and education, and support voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity.

As for durable solutions, the Organization make special efforts, in concert with its partners, to develop income-generating activities and strengthening livelihoods, so as to enable refugees to increase their opportunities for integration. Furthermore, for the purpose of reducing statelessness, UNHCR undertook a comprehensive awareness campaign for the issuance of birth certificates, support the civil status office and sensitise parents on the need to report births.

From another perspective, and despite the efforts of the government, UNHCR and partners to promote quality education for all in urban areas, some factors still limit the access of refugees, including participation the cost for exams, assessments, transport, purchase



UNHCR representatives consult with camp leaders

uniforms and books. To overcome these shortcomings, UNHCR is working to improve access to quality education for refugee children, especially girls and children with disabilities, as well as access of at least 50 percent of children aged 3-5 years in preschool education.

In addition, UNHCR is committed to reducing the number of people at risk of statelessness by developing a strategy for sustainable solutions to the Cameroonian government, strengthening the capacity of local institutions involved in organizing information and awareness campaigns, helping 3,000 vulnerable individuals to confirm their nationality and, through all the authorities to organize campaigns for mobile birth registration⁹.

In sum, UNHCR partners with government departments, UN agencies, other international organizations and NGOs. As such, the Office works closely with the Ministry of External Relations, helping the National Commissions of eligibility and appeal to assume full responsibility for status determination and registration procedures and the issuance documents to refugees. It is also continuing its collaboration with ministries respectively responsible for the Promotion of Women and the Family, and Social Affairs.

Besides the UNHCR, other actors with institutional contours are mustering synergy in favour of refugee protection in Cameroon. This is the case, for example, of the 2014 cooperation between the UNHCR and the UNFPA, UN Women, WFP and UNICEF in the areas of nutrition, education, recording the facts of marital status, child protection, health, procreation and the fight against sexual violence, which is still ongoing as part of a lasting solution to refugee problems in Cameroon.

Conclusion

From the foregone analysis on the legal and institutional framework for hosting refugees in Cameroon, one can see that, although it has not participated in the development of the main international instruments protecting refugees such as the Geneva Convention 1951 and the New York Protocol of 1967, Cameroon's accession to these two treaties and the political will to ensure optimal protection of refugees remain strong and noticeable. Indeed, after agreeing to endorse the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, Cameroon, aware of the humanitarian nature of any action taken in favour of the later, has adopted its own national legislation dedicated to the cause of refugees, with the objective of providing them the utmost protection possible, in line with international standards, while preserving the legitimate concerns of local host communities.

Furthermore, while Cameroon maintains a strong political will for hosting refugees, it must however recognize the profound difference that exists between the practice and the domestic and international legal standards; and that the means and actions deployed in the field by both public institutions and organs, civil society organisations, and the UNHCR, are, indeed, far from covering the needs of the ever increasing number of refugees, spread in different site across the country.

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9-cf. VALLUY, 2007, cited by Agathe Etienne, in « the UNHCR in the framework and network of hosting refugees in sub Saharan Africa : Stakes and Assistance to Cairo » pp30 »

THE EXPLOSIVE PRODUCTION OF REFUGEES IN AFRICA : FROM PRECARIOUS PROTECTION TO VICIOUS CIRCLE

SAMUEL NGUEMBOCK

This article envisages and addresses the risky notion of protection within a backdrop of refugee explosion in Africa. The concept of unreliable protection seems relevant to better understand and explain the disturbing development of the number of refugees on the continent. It provides space to highlight and understand the most relevant structural and underlying causes of refugee problem, ranging from internal processes of states to the international management of refugees.

After presenting the worrying developments of refugee in terms of the number of refugees in recent times, this study explains the explosive production of refugees in two perspectives; first the weak conflict prevention and management policies and, secondly the gaps of coordinating the issue at the international level.

All of these pitfalls and failures, as well as the risky treatment of refugees in addition to the hostility faced in the host country has made the management and protection of refugees a vicious circle that needs to be destroyed in order to break the codes of sovereignty of states and the suicidal autism policy of national and international political authorities.



Campement de réfugiés d'Assaga, l'éducation des enfants, une préoccupation pour l'UNICEF

If the number of refugees has declined significantly since 2005 compared to the various crises that occurred between the early 1990s and early 2000s, it should be noted that this number has exploded over the last three years. In 2014, approximately 17 million Africans were forced to leave their homes. Until 2013 and for the fourth consecutive year, the number of refugees has been on the increase in the continent. Africa had over close to three million refugees in 2013 and of these, only 170 000 of them were able to return home in the same year¹. The political and security instability in Mali, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Darfur have increased the forced displacement of populations. In a context of environmental constraints and terrorist threats in North Africa, West and Central Africa and the East African Community States, the production of refugees is becoming more and stronger. In recent years, Africa has moved from a generation of refugees caused by civil wars and internal crises to that with multiple causes.

If international protection in international law refers to the protection of the individual as entity acting under the government of a state, we can admit that the recent explosion of refugees in Africa is related both to the failure of states and the weaknesses of international protection. It is clear that international law is addressed to states as representative organizations of human communities and it is the prerogatives of states to protect their sovereignty against foreign interference². As such, the deterioration of human living conditions that precedes the forced displacement of populations is primarily a state responsibility and secondly, the ineffectiveness of the application of international rules on protection of the human person.

Beyond doctrinal differences on the attitude of international law vis-à-vis human beings, this article aims to show that the alarming growth of refugees in Africa in terms of figures with its dramatic consequences on international migration is explained both through the internal processes of states and the limited impact of international arrangements and mechanisms for the protection of the human person. At the state level, these processes are observed through weak prevention and crisis management policies, conflict and disaster. The weakness of prevention policies is itself in some states linked to the processes of getting to power and the exercise of the power systems and structures from the perspective of protecting the human person. Internationally, it is necessary to question the will of states

to implement international guidelines for protection of the individual and measures taken globally to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Furthermore, the analysis of this paper is not only limited to the consequences of crises, in a strictly security sense, but presents in a global perspective the explosion of refugees in Africa as an attendant corollary of poverty, underdevelopment and the failed policies of "co-development" meant to help limit or even stop the South-North migration³. A non negligible and significant element of this analysis is also to probe into the diplomacy of some international powers whether Western or Asian. It is about the inconsistency in diplomacy and the intervention of these international powers, who in using poor diplomatic tools in their foreign policy, supports authoritarian regimes in Africa in order to protect their interests at the detriment of the welfare of the populations. The role played by the Americans and Chinese in the conflict in South Sudan is one of the most telling examples.

The Explosion of Refugees in Africa: a Worrying Evolution to the Poorly Managed Sources of Production.

If the causes of the explosion of refugees in Africa are relatively well known, the control of the evolution and proliferation of this migratory phenomenon is beyond the control of certain states, who paradoxically feeds the threat. In 2005, the number of refugees worldwide was estimated at 8.4 million, the lowest in terms of numbers since 1980. In Africa, 2.6 million refugees were registered in 2005 as compared to 6.7 million in 1994⁴. It is clear that the developments after 2005 which was rather encouraging and that could lead to more optimism fell as highlighted by many observers. But this vision, did not only fail to stand up to scrutiny, but equally did not stand the test of facts.

The management of certain conflicts which were the focus of production of refugees, albeit now in the past, has not completely settled the issue of the return of refugees and their lasting presence in their country of origin and departure. Countries like Rwanda, Chad, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo in particular still has refugees outside their countries. Added to this, is the category of refugees leaving countries with authoritarian regimes. Beyond the legacy of civil wars in some countries, the explosion of

1-<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140619-International-refugee-day-there-are-more-than-3million-in-Africa>.

2-Sperduti Giuseppe, The Human Person in International Law, in : French Annal of International Law, volume 7, 1961. pp. 141-162.

3-Luc Cambrézy, « Refugee and Migration in Africa : What Status for the Vulnerable ? » European Review for International Migration, Vol 23 – n°3, 2007.

4-Luc Cambrézy, *ibid*.

refugees has seen accelerated by new hotbeds of tension in recent years; Central African Republic, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Mali, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Somalia and Eritrea are glaring examples.

Moreover, as Luc Cambrézy intimates, sticking to the strict definition of a refugee as enshrined in international law cannot put aside the millions of displaced people who, for various reasons, have not been able or willing to leave their home country and who experience similar challenges as the refugees who have crossed a border. But many civil wars "produce" as much - if not more - of displaced persons without statutes as "statutory" refugees. As such, to take into account all these categories and have a comprehensive analysis of the scale of the phenomenon, it is important to combine the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) definition of international law conception in the issue.

In this perspective, the Convention of the O.A.U. governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, signed on 10 September 1969 and entered into force in July 23, 1975 did not merely reproduce existing text⁵. The provisions of this convention states that the term refugee applies to

"any person who, because of aggression, foreign occupation, foreign domination or a seriously disturbing events of public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or the country of his nationality is compelled to leave his habitual residence to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or the country of his nationality".

If this approach was justified by the political and economic context of the time, we must recognize that more than forty years later that context still resists analysis and the current trend of affairs.

In its June 2015 report, the United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) states that it manages 60 million refugees and displaced persons. According to this report, 42 5000 people are forced to flee daily as a result of conflicts. In Africa, since 2012, more and more Africans are forced to flee primarily due to conflict. Simplice Kpandji the Coordinator for "Reporting" of UNHCR, for West Africa highlights the possibility of a further increase. In his words; "These numbers have greatly increased and we expect a further increase in 2015," He further highlights that "The report shows an increase of 17% for sub-Saharan Africa, but these figures are underestimated because they do not include Nigeria, due to the lack of reliable data⁶." With

17 million people forcibly displaced at the end of 2014, not counting the hundreds of thousands who have suffered the same fate in 2015, and through early 2016, Africa remains one of the geographical areas with a highly dense population of refugees and displaced persons, without any real perspective on their final return.

Production of Refugees Worsened by the Uncertainty in Returning.

The return of refugees is a key indicator for understanding and assessing the political and security situation of the country of departure on one hand, but also the accompanying measures for the resettlement of refugees in their country of origin or nationality, on the other hand. With the facts on the ground, it is clear that Africa and specifically the countries in post-conflict situations need to increase the rate of return of persons who have neither the means nor the right to stay in the receiving country. The measures and mechanisms put in place for the resettlement of refugees seem neither effective nor gives incentives to return. The general consensus seems to confirm the idea that few refugees and IDPs are motivated to return.

In Mali, for example, only 21 000 refugees of about 140,000 have returned home since 2014. In the absence of structures, accompanying measures and security guarantees, returning only takes place either because of the inhuman conditions of installation in the host country or because the spontaneous attachment to the land is urgent. Simplice Kpandji, a UNHCR official in West Africa, said in 2015 that the UNHCR had "found at one point a spontaneous return of Malians, but there was a sharp setback with the resurgence of the conflict in the north" and hoped the peace agreement signed in Bamako for the return of refugees could reignite the process.

It also important to take into account the living conditions of these refugees and the social environment of the host country. Given the situation observed in several host countries, it appears that not only the refugees live in precarious conditions but sometimes are faced with increasing intolerance from people in the host country. Obviously, the situation of the refugees varies from country to country. But in any event, it is a vicious circle when conditions to motivate returns are not met in the short or medium term.

5-Henri Joël TAGUM FOMBENO, « Reflexion of Refugees in Africa », Trimestrial Review on Human Rights, n° 57, 2004 : <http://www.rtdh.eu/pdf/2004245.pdf>

6-Simplice Kpandji, as cited by par Jeune Afrique of 25 July 2015.

The host countries or those offering asylum to neighboring populations in Africa are almost all poor, with often fragile and related levels of political stability and security related. It is almost evident that the more the instability or war situation of the country of departure lasts, the more the living conditions of refugees in the host country deteriorates especially in the absence of sustained humanitarian assistance and opportunities reliable for socio-economic integration. Faced with this situation, mistrust, intolerance and rejection gradually settle in the minds of the populations of host countries. The case of Nigerian refugees, mostly installed in Cameroon, Chad, or in Niger is particularly illustrative.

In April 2015, humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the UN had appealed for donation with the deterioration of the humanitarian situation of refugees and victims of Boko Haram. In total, an estimated \$ 174 million was assessed necessary to help the victims of Boko Haram Nigerian refugees. Until then, the refugees were estimated 192,000 numbers in the neighboring

countries of Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Beyond the cases in the Lake Chad Basin, other countries on the continent have experienced or are experiencing similar situations of precariousness. The increasing number of figures in the last five years can be cited in this order; in Côte d'Ivoire (2000 to 2011), the Central (since 2013), Libya (since 2011), Mali (since 2012) in northern Nigeria (since 2011), DRC (since 2005), and southern Sudan and recently in Burundi. Admittedly, if the production of refugees has become explosive in recent years it is due to the unstable situation in these countries. Indeed, these countries were until early 2015 the greatest suppliers of refugees and IDPs.

Going back to the case of Niger, in Basso for example, the inhuman living condition of the displaced is glaring. As a result of the insecurity in the region, there are only two NGOs providing humanitarian assistance to victims. In Diffa, the WFP plans to feed 140,000 refugees, more than 80 000 inhabitants of the province, which constitutes more than a quarter of the entire population. This is quite challenging taking into



Caring for persons displaced by Boko haram

consideration that the mobilization of finances from the international community does not follow the pace of this degradation⁷.

Sources of the Production of Refugees Related to Internal Political Mechanism and Processes.

An examination of the explosive situations that provoke and produce refugee flows reveals that it is often because the signals at political, economic, social and cultural are not strictly observed and addressed. In other words, conflict prevention policies and early warning systems are often dysfunctional. In 2008, social demands and political uprisings led to hunger strikes in urban areas in countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Madagascar provoked by the rise in food prices⁸. Incidences that have not gone without violent repression.

Since the popular uprising in Burkinabe, the opposition parties and civil society benefiting from the support of the citizenry are trying to garner support to put an end to the traditional constitutional amendments that allow sitting heads of heads to remain in power. Few countries can be cited under this; Gabon, Benin, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Uganda. These countries will soon organize presidential elections under tense domestic political situations that could lead to crisis and unrest. From government reforms, security measures unpopular to the political class and the adoption of draconian legislative instruments in an uncertain political and social context, these countries and others on the continent seem to be on the brink of a national fracture that could generate new flows of migrants and refugees.

Even though there is no single party state and many countries are moving towards multiparty politics, there is a rise of street protests carried out by civic movements, political and trade unions and most often supported by churches. These dissent voices and resistances, products of the failure of reliable and transparent electoral processes, pass through various techniques of subversion that fluctuate between mobilization and violence protest. The persistence of anti-democratic behavior and the lack of political change could ruin any hope emancipating from the African people. It could

also confirm the reproduction of the formation of the current ruling class and thus strengthen the policy of inertia that engenders cleavages and division⁹.

Towards the Rise of Refugees: Victims of Unemployment, Political Disillusionment and Fundamentalism.

The production of refugees in Africa seems far from being contained by the measures and actions taken on the continent. One indicator to confirm this trend lies in demographics. African youth also wants its space in the political, social and economic fields. Leveraged by its growth, it has become a decisive force in Africa due to urbanization, the process of individuation and the different social networks¹⁰. The demographic challenge is huge for this continent of over one billion people. In just one century (1950-2050), the number of young people between the ages of 15 to 30 will have increased more than tenfold in Africa and the number of urban youth will have increased more than twenty times, a historical challenge that no society has ever been able addressed. Twenty million young people arrive annually in the labor market with over 75% without decent jobs or sustainable livelihoods.

Several studies demonstrate that the growth rate of the rural population in Africa is 10 million per year and that the urban population current growth rate in the urban areas which was ten million per year in 2015 will move to fifteen million to per year by 2030. Economic growth translates into great inequalities and contributes little to internal redistribution which enables markets to expand. It is characterized by processes especially those using capital at the expense of labor. The main difficulty countries face to enable active youth get inserted into the economy comes from the low capacity of the market to integrate them but also from an insufficient level of preparation of young people.

If youths are kept away from the economic life and if its inclusion in the political space and public service is not effective, undoubtedly South Saharan Africa will experience an unprecedented level of instability and humanitarian disaster¹¹.

The political and religious arena is increasingly favorable to fundamentalist versions of Islam. Advocates of the moderate versions of Islam because of fear

7-Benoît Moreno, Spokesperson for the High Commissioner for Refugee parole(HCR), as cited by Jeune Afrique of June 2015

8-Philippe Hugon et Samuel Nguembock, Uprisings Linked to the Problem of Transition in Africa, IRIS Consultation Notes for Quai d'Orsay, February 2015.

9-Samuel Nguembock, « A Slow process of Transition in Sub Saharan African » in Virgie Report,, in Rapport Virgie 2016 : The Possible Future of 2030 Horizon 2030-2050, Futuribles International, January 2016.

10-Philippe Hugon et Samuel Nguembock, op. cit.

11-Samuel Nguembock, « Demographic Growth, Bearers of Economic Opportunities and Risks of Instability » Une croissance démographique porteuse d'opportunités économiques et de risques d'instabilité politique », Virgie 2016 Virgie Report : Possible Future of Futurs 2030-2050, ibid.

remain silent and hardly lead any ideological battle against these fundamentalists.

It would appear that Armed jihadist have some favorable positions amongst young people from middle class and popular media. Although there is a marked reduction of crises and conflicts in the continent, the prospects for peace are organized around two main hypotheses. Either states will resolutely learn from the failures of the recent past years in the management of conflicts, in the management of political transition and in addressing post-conflict reconstruction and thereby strengthen their regional cooperation on issues of security and defense, or national selfishness will prevail over regional cooperation and the failures of the past would give the opportunity for these armed groups to increase their menace and disturbance. This would enhance a formidable proliferation of asymmetrical threats that could plunge states into a structurally chronic insecurity, a situation that could have devastating effects not only on national economies but also, and above all, their ability to catch up with developmental delays that have been accumulated for over the last forty years. These countries may well legitimize the practice of fundamentalism as an instrument of social recognition and of an ideological struggle with the predominantly young and non-career people (sometimes graduate unemployed, sometimes poorly trained and under-educated). Population growth, which to an extent feeds these fundamentalist does not only constitute and a reservoir for consummation but will also threaten the acquired structural growth and the political stability in many African countries¹². If the rise of fundamentalism and these jihadist groups is confirmed, we could witness the collapse of African States and the economic paralysis of the latter (the case of Libya or Somalia).

The International Management of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Africa: A Vicious Circle for the Victims.

If legally, there are instruments mobilized to supervise and protect refugees and displaced persons, it should be noted that the care and welfare of the latter in the prospect of permanent resettlement in their countries remain an unknown equation. Refugees are specifically considered within the context of refugee law under the UN Convention (1951) and Protocol (1967). On its part,

the legal regime for displaced persons consists of a set of instruments of international humanitarian law (IHL), the International Law of Human Rights (IHRL), domestic law and the Guiding Principles on displaced persons within their own country as stipulated by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (1998). On the ground, the humanitarian governance, which authorizes the use of international humanitarian law and in different juridical instruments implements the principle of international solidarity, is facing diverse challenges that put the refugee or displaced in a spiral of continuous pain.

On the continent, the situation of the international protection of refugees and displaced persons is far from being interesting. With great amazement, a certain political and institutional silence of national and regional state apparatuses is being observed. Exclusively at the level of the African continent, the principle of African solidarity is hardly observed in practice. Musharraf Justin Paraiso and Alain Pierre Mouchiroud, wonder if the famous African solidarity is nothing but a golden legend. In their words;

Why are African Governments, sub regional organizations and the African Union not involved in humanitarian and emergency aid? How can one explain the fact that they have systematically abandoned their duty in providing assistance in times of emergency to international organizations, NGOs and Western countries¹³?

It's possible that sometimes we can be contented to see the hospitality of some countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Cameroon but this hospitality is often confused between the *laissez-faire* of some localities and the interest of the central government putting in place a strategy to capture international aid. From the point of the host communities and as observed elsewhere, such hospitality has its limits as it is feared that the influx of refugees comes along with insecurity, exportation of conflict beyond borders and brings environmental degradation (access to firewood, water, etc.). In any case, this structured and oriented search for answer reveals African contradiction characterized by the traditional fraternity which urges men and women of the continent to rescue people in distress and the inertia of the states in providing relief.

The Central African Republic, for example, was for some years torn by coup d'états and identity clashes

12-Samuel Nguembock, « Africa : Between the End of Civil Wars, the Rise of Fundamentalism and the affirmation of Insecurity », in Virgie L'Afrique : entre la fin des guerres civiles, la montée des intégrismes et la réaffirmation de l'insécurité », in 2006 Virgie Report : A Possible Future for 2030-2050 Horizon, Futuribles International, January 2016.

13-Moucharaf Justin Paraiso and Alain Pierre Mouchiroud, « Central Africa : Humanitarian Crisis, African Solidarity put to Test », Jeune Afrique, 20 January 2014.

which have left more than 900,000 IDPs scattered in makeshift camps with unacceptable living conditions. On the ground, as noted by many observers, the priority needs such as food, water, health care and other amenities to alleviate the suffering of those who were forced to move, have been and are still below the living minimum. The African Union, which gives out aid based on the contribution of its Member States, has confided the international governance of humanitarian assistance to the international community. Though insufficient, the UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, the European Union and international NGOs have provided international assistance in the form of tents, medicines, food and other relief items¹⁴. Some observers have noted that the international humanitarian aid and emergency aid are not only become institutionalized in several African states, but have succeeded to create dependency which most African leaders and senior officials are yet to understand the length of its perverse effects

Beyond the continent, the principles adopted by the UN for the validation of refugee status and the main principles for the management of refugees known internationally do not seem to take sufficient consideration of the extent of forced migration on the continent and the consequences this has on the latter in its duty to provide more measurements. As Luc Cambrézy puts it, if people are granted refugee status on a group basis, "it is not necessarily in the direction of better protection¹⁵." It is in this perspective that this specialist borrowing from Claire Rodier's arguments¹⁶ expanded that¹⁷; the OAU has discouraged and weakened Western states from participating in crises that do not directly concern them. This observation is particularly relevant as it reveals that if 80% of refugees in Africa were granted refugee status on a collective basis or *prima facie*, in Europe the majority (if not all) the plaintiffs obtained refugee status on an individual basis. UNHCR seems to confirm this thought by stating that: "The regional differences in the recognition of



Refugees reception in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria : trial by patience

14-Moucharaf Justin Paraiso and Alain Pierre Mouchiroud, « Central Africa : Humanitarian Crisis, African Solidarity Put to Test », *Jeune Afrique*, 20 January 2014.
15-Luc Cambrézy, *op. cit.*

16-Claire Rodier, *The Construction of European Policy on Asylum between discourse and practices*, *Man and Migration*, n° 1240, 2002
17-HCR, *Refugees : World Trends in 2005*. UNHCR, Geneva, 115 p.

refugees can be partly explained by the nature of the existing legal framework as well as the economic development level (individual determination of refugee status is demanding in terms of resources)¹⁷.

Conclusion

After this analysis, we find that the explosive production of refugees in Africa has become a worrying phenomenon in the continent and the prospects are not encouraging. Sources and factors of these refugee flows and forced displacement are numerous and are found both within the internal processes of states as well as at the level of major international principles that govern the management of refugees. Between the reluctance of some players, the structural deficiency of others-both materially and financially, measures taken in relative stable moments as well as in conflict situations do not seem to live up to the expectation and protection of populations. Although the means of the intervention of humanitarian organizations is considerable, it does clash with the persistent problem of coordination and harmonization of humanitarian intervention policy. In this precarious context, the protection of refugees is under a kind of joint authority, that is, it is largely dependent on the aid granted by the international community through UNHCR, but also on the benevolence, willingness and capacity of the host state.

Faced with this dramatic and worrying situation, in anticipation to the coming years, the African Union

through its Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs, has initiated activities to increase awareness of the situation of refugees. It sent open letters to appeal to all Member States and the international community to redouble their efforts to solve the problems of refugees and displaced persons including the Sahrawi people of Tindouf. In addition, regional consultations were opened for the regions of Southern Africa, East, West, Central and North on the development of the African Common Position on the effectiveness of the humanitarian action under the global humanitarian Summit in May 2016. This project that recognizes the gaps of the global humanitarian system has been reviewed and approved by the representatives of the Member States in November 2015. It deserves the ownership at national, regional and International agencies to develop responsive and responsible governance architecture at the local, national, regional and global levels, including full and fair representation of African countries on the international stage.

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REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND RETURNEES IN THE CONFLICT SYSTEMS AT CAMEROON'S EASTERN AND FAR NORTH BORDERS

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Since 2010, Cameroon is plagued by recurrent insecurity at its borders with CAR and Nigeria in the Eastern and Extreme North Regions respectively. The politico-military crisis in CAR and the Islamic insurrection in the North East of Nigeria, augmented the outstanding cycle of violence engendered by armed factions and cohorts of unbridled assailants. Existing literature on this subject in Cameroon has largely focused on the chronicles of the war, its effects on the civilian populations and the military, as well as security and popular responses. Meanwhile, civilians, seeking refuge from the barbarity of armed gangs in the East, and terrorists in the Extreme North have fled to safer areas in the interior. Upon arrival at the host communities, the refugees, displaced and returnees initiate adaptation strategies that are often greeted with hostility by host populations, hence the emergence of new conflicts.



Influx of Nigerian refugees at the Minawao camp

This contribution seeks to investigate the itinerant trajectories of refugees, IDPs and returnees in a bid to illustrate that their coping mechanisms as well as that of the host communities generate a new cycle of crisis at the socio-religious, economic and political levels. Drawing from field data and available literature, this study focuses on the Extreme North and Eastern Regions to demonstrate that the massive exodus of population in search for safety is accompanied by local conflicts, exacerbated by historical factors as well as political and economic interests.

I- Precarious settlements, access to resources and conflicts in the Extreme North of Cameroon

Crisis-induced movement of populations often present one dominant feature: that of refugees and IDPs seeking refuge in makeshift areas. Since June 2013, millions of refugees have fled to the Cameroonian border in successive waves. Despite the plurality of escape routes, the refugees use multiple entry channels. The first is the Madagali axis (Nigeria) Tourou - Mogode (Cameroon) at the border of the State of Adamawa and Far North Region. Upon arrival in Cameroon, refugees provisionally settle in the villages of the district of Zhelevet in Mayo- Moskota, Gawar and Minawaou in the district of Mokolo. The second entry point is Kerawa locality from where the refugees settle in Assighassia, Kolofata and Mora in Mayo-Sava division¹. The first massive wave estimated at 20 000 people arrived from Bama in Nigeria in August 2013 and took refuge in Amchide, Kolofata and Mora². According to UNHCR, successive arrivals exceeded the capacity of the Minawaou camp, which



Precariousness and promiscuity : harsh realities in refugees camps

1-Meyeme, M., « Assisting Refugees in Cameroon : insufficient means despite goodwill», Association of Social Workers in Cameroon, 5 October 2013

2-L'œil du Sahel, N°539 du 2 August 2013

was estimated at 39 000 places. The UN organ recalls, for example, that in September 2014 "newcomers fled recurrent attacks in the past three weeks in the region of Gwoza in Borno State in Nigeria, before seeking safety in Cameroon. According to authorities, some 5500 refugees arrived in Kolofata, 3000 to Kerawa and 370 in Mora, in the districts of Mayo-Sava and Logone-et-Chari³." Under the same conditions of migration and subsistence, local people in border areas have also fled the escalating violence to settle inward.

Resilience strategies vary across groups and settlement areas. They also depend on relations with host populations. Be they refugees or displaced persons, victims of Boko Haram insecurity derive their livelihood resources in the areas where they settle. Many displaced persons and refugees prefer to settle along the main roads consisting of a few families brought together by clan ties, village or interests. Thus, dozens of refugee villages have emerged along the Maroua-Kousseri highway, especially around the towns of Waza, Dubbed, tilde, Dabanga. Precarious huts made of straw and temporary materials also serve as shelter for hundreds of families on the road to Kolofata-Mora⁴. The situation is similar in the Mayo-Tsanaga the Division where temporary camps have been erected around the villages of Tourou, Mogodé, Moskota, Achigashia, Mozogo and Zelevet. In the town of Mokolo, the Mofou villages Gawar Hossere, Mofou Djeling, Mavoumaï, Mandaka, Kossehona, Ldamtsai Goda, Legga Mayo, Mayo Saganaré, Gorai, Jimeta have experienced conflicts linked to difficult cohabitation. Hostility between the refugees and the IDPs has hardly been observed. One recalls that, at the beginning of the crisis in 2013, the first exodus of population movements witnessed a friendly welcome of the displaced in the villages of Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga.

However, the growing numbers of refugees and displaced persons have led to uncontrolled establishment of precarious camps and survival strategies. The scramble for access to limited resources resulted in tough competitions that replicate the crisis already suffered by displaced persons and refugees. At the same time they engender conflict between the two communities over limited available resources. In some villages of Mayo-Tsanaga Division, former settlement communities like the Mafa, Hide, Mabass; Peul and Kapsiki are in conflict with displaced communities due to the increase in cattle theft, stray

animals, religious tensions and recurring disputes over water sources and farmland. We also recorded several disputes over the occupation of commercial spaces.

Some displaced persons integrate the local economy through retail of agricultural products in the periodic village markets. Here also, conflicts between local businesses and new entrepreneurs from displaced communities are conspicuous. It is worth noting that land remains the main bone of contention between the host communities and those hosted. This type of conflict has also been registered in the Logone and Chari division. The invasion of agricultural areas and the occupation of private pastures by refugees and IDPs attest to a persistent agro-pastoral conflicts. Several villages around the town of Kousseri are affected by land-related conflict although, for itinerant reasons, the town of Kousseri was spared by the large wave of transhumance who preferred the corridors from the region Serbewel toward the Logone flood plain. Some displaced Arab and Fulani herders are however settled in the villages around the city and live in harmony with Kotoko farmers, Arabs, Mousgoum, Massa and Sara. Some conflicts that predate the arrival of IDPs, however, were exacerbated by their presence.

In the Mayo-Sava Division, communities displaced massively settled in more than twenty villages and in all areas of Mora. Host communities being as poor as the displaced, have witnessed increased tensions generated by pressure on available resources. Increased marital conflict has also been recorded; and, above all, a strong apprehension of religious postures between hosts and host communities.

II- Conflictual integration of IDPs and returnees

Violence, resulting from Boko Haram attacks, also induced the return of people to their village of origin. The survival measures of refugees and displaced persons do not always culminate in refugee camps. More often than not, they end up in original or foster families. While tens of thousands of refugees have agreed to join the Minawaou camp, it should be noted that several other thousands have refused to do same, preferring to return to their families or accept hospitality from close family friends. This choice stems from a sense of apprehension for their refugee status, and the desire to abscond the 'various vicissitudes of

3-Cameroon Tribune, N°10669/6868 du 9 September 2014

4-Mbakoutou Mahamat Henri, « Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in

Cameroon» in Socio-Economic Effects of Boko Haram Attacks in the Extreme-North of Cameroon, Kaliao Review, Special volume, November 2014 pp.13-33

confinement in camps⁵." In December 2013, only 1882, out of the 8200 Nigerian refugees registered by the Cameroonian authorities, agreed to be transferred to Minawaou camp. The others, opting to stay with relatives, settled in the border villages. In July 2015, Nigerian refugees were an estimated at 74,000 in the East. During the same period, there were 159,905 Central African refugees⁶.

Mostly belonging to the same ethnic groups, many refugees crossing the border know, a priori, their weak points. Most of them share the same socio-cultural space and speak the same language, in this case the Kanuri, the Mafa, the Arab-Choa, the Mandara, the foulfouldé. Religious identity is also a binding factor in this circumstance. We also gathered that many families are integrated by bonds of friendship. Away from the border areas, we observed that families who have agreed to receive refugees are difficult to identify. The localities of Mogodé, Moskota, Mokolo and Maroua serve as the main drop-off points for distressed families. A little further north, the towns of Kolofata, Kerawa, Goulfey, Makari, Kousseri Waza are also experiencing the same influx of families. More or less integrated, these families are experiencing mixed blessing between odd jobs to survive and idleness.

In neighbourhoods of the host cities, the integration of refugees and especially the displaced has initiated a new generation of conflicts. These conflicts are related to difficult access of the displaced to basic services (education, health, water), irregular and sometimes unfair distribution of food, family isolation due to poor psychosocial care. The impossible empowerment or difficult integration of IDPs, particularly youth and women, mainly due to the lack of support for income generating activities, family reunification difficulties, positioned the displaced in a state of growing vulnerability. This support deficit situation of the displaced generates conflicts with donors, and an upsurge in pilfering and prostitution. In Maroua, Mokolo, Mora and Kousseri, community tensions are rife. Households of registered IDPs and returnee in some villages share water, farmland, and commercial spaces with host communities. This has bred a climate of rancour from the host population vis-à-vis the displaced, because they feel excluded from the food distribution.

The life returnees from Nigeria is equally prone to crisis in returnee communities. Nigerian returnees were

registered in the towns of the Tourou in Mayo-Tsanaga, Maroua in Diamaré, Kousseri in the Logone and Chari or Grandma in Mayo-Sava. While the nature of the conflict facing the refugees and IDP, and the host communities is external, returnees are prey to internal conflictualities, with the main protagonists being the parents and members of the same family. The contention, which often manifests as jeers, brawls or implosion of the family, is related to the sharing of family heritage or a disputed piece of land.

The situation is almost similar in the East Region. As in the Extreme North, most of the communities seeking refuge in Cameroon hail from the same ethnic group as the host community. The Gbaya and Mbororos of Cameroon host their brethren and other groups from CAR. The first signals of a difficult cohabitation between refugees/IDPs and the local population dates back to the 2005, 2007 and 2013 crises in CAR. Several thousands of refugees from CAR from previous waves, notably the Mbororo, settled permanently in the villages of the Bétaré Oya, Garoua Boulay, and Batouri Districts, around the town of Bertoua (Mandjou District), despite having lost their refugee statuses. Many obtained a Cameroonian nationality thereby creating suspicious relations with the indigenous populations. The new refugee arrivals during the 2013 crisis are hosted in the camps in Mbilé, Lolo and Timongolo in Kadey; Ndokayo, Gado-Badzéré, Lawane in Lom and Djerem⁷.

Like the Minawaou camp, the refugees in the East enjoy freedom of movement around the camps and interact with the host populations. In addition, unlike the Far North, thousands of Central African refugees reside in large cities Bertoua, Batouri and especially Garoua –Boulay. As in Garoua Boulay, one notes a division of economic activities among Muslim traders (Fulani, Hausa and other originating in the Far North) and the Gbaya and Kako farmers. The disproportionate spatial configuration of the city into more comfortable Muslims quarters and disparate overcrowded Christian neighbourhood (Gbaya), denotes a latent conflict reinforced by ethno-religious communitarianism. From a prospective socio-political standpoint, the socio-demographic reconfiguration of a locality such as Garoua Boulay is manifest by a significant population explosion, from around 22,500 inhabitants in 2010 to an estimated population of more than 60,000 according to estimates by the local

5-De Perouse, A-M., « Refugees : Long term Flights Strategies », in Refugees, Exodus and politics, African Politics, N°85, march 2002, p.11

6-BUCREP, « A look at the regions affected by emergencies in Cameroon », July 2015 Cameroon Tribune, N°10582 du 5 may 2014.

7-Interview with the SubDivisional Officer of Garoua-Boulay, 03 october 2015

council⁸. This trend can potentially alter the political balance between the traditionally indigenous Gbaya, supporters of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, and called Fulani "alien", generally affiliated to the National Union for Democracy and Progress. This trend is even more worrying because the apparent ethno-religious cross border solidarity that seems to be shared among the Fulani-Mbororo and Gbaya conceals a potential risk that could permanently weaken social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the town of Garoua-Boulay

Within communities, the conflicts are agro-pastoral, pitting the refugees and IDPs against the Mbororo pastoralists and farmers Gbaya and Kako. This conflict type is related to the strain of transhumance, that is to say that, farmers fleeing the violence of armed groups did not borrow conventional transhumance corridors. This has led to the destruction of farmland as they pass. Some agro-pastoral conflicts are caused by the fact that the Gbaya or Kakp traditional leaders allocate agricultural areas to Mbororo pastoralists. This has often instigated the rebellion of local people against the presence of the

animals and shepherds. The cohabitation between host and displaced populations / refugees is undermined by the phenomenon of cattle rustling or herds of cattle, and even abuse of animals by the disgruntled local people. These new conflicts is also true among the Mbororo pastoralists due to issues over subcontracting of grazing areas, illegal settlement of foreign shepherds on other grazing areas, contamination of local cattle by those migrating ..

III- The refugee Camps and environmental sources of conflicts.

Situated 120 km away from the Nigerian border, the Minawaou camp was established by the Cameroonian authorities on July 2, 2013 as the only lodging and support site for refugees in the Far North. There are several other temporary sites along the flight routes of refugees notably: relay shelters and temporary points of convergence for refugees seeking safety until they are evacuated Minawaou camp. The assistance of refugees in this 139 hectares – wide Minawaou Camp, is ensured and coordinated by the



Improvised shelters for welcoming refugees

Office of the United Nations for Refugees (UNHCR).

Other organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, like UNICEF, WHO, the Red Cross and Public Concern provide support for refugees on specific issues. The mandates of these organizations cover health, education, the camp administration, strengthening solidarity and income-generating activities. As for the staff, it is difficult to make a statistical analysis as the figures fluctuate along with the sources and contexts of violence. However, one can attempt a periodic evolution. In January 2014, there were already 2,183 Nigerian refugees⁹. In May, they were 2572¹⁰. In October 2014, they were estimated at 15 281 refugees in Minawaou camp. In May 2015, the camp had 37,171 refugees. Similarly in Mbile camps, Lolo, Timongolo, Ndokayo, Gado-Badzéré Lawane and east, organizations like International Emergency Aid and Development (IEDA), Switzerland Africa Solidarity (ASOL), Arab and Islamic Non-Governmental Organisations Arab, Cross red) ensure the socio-economic framework of the displaced and refugees. In total, there was an estimated 224,958 people who sought refuge in the eastern regions, Adamawa and North.

According to the conflict logic in refugee camps, two types of conflicts can be noted: internal conflicts linked to a reproduction of historic causalities, and external conflicts, pitting the refugee camps against the surrounding populations. In fact, the displacement of populations to Cameroon has also moved the ethno-religious folds whose representations are at least alive. The condition of refugees in Africa is not the same in different contexts and regions. while four decades of forced mobility in the Great Lakes Region has become a constitutive element of the identity and lifestyles of significant number of the populations, who have assimilated the rules of an unending game¹¹, at the borders between Cameroon, Nigeria and CAR, there remain conflictual religious representations that undermine the peaceful life style and coexisting of refugee camps. Many conflicts are recorded in the camps, extending the previous tensions between the sending communities. The Gado Badzere Camp recorded many cases of armed clashes reproducing ethno-religious conflicts between Seleka and Anti-Balaka. Whether in the Minawaou camps in the Far North or Badzere Gado in the district of Boulay-Garoua in the East, refugees convey a double perception, of vulnerable communities in need of help,

but also of criminal assailants hiding their true identity and goals. Hence, the game of perceptions, that often tends to be mutually hostile, resulting in acts of enmity, marginalization, stigmatization, invective and acts of violence against refugees.

On their part, external conflicts are related to contacts between refugees and host populations outside the camps. Regarding Minawaou, the refugees seem unable to resist the temptation to leave the camp to stray to other occupations. With the quality of the support - health, nutrition and housing being relative, - many refugees are engaged in small income-generating activities. The more ambitious, are working to get a piece of land for agriculture or animal husbandry. Still others are employed in agricultural plantations, thus escaping the camp's regulatory constraints. These attempts at integration and adaptation to the camp environment invariably orchestrates crisis situations. The villages near the refugee camps in Minawaou, and Gado Badzéré developed a discernible antipathy towards refugees and displaced persons in search of vital resources (agricultural areas, residential). Beyond evidence of conflicting coexistence between refugees around the camps and surrounding communities, it remains true that the presence of refugees and IDPs also the poses issue of social cohesion.

IV- IDPs and the Problem of Social Cohesion

The life of refugees and displaced communities is mostly a call for suspicion. Due to the nature of the Boko Haram Islamist threat a perception of refugees associated with violence seems to have spread and taken root in collective imagination. People living with or in contact with host communities develop a sense of fear and rejection because they are either associated to the cause of their misfortunes, an extension of Boko Haram in Nigeria, or the Anti Seleka of Balaka RCA. This suspicion, fuelled by the echoes of the violence perpetrated by armed groups and attackers, is growing gradually alongside media and third parties' reports on the macabre scenes of war, helpless fleeing populations or individuals arrested in the vicinity.

The game of consecutive perceptions of forced displacement of populations to Cameroon is, however, not new. At the height of the civil war in Chad between 1979 and 1982, refugees in Kousséri incited suspicion and aversion by host populations. In the long term, this perception, based on stigma and repulsion of each

9-Septentrion Infos, N°153 du 24 january 2014

10-Cameroon Tribune, N°10582 du 5 may 2014

11-Guichaoua A., (dir.), 2004, Exiled, Refugees, displaced in Central and Eastern Africa, Paris, Karthala, p. 29

other, that neither the administrative authorities nor the professional coaching of refugees seem able to detect, is detrimental to social cohesion and peaceful co-existence. Social vulnerability has increased with the massive presence of refugees and IDPs in cities like Mokolo and Mora, in this case women, now household heads having lost husband and children, who are in their own families and yet are experiencing a similar state of precariousness displaced grouped. Rejection, related to exasperation, are noticeable among the host populations, who, having exhausted their reserves shared with the victims of the security crises, do not appreciate being excluded from the distribution of food and other donations. The special situation of girls and women, who are the main victims of violent scenes (raped, widowed at age 20, illiterate etc) highlights the worsening vulnerabilities causing social and inter-communal tensions.

The difficult coexistence between IDPs and host communities crystallizes on religious tensions in the Mayo-Sava because of an old dispute between the Mora Mandara and those of Kerawa. Historically, Kerawa's dominant position in the administrative

system of the kingdom Wandala over Mora gave rise to a leadership struggle.

Having inherited this trajectory of domination, both communities claim a historical ancestry which, over the centuries, has groomed a sense of mutual rejection that has remained peaceful until now. This identity affirmation also influences the practice of Islam. Following the same logic of ethnic purity, the Mandara Kerawa consider their practice of Islam to be pure, unlike that practiced by Mandara Mora. These opposing positions stifles relations between displaced and host populations. The tension in Mora can be seen from the division of prayer scenes, economic activities (slaughterhouses and butchers for each community) initiated by the displaced, as a sign of impurity of local Islam. Finally, in the current context of the fight against terrorism, a climate of suspicion reigns among the two communities. The numerous arrests of members of the displaced, suspected of conniving with Boko Haram terrorists, has instilled a sense of fear and rejection in the local population.



Soccer, the most popular sport even in Minawao

Conclusion

The emergence of new threats at Cameroon's Eastern and Far North borders with the CAR and Nigeria respectively, has led to a focus on the military aspects, thereby essentially neglecting the precarious conditions of homeless refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The sojourn of internal and foreign victims of border insecurity in Cameroon has led to a transition from insecure to a new crisis. The cohabitation between host communities and the hosted evolves in a context of hostility where recurrent disputes over access to vital resources, generate conflicts. In refugee camps, especially those in the East, violent tensions and conflicts recorded regularly appear as extensions of crises that caused their departure. Around the camps, apart from sympathy observed in the reception of displaced persons and refugees in the early crises, the hostility of host populations is vehemently manifested when the presence thereof is prolonged. In villages that host communities of refugees and displaced persons, an increase in agro

pastoral conflicts, land disputes, community, religious and social tensions are observed. Beyond the competition for resources, the historical burdens and political issues amid all-out pursuit of the electoral clientele, have also established host communities against those of refugees and displaced persons. The escape of insecure areas in search of safety and the itinerary of refugee, displaced and returnees, reveal a complex journey that is marked by the emergence of new conflicts. It is therefore expedient to prepare the material and psychological conditions for a better reception of people affected by emergencies, while strengthening the level of knowledge of vulnerabilities inherent to the survival of victims of insecurity on the borders of Cameroon.

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REFUGEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN CAMEROON: TOWARD RECONFIGURATIONS OF GAMES AND STAKES IN DOMESTIC POLICY AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF IDENTITIES

GUSTAVE GAYE

The socio-religious and political violence in the neighboring countries of Cameroon has brought several refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) on the Cameroonian soil. Experiences in managing refugees and displaced persons reveal that, in the long term they generate security challenges that may weigh heavily on the political stability of their host country. Though victims themselves, refugees and IDPs are now at the epicenter of several structural and cultural violence in many countries. This complicates their management, as it has over time affected either diplomatic issues or issues of domestic policy in host countries. A point in case is the flame often stirred up by the Banyamulenge rebels in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Darfur which is also a reception area for refugees, haven served as a rear base for the seizure of power in Chad since 2002, is still paying the price after having witnessed atrocious acts carried out against its civilians. Away from Africa, the split in Yugoslavia equally brought up the issue of the Albanian refugees, the key stakeholders in the war in Kosovo. This paper is an attempt to analyze issues on refugees and IDPs in Cameroon in order to issue out presuppositions of the subsequent political repercussions of this phenomenon.



Pupils fully integrated in Mokolo

The current configuration of politics in Cameroon is based on the legacy of the democratic transition that began since the 1990s. It coincided with the recession ensued from the political reforms imposed by international financial institutions on Cameroon, in order to restore and recover the latter's economic health. However, complying to these reforms rather plunged the country into a dark and difficult period. A patronage-clientele form of governance and public action based on ethnic politics was then established following the economic crisis and the demands for the opening of the space. (Lendja Ngnemzue, 2009).

It was characterized by several identity hubs, based on cultural associations and on the carving out of geographical and linguistic space; a real demonstration of the influence of elitism, geographical weight and space on the political game. Anchoring to the socio-anthropological and cultural reference sphere, it will, overtime inevitably take root and thereby influence issues of domestic policy. It would therefore clearly appear that, it is difficult to separate political and ethnic conflicts on matters concerning refugees and IDPs, not only because the populations living in the border areas "refuse" to incorporate the concept of border based on international law, but much more because local politics feeds on issues of identity and the structured representations that serves the cause of the political elite.

In light of the realities of humanitarian emergency in the zones of Cameroon, this article seeks to analyze based on a qualitative approach, the current visible effects, but much more, seeks to evaluate the impact of the conflict within the context of the neighboring countries of Cameroon, which have pulled several people within the country in the name of international protection, without the necessary measures usually taken in other countries under similar countries to prevent the inconveniences that go with similar phenomena.

Based on both empirical field experiments and documentary research, an interdisciplinary approach was employed aimed at contributing to the analysis and reflection on the socio-political transformation of the influx of refugees and the phenomenon of internal displace persons and its effects in Cameroon. Thus, we will proceed by revisiting the political and legal framework that opens the borders of Cameroon to persons seeking international protection as well as its impact on the economic environment. It will be necessary to carry out a socio-political and historical analysis of the waves of refugees that Cameroon has welcomed in order to make a projection of this trend. Finally, we will discuss the possible risks linked which the

influx of refugees could eventually present to the balance of internal political game, based on the experiences of the other countries in the past.

A. The Political and Legal Framework for the Protection and Management of Refugees and IDPs in Cameroon.

Cameroon remains one of those African countries whose allegiance to international institutions in matters of ratification of international legal instruments and on issues of protection of human rights as a whole is widely acclaimed and esteemed. Thus, in 23 October 1961, Cameroon adhered to and ratified on September 4, 1969 and July 4, 1985, the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951, as well as its 31st January 1967 New York Protocol. It equally adhered to the OAU Convention of 10th September 1969 addressing specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. Within the national scope, after granting a national headquarters to the UNHCR in 1980, Cameroon equally developed several mechanisms for the management of refugees, including Decree No. 91/262 of 30th May 1991, creating a Department of Special Affairs and Refugees (SASR) in the Ministry of External Relations. This service is responsible for monitoring the refugee problems in conjunction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Added to this, is the 2005 law defining the legal framework whose decree of application came to fruition in November 2011. What could explain this legendary political tradition of Cameroon welcoming refugees?

a) A Long Political Tradition of Cameroon's Open Borders Policy and the Growing Need for Support to Victims of Violence in the Local Context

In addition to observing the terms of the international legal instruments by states which are parties to the Geneva Conventions that require Cameroon to open its borders to refugees, three basic factors can explain and justify Cameroon's long political tradition of its open-border-policy for victims of social crises to seek refuge in Cameroon. Under Ahmadou Ahidjo as well as Paul Biya, Cameroon employed and continue to employ the logic of humanitarian diplomacy not only to project its image as a country that respects international humanitarian law but also because until the 1980s, Cameroon had no economic or demographic challenge. Even with the recession of the early 90's and other forms of social and economic crises, Cameroon still continued keeping its borders open, to be consistent

with its international commitments.

As a matter of fact, Cameroon's economic performance and socio-economic indicators between 1961 and 1985, based initially on its agriculture and subsequently on the export of its raw materials, remained as per that time, one of the best within the African continent. Between 1980 and 1986, Cameroon recorded in real terms a growth rate of 8% per year because of its oil revenues. This provoked an annual investment of 7% and 16% exports. In that year, consumption was only about 3.3% which thus explains the reasons for its economic performance (Aerts et al, 2000). In the 1970s, agriculture dominated the Cameroonian economy. It contributed to 34% of its GDP and constituted more than 85% of its workforce.

However, this did not last long because in 1987, Cameroon's economy witnessed a sharp contraction producing negative growth rates. This drastic decline is explained by a fall in prices of some commodities (oil, cocoa and coffee) in the world market during the three fiscal years after 1986. In addition to this, there was the FCFA against the dollar. Thus, Cameroon's long political tradition of opening its borders to refugees and economic migrants stemmed from the relative prosperity its economy experienced in the 1970s and

1980s, and political will of the regime in Yaoundé to continually project itself and thereby strengthen its leadership role in the Central Africa (CEMAC) sub region.

It must nevertheless be emphasized that demographically, on a long term, Cameroon had no worry settling refugees and other asylum seeker. Moreover, at the domestic and political level, the Cameroonian government had launched a demographic reform in the 1970s, aimed at stimulating births so as to simultaneously rebalance land use in some parts of the country like the current Northern Region that witnessed a largely imbalanced position with the current Far North Region (Bella 1998). This justifies the occupation and development of the Benue Basin by migrants from the far northern part of the country. Therefore, it was under this favourable conditions and context that Cameroon successively hosted waves of refugees in the country.

b) The Burden of Caring For Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

The permanent settlement of refugees in Cameroon is not a matter of chance. It is intimately linked to its geopolitical position in Central Africa. In addition to the



Refugee children educated despite lack of resources

above mentioned relative economic prosperity, the political stability of its institutions and the multiculturalism nature of the country attracts many refugees and makes it a permanent safe haven. However, the growing number of refugees and IDPs on Cameroonian soil is making it increasingly challenging to manage them despite the international humanitarian aid conveyed by inter-governmental organizations and international NGOs who have come to support the state of Cameroon.

If in the past, the demographic context and economic growth in Cameroon favoured the accommodation of refugees on Cameroonian soil, it is important to point out that since the recession of the 90s, Cameroon has not gotten the means to support such a policy of opening out all its borders, hence the presence of many IOs and NGOs, partners, in relieving the efforts of the government of Cameroon. At the time of writing, Cameroon's economy ranks among the least competitive country in the world. It occupies the 111th position of the 133 countries according to the Global Competitiveness Index. As per 2011, Cameroon ranked 38th of the 53 countries in Africa based on the Mo Ibrahim Index on governance. Currently, economic growth is below the African average, with about 3% against 4%, according to figures from the National Statistics Institute. Poverty is growing and is becoming

more rampant and endemic especially in regions that host most of the refugees. Besides the fact that the road infrastructure, commercial and communications are in very poor conditions, a third of the population lacks access to either clean water or electricity.

Despite these internal difficulties and socio - economic indicators with worrying results, Cameroon is compelled to respect the principles of non-expulsion and non-refoulement which are key to the protection of the refugee. Under these principles, the Cameroonian government refrains and has always refrained from any action that would result to sending back or cause a refugee remain in a country where there are substantial grounds for persecutions. So far, who are those refugees who have benefited from the generosity of the state of Cameroon and in what circumstance did they do so?

B. A Social History of Refugees and IDPs in the Border Areas of Cameroon

From 1970 to date, Cameroon has experienced several waves of inflows of refugees and IDPs caused by natural disasters (Nyos) or direct interethnic violence (gang violence, kidnapping and hostage-taking perpetuated by Boko Haram) which led to movement of several families to other communities. There is no point doing a review of the different waves – this analysis has already



UNHCR distributes food to refugees

been made by Fadimatou Moussa Iya in this volume. It is however necessary to briefly present them for analytical consistency and for the need to make a reading of the socio-political integration of refugees and IDPs in their host communities. It is also about addressing the installation modes of internally displaced persons and refugees.

a) The Large Waves of Refugees in Cameroon

The history records that Cameroon has overtime remained a longstanding host country for refugees from Central Africa and West countries (Rwanda, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, CAR, DRC, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria). The first waves of refugees arrived Cameroon between 1966 and 1970, fleeing from the atrocities of the "Biafra war". At the same time, the Northern part of Cameroon also welcomed thousands of Nigerian refugees, mainly nomads and Hausa Muslims.

In 1978, Cameroon was once again host to an influx of nationals from Equatorial Guinea who were escaping from the dictatorship rule of Macias Nguema. This situation coincided with a declaration of cooperation between UNHCR and the Cameroonian government. Political crises in Chad in late 70s brought many more Chadian refugees to Cameroon. This wave was later added by refugees that came at the end of the reign of Hissène Habré in December 1990. At that time, North Cameroon was again under shock with the arrival of more than 100,000 Chadian refugees fleeing the civil war. Between 1980 and 2000, Cameroon hosted thousands of Congolese fleeing the Mobutu regime. Again, following the ethnic conflicts that occurred in January 2002 in Nigeria, the Northwest Region of Cameroon received nearly 20,000 Nigerian nationals.

In 2003, over 3,000 Mbororo herders from the Central African Republic fled to Cameroon following attacks by Central African militias who took over a vast territory beyond the control of the government. A few months later, in January 2004, Mambila countryside at the borders of the then Adamawa province received about 23,000 Mbororo herders from Nigeria, after a conflict between them and the farming communities of Taraba State. In 2002, the services involved in refugee care registered about 41,288 people mainly from Chad, DRC, Congo, the Central African Republic and Rwanda. A year later, 5308 new asylum seekers were registered by the UNHCR in Cameroon. Following the political crisis of 2005-2006 in CAR, a new successive wave of Central African refugees took refuge in the present Adamawa and East Regions of Cameroon. Ever since then, the number of arrivals keep increasing and in August 2014, UNHCR had 240 000 Central African

refugees under its care, spread across some 314 sites and villages located mainly in the East and Adamawa Regions.

Meanwhile, a new political instability in Chad orchestrated by the 2008 rebellion, caused thousands of Chadian refugees to again move to Cameroon. They were however voluntarily repatriated in 2012 after an agreement reached between UNHCR, the State of Cameroon, the State of Chad and the refugees themselves. Since July 2013, the atrocities of the Islamist Boko Haram group has grown in large urban areas in the North East of Nigeria causing over 60,000 Nigerian to flee to Cameroon as refugees while leaving thousands of internally displaced people in the border villages of Cameroon. Despite the fact that many countries are in the process of closing their borders to refugees, Cameroon continues to practice its policy of hospitality and receives a continuous influx of asylum seekers from neighboring countries. Added to these figures is a minority group of urban refugees who are concentrated in the cities of Yaoundé and Douala.

b. A Growing Number of IDPs following the Abuses of the Boko Haram Islamist Group

In Northern Cameroon, clashes between Cameroon forces and the Boko Haram terrorist group has led to many changes in the geographical stability of populations in border villages north-east of Nigeria; a region where the defense forces and security of countries bordering Lake Chad are struggling to curb the attacks of the terrorist group on civilian populations, attacks which has brought numerous injuries to the local populations. The civilian population is forced to flee their natural environments to relatively areas which are relatively safer.

Thus, May 30, 2015, IOM registered 81000 IDPs and over 12,000 unregistered asylum seekers living out of the camps in Northern Cameroon. Presently, and with the latest high level hostilities in the war between Boko Haram and Cameroonian forces, one can extrapolate that more than 100,000 IDPs and 20,000 refugees are presently living out of refugee camps in Cameroon. It is important to note here that abuses are not the only causes of internal displacement. In the course of our research, some of our informants, a group of people we found in the towns of Mokolo, and Oulad Zelevhed summarized their despair in these terms: "There is no more life in our villages so we should rebuild ourselves elsewhere." Indeed, the departure of families along the communities in the Nigerian borders are organized almost on daily basis. These are communities with whom they had established and shaped social ties and

economic exchanges before the conflict. This relationships had permitted them maintain some economic exchanges that had enabled them to live and maintain a local economy albeit on a small scale. However, lives are better off in villages where people have developed strong anthropological links.

The culture of solidarity and social links maintained between the populations on both sides of the border, between Nigeria and Cameroon on the one hand, and even between Cameroonian communities themselves, regarding IDPs is of great value in the process of reception and integration of asylum seekers, be them Cameroonians or Nigerians. This spirit and momentum of solidarity that permits refugees, those outside the camps as well as IDPs to settle on the first sites they come in contact with and subsequently continue further inland, continues to be a more or less definite path to their installation site. In terms of refugees, those who do not have a community base are saved by humanitarian actors who get them registered before they finally join the refugee Minawao camp in the Mokolo Subdivision. Based on the fact that the situation of refugees and IDPs during their departure is far from improving, one will not be wrong to say that the rhythms and patterns witnessed during the departures phase will rather increase.

C. Towards a Massive Influx of Refugees and IDPs in the Years to Come

Based from experiences elsewhere and with a deep analysis of the Boko Haram crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, there is concern that the crisis may continue, if the response to the situation remains essentially military. Therefore, indicators from some analysis suggest that the states involved in this conflict should not only focus on eradicating the crisis, which is but noble thing to do, but should also put in place measures to support victims whose numbers are in the increase amongst refugees as well as with the IDPs. This second aspect is an anticipation of refugees and IDPs which will without doubt produce a long-term impact on configuring cultural space and consequently the internal political game. What is state of the management of refugees and IDPs? What kind of relationship do they have with the host communities?

a) Management of Refugees and IDPs in a Complicated Context of Endemic/Widespread Poverty

According to the UNHCR, Cameroon is presently hosts to 350,000 refugees and over 100,000 IDPs. This is a huge burden on its national resources despite the

international humanitarian assistance given to refugees, IDPs and the host populations. Though several countries contribute in taking care of refugees in Cameroon, the assistance from outside and the efforts granted by the Government of Cameroon to assist the refugees and IDPs still remains inadequate. Their needs spreads from different domains namely; food, access to water, health, shelter, hygiene and sanitation and education. According to some refugees who anonymously expressed their views, all these basic services are far from being satisfied. Moreover, the refugees in the camp think that their lives are meaningless as they are confined in an area where fundamental freedoms are deeply reduced. Seeing them being helped gives them the impression that they are not alive and that they do not have any human dignity or future. Yet they have children and they would like to have facilities that will enable them integrate into their host communities in order to rebuild a "normal" life. Note also that in addition to the continuous arrivals of refugees and IDPs, the skilled population which is presently in a vulnerable situation is already generating concerns as the table below presents.

Tableau 1: Estimated Populations in Positions of Vulnerability in Cameroon at the End of 2014

Category	Figures	Yearly Extrapolation	Present Estimation of Current Population
PDIs	60	1,68	61,68
Refugees	312	8,736	320,736
Host Population	783	21,924	804,924
Persons Facing Food Insecurity	920	25,76	945,76
Total	207,5	58,1	2, 133,100

As per 2015, a team from the Emergency Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs in Cameroon estimated that about 2.07 Million persons of the country's population are in need of humanitarian assistance because of the influx of refugees and internally displaced people in the country. This figure which is 9% of the country's

population is essentially situated in the three regions which are also the most affected by the humanitarian emergency population. The above table gives the extrapolations that we made on the basis of data initially obtained in the Strategic Response Plan developed by OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) for Cameroon. It would therefore appear that in a year, an estimated 58,100 persons add to the already existing picture of vulnerability by 2.8, which is the growth rate of the national population. This number is not negligible in terms of the growth of the total population but also in terms of the costs it induces on the national budget and on the country's resources. Security wise, it goes without saying that when the population increases, the risk of maintaining cohesion invariably decreases, especially in the context of Cameroon where very few internal actions have been put in place to reduce the risk of social crises related to autochthony and social integration.

Economically, the situation is even more challenging. If the refugees from the East and Adamawa have the opportunity to fully integrate into their host communities and that many of them continue to carry out economic activities they carried out in their country of origin, the situation in the Far North is pretty disastrous for Nigerian refugees in camp and outside the Minawao camp whose only radius for economic action is confined to camps where they engage in small income generating activities. However, initiatives though timidly, are being undertaken by UNDP to strengthen market infrastructures (Zamay, Mora, Mokolo) in order to increase the capacity of markets in accordance with the presence of refugees, whose social demand in terms of capacity and market infrastructure are but obvious.

However, it must be said that very few refugees and IDPs have the means to engage in income generating activity at a satisfactory level. Over 80% of refugees and IDPs are involved mainly in petty trading (selling donuts, sewing, selling vegetables ...). These activities however bring insignificant profit margins. On the other hand, a minority of refugees and IDPs are involved in illegal importation and smuggling of motorbikes and other manufactured goods. These refugees crossed the Cameroon border illegally and bring goods into the country which they sell in large towns like Mokolo, Mora and Maroua.

In view of the above description and explanation, one can see how challenging and difficult it is for refugees and internally displaced persons to live normally, to integrate socially and economically and finally to project a bright future for them. However, how feasible is it to solve the equation between the full

integration of refugees and IDPs and adherence to the rule of law? Our experiences as participant observers enables us to deduce and point out that, there is a serious challenge in the horizon between the integration of refugees and IDPs, especially in a context where there is little compliance to the rules and obligations imposed on each party.

On the one hand, we have refugees and IDPs who have little knowledge of the rules and regulations that apply to them in a context of crisis. On the other hand, are the security forces and administrative authorities who do not have a mastery in the observation and application of the terms of the legal instruments which Cameroon is a signatory to; legal instruments which do not only spell out rights but also require obligations in their application towards these classes of persons. In this context, though it is possible that the effects might not be direct, based on the experiences of other regions in Africa that began with similar conditions, one can however foresee that this might pose a security and political stability challenge in the future.

As noted above, the three regions which are host to refugees, are the poorest in Cameroon. According to UNDP, despite its economic potential and undeniable natural endowments, Cameroon's GDP per capita stands at only 1143 dollars. She equally registered a 3% average growth rate in the past three years, a percentage which is insufficient to trigger a sustainable virtuous circle. The Human Development Index (HDI) in 2013 stood at 0.495, ranking the country amongst those with low HDI. Cameroon's poverty rate 2001 and 2007 stagnated not to say reduce between 40.2% and 39.9%. It is important to add that 55% of the poor live in rural areas. Based on its different administrative regions, the North, Far North and to a lesser extent the East registers the highest poverty rates in the country. Yet it is in these regions that almost 80% of the population of refugees and internally displaced persons are concentrated.

This endemic poverty emanates from the fact that more and more, the refugees and IDPs found in these areas impact the quality of the social relations that exist between the host communities, the refugees and the IDPs. If the disagreement in the Far North Region is mainly due to competition over food and land occupation, those in the East between the different communities are recurrent and even more violent. This violence is a major security challenge to the State of Cameroon. This new concern traces its roots to the extreme poverty found in host communities that had caused the original settlers to see the foreigners as a threat to their scarce resources. Social infrastructure is extremely inadequate for local people or host

communities and more to that, they have to share it with refugees from Central Africa Republic, whose greater basic services are already being provided for by international organizations.

Moreover, strong pressure is exerted on the environment and the resources available within local communities. The situation is similar in many areas. For example, CAR refugees mainly Mbororo and Fulani who on entering Cameroon with their cattle must ensure the survival of their livestock by finding pasture. Now it happens that the host populations are mostly farmers and have occupied all available land with their core businesses that employ more than 80% of the rural population in the East of Cameroon. This results to tensions arising within the conflicting communities leading to positions over their basic needs and their strategic interests (land or pasture).

Furthermore, when refugees receive food aid and other assistance such as access to health care the indigenous people considered this as evil as they have to struggle in order to provide for the bulk of their needs. Culturally, clashes also emanate from burial processes and procedures whose methods differ from one community to another. For the host communities, refugees do not make efforts to dig deep their graves which they think it can lead to highly contagious diseases. Ultimately, if solutions are not provided to these problems earlier enough, latent or open tensions will be maintained on both sides and could later in the future degenerate into open and violent confrontations.

D. Risks of Political Instability which may Lead to Identity Based Political and Ethnic Conflict in Cameroon

It is extremely difficult to situate Cameroon's position in its open borders policy given the numerous border insecurity challenges and even the security threats within the territory. As clearly demonstrated earlier on, though several reasons, specific indicators and policy choices were in favour of this open border policy, the present situation and context is quite different. Indeed, how can one come to term with the fact that this open border policy comes along with difficult and hard to overcome ills such as the phenomenon of highway robbery, hostage taking resulting to high demands of ransom in the Northern and Eastern regions of Cameroon? Added to this is the growing insecurity and acts of banditry within the national territory. Based on the experiences elsewhere, we want to analyze the possible impact of policy Cameroon's open door policy on national politics.

a). A Reconfiguration of the Risk Involved and Policy Issues

Let us first of all recall that refugees and IDPs in Cameroon have all the ethnic or tribal traits found in their choice area of resettlement in one or another part of the territory. The majority of the refugees areas of choice in the Far North and in the East, are almost entirely from ethnic groups that are located on Cameroonian soil and which have enjoyed a long period of concurrence of indigeneity with sister communities. Moreover, since the beginning of the opening of the political space and the democratic transition that ensued thereof in Cameroon, the governance of the country has been plagued with "ethnic and clan syndrome." A syndrome characterized by cultural groupings, registered in the demonstration of a logic of numerical strength, used as a means or asset to influence political game and domestic issues in Cameroon.

In this context, it is but clear that the (Arabs choa and Kanuri) refugees of the Division of Logone and Chari (Mafa, Mandara, Glavda, Tourou,) to name just those from the Mayo-Tsanaga and (Kanuri, Arab Choa, Gamergou, Mafa, and Glavda Malgoua) in the Mayo-Sava of the Far North Region; the (Gbaya, Pana, Sango, Mbororo and Fulani) refugees in the eastern Cameroon have all played ethnic card to find a base in their host communities.

In all, benefiting from the existing integration facilities in Cameroon and the ongoing social crisis in Nigeria and CAR, refugees from these countries have meditated on the idea of settling in Cameroon for a long time or even permanently. Their numerical strength will certainly play on the political mobilization and thereby influence the internal political politics which relies more on ethnic and sociological considerations.

It is rarely told by researchers; talk less of international organizations and institutions that refugees engender serious security issues. Basically refugees go together with major insecurity risks and their presence even at times can lead to rebellions like the experiences witnessed in the DRC and Western Sudan. Examples abound to corroborate this theory. But the challenge is how do you ensure the mitigation of these risks when one has to comply and satisfy the commitments of international law (applying the principle of non-refoulement) on the one hand and simultaneously take preventive measures against the risk of insecurity? In the case of Cameroon, an observation of what is currently happening in the East of Cameroon and even the Far

North, calls for preventive actions as historically, armed robbers of the Lake Chad borders have come to consider the area as a no man's land. Add to this is the present insecurity caused by Boko Haram which has maintained an influx of Nigerian refugees into neighboring countries and thousands of internal displace people living beside the Lake, which is the bread basket of the region .

b. A Challenge to the Integration of Recent Refugees

Even though Cameroon's official policy of opening its borders to people seeking international protection on its soil has not changed, more and more, there is an increase hostility from the host communities towards the refugees as they are not only perceived as invaders of the meagre resources of the later, but also as street bandits. This xenophobic sentiment grew up after a series of offenses carried out in the East and Centre regions between 2014 and 2015 by refugees. More than 50 other acts of vandalisms was said to have come from these refugees. The above reported violations were empirically collected in the communities and therefore the views of the UNHCR on this, as an organization mandated by the international community to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and find solutions to their problems would have been very much welcomed.

Therefore, in the North as well as in the South of Cameroon, refugees and IDPs face the same integration and social inclusion challenges which can be summed up as economic, sociological, socio-cultural and political difficulties. Economically, endemic poverty in Cameroon and the lack of economic opportunities for refugees and internally displaced persons are the main threats to the hope of the well-being which they seek. Added to this, are challenges linked to access to land, dependency and idleness. On the sociological and socio-cultural perspective, refugees and IDPs on a daily basis feel they are victims of exclusion and all forms of social injustice which dehumanize them. Incompatibility of norms, customs and traditions as well as identification problems, corruption and violence against women weigh heavily on the psychosocial status of asylum seekers in Cameroon.

Added to this is mistrust, negative perceptions and the increasingly intolerance developing in the transit or

installation areas of families of asylum seekers. Concerning refugees and IDPs, Cameroon lacks a clearly defined policy on their reception and integration into the national territory. Refugees are handled by several categories of players and actors whose mandates cannot be clearly defined. In this confusion, the refugees think they are being spied upon and even tracked by groups which they cannot actually distinguish. Added to this are the challenges and issues of ethnicity and leadership among groups that surround refugees' camps and areas where IDPs live.

Conclusion

In sum, it should be noted that refugees, IDPs and other types of migrants who settle on a long-term basis within a territory often produce socio-political and security implications that structure or deconstruct the game and political issues of that territory. It is clear from our discussion that Cameroon has a long tradition of opening its borders to those seeking international protection in the country. However, the socio-economic context has evolved over time to the extent of raising questions about the capacity of the authorities of the country to continue to support refugees and IDPs while ensuring the maintenance of peace and social cohesion in an environment where issues of identity are highly sensitive and complex. This concern emerged from the idea that given the sequence of events that preceded the departure of populations in and out the country, there is every reason to believe that this influx will continue and that in this context of scarce resources, tensions will continue to grow between the "beneficiaries" and host populations. It would be important that public policies are tailored to address these risks by anticipating the support for the settlement of refugees and IDPs while at the same time putting in place concrete actions that will watch over the social cohesion between refugees, IDPs and the host populations.

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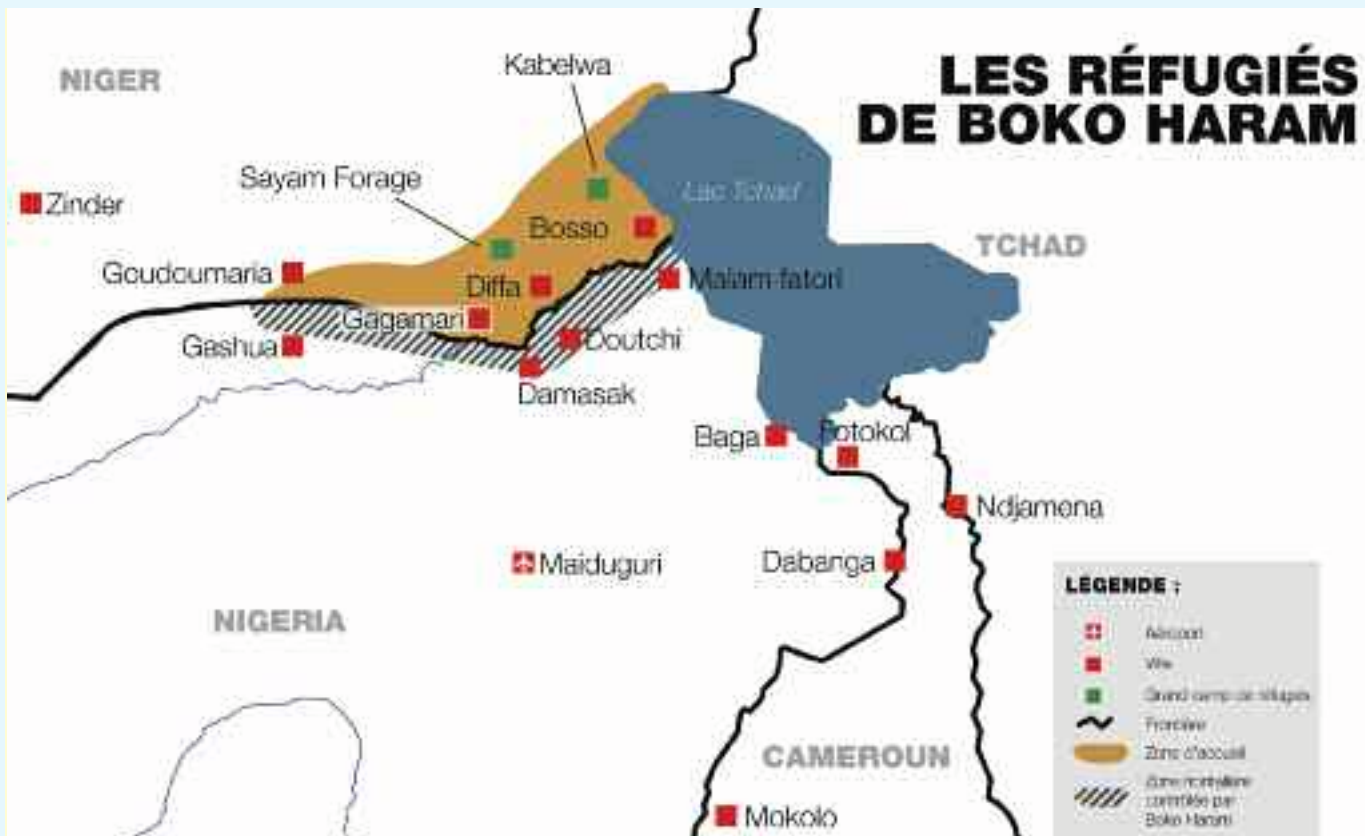
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND LAND ISSUES IN THE FAR NORTH OF CAMEROON

ARMEL SAMBO

This article seeks to study the problem of access to land by IDPs in the Far North Region of Cameroon. The multiple insurgent incursions of the Boko Haram sect in Cameroon since 2014 has, in addition to refugees, resulted in the internal displacement of thousands. Statistics estimate between 81,000 to over 100,000 IDPs. Local integration where displaced people have sought refuge raises specific problems of access to land. What happened to the land that the displaced persons left? Do IDPs have access to land? This research is based on interviews, surveys, observation of the land activities of IDPs in the region of the Far North of Cameroon and exploitation of written data (archives, reports of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and humanitarian international Organizations, newspapers, science, etc.).

Key Words :

Displaced Persons, landed properties, land, Boko- Haram, Conflicts, Far North, Cameroon.



Globally, the African continent hosts the highest number of IDPs. Internally displaced persons are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (Guiding Principles in IDPs, 1998). The countries with the highest number of IDPs are Sudan, DRC, and Somalia¹. Since 2014, Nigeria has been listed among the countries with the highest number of IDPs. More than 975300 persons have been forced to flee from attacks carried out by Boko Haram². These attacks have recently extended to the border between Cameroon and Nigeria.

The problem of IDPs is becoming a major challenge in Cameroon following increased attacks by CAR rebels in the Eastern Region, and by Boko Haram in Far North Region since 2014. Statistics divulge that the number of IDPs range from 81.000 to 100.000. The districts at the border with Nigeria notably: Mayo Sava Mayo Tsanaga Chari and Logone are the regions with higher numbers of IDPs, victims of Boko Haram raids. Given the scale of the clashes between the army and Boko Haram insurgents, and terrorist attacks, the number of IDPs is likely to increase.

Furthermore, besides the persons displaced by Boko Haram attacks, there are also IDPs linked to natural disasters, particularly drought and environmental degradation. According Lavigne Delville (1998), "faced the growing competition over land and renewable resources, and the challenges of pastoral and agricultural production for African economies, the issue of rules that regulate this competition (limit conflicts of rights, transmission, lands boundaries etc.) and ensure effective allocation (distribution and circulation) the land is acute."

In this context, the assistance of IDPs poses an increasingly disturbing challenge, especially with regards to the question of land. More precisely, local integration into communities where the IDPs seek refuge, lies at the origin of land problems particularly in terms of access to land and natural resources. Yet, access to land and housing issues are essential for the improvement of

living conditions of IDPs. What happens to the land that the displaced persons left? What are the difficulties of access to land for IDPs? In other words, what is the land situation of IDPs in the region of the Far North of Cameroon? This article intends to study problems of access and development of land (fields, pastures, etc.) faced by IDPs in the region of the Far North of Cameroon.

Data was collected from written, oral and iconographic sources, and from observations and interviews. Written sources were collected from several documentation centres and repositories in Maroua, Mora, Mokolo, etc.. Oral sources included surveys conducted in areas where IDPs are located. Information was collected from populations affected by displacement, national and local authorities, community leaders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations, UN agencies and other stakeholders. The analysis of data collected from these sources enabled us to sketch an analysis that first presents the factors that led to the displacement of people, their migratory patterns and the difficulties of access to land and natural resources, and finally management of IDP lands.

I- From environmental displacement to displacement linked to insecurity and Boko Haram attacks

Since 2014, the Far North Region of Cameroon has been subject to regular incursions of Boko Haram Islamists, who launch attacks against the civilian population at the North East border with Nigeria. This partly explains the upswing of IDPs. However, it is important to precise that this area is also plagued all kinds of ecological crises which have coerces population displacements.

The definition of IDPs also takes into account the people who fled their homes in the wake of natural disasters. The Far North region has the highest rate of poverty in Cameroon. The poverty situation is compounded by environmental shocks that have a direct impact on the livelihoods of 45% of the population working in subsistence agriculture.

1-Rapport l'IDMC (Observatoire des situations de Déplacement Interne), « Les déplacements internes en Afrique: Un obstacle au développement Comment faire en sorte que les initiatives de développement réduisent les déplacements internes dus aux conflits, à la violence et aux catastrophes naturelles? » in <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2012/201210-af-internal-displacement-in-africa-development-challenge-thematic-fr.pdf> consulté 30 novembre 2015.

2-IDMC, 2015, « Vue d'ensemble des personnes déplacées à l'intérieur de leur propre pays par les conflits et la violence », www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/displacement-f.pdf consulté le 30 décembre 2015.

Located in a semi-arid area, the Far North region is prey to broad range of environmental problems (droughts, famines, floods, etc.). According to a study, thousands of people are facing bad weather conditions such as floods, droughts, epidemics and food insecurity. Although not sufficiently discussed, environmental degradation is one of the causes of impoverishment and rural migration. Moreover, the Far North region is the most exposed to food insecurity.

Following the weakening means of subsistence, people have been forced to move towards more friendly areas. The recent floods, for example, forced the people in the Logone and Chari and Mayo Danay Districts to abandon their fields. According to a study by the country team in charge of humanitarian action, "since September 2014, around 500 people have been affected by floods caused by the bursting of a dam in the Logone River in the towns of Dougui and to Houmi the Far North, with extensive material damage which devastated fields and livestock washed away³." The

increased migration of people on the shores and islands of Lake Chad is also explained by their desire to have access to water, fish and fertile land (Sambo, A., 2011).

The IDP phenomenon is growing in consonance with insecurity caused by the activities of the Nigerian armed group, Boko Haram. Since 2014, insurgents of this sect have multiplied kidnappings, attacks, raiding of cattle, and the situation is getting worse with the use of heavy weapons, anti-personnel mines and suicide attacks. Attacks are accompanied by killings and burning of houses. These incursions into border villages can be explained by the efforts of the insurgents to find hideouts, refueling corridors, etc. The most affected by this insecurity are Achigachia, Zevelet, Gossi, Mozogo, Kerewa, Limani, Doulo, Waza, Makari, Dabanga, Fotokol and Kousseri localities etc.

Entire villages were almost emptied of their populations following the attacks of the Islamists (Mbarkoutou Mahamat H, 2014: 29). Other people left



Security in Cameroonian cities challenged by refugees influx

3-Equipe de pays chargée de l'action humanitaire, 2014, « Aperçu des besoins humanitaires du Cameroun, 2015 » in

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HNO_Cameroon_Final_20141216.pdf consulté le 27 novembre 2015

not only for fear of being assaulted but also to avoid increasing attacks in border areas, specifically in the towns of Fotokol, Kerewa and Waza. Displaced persons often take off abandoning almost all their possessions as they generally have no time to prepare their escape (FAO, 2005). They hurriedly abandon land and property (fields, houses) and flee, as far as possible, for safety. With regard to the IDP situation in the Far North Cameroon, Stephen O'Brien, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, states that "entire communities were uprooted from their homes. Tens of thousands of people have lost access to their fields and their pastures because of the insecurity⁴." The displaced go to different towns and villages around the border with Nigeria, or to more secure locations in the interior parts of the Far North region of Cameroon.

II - Migration flows and lack of access to land and natural resources

The abuses of the Boko Haram extremist sect have orchestrated a multiplicity of spontaneous movements of populations in border areas and in the interior parts of the country. The peculiarity of these movements is that "the displaced are dispersed by integrating into neighboring communities" (Mbarkoutou, 2014: 29). The essential goal of such displacement is to seek refuge in remote and more secure areas. The preferred cities for IDPs are: Mora, Mokolo, Bourha and Kouï.

According to statistics provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, "the Mayo-Tsanaga department alone has 33,900 IDPs who have abandoned houses and property and ended up wandering⁵." According to a survey conducted by International Medical Corp (IMC), "the sub districts of Mogodé, Bourha Mokolo have welcomed a large number of displaced persons. They are found in small groups in the villages of Kortchi, Rhumzou, Rhumsiki,

Kossehone, Boukoula, Tchegu, Oura-Tada, Mougoumas, Zamay, etc. Over 1000 IDPs have been identified, for example, in the Kortchi, Rhumsi, Ouro Tada and Mougoumas villages." (BMI Report, 2015). In June 2015, it was estimated that the number of IDPs in the districts of Logone and Chari and Mayo Sava, ranged from 56 000 to over 60 000. In the Mayo Sava IDPs settled in the neighbourhoods around the city of Mora, and in several villages of the Mayo Sava Department (Grandma, Tokombéré, Kolofata, Kourgui) etc⁶.

Upon arrival in these communities, many IDPs settled in host families. Others were resettled in precarious camps, schools and public buildings. This was observed in the towns of Mokolo and Mora. A study by UNHCR and IOM revealed that, 36% of IDPs live in foster care, 28% in rented accommodation, 24% on spontaneous sites, 7% in the unfinished habitats, damaged and 5% in mass shelters (schools, public buildings, etc.)⁷. It should also be noted that most of the displaced were welcomed by host families in major urban centers (Mora, Mokolo Maroua, etc.), while some are tenants. In the Mayo Sava for example, 56% of IDPs live in Mora and 40% of IDPs were welcomed in a host family⁸. The main challenge for these vulnerable populations is to have land for farming, areas for grazing, housing, etc. This situation sheds light on the difficulties that the IDPs face with regards to their integration in cities and host villages.

Generally, "migration dynamics are always bearers of social issues, both for places of emigration and immigration societies. (...) The appropriation of space is central to inclusion among these migrants in search of their roots"⁹ thus, the land question. IDPs from the region are facing huge problems of access to land having abandoned their land, and taken along their livestock. As a result, the issue of access to land and pasture becomes acute. The situation is exacerbated by the scramble for pasture and risks of land conflicts.

4-Reliefweb Report, « In Cameroon, the Coordinator of emergency assistance calls for more support for families displaced by the conflicts and their host in <http://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/au-cameroun-le-coordonateur-des-secours-durgence-appelle-plus-de-soutien-pour-les> accessed on 29 november 2015. <http://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/au-cameroun-le-coordonateur-des-secours-durgence-appelle-plus-de-soutien-pour-les>

5-Djarmaila, G., 2015, « Plan Cameroon on the Side of those Displaced by Boko Haram Terrors », in https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90714:plan-cameroon-aux-cotes-des-deplaces-de-la-terreur-boko-haram&catid=1:politique&Itemid=3 Accessed on 29 november 2015. https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90714:plan-cameroon-aux-cotes-des-deplaces-de-la-terreur-boko-haram&catid=1:politique&Itemid=3#contenu

6-INTERSOS Report, « Evaluation Report on the Conditions of IDPs in the District of Mayo Sava (Protection, Shelter et Non-vivres) », <https://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=1315> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

7-UNHCR and OIM, 2015, « Executive Report on the Profiling of IDP » <https://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=1320> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

8-INTERSOS Report, « Evaluation Report on the Conditions of IDPs in the District of Mayo Sava (Protection, Shelter et Non-vivres) », <https://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=1315> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

9-Mimché, H., « When Immigrants become Indigenes : Immigration and Space appropriation dynamics by Chadian Refugees in North Cameroon », <http://www.ceped.org/cdrom/asile/cd/theme3/03.html> <http://www.ceped.org/cdrom/asile/cd/theme3/03.html> Accessed on 26 november 2015

The presence of refugees and IDPs also puts pressure on local resources, including water, pasture, food, etc. Such pressure on the already scarce natural resources of host populations leads to tensions. As Winter (1998) rightly opined, the need for mobility is growing "in parallel with scarcity or uncertainty." According to some informants, there was a massive influx of livestock from the border areas. This influx of cattle has induced a broad range of challenges related to space management. Conflicts over access to pasture arise regularly between the IDPs and hosts in the Districts of Mayo Sava Chari and Logone. Most IDPs fled along with their livestock to shelter them from raids. However, in their new resettlement sites, they came into conflict with host populations. As related by our informants, sometimes, conflicts arise with host communities due to the destruction of the fields by displaced animals.

The resurgence of conflicts between farmers and grazers and among grazers in the communities can also be explained by the violation of some private pastures (MINEPAT, 2014). This situation is usually orchestrated by the uncontrolled movements of livestock during the flight of IDPs. Problems of space management, in this

case, results not only from the scarcity of natural resources, but also from poor organization of agricultural and pastoral areas. In addition, the movement of pastoralists is affected by Boko Haram attacks causing disruption of space and pastoral routes. In this light, Saibou Issa states that "grazing areas are inaccessible, many pastoralists are now forced to settle" (Saibou Issa, 2014). Those who choose to move are then forced to violate human corridors given that they hardly master the cattle tracks of their host community¹⁰. Thus problems of IDP access to land and pasture remain outstanding in the Extreme North Region. However, till date, very few of such conflicts have been noted. In an analysis of problems affecting individuals in the communities, UNHCR note that only 7% of disputes arose from issues of land and property¹¹. As such, it remains undoubtable that the situation may amplify and generate other problems that may endanger peace in the future.

One fundamental question that must be asked is: what becomes of the lands abandoned by IDPs? In the case of the displaced populations from the Extreme North Region, it is important to precise that majority of



Running from Boko haram : families en route to the unknown

10-Interview with Aboukar Mahamat, Maroua on 02 december 2015.

11-UNHCR and OIM, 2015, « Executive Report on the Profiling of IDP »

<https://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=1320> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

the border villages have been emptied of their populations. In some localities, these lands are either left unoccupied or occupied by those who stayed back. According to our findings, some displaced persons affirmed that their lands had been sold or rented out. This would further complicate their return communities when the conflict eventually dies down. This is the case of one IDP who reported that his brother, who remained in Amchide had sold off his land. The major land problem that may arise, in this case, would be upon the return of IDPs in their villages. The illegal occupation and sale of properties in the absence of the displaced persons would constitute a huge challenge to surmount. This was the case in DRC, la Côte d'Ivoire, etc. On this question, the Observatory of IDP situations noted that:

The houses, land and properties left behind by IDPs during their flight often include items that are precious and necessary for their survival and identity. These goods are often left unprotected, thus compromising the rights of the displaced to not be arbitrarily deprived of their goods. Their loss contributes to the impoverishment of the displaced persons and creates the need to find adequate shelter during displacement and until they are able to recover their goods¹².

Access to land, housing and property constitutes one of the main obstacles to the sustainable return of displaced persons. Since the onset of Boko Haram attacks, pillage, arsons, partial or total destruction of houses, cultures and buildings have become generalized in the Extreme North Region along the borders between Cameroon and Nigeria. This dimension must be taken into consideration in a timely manner so as to prevent a more complex situation in the future. It is also noteworthy, that the IDPs have made efforts to acquire land for agriculture, housing etc.

III- Land Acquisition and the Bolstering of IDP resilience

Faced with the above mentioned challenges, « land becomes a crucial stake eliciting diverse strategies by populations reclaiming the right for a difference, and for a better integration through the recognition of their rights.” In this bid, the IDPs have developed several

modalities for access to land and housing. These translate their willingness to integrate their host communities. In this vein, Mimche Honore affirms that: “by making access to land and housing an ultimate objective, and even more, by deciding to invest in landed properties the migrant truly demonstrate the importance of the land in the dynamics an integration that is similar to becoming indigenes¹³.” The amelioration of the land security of displaced persons -their access to land and housing- also forms part of improving their living conditions, and their agricultural and pastoral productivity.

In some villages in the Extreme North Region, the host populations, on their part, have accorded pieces of farmland, and sometimes seeds, to IDPs. This was observed in some villages in Mayo Tsanaga notably: Hina, Mokolo, Mogode etc¹⁴. The concession of land to IDPs is aimed at enabling them to carry out the agricultural activities in which they were previously engaged. Furthermore, some displaced persons were able to purchase pieces of land and about 28% live in rented houses¹⁵. This system of letting pieces of land to a user, without obliging the acquisition of property rights, is an expression a legendary solidarity to the strangers who have always indwelt this region.

It should also be noted that displaced persons usually settle in villages where they have family relations. Thus, their access to land is often facilitated by their hosts. Those who reside in the cities such as Mokolo, Mora, Kousseri and Maroua, mostly rent pieces of land. Statistics on the number of displaced persons who have land titles are not yet available. Nonetheless, the increasing renting of land is regulated by customary law. These laws give the right to a land user, to raise cattle, grow crops, harvest forest products etc. However, the tenant do not have ownership rights for such rented spaces. According to Lavigne Delville (1988:77), the security of land or resource access depends on a host of parameters (usage rights, access rights, tributes, management, time limit/unlimited, rent, acquisition by deforestation etc).

Half of the criteria for determining the sustainability of solutions to IDP problem is linked to access to land, pasture and house. Thus, it is evident that one of the

12-Observatory Report in the situation of IDPS, « Internal Displacements in Africa: A Obstacle to Development. How can development initiatives be tailored to limit internal displacements following conflicts, violence and Natural Disasters? » in <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2012/201210-af-internal-displacement-in-africa-development-challenge-thematic-fr.pdf> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

13-Mimché, H., « When Immigrants become Indigenes : Immigration and Space appropriation dynamics by Chadian Refugees in North Cameroon », <http://www.ceped.org/cdrom/asile/cd/theme3/03.html>

<http://www.ceped.org/cdrom/asile/cd/theme3/03.html>

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14-Interview with Fibané Christophe, Mokolo on 30 november 2015.

15-UNHCR and OIM, 2015, « Executive Report on the Profiling of IDP » <https://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/download.php?id=1320> Accessed on 30 november 2015.

stakes for the development and future of this region lies in the prevention of inter-communal conflicts through a sustainable integration of displaced persons and returnees. The right to land and housing, which results from official land titles or customary laws takes into account all the social strata (internally displaced, returnees, women etc). Land access is a survival strategy. It guarantees food, shelter and access to humanitarian assistance for the affected populations. Secure access to land is also a determinant means of poverty eradication in the Extreme North Region of Cameroon.

Conclusion

From the above analysis on the land access situation of IDPs in the Extreme North region of Cameroon it can be undoubtedly understood that one of the major challenges is access to resources (land, pasture, water etc) which remains an outstanding preoccupation. In a context of already scarce resource, one observe increase pressure due to the constantly increasing number of IDPs in the Extreme North Region of Cameroon. Several factor explain this situation. Besides environmental internal displacement, multiple kidnappings, attacks, cattle looting etc, the Boko Haram insurgency in the border areas with Nigeria only exacerbates the situation of IDPs.

One of the major challenges facing IDPs is that of access to land and pasture. It is difficult to secure access to land especially in a context of increasingly scarce natural resources. Thus land becomes a crucial stake between the IDPs and the host communities. Some incidents have been recorded in these communities; it is therefore feared that land disputes may multiply upon the return of these displaced persons.

In any case, the commitment to the integration of IPS can be noted from the different modalities of land access that have been elaborated. The support of local and international NGOs, UN Institutions etc, which are praiseworthy, should henceforth factor land stakes, which can potentially trigger inter-communal conflicts if not well managed. The basic need of IDPs in the Extreme North Region, is to dispose of land, pasture, and water basins – in a context threatened by desertification, environmental degradation and cross border insecurity.

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Drinking water is scarce for refugee families

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REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AND RETURNEES IN CAMEROON'S FAR NORTH: HOW TO RECONCILE SECURITY MEASURES WITH HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVES? THE CASE OF THE MAYO TSANAGA DIVISION

FREDERIC FOUMENA

Considered as a country immuned to certain aggressions and other destabilizing forces, Cameroon formerly labeled as haven of peace, for over two years now and for reasons not yet clearly defined has been confronted by the Islamic State of West Africa (Boko Haram).

Cameroonians living in the Extreme Northern Region of the country, in the Logone and Chari, Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga divisions to be more precise are in a daily spectacle of terrorist attacks. Attacks whose consequences in the lost of human lives, economic disasters and psychological damages is difficult to decipher by those who simply witnessed these occurrences through the media. With origin from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Boko Haram has caused serious damages in the country and specifically in the North East region almost scratching away some of the localities from the Nigerian economic map.



Firefighters ensure safety measures

This aggression from Nigeria which is almost permanently established in Cameroon is becoming more and more complex each day as the methods the groups seek to get Cameroonians into this phenomenon keeps changing.

Martyred by the barbaric attacks of Boko Haram, paradoxically the Extreme Northern region besides welcoming internally displaced victims and refugees from Nigeria serves as a base from where Boko Haram prepares its attacks.

Meanwhile, though it was expected that Cameroon closes its borders based on security reasons as some so called civilized western Nations handle the different humanitarian conventions which sanctions the influx of refugees from the Syrian crisis and the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. Rather, Cameroon as a country of hospitality and peace has graciously offered to the international community a vast territory of its national territory to receive those in distress despite the threats that weigh on her.

In the Northern Region, precisely in the Mayo-Tsanaga Division- an area that caught our attention, the Minawao refugee camp located in the Mokolo Sub-

division is declared to have a surface area of 320 square km.

From credible sources, other areas are under preparation to accommodate these refugees based on a projection made to address the influx of 53000 who are to be camped, the 3000 who are to live out of the camp and the 200.000 internal displaced persons and returnees scattered through out the region who live in miserable conditions which are susceptible to humanitarian and security threats that can result to a state of vulnerability.

Given that refugees, returnees and IDPs are vulnerable and most often have lost almost everything, their plight had caught the attention of the international community and specific attributions are now given to them.

From a combined reading of the 28 July 1951 General Convention on the status of refugees and stateless persons that emanated from the Plenipotentiary Conference of the United Nations held in Geneva from the 2- 25 July 1951; the OAU Convention highlighting refugee problems in Africa that ensued from its 6th ordinary session held from the 6-10 September 1969



74,000 plus strong refugee wave poured into Cameroon

in Addis-Ababa, a convention that came into force on the 20th June 1974 ; the Law N°2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon and the Kampala Convention adopted by the Special Summit of the African Union Africa held on the 22nd October 2009, a refugee can be defined as:

a) - A person who with genuine and founded fear of persecution because of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group and political opinion is found outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear is unwilling to avail of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return;

b) - the term " refugee " applies to any person who, because of an assault, external occupation, foreign domination or events seriously affecting public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or the country of which he is a national is obliged to leave his habitual residence to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or the country of which he is a national.

To them, internal displaced persons are defined as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular after or to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, natural disasters or man-made disasters and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border."

Since May 2013, Cameroon has been obliged to take security measures at its borders following the declaration of a State of Emergency in the North East Region of Nigeria and the arrival of the first Nigerian refugees in the Minawao refugee camp in July 2013; refugees who were aided and transported by UNHCR. Ever since then the Cameroon is officially at war against Boko Haram following the Paris conference in May 2014. The President of the Republic of Cameroon did not mix up his words when he said; "We are here to declare war against Boko Haram."

The seriousness of the speech and the determination of the Head of State betrayed the self sacrifice already demonstrated by a people, who though being assaulted had to courageously accommodate and protect the victims of the terrorist atrocities of Boko Haram , thousands of whom have spilled into the driest region of Cameroon.

The strong presence of refugees, returnees and displaced persons has resulted into new threats which have raised concerns on the needs of Cameroon providing the necessary humanitarian and security responses.

How can her legendary respect and hospitality manifested through the reception and protection of refugees and displaced persons, whose presence have led to serious security threats be reconciled with (I) the need for development of security methods to guarantee the peace, security and territorial integrity? (II) These are the concerns which Cameroon has to provide solutions.

I- Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in the Mayo-Tsanaga: the Imperative of Hospitality in a Context of high Security threats.

Assaulted by an enemy with multifaceted and Asymmetric combat techniques who make use of infiltration, the poisoning of water sources, human bombs or suicide bombers, the laying of mines and summary executions, Cameroon, faithful to its fame, has received thousands of vulnerable people who have subjugated her to several hosting constraints and has compelled her to reflect on the types of threats that can accommodate such a demonstration of solidarity.

A- Limitations and Challenges of Hospitality

With an impressive number of refugees, returnees and IDPs received within a short space of time, Cameroon has to make provision for resettlement sites in order to mitigate the risk of their penetration into the local population which might increase its vulnerability and make it difficult to deal with the various hospitality constraints.

1) Location of Refugees

Several identified sites currently provide shelter to Nigerian refugees living in some administrative divisions in the Far North Region

A) Minawao Camp: The Main Site

Built entirely by UNHCR and its various humanitarian partners on a surface area of about 320square km offered by the state of Cameroon, this refugee camp, based on international standards which were opened on July 2, 2013 to accommodate 20. 000 people, has a growing population of about 52,000 refugees. Living in obvious promiscuous and poverty circumstances, this camp is a time bomb whose explosion may bring a serious blow to the country's image and shake its very foundations.

b) Secondary Refugee Sites and Location

Defying the rules of the refugee conventions, thousands of Nigerians in playing some tricks till date, have no contacts with the UNHCR teams, who could help identify, register and take them to where they can benefit from monitoring and international protection. Their legal status which is even more fragile than their presence has raised suspicion about them and thereby compelled the State for security reasons, to take some measures which has constraints on them. The table below is not only limited to the locations and numbers of refugees scattered throughout the Far North Region (Table 1).

Table 1 : Location and Number of Refugees Found Out of the Camp

Division	Sub Division	Number of Refugees found out of the Camp
Diamaré	Gazawa	6
Total 1		6
Logone and Chari	Fotokol	886
	Kousseri	10000
	Makari	2136
	Waza	2078
Total 2		15100
Mayo-Sava	/	/
Mayo-Tsanaga	Koza	16
	Hina	152
	Mayo-Moskota	3345
	Mogodé	261
Total 3		3774
Total 1, 2 et 3		18880

Source (HCR, Prefect's Office, Mayo-Tsanaga)

2) Displaced and Returnees

While IDPs were forced to leave their places of origin for greener pastures, the returnees mainly Cameroonians having residence in Nigeria who were forced because of Boko Haram abuses to returned to Cameroon having lost all their possessions in Nigeria.

The synoptic table below whose numbers are not exhaustive highlights their location. (Table 2)

Table2 : Localisation and Number of Displaced and Returnees

Division	Sub-Division	Number of Displaced	Number of Returnees
Diamaré	Gazawa	67	/
	Peté	2310	/
Total 1		2377	0
Logone et Chari	Blangoua	1247	/
	Darak	1450	1400
	Fotokol	8000	1723
	Goulfey	350	0
	Hilé-Halifa	2500	5750
	Kousseri	810	0
	Logone Birni	2769	0
	Makari	3955	1871
	Waza	5186	2730
Total 2		33467	13474
Mayo-Sava	Mora	13119	1900
	Tokomberé	562	0
	Kolofata	3085	0
Total 3		16766	1900
Mayo-Tsanaga	Bourha	4053	0
	Hina	523	328
	Koza	8513	791
	Mayo-Moskota	30000	1541
	Mogodé	4489	565
	Mokolo	18069	9000
	Soulédé-Roua	158	7
Total 4		65805	12232
Total 1, 2, 3 and 4		118415	27606

Source (HCR, Prefect's Office, Mayo-Tsanaga)

The constraints of hosting refugees and displaced persons presents stakes and challenges related to various forms of threats, which if not properly diagnosed and addressed and may plunge the country into a deep instability crisis that may threaten the gains and inheritance of stability the country has acquired over time.

2) Constraints

Hospitality is commendable, but to provide for our guest entails a number of constraints which must be dealt with. Thus, Cameroon is obliged to find ways to address questions like:

How will all these people be fed?

How can all the young people of school age whose lack of monitoring risks increasing the ranks of Boko Haram in the future be enrolled?

-How can adults who have lost everything and whose idleness can render violent be handled?—

How can those have psychologically been bruised and abused by Boko Haram be taken care off?—

How can it be explained to all that tolerance is and remains the first weapon to whoever wants to win a fight?—

Taking into account all these questions a number of answers must be provided for.

B- Types of Threats Linked to the Strong Presence of Refugees, Displaced Persons and Returnees in the Far North Region

The little geographical space and fragile conditions in which these people are hosted render them psychologically vulnerable. The inhabitants of the Far North Region in general and those of the Mayo-Tsanaga administrative division to more precise are confronted with two major types of threats-(i) humanitarian and (ii) safety

- Humanitarian Threats

The sudden arrival of thousands of people in distress with neither shelter nor food, sometimes sick and forced to bear poor weather forced compels Cameroon to deal with certain humanitarian exigencies including:

a) - Health Threats .

The Far North region is the most affected by epidemics. A great number of people made their way into the Cameroon from Nigeria when the later was confronted by the Ebola virus. The non vaccination of the populations against certain epidemics continues to constitute a great health threat in the Mayo-Tsanaga Division. Moreover, the cholera epidemic hangs on in an environment where personal hygiene is a luxury due to lack of water.

Several other diseases resulting from promiscuity such as sexually transmitted diseases, based on

confidential statistics has prevalence rates which is not negligible and therefore raises fears and concerns. Inadequate water supply also poses the risk of the outbreak of waterborne diseases.

b) - Food Threat

Famine being the first opponent to any human being in distress, it constitutes a great threat that could lead to several other threats such as increase in crime rates. It is therefore essential to solve the food problem in order to successfully hope of addressing the other threats.

c) Ecological Threat

The concentration of people within a given environment certainly reduces the negative effects especially when one is found in a fragile environment like that of Mayo-Tsanaga.

Since the arrival of refugees, the forest reserves of the Gawar and Zamai localities are almost completely devastated. This has been a source of tension between the inhabitants of these areas and the refugees and displaced persons as the latter who are obliged to cut protected trees and hunt games found in these protected forests. In any case, the presence of these persons could lead to an ecological catastrophe especially as it is an environment not so much endowed by nature.

d)Farmer-Grazer Conflict

In the process of their flight, Nigerians and Cameroonian IDPs came along with their cattle which have to live on dry land where pasture is highly insufficient even for the local inhabitants. Taking care of their cattle is often not well appreciated by the locals as they see their reserves disappear. In addition, the refugees and displaced persons in their new environment are not often accustomed with the traditional norms and attitudes when it comes to the circulation of cattle and this often provokes conflict between farmers and grazers.

Other humanitarian threats are linked to the heavy presence of refugees and displaced persons in the Mayo-Tsanaga.

2) Security Threats

Safety Threats

Conscious of the movements of their victims and anxious to extend their activities within a great part of Cameroon, Boko Haram because of its familiarity with the environment and the presence of children in its ranks, gets beyond where refugees and displaced persons are located under the pretext of humanitarian needs. This is one of the challenges of Cameroon's war

against Boko Haram. Many security threats can thus be identified:

a) Infiltration of Boko Haram Members

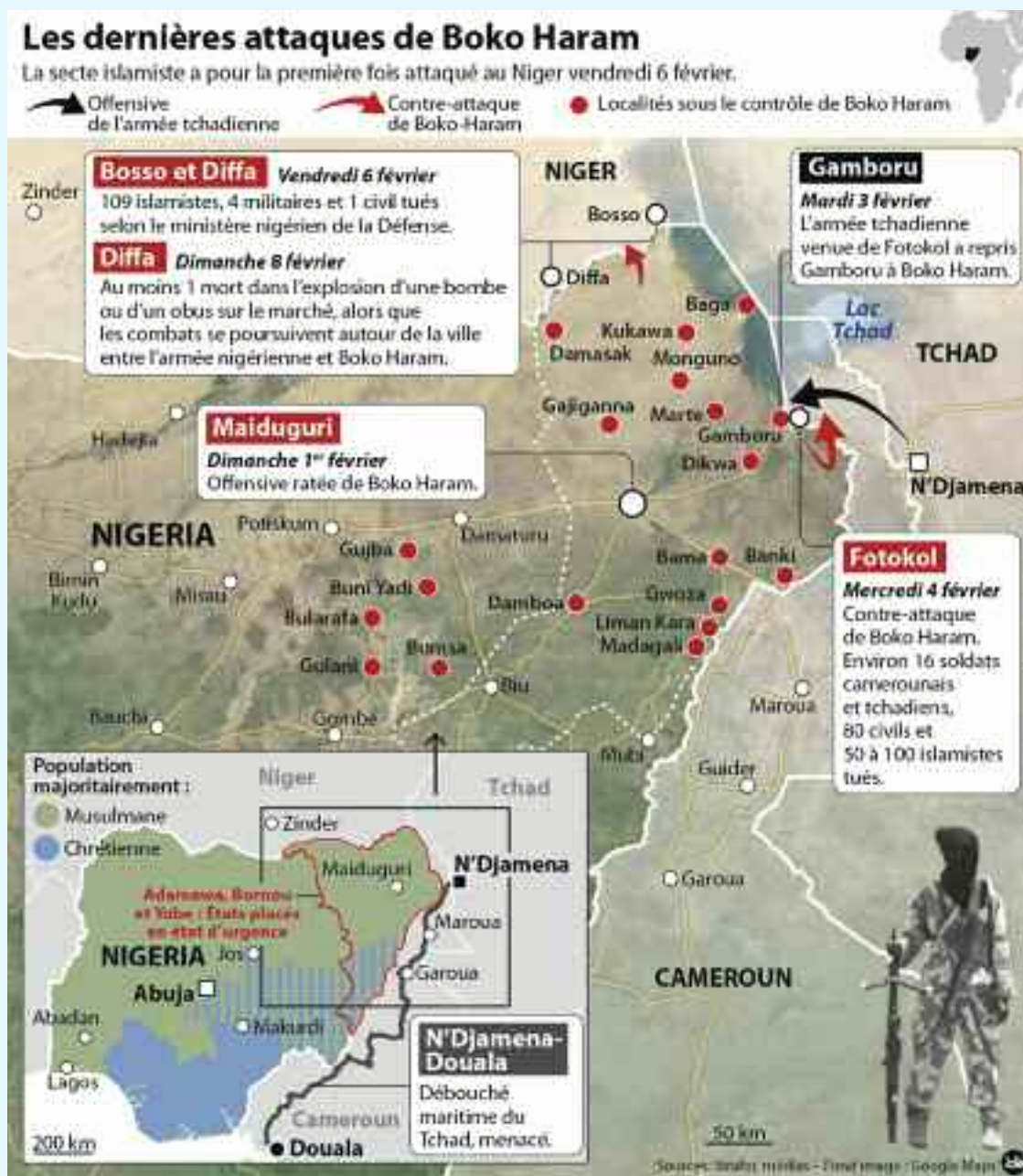
Having mastered the lifestyle of the population, by living closely living with them and constantly changing its modus operandi, Boko Haram in a bit of causing many deaths operates through infiltration.

Till date, in the Minawao camp alone, some Boko Haram members who infiltrated the ranks of their victims have been caught within the camp thanks to the good faith of some of these victims who denounced them.

Many of them are still benefitting from the complicity of other victims found within the camps.

Playing the role of victims in the camp, these terrorists act as dormant cells waiting for the ideal moment to carry out acts with frightening effects.

Members of this group are found in several other parts of the region. Their infiltration and penetration had been made easier and possible through the acquisition and possession of the Cameroon National Identity Card and other legal and official papers. This phenomenon therefore weakens the Cameroonian defense system.



b) Circulation of Light Arms

The presence and movements of refugees and displaced persons exposes the country to the dangers of the circulation or the traffic of arms. The existence of paths where unregulated goods are transported has gone a long way to increase contrebande.

The entry of entire goods and cargoes without subjection to any rigorous control by the different security and Customs services constitutes a sure passage for arm traffickers to introduce dangerous persons and objects into our national territory, which could deeply and durably affect the security of the country.

By continually receiving Nigerian goods from the acquired zones or by sympathizing with the terrorist ideology without reinforcing the control system will constitute a serious security challenge to Cameroon.

The weak and porous nature of these frontiers does not always permit the search, identification and registration of those who get into the country. This deficiency can also facilitate the entry of arms into the country.

c) A Recrudescence of Criminality

Hitherto known as a administrative division of peace, the Mayo Tsanaga is today paying the price of over population which has created a disequilibrium in the population-security forces ratio.

This disequilibrium does not permit the security forces to carry out certain tasks which makes it possible for certain types of behaviours to crop up. Hardly will a week go by without a case of aggression, rape or theft being reported in this locality.

d) The Risks of Trading Cameroonian Nationality

Benefiting from the complicity and unpatriotic and uncivic acts of some officials charged with the delivery of national certificates, several Nigerians, members of the Boko Haram sect, end up in possession of Cameroon National Identity Cards delivered to them after the presentation of birth certificates and certificate of nationalities.

These documents which should only be possessed by nationals are now being brandished by foreigners who in freely roaming over national territory widen Boko Haram's potential targets.

II- An Effective And Efficient Securitive Measures Will Require A Synergy Of Humanitarian And Security Actions

The fight against Boko Haram has generated a crisis of great impact in the Far North Region in general and particularly in the Mayo-Tsanga Division which is considered the most populated in Cameroon.

To reponse to the problems and discomfort caused, several joint actions have been taken by the State and the international community to reduce the spectrum of the human catastrophe desired by the enemy.

Gurantor of the security of its citizens, the state has deployed strategies to contain the assaults of the enemy and to destroy if need be. All these measures to response to the crisis suggests certain perspective.

A- Common Actions On The Humanitarian Plan

Responding to human distress requires certain urgent measures which our country did not have from the outset. Supported by the High Commission for Refugee (The United Nations High Commission for Refugee), certain measures were undertaken within the national domain.

1) Measures By The Cameroon Government Itself

Several non exhaustive measures have been observed.

a) Reception and Hosting of Refugees

By identifying a site and depriving the locals of their customary rights on this space, the state could offer a geographical space of more than 320 Km square in Mayo-Tsanaga to keep these refugees. Studies are underway to find a second site to reduce the saturation and over population found in the Minawao camp.

b) Health Care

Entering Cameroon at a time when Nigeria was confronted with several epidemics like those linked to Ebola, meningitis and poliomyelitis refugees from Nigeria received medical attention upon arrival. The Cameroon government has also mobilized its medical agents in Mokolo and its environs to address these health needs. Mokolo locality has been selected and free medical care is being administered to Boko Haram victims.

c) Intervention On the Educative And Social Domains

Worried and concerned on a better future for Boko Haram victims, an emergency plan was put in place in the educational domain.

Beyond the urgent construction of classrooms in some schools were displaced and pupils and students are being hosted, the government of Cameroon has created within the Minawao camp several schools which include ;

- a Government High School
- three primary schools
- -02 nursery schools
- and professional centres which are under construction.

These educative measures are aimed at attacking the Boko Haram menace by the spirit and minds so as to build into young people the capacity and willingness to enable them resist these obscure and dangerous doctrines.

- On the social domain and precisely concerning civil status registry, a civil registry centre was created on the Gawar locality to deliver birth certificate to every new born baby.

d) Food Care

Far away from their homes, the refugees and IDPs in all of the entire Far Northern region have benefitted from Cameroon's attention and care.

Concerning the refugees, the Cameroon have on several occasions sent ministers and administrative authority with food to the Minawao camp. Concerning the IDPs, several thousands of tons of food have been offered to them.

Besides the special gifts from the Head of State which has just entered the third phase of distribution, national solidarity has been demonstrated towards these afflicted brothers to enable them live within those Cameroonian localities which have been plunged into insecurity.

2) Measures Taken by The United Nations High Commissioner For Refugee

As the first organ charged with the management of refugees at the international level, the HCR and its



Extreme promiscuity in food preparation spaces

different humanitarian partners has until date given a sense of worth and dignity to these refugees. Several actions have been taken in the following domains.

Since the arrival of refugees, the head of the under sub delegation of the HRC in the Extreme North, has been lobbying and this has led the international community to intervene in several domains to assist these refugees, the collaterally displaced persons and the riveraines population.

If the State has taken the initiative to create schools and send personnels thereof, the HCR has taken the cost for the construction of these schools.

Shelters, water points (taps) and latrines have also equally been constructed.

The concern for the health of the refugees, their feeding and care are the priorities of the HRC. Envisaged psychological actions, prevention of violence and the restoration of dialogue between the different religious groups constitute one of the agenda of these international bodies.

Beyond these actions carried out exclusively by the HCR, others are jointly carried out with the State of Cameroon. During his visit on the 21st October 2015 in Mokolo, the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, Mr. Khassim Diagne announced following an agreement with CAMWATER, the construction of a water supply that will start from Mokolo to the Minawao refugee camp. This water supply will not only substantially increase the supply of water in the camp but will also permit the populations in the vicinity to access drinking water. This will greatly and drastically improve on the development of these communities.

B- Security Measures

To achieve secure refugees, returnees and displaced Mayo-Tsanaga, the state has put in place a number of operational devices that shall inform and calls for other future actions required for a comprehensive resolution of the problems arising from the presence of these vulnerable persons.

Operational Defense Actions

These actions are answers linked to various stakes and issues related to the large number of refugees and displaced persons who are capable of conveying threats that the state would want it limited to the borders.

To isolate the phenomenon of the spread of Boko Haram towards Cameroon and protect lives, several actions are under execution in the security domain.

These include;

- a) - The revitalization of the intelligence services

Concerning the principal lung in the asymmetric fight against terrorism, the state in order not to be taken by surprise by the infiltration of these terrorists among refugees and IDPs, has been keen to play the intelligence role that is theirs: the listening, observation, isolation of dangerous individuals and reporting to the various senior management officers who are appropriate to take the necessary actions.

In this chapter the Security Forces for National Security and National Gendarmerie are involved to ensure safety and comfort to the refugees.

- b) - the establishment of operational security units.

The camp Minawao, a time bomb which should never be desired to see go operational has caught the attention of the state.

A Gendarmerie post has been installed and a police post has been projected. Intelligence units are to be put in place in the near future to protect and secure the rights and wellbeing of refugees and prevent dormant Boko Haram cells.

- c) The Entry into Operation of Vigilance Committees

To better monitor and pick out these terrorists, vigilance committees have been deployed in all areas where Boko Haram operates and where refugees and displaced persons are found. Till date, this action has put Boko Haram members to flight and has consequently prevented saved Cameroonians from a large scale bloodshed and bloodbath.

At the camp Minawao more than a hundred people are deployed day and night. The same mechanisms can be seen in all localities of the Mayo-Tsanaga.

To better understand the threat caused by the high presence of refugees and displaced persons, other useful measured are being considered and proposed.

2) – The Security and Humanitarian Actions to Execute

To be more effective, minimizing threats caused by the heavy presence of refugees and displaced persons in Mayo-Tsanaga will require:

A) - Multi Sector Response to the Problems Posed

To better identify and provide answers to the various

threats arising from the large flow of refugees and displaced people in the Mayo-Tsanaga Division, there is a need for a comprehensive approach as well:

The diversity of threats that are both material and moral will require a multi sectoral mindset and approach. Therefore the security, education, health, civic education, social affairs services should come together and work in synergy for an effective response.

This comprehensive approach must not only be concerned with the integration and resettlement of the displaced persons but also accelerate the process of empowering refugees in order to reduce their idleness which is a source of criminality.

The multi- sectoral approach should also act on the psychic of these victims by enabling the refugees and displaced people to become more tolerant and to understand that the ideology advocated by Boko Haram has no future in a modern world where the quest for happiness is in the search for the acquisition of technological knowledge to improve the living conditions of man.

B) - On Security Plan

One should envisage the strengthening of the capacities of all actors and security officers especially those in charge of the intelligence service in the areas of operation of Boko Haram so that with the establishment and dedication of the vigilante groups, information sharing and detection of members of this terrorist cult should be more efficient.

The creation and implementation of Intelligence and Security Units should also be on the agenda. Their numbers and quality equally ought to be strengthened.

FREDERIC FOUMENA
Police Commissioner and EIFORCES
Staff Graduate



THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE EAST REGION OF CAMEROON

Sah Chiara Ndumanu

Cameroon remains a safe haven and preferred destination for refugees in the Central African Sub-region and Africa as a whole. Women and children constitute such a large number of this refugee population and they are of the vulnerable group of persons, who most likely experience dangerous, risky and more challenging situations. By bringing refugee women and children into the picture, it is possible not only to illustrate their different experience but also to understand more fully their dynamics and their many challenges in conflict situations and in refugee-warrior communities. Community support structures break down and traditional or formal justice systems may not uphold women and children's rights. Unaccompanied women and girls, women heads of households, pregnant, disabled or older women may face particular challenges.



Healthcare, key to security in camps

Women and children are the subject of concern in most societies as they go through a series of challenges in their everyday life, this is the case especially in Africa. Their lives become more difficult in the event when they leave their comfort zone due to instability and disorder, and are forced by such circumstances to migrate and live in unknown countries; where they are not only vulnerable, but are uncertain of the unknown.

The central question that comes to mind then is: with Cameroon being a host to refugees, what social measures have been taken to protect refugee women and children in the Eastern Region? To better respond to this question, it will be of interest to understand the social situation of women and children refugees in the Eastern region of Cameroon.

The Social Situation of Refugee Women and Children in the East Region of Cameroon

With its strategic location and relative stability, Cameroon has drawn a number of people fleeing conflict and in search of asylum. Cameroon, has signed international (Geneva 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol) and regional (The 1969 OAU Refugee Convention and the Maputo Protocol on ACRWC on the Rights of Women) conventions and protocols on the protection of these refugees (including women and children).

The Government of Cameroon has lodged thousands of refugee women, children, and displaced persons of Africa hauled from their countries by intra-state conflicts. The serenity of this environment has transformed the country to a major pole of attraction and a paradise for these group of persons who are constantly increasing in the Sub-region. According to UNICEF report of December 2014, the outbreak of violence in Central African Republic (CAR) in December 2013 resulted in a new set of refugee flow into East Region of Cameroon which amounted to 134,611, of which 62,284 are currently in these refugee sites: Gado, Lolo, Borgop, Timangolo, Mbile, Ngam, Garoua-Boulai, Timangolo, Mbile, Yokadouma in East region, while others are living outside of these sites in towns and villages such as Meiganga, Betare Oya and Bertoua.

Sixty seven percent (67%) of these refugees; that is, 41,666 are children under 17 years of age; and twenty percent (20%), that is, 12,457 are women. An estimated forty percent (40%) of children arrived suffering from malnutrition¹.

Upon the arrival of refugees in the East Region of Cameroon, depending on their circumstances, the refugees could be lodged into refugee camps² or they are allowed to integrate with the local population³ such is the case with some of the Central African refugees found in the East and Adamawa regions of Cameroon.

The presence of CAR refugees in Cameroon will continue to overstretch resources in existing refugee sites, host communities and urban areas. It will require a coordinated humanitarian response to address the needs of all affected populations from the CAR, and host communities. Measures to facilitate peaceful coexistence and social cohesion will be mainstreamed throughout the operations. All humanitarian actors have been made aware of the need to integrate host communities in assistance and protection interventions, where needed. UNHCR coordinates the overall refugee response in Cameroon, in support of the authorities, and works closely with other UN agencies and NGOs to identify and meet the needs of the women and children refugees. This situation led the government of Cameroon, UNHCR and stakeholders to launch emergency humanitarian intervention to provide assistance⁴. This distressing state of affair therefore makes the subject of 'The Social Protection⁵ of Refugee Women and Children in the East Region of Cameroon' an all-important agenda to be dealt with in the studies of international relations.

THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CAMEROON

The social protection of refugee women and children in the East Region of Cameroon is governed by a legal and an institutional framework. The legal framework (constitute the global, regional as well as national legal instruments) is significant as it provides principles and criteria for the social protection of women and children refugees in Cameroon. Without legal standards, there will

1-Statistics from UNICEF report of December 2014

2-Refugee camps are humanitarian spaces arranged by the government of Cameroon to receive refugees. These camps are temporal shelter, but could turn out to be permanent. In case of refugee emergencies, these refugee camps have the objective to meet-up with the fundamental needs of the displaced population in terms of food, hygiene, security and shelter.

3-Here otherwise referred to as self-settle i.e. outside the ambits of the UNHCR assistance framework.

4-It is a response by the international community by way of provision of food, shelter, medicine, and logistics among others to victims of natural or manmade disasters with the primary objective of saving lives, alleviating sufferings, and maintaining human dignity in the phase of natural and manmade disasters that are beyond the capacity of national authority.

5-The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development considers social protection to be concerned with: preventing, managing, and overcoming situations that adversely affect people's wellbeing.

be no basis for social protection. Institutions generally play an essential role in ensuring the enforcement of legal instruments. Institutional framework on its part, implies organs or bodies which oversee or control the implementation of norms regarding social protection. The institutional framework will range from international, regional and national institutions; as without the existence of such institutions, the legal framework will be worthless. These institutions consist of International (the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Regional (the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the National Institutions (Government Departments: the Ministry of External Relations, the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation and the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) and the Ad hoc Institutions in Cameroon: Eligibility and Appeal Commissions lodged at MINREX.

As concerns the legal framework, Cameroon is signatory to the major international as well as regional instruments that regulate refugees issues in the world. It

has acceded to a broad range of international instruments ranging from the International Bill of Rights (the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)), the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that guarantees the protection of all human being (including refugee women and children) in general, and the 1951 UN Convention and its 1967 Protocol Relating to Refugee Status, which is specific to refugee protection. Africa just like other regions of the world have refugee problems which are specific to their respective structural dynamics. Africa has always been and remains a unique case in point as far as regional legal framework for refugee protection is concerned. It has develop legal instruments to respond to refugee problems exclusive to the continent; as there exist many texts in Africa on Human Rights which spell out implicit or compelling principles on refugee protection. It is in this light that the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights disposes in its Article 12(3)



Snapshot in refugee camp

that, "Every individual shall have the right, when persecuted, to seek and obtain asylum in other countries in accordance with laws of those countries and international conventions". Other African legal instruments that protect refugees are, The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (The Maputo Protocol), The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) 1990, and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. In Cameroon, Refugee women and children are socially protected through law n°2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon. Prior to this law, Cameroon did not have any legislation to deal with issues related to refugees. Refugees were being treated according to law No. 1997/012 of 10th January 1997 on the condition of admissibility, stay and return of foreigners in Cameroon. The only disposition in this law that makes reference to refugees is Article 27 of section IV. This article stipulates which categories of persons are eligible for a refugee card, the duration of validity of a refugee card and announces that a decree of application will precise the conditions and modalities for the delivery and renewal of a refugee card.

MEASURES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMEROON IN THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF REFUGEES WITH EMPHASES ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The presence of the refugee population in Cameroon in general and the East Regions in particular, results in significant modifications in the economic, social and cultural landscape. Upon arrival, refugees faced problems pertaining to their social needs such as: shelter, food, access to portable water and access to basic health care. As they prolong their stay on Cameroonian soil, these needs only increases in spite of the spontaneous hospitality of the local population that provided the refugees with shelter, food and land for cultivation and for pasture. The government of Cameroon recognizes the gravity of the phenomenon and the need to act urgently. The state acting within its capacity provides minimal services to the refugees by securing the borders and providing their essential needs. At the helm of the state, a law and decree related to refugees saw the light of the day. Based on this law and other conventions related to refugees to which Cameroon is a signatory, these refugees are granted protection within the national territory. The state of Cameroon being the principal organ responsible for the protection of refugees



Get busy as possible in refugee camp

in Cameroon in general and refugee women and children in particular: through the development of a legal framework for their protection; the physical protection of refugees and humanitarian workers; but it is helped by other organs in the protection of refugees in Cameroon such as MINREX, MINAS, MINPROFF, NCHRFs in areas like: Protection of Women, Children and the Family; Prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV); Employment and Social Security; Security of Persons; Freedom of Movement.

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) AND PARTNERS

In accordance with paragraphs 1 and 8 of its Statute, the UNHCR has assumed the primary function of providing international protection to refugees. The protection of refugee women and children has remained a central part of the UNHCR's responsibilities for a very long time now. It has a highly dynamic character and emanates essentially from the UNHCR's operational practice and the practice of states in providing protection to millions of refugee women and children. To ensure the effective protection of refugee women and children in the East Region of Cameroon, the UNHCR and its partners has embarked on a number of activities in terms of the: nutrition; shelter; health care; education; emergency relief and assistance; and lastly, freedom of association and assembly; in order to guarantee the social protection of refugee women and children in Cameroon.

1. Nutrition

Première Urgence, works with UNHCR in the domains of food security and water in the East Region of Cameroon hosting Central African refugees. It distributes food and vegetable seeds. It also supports agricultural self-production by making provisions for the setting up of individual food and vegetable plots. In this connection, it supports refugee women especially, in their effort to access cultivable land and organizes sensitization campaigns targeting traditional authorities and populations of host communities.

It rehabilitates and creates protected water points, to ensure that water is safe for drinking in area like; Gado, Lolo, Borghop, Timangolo, Garoua-Boulai, Kentzou with refugee host communities, the organization carries out sensitization campaigns on hygiene to reduce the risk of cholera outbreak. They also train water management committees to make beneficiaries responsible and ensure sustainable management of water points.

The International Relief and Development (IRD)

programs in Cameroon on its part, is concern with both refugees and native Cameroonians, helping them develop more economic opportunities and provide food for their families. IRD contributes to an improved food security situation by training refugee women in bio-intensive farming, in order to provide year-round access to nutritious food, recover livestock, and improve potable water systems. While International Medical Corps helps address the prevalence of malnutrition among refugee women and children in the East and Adamaoua regions by providing nutritional supplements to mothers and young children, the Cameroon Red Cross and the IFRC are mostly involved in the domain of nutrition during emergencies.

2. Shelter

As with the case of nutrition, refugee women and children are personally responsible for their housing expenses in urban areas. Nevertheless, the housing realities of urban refugees have not been ideal. For example, many refugees in Yaoundé live in small, unfinished slum housing. Conversely, in rural areas, notably in refugee camps, shelter is provided by the UNHCR at first hand through temporal tents. The UNHCR also provides assistance in the form of building materials to enable them construct their homes following customary practices in their respective countries and communities of origin. Some refugee women and children in the East region live in villages but have income generating activities that enable them fend for themselves including their housing.

Shelter needs usually pose an immense problem to the UNHCR and its partners during emergency phases. For example, in December 2013, when over 134,611 people fled from the outbreak of violence in CAR to seek refuge in Cameroon, most families were grouped together in make-shift tents at the Garoua-Boulai camp while many others slept in public places, schools, churches, parish halls, mosques and museums.

3. Health Care

In the domain of health care, there are a handful of partners working with the UNHCR; the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), International Medical Corp (IMC), IFRC, Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), FAIRMED, etc. The UNHCR lays major emphasis on the primary health care of refugee women and children. There is currently no permanent health care unit created purposefully for refugees. This is unlike in the past when special measures were put in place to provide health care to refugees. The UNHCR on its part encourages refugees to follow government national policies on health care, for example, vaccination campaigns.

International Medical Corps (IMC) works in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health along Cameroon's eastern border, where thousands of refugees from CAR have settled, to provide basic health care including maternal and child health care, immunisation and supplemental feeding services in the Djohong, Meiganga and Tibati districts. They also deliver health care via Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) that make services available to approximately 12,000 refugees especially women and children refugees throughout the region.

AHA on its part, has its main objective to improve the quality of primary health care. It has provided assistance to over thirty thousand (30, 000) refugees from CAR who are integrated within villages and settlements in the East region. To accomplish its objective, AHA collaborates with national health systems given that refugees and host communities use the same health centres. AHA provides drugs, medicines, medical equipment and furniture to twelve health centres in the districts of Kette, Batouri, and Ndelele. This is expected to increase as it is in the process of building new health centres in Toktoyo and Mboumama villages. In delicate cases, AHA refers patients to district hospitals and covers their expenses. To better coordinate its activities, AHA has set up complete medical teams led by qualified doctors who visit their respective health centres daily.

4. Education

While refugee students are eligible to receive funding provided by government, the UNHCR through its implementing partners assists refugee children in primary, secondary and university education as well as vocational training. Within the framework of primary education, the UNHCR liaises with its partners to ensure that refugee children aged six (6) and above attend primary school. This is also the case with respect to secondary and college education and is done through direct financial assistance to parents. However, high school and university education as well as other professional schools take the form of scholarships. Here, the "Deutsche Akademische Flüchtlings Initiative Albert Einstein" (DAFI), which can be translated as "Albert Einstein German Academic Initiative for Refugees," can be cited. Between 2004 and 2015, the programme enabled about one thousand three hundred (1300) refugee students in Cameroon to pursue higher education and vocational training worth about eight hundred million (800, 000, 000) Francs CFA.

To guarantee that refugee children have special considerations, ADRA/UNHCR programme has entered

into partnership accords with some heads of educational institutions. There are also agreements with regional and divisional delegates of secondary education to facilitate the enrolment of refugee children in public schools. Given the fact that entry places are competitive and thus limited in such schools, these agreements enables ADRA/UNHCR to get authorisation from the concerned stakeholders to ease the enrolment of refugee children in public secondary schools.

5. Emergency Relief and Assistance

In this domain, the UNHCR only gets into ad hoc partnerships depending on the emergency situation at hand. The IFRC is the main UNHCR partner which is mostly involve in emergency relief following unprecedented mass influx of refugee women and children into Cameroonian territory. The basic reason for this is that emergency relief is part of the official mandate of the IFRC which also has the necessary expertise.

The UNHCR works in collaboration with the IFRC in emergency relief related first aid training alongside the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. During emergencies, staff and volunteers of the Cameroon Red Cross provide food, water, relief items, health care and psycho-social support to vulnerable people such as pregnant women and children under the mandate of the UNHCR. This is the case in the East Region of Cameroon harboring thousands of women and children refugees, where the Cameroon Red Cross is in charge of distribution of food supplies, providing water and sanitation as well as shelter to the refugees.

CHALLENGES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE EAST REGION OF CAMEROON

The social protection of refugee women and children in Africa and Cameroon in particular is increasingly becoming a call for concern amidst the growing insecurity especially in the East region. Stakeholders and policy makers in the field of social life often face challenges and constraints in the realization of their goals as social protectors as explained below;

In the domain of health care, communication is difficult and thus renders the job of partners like CRS complicated as they are some refugees who neither understand French nor English languages, but their local

6-Joel Marinos TEGUIA, op. cit.

vernaculars (Fulfulde and Sango); and as a result, do not take to instructions or directives⁶. It is almost usual to hear of cases where refugees are told to go to a hospital laboratory but understand that to mean they should return home. This is common with Central African refugees whom most are illiterates.

In addition, malnutrition is another health care related constraint posed to implementing partners among sick refugee especially children and pregnant women. While food remains an essential requirement for the sick especially those placed on very powerful medications, most women and children refugee in particular suffer from malnutrition given the fact that a majority of them are poor and have no income generating activities. There are equally health related constraints relating to blood transfusion. The problem of malnutrition among refugee families renders difficult the transfusion of blood to and from their siblings.

Furthermore, educationally, partners like ADRA face problems of insufficient funds to enable refugees to access secondary and university education. ADRA have no other source of funding apart from the UNHCR when it comes to the education of refugee children; as some refugee parents have little motivation to make provisions for their children's education. The few parents who are motivated do not ensure that their children revise and do their assignments back at home. Rather, given the fact that most of them are from extremely poor backgrounds, they have to engage in income generating activities after school hours; a situation that has a negative impacts on their school performance⁷. As a result, some do not make it in semester and promotion exams. In other cases, some refugee women shortlisted for vocational training receive the required financial assistance but do not use it for the purpose for which it is required⁸. When this is realised, the refugee is excluded from the ADRA scheme. This may increase the refugee's level of vulnerability in the long run.

Again, there is the problem of limited school facilities in the East region. The problem surfaced as a result of the influx of the M'bororo population in 2008, school attendance nearly doubled in this part of the country, filling already crowded classrooms with children from refugee families. To illustrate the magnitude of the problem, despite the upsurge, about two-thirds of the 28,000 refugee children were not enrolled in school. With many more children having the desire to attend school, the infrastructure in place is not sufficient to support them.

In the domain of protection of women against gender

based violence, the job of partners like ALVF becomes difficult in cases where aggressors are foreigners and return to their countries of origin for good. ALVF finds it practically hard if not impossible to track down such individuals and bring them to justice. Operating in a developing country like Cameroon with financial constraints, it is usually costly to pursue extradition procedures.

Cameroon government ministerial departments as partners to the social protection of refugee women and children equally have their share of the blame.

Cameroon has limited resources; about 40 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line⁹. From a logical standpoint, with these limited resources, the government finds it hard to meet the needs of its own citizens and therefore the needs of desperate foreigners. This explains why the government only facilitates the implementation of UNHCR activities through policy making. This situation poses a problem as the UNHCR is forced to shoulder most, not to say the entire burden of the protection of the refugee women and children.

Furthermore, the law enforcement authorities especially in the area of security of refugees pose certain constraints; given the fact that they lack a mastery of national and international human rights law in general and refugee law in particular and especially those pertaining to women and children rights, they are prone to violating the rights of this category of persons. While authorities in urban areas generally recognise refugee identification papers and certificates, police and gendarmes in rural areas occasionally do not but instead detain their bearers. This might be because refugees only receive ration cards which are not identification papers and therefore provide no protection. Under such circumstances the right of refugee women and children to physical protection and security are often violated¹⁰.

Again, Cameroon can also be criticised for not including refugees in a couple annual reports such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper, the reports of the Ministry of Justice on human rights in Cameroon and the National Plan of Action for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. This can be interpreted as a neglect of rights and welfare of refugee women and children.

Even though the reception of refugees in Cameroonian villages and communities usually takes place without major clashes, the inhabitants of the remote areas in the East

7-ibid.
8-ibid.

9-ibid. International Medical Corps, "Our Work in Cameroon." op. cit.
10-World Refugee Survey 2008 – Cameroon, op. cit.

region have to deal with increased pressure on limited resources such as land and water. The influx of women and children refugees which exacerbates population pressure therefore makes access to such resources and health facilities difficult. In other words, sudden increase in population has the effect of putting a great strain on food supplies and health care systems that are usually already overtaxed trying to meet local needs. This constitutes the main challenge in host communities in the context of the East region of Cameroon.

POLICY CONSIDERATION FOR THE SOCIAL PROTECTION OF REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE EAST REGION OF CAMEROON

Against the backdrop of the challenges encountered by stakeholders in the social protection of refugees in Cameroon, a way forward is proposed in view of an ideal social status of refugee women and children in Cameroon.

The UNHCR as the international body in charge of refugee protection in Cameroon, needs to seek ways to reach out to refugee women and children. This can be done through specially organised sensitisation campaigns where these refugees are informed of their rights to be registered and the benefit emerging from international protection. Such peripheral field visits can equally be used as platforms for 'on the spot' refugee status determination.

The UNHCR in collaboration with the government of Cameroon may equally have to provide translation assistance to some of its implementing partners who face difficulties communicating with refugees because of language barriers, especially those who speak nothing but their local vernaculars. This is typical of Central African refugees who pose an enormous constraint to UNHCR partners in domains such as health care. Such a move might bring about efficiency in their operations.

Nationally, in order to better reach out to refugees particularly women and children and other persons of concern to the NCHRF, the bureaux of the Commission should be stationed in all the regions of the country where they are not yet stationed, such as the Far North, West and East regions. No doubt, a site has been chosen for the construction of the Far North regional delegation of the Commission. Efforts should equally be made in order that the Commission can have divisional offices in all divisions of the various regions of Cameroon, especially in refugee-

host divisions in the border zones of the country. This will go a long way to increase the efficiency of the Commission with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights in general and refugee rights in particular.

The Cameroon government is equally called upon to extend legal aid to refugees seeking asylum, especially those detained by local authorities upon arrival¹¹. NGOs should also be authorised to represent refugees in litigation before courts¹² while ordinary courts should be allowed to review decisions of the Commissions of Eligibility and Appeals concerning the status of asylum seekers. All of these measures may help improve the legal backing of refugees in judicial proceedings.

Furthermore, concerning the constraint of insufficient funds posed by educational partners to the UNHCR, it would be astute for the UNHCR to increase the amount of money put at the disposal of these partners. The government of Cameroon as a means to meet its international engagements on refugee welfare can, through the Ministries of Basic, Secondary and Higher Education, make financial allocations to NGOs involved in promoting refugee education. The government can as well take steps at policy level to reduce the cost of refugee education in secondary and high schools and universities. This is because far from their countries of origin, most refugees are poor and vulnerable and cannot always meet the cost of education at higher levels. Preferential treatment on their behalf is therefore encouraged.

Again, the new organisational framework of the MINREX provides a glimmer of hope. The Presidential Decree of 22 April 2013 on the organisation of the Ministry of External Relations created two new departments including that of "Cameroonians Abroad, Foreigners in Cameroon, Migration and Refugee Issues"¹³. Amongst others, this department is in charge of follow up of refugee-related issues and the activities of the UNHCR.

Another crucial means of reaching out to populations of host communities is through sensitisation campaigns which targets traditional leaders; for as opinion leaders in their various local communities, the UNHCR can develop and consolidate refugee acceptance policies by reaching out to them. These can be a medium to explain to them the idea that refugees are human beings in distress, who need their support; that of the State, national and international N.G.Os; as no single community is immune from unrest which can lead to massive movements across international frontiers; and very importantly, that facilitating

11-Mukete TAHLE ITOE, "West Africa: Refugees in Cameroon: An Overview." op. cit. The author is a practicing judge in Cameroon and a civil society activist. He is also the founding Director/CEO of the Refugees Welfare Association (REWAC).

12- *ibid*.

13- Chapter X of Decree N° 2013/112 of 22 April 2013.

the local integration of refugees is an important sustainable solution. An essential means of achieving this is by the involvement of host communities in refugee assistance projects such as those analysed above.

Sensitisation campaigns in refugee host communities should not only be directed towards the indigenous host populations but to refugees themselves. Refugees need to be constantly sensitised on their rights in order to be better prepared when confronted with unscrupulous forces of law and order and hostile elements in host communities.

While there is general need for revision of some instrument for the social protection and the reconsideration of policies of institutions and stakeholders in the field of the protection of refugee women and children, they are somehow all limited by the fact that they remain reactive responses. Conversely, the most essential and sustainable solution to the plight of refugee women and children lies in the preventive response, that is, the averting of civil and political unrest that orchestrates the massive displacement of people. This means that those who hold the key to solving the refugee crisis are not necessarily in Cameroon nor directly involved in the task of international protection. The solution lies not just in political actors in refugee producing countries but also in those involved in peace making, building and consolidation.

Conclusion

As far as this study is concerned, it can be concluded that there has been enormous progress in the areas of education; emergency relief and assistance, protection of women, children and the family; security of person; and freedom of association and assembly with reference to the international, regional and national legal frameworks for protection. This is probably because the cost or burden to respond to these is very minimal. Much however remains desired in such areas as nutrition; shelter; health care; freedom of movement (for camp refugees), and very importantly employment and social security.

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PROTECTING INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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Since 1960, Central African Republic (CAR) has suffered recurring internal displacement triggered by decades of coups, internal armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations and natural hazards. One of the gravest and most recent instances occurred in the aftermath of the 2013 conflict which saw displacement on a vast scale, both within and beyond CAR's borders. As of December 2015, there were still an estimate of over 453 000 IDPs, approximately 10% of the country's population, living in appalling conditions. In addition to persecution and human rights violations which generally affect all displaced persons, the risks are disproportionately extreme for women and children, who form the majority (70 – 80%).



Immunisation campaign in refugee camp

In CAR, IDP women and children face a unique set of horrendous challenges such as sexual violence, exploitation, pervasive insecurity, malnutrition and high infant mortality, and limited access to education, health and justice. This calls for an exclusive attention to age and sex disaggregated challenges and protection needs. Against this backdrop, this paper undertakes an inquiry on the situation of IDP women and children in CAR. It opens up with the background and causes of displacement, statistical and legal framework for IDP protection in CAR, and quickly narrows down to the quandaries of IDP women and children. It argues that, unless response to the IDP crisis in CAR is gender and age specific, prospects for sustainable peace would remain farfetched.

A. BACKGROUND AND CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT IN CAR

Since independence from France in 1960, CAR has experienced at least five successful coups, 16 army mutinies, and a series of internal armed conflicts and generalized violence that have triggered consistent displacement over the decades. This endemic instability has been exacerbated by a highly volatile sub regional context of cross-border - including ferocious incursions by Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army - inter-communal violence, robbery, resources-based disputes between nomadic pastoralists and sedentary farmers, and the impacts of natural hazards¹. These would be broadly analysed here as conflict related and environmental causes of displacement.

Conflict related Displacement: Armed conflict is the biggest displacement factor in CAR. The current displacement crisis began in December 2012 with the emergence of Séléka; and peaked in March 2013 when the movement overthrew the country's president, François Bozizé, in a nationwide violence campaign, which re-intensified following the dissolution of Seleka in December 2013, causing further displacements². As of December 2015, the situation was unstable and unpredictable in many parts of the country. Sporadic fighting continues

between armed groups for the control of populations, territory and natural resources such as diamonds and gold. All parties to the conflict have perpetrated human rights abuses including massacres, killings, looting and gender-based violence (GBV)³. Every clash, attack or reprisal comes with the direct consequence of population displacement, most of whom are women and children. Armed herders and bandits, known locally as coupeurs de route, have also increasingly attacked civilians thereby inducing further displacements⁴.

Displacement caused by natural hazards: Every year, heavy rains cause flooding and the destruction of homes and farmland in CAR. By the end of the rainy season in 2014, at least 1,500 people lost their homes in Bangassou, Bozoum, and Bangui⁵. The rains and floods also affect people already displaced by conflict and violence and living in displacement sites, damaging their temporary shelters and pushing some to return home earlier than they had intended, and despite continuing insecurity.

Pastoralism and displacement in CAR: Pastoralism in CAR is increasingly attendant to displacement in several ways. While skirmishes between predominantly Muslim pastoralists and Christian farmers are hardly neoteric, the conflict since 2012 has undoubtedly deepened tensions between them and stirred inter-communal violence, causing dislodgments⁶. Due to perceived allegiance to certain armed groups or age-old resentments, the country's nomadic minorities have been increasingly targeted by the conflicting parties. This has forced them to abandon their time-honored migratory itineraries and flee for refuge to eastern and northern areas of the country, or across the border into Cameroon and Chad. As of the end of 2014, western CAR had been largely emptied of its pastoralists, with the remaining few trapped in enclaves such as Boda and Yaloké⁷; while the areas around Batangafo and Kabo became overpopulated as a direct result of such displacements.

The above factors, but mostly conflicts, combine to explain the current appalling displacement trends in the country.

1-HRW, 7 March 2014; HRW, 11 November 2010; ICG, 11 June 2013.

2-OHCHR, 19 February 2014.

3-AI, 10 December 2014.

4-UNHCR; 27 April 2015; ICG, 12 December 2014.

5-IDMC Disaster-induced Displacement Database, May 2015.

6-ICG, 12 December 2014; FAO, 6 May 2015.

7-DRC, April 2015.

B. THE DISPLACEMENT DASHBOARD OF CAR

Since December 2013, approximately 25% of CAR's population has been internally displaced by armed conflict. At the peak of the unrest in early 2014, more than 930,000 people were internally displaced. As tensions decreased, the number of IDPs dropped down to over 560,050 in May 2014 and approximately 508,000 in August of the same year. However, daily violent clashes continue to dislocate thousands already living in dire conditions. The situation remains volatile and unpredictable as rival factions control vast areas and armed groups splinter. As of December 2015, the number of IDPs in CAR stood at over 453 000, including about 58 000 in the capital Bangui.

With specific regards to women and children, there is lamentably negligible sex and age disaggregated data on IDPs in CAR. What remains undisputable is that, as elsewhere in Africa, women and children comprise more than 70% of the displaced in CAR. At the peak of the crisis in 2014, about 2.3 million children were brutally affected, while almost half a million children fled their homes. As of December 2015, more than 1.2 million children were in acute need of a humanitarian lifeline. Based on their copious demography, IDP protection must therefore prioritize the collection and analysis of age-disaggregated data and sex responsive measures for women and girls. Such protection is not only a quantitative but also a legal obligation.

C. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROTECTION OF IDP WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CAR

The legal framework for the protection of women and children in general, and IDPs in particular, has

grown significantly over the last two decades with the elaboration of a commendable number of standards and guidelines relating to internally displaced women and children, covering such issues as reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence, and recruitment of children, education and other cross-cutting issues⁸. The below legal framework are applicable to CAR.

The UN's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provides an overarching normative framework that applies international human rights and humanitarian law to IDPs. It was the pioneer international framework to outline specific rights relevant to women facing internal displacement, including: Non-discrimination and the right of expectant mothers, mothers of young children, and female heads of household to protection and assistance that "takes into account their special needs"⁹ such as: protection from SGBV and other forms of violence and exploitation; access all necessary documents, education and training; active participation of IDP women in decision-making at all stages of displacement. The Guiding Principles also offered an important foundation for additional instruments and frameworks that address the needs of displaced women, such as the Kampala Convention and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons, and UN Resolutions (UNSC 1325, 1820, 1822).

The Kampala Convention on the protection and assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, which was ratified by CAR on August 03, 2011 and entered into force in December 2012, contains the following provisions incorporating a gendered approach to protection and assistance:

8-See, for example: UNHCR, Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls (2008); UNHCR, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response (2003); IASC, Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies (2005); Inter-agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises, Inter-agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings (2010); UNHCR Executive Committee conclusion 105 (LVII) of 2006; the United Nations Principles on housing and property restitution for refugees and displaced persons; the Protocol on the

Property Rights of Returning Persons in the Great Lakes Region; general recommendations No. 24 (1999) on women and health and No. 27 (2010) on the human rights of older women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

9-See UN Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement Article 4 (2) "Certain internally displaced persons, such as children, especially unaccompanied minors, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, female heads of household, persons with disabilities and elderly persons, shall be entitled to protection and assistance required by their condition and to treatment which takes into account their special needs."

- SGBV: “protect the rights of internally displaced persons regardless of the cause of displacement by refraining from, and preventing,” various acts, including: “Sexual and gender based violence in all its forms, notably rape, enforced prostitution, sexual exploitation and harmful practices, slavery, recruitment of children and their use in hostilities, forced labour and human trafficking and smuggling” (Article 9.1.d);

- General protection and assistance: “Provide special protection for and assistance to internally displaced persons with special needs, including separated and unaccompanied children, female heads of households, expectant mothers, mothers with young children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities or with communicable diseases; (Article 9.2.c).

- Reproductive and sexual health: “Take special measures to protect and provide for the reproductive and sexual health of internally displaced women as well as appropriate psycho-social support for victims of sexual and other related abuses” (Article 9.2.d).

- Registration and personal documentation: “Women and men as well as separated and unaccompanied children shall have equal rights to obtain such necessary identity documents and shall have the right to have such documentation issued in their own names” (Article 13).

African Charter on the rights and welfare of the children: provides against the active use of children as soldiers during armed conflicts and the government must take necessary measures to ensure that the child is protected and that humanitarian assistance is provided (article 22). This charter was signed by CAR on February 04, 2003, pending ratification.

The Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted on 25 May 2000, provides that State Parties must take all feasible measures to ensure that members of their armed forces who have not reached the age of 18 years do not take direct part in hostilities (Art. 1); prohibits compulsory recruitment into the armed forces of persons under 18 years of age (Art. 2; raise the minimum age for voluntary recruitment from 15 years.

This rule does not apply to military academies (Art. 3); armed groups distinct from the national armed forces should not, under any circumstances, recruit (whether on a compulsory or voluntary basis) or use in hostilities persons under the age of 18 years, and the States Parties must take legal measures to prohibit and criminalize such practices (Art. 4). CAR has taken the first commendable step towards accession by signing this instrument on September 27, 2010.

Institutional Framework for IDP Protection: State parties, have the primary responsibility to protect their IDPs. However, since the State capacity (CAR) for such protection is often constrained, in this case, by Armed conflicts, the international community often intervenes to provide humanitarian assistance through three networks: UN and UN Agencies (UN Women, UNICEF, UNCHR, UNFPA etc.), Special Rapporteur on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (the African Commission); the ICRC, IRC, and other local and international NGOs notably MSF and Save the Children, War Child.

While the above laws and institutions provide a solid legal and policy base for the protection of IDP women and children in CAR, the reality on the ground is sharply contrasting. Women and children continue to bear the brunt of a broad range of specific protection challenges that beckon for a scientific analysis.

D. PROTECTION CHALLENGES AND ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF IDP WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Informed protection action is guided by a sound understanding of the current protection risks facing the populations, and an evidence-based analysis of the situation. CAR’s IDPs face a range of serious protection concerns, some of which already existed before the current crisis but have been made worse since. While the challenges are cross-cutting, IDP women and children bear the brunt, including of a unique set of challenges¹⁰.

10-ICRC, Children hardest hit by ongoing violence in Central African Republic
Published: 8 December 2014 10:56 CET available online at
file:///C:/Users/melvis/Desktop/idp/Children%20hardest%20hit%20by%20ongoing

%20violence %20in%20Central%20African%20Republic%20-%20IFRC.html
accessed on February 6, 2016

i. Protection Challenges and Needs of Women and Girls

In addition to persecution and serious human rights violations which affect all IDPs, Internally displaced women are at a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, have specific health needs, limited access to WASH, HLP etc.

Sexual Violence: Displaced Women and girls in CAR are often subjected to sexual violence including rape, torture and mutilation, and sexual slavery. In December 2013, the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment identified rape as the most common form of violence experienced by 44% of women and 40% of girls who reported violent incidents. Between January to March 2014, the IRC, through its activities in 7 IDP sites in the outskirts of Bangui, provided direct services to 238 women and girls who experienced sexual and physical violence, the youngest being just five years old. 82% of these women and girls were raped and 73% of them reported rape by multiple men. Women reported horrific and physical attacks where multiple armed men hit them, raped children in front of them and kicked pregnant women in their abdomens.

Reproductive Health and Nutritional deficiencies: Women IDPs in CAR have specific health needs that often go unmet. Some of these emanate from the

sexual violence suffered notably: acute injuries and gynecological problems, sexually transmitted infections and HIV AIDS, pregnancy and childbirth complications, and psychosomatic and psychological effects. The situation is exacerbated by limited access to medical care. Nutritional Deficiencies are also common to women as a result of prolonged deprivation in IDP camps/ settings inadequate access to clean water and nutritious food may cause long-term vitamin and mineral deficiency. Menstruation and breastfeeding also heighten women's nutritional needs.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Due to the overcrowding of displacement sites in CAR, providing adequate WASH facilities remains a challenge. At displacement sites, there are limited sex-segregated toilets and bathing facilities leading to limited privacy and dignity for men and women alike. Even when toilets are available, they often overflow, and have limited lighting at night, which heightens the risk of harassment, rape and other forms of GBV. Additionally, with limited water supplies in the IDP camps, women of all ages are forced to travel long distances to collect water, increasing their risk of violence.

Livelihoods and Community Stabilization: The conflict continues to rob women of their already meagre sources of income, and expose those who are



Refugee management : a monumental challenge

extremely poor to negative coping mechanisms including survival sex and ECFM. Cases of drug, alcohol abuse, joining armed groups and engagement in criminal activities, including GBV, are on the rise, particularly among men. For women especially, the conflict has constricted economic opportunities. Insecure routes makes it difficult for women who depend on petty trade to resume their economic activities. For traders outside of Bangui, mobility is further constrained by poor infrastructure and lack of transportation. During the rainy season, low comparative ability of female farmers to buy seeds, fertilisers, farming tools (having lost their tools as a result of the crisis), impacts detrimentally on their abilities to feed and meet basic needs of their families. In addition to limited economic opportunities for women, women's involvement in social cohesion and resilience activities in Bangui and rural areas remains low, and in some communities such as Mb'aiki, Carnot, Boda and Kaga Bandoro, it is imperceptible.

HLP rights and displaced women: IDPs in CAR face a number of challenges in exercising their HLP rights. As in many countries, displaced women are among those who struggle most to do so, because of discriminatory practices, a lack of understanding of their rights and few options to seek redress when they are not respected¹¹. Women in CAR tend to depend on their relationship with a man for land ownership, and given the current conflict, displacement and family separation, this poses a significant challenge for displaced women. A study undertaken by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) at the end of 2014 revealed that they were at risk of eviction from their homes. After the death of their husband or partner, the family of the deceased often asks them to leave. This practice was observed across the country as a whole, but appeared most common in non-Muslim communities¹². As such, displaced women who have lost or been separated from their partner or husband may find that return to their habitual places or origin becomes impossible, creating additional obstacles to their pursuit of durable solutions.

ii. Protection Challenges of IDP Children in CAR

According to the Country Director of War Child in

CAR, "children are really in the middle of everything - in the middle of crime, killing, even on the streets, because people are being slaughtered on the streets. Children are witnessing all this. When you think about the psychosocial impact, that's huge. It's immediate and long-term¹³." In addition to the general IDP challenges, displaced children are at risk of: separation from family, erosion of community ties, loss of identity, disruption of schooling, stigmatization (some displaced youth are viewed with suspicion in their new environment), physical insecurity, psychosocial distress, constant exposure to disease, malnutrition, sexual abuse, forced recruitment by armed rebel groups.

Separation from Family: Violence and displacement have forced families to separate, leaving many unaccompanied children in CAR¹⁴. Without their parents' care, they are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and forced recruitment. According to a War Child Report, atrocities have been committed against children as young as three years old, 42% of displaced children have lost their fathers in the bloodshed; 11% of displaced children have been orphaned; 95% of girls and 75% of boys said they needed support to cope with psychological trauma¹⁵.

High Mortality: Ranked 180th of 187 countries in the 2013 Human Development Index, CAR is said to be one of the most difficult places in the world to be a child¹⁶. Even before the latest fighting, an average of one in eight children in the country died before their fifth birthday¹⁷ and life expectancy was just 49.34.

Malnutrition is closely linked to high mortality¹⁸. Half of all displaced people in CAR do not have enough to eat. As the food crisis worsens, it is estimated that more than 100,000 children will suffer malnutrition in 2014. 41% of children have had their physical and mental development stunted by lack of food. They will be expected to do worse at school and earn less over their lifetimes than if they had received enough to eat.

Forced Conscription: More than 6,000 children are believed to have been recruited to armed forces

11-INRC, 13 April 2015.

12-Ibid.

13-War Child, "A Vicious Cycle for Children: In the Central African Republic" March, 2014

14-ICRC, 18 March 2015; UN, December 2014; child protection sub-cluster, 20 July 2014.

15-War Child, "A Vicious Cycle for Children: In the Central African Republic" March, 2014

16-The World Health Organisation put the under-5 mortality rate at 129 children per

1,000 live births in 2012. Available: <http://www.who.int/countries/caf/en/>

17-Human Development Index, 2014, 'Central African Republic: Human Development Indicators'. Available: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CAF>

18-A displaced boy in Yaloké died of malnutrition in February 2015, after refusing to eat until he and his siblings were reunited with their parents (UNHCR, 17 February 2015).

and armed groups – a grave violation of their rights¹⁹.

Access to Education: As a result of the crisis, all schools in Bangui were closed for several months starting from December 2014. Most children in CAR have had limited, or no, schooling and are unable to read or write. 42% of young women, and 28% of young men in CAR are illiterate. Adults in CAR have received an average of just 3.5 years of schooling²⁰.

Sexual Violence: The UN confirmed 1,186 cases of sexual violence in one month – lack of reporting means this is likely to be a fraction of the true figure. Sexual violence have been reportedly perpetrated not just by the rebels, but also by French (2014) and UN Peacekeepers (2015)

In light of the above, it becomes imperative to interrogate the reactions of the government and the international community to the flight of IDP women and Children in CAR.

E. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

i. National Response

CAR's government has struggled to fulfil its role as the primary provider of protection and assistance to IDPs. However, the government remains constrained by instability and limited resources and capacity. It established a Technical Support Unit for Humanitarian Action in April 2014, but thus far, communication and collaboration with responders have been limited.

Promoting Voluntary return: The government of CAR has repeatedly shown its preference for IDPs' return. In January 2015, it announced plans to close the displacement site at the airport, once the biggest in the country. It cited security and development reasons and expressed its hope for IDPs to return to their homes²¹. The majority living there, however, are disinclined to do so for the time being, and the substitute site the government has identified is both unsuitable and too undersized²².

Legal Framework: CAR is party to several international conventions that establish a framework

for its response to displacement. They include the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, known widely as the Great Lakes Pact, and its protocols on displacement; and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, known widely as the Kampala Convention. The domestication of the convention received a boost in July and August 2014, when the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) supported the government in establishing a roadmap and working group for the development of national legislation on IDPs' protection and assistance²³. After several months of delay while the government underwent restructuring, a new focal point was appointed to coordinate the process in December 2014. A technical committee made up of national and international experts was also set up to lead the drafting exercise.

ii. International Response

Several UN agencies and International Organization/NGOs have worked relentlessly to provide targeted assistance to displaced women and children in CAR. This section vividly considers the responses of UN Women, UNICEF, ICRC/IRC and regional organizations with specific mandate relating to women and children.

UNICEF: In 2015, UNICEF and partners focused on delivering life-saving interventions to affected and internally displaced populations. As a result, more than 850,000 people in need of assistance gained access to basic health services and medicines. Nearly 20,000 severely malnourished children received treatment according to agreed protocols. Some 350,000 people now have improved access to safe water and over 191,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have access to improved sanitation. More than 130,000 children received psychosocial support in child-friendly spaces. Nearly 2,500 women and children identified as survivors of sexual violence accessed comprehensive support. With UNICEF support, more than 2,200 children associated with armed groups – one quarter of them girls – were released. Over 40,000 children aged 3 to 17 years,

19-UNICEF, February 2014, 'UNICEF 'horrified' at cruelty against children in Central African Republic conflict'. Available: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47144&Cr=central+african+republic&Cr1=#.UwXCC66QdVI>

20-UNDP, 2013, 'HDI values and rank changes in the 2013 Human Development

Report', pp 2. Available online at: <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/CAF.pdf>

21-UNICEF, 19 January 2015.

22-IDMC interviews with humanitarians, Bangui, December 2014.

23-Unpublished roadmap, August 2015, on file with IDMC.

nearly half of them girls, accessed temporary education in safe and protective learning environments. As part of UNICEF's School-in-a-Box kits, learning supplies were distributed for 241,000 children in affected areas. Despite security challenges and difficult humanitarian access, the RRM provided emergency WASH and non-food items (NFIs) to more than 40,000 households. The RRM also reached the humanitarian community with a total of 171 alerts on humanitarian situations requiring rapid response. Although progress was hampered by insecurity and lack of access to affected areas, UNICEF is on track to meet many 2015 targets²⁴.

UN WOMEN: UN Women WCARO, took the challenge to provide psychosocial support to women and girls by fostering the implementation of an efficient and innovative psychosocial itinerant support mechanism commonly known in CAR as 'DIAP' (Dispositif Itinérant d'Appui Psychosocial). The DIAP relies on an expert on psychotherapy and the CAR National Committee Against Traditional Practices Affecting Women's and Children's Health. It offers an array of services catering to the specific needs and conditions of the survivors such as medical care,

psychological support, economic empowerment and legal support. Ms. Gbaguidi, the WCARO coordinator, reveals that "through the DIAP, UN Women WCARO successfully responded to the needs of 2,096 survivors who were able to benefit from psychosocial support; 60 healthcare and social service providers were trained on post stress and post trauma care, respectful and supportive listening, legal orientation and rehabilitation". A beneficiary of the DIAP stated, "UN Women and the DIAP providers relentlessly offered me counseling services and have even enrolled my daughter in high School in Bangui. My 13 years old daughter and I were raped at the same time in the same house by three soldiers of the rebel groups. Today, I have an income generating activity and live in peace." Furthermore, Ms Gbaguidi, reports that "to date, the DIAP has been successfully deployed in 30 centers covering the 8 districts of Bangui. Among the 2,096 survivors, 746 have benefited from medical care, 114 from legal support, 601 from economic empowerment and 30 have resumed their studies²⁵."

Red Cross - Promotion of hygiene and sanitation: During the raining seasons, there is high potential for the health situation in camps to deteriorate as



CAR women show concern at Timangolo camp

24-See more at: <http://www.unicef.org/appeals/car.html#sthash.oGtgPYFe.dpuf>

25-See more at: <http://www.empowerwomen.org/en/news/un-women-supporting-vawg-survivors-in-central-african-republic#sthash.2rBkwcUN.dpuf>

exposure to waterborne diseases and malaria increases. In an effort to ward off a disease outbreak, the Central African Red Cross Society has, to date, built 802 latrines in camps and schools in Bangui, and deployed 50 volunteers to raise awareness on good hygiene practices, as well as household waste management. The Red Cross also supplies drinking water to sites with high demand.

International Rescue Committee: has so far distributed 9000 dignity kits, which also include cloth, sanitary items, soap and shoes. Buckets are an essential part of the “dignity kits” they receive in displacement camps so they can avoid the perilous walk to communal bathrooms after dark. Christian Lubanzadio, a coordinator for the IRC’s women’s protection and empowerment programme in CAR noted that “Women have now adopted a protection mechanism by which they use these buckets to go to the toilet, instead of going outside at night. That reduces the risks to which these women are exposed²⁷.” Additionally, the distribution of 200 fuel-efficient stoves by the IRC has also halved the time women were forced to spend looking for firewood, often in isolated areas that increase the risks they face.

UNFPA also provides humanitarian support, including reproductive health supplies such as clean delivery kits, male and female contraceptives, and medical equipment²⁸.

ECCAS, AU and UN have also deployed peacekeeping missions with specific mandates for civilian protection, most of whom are displaced women and children.

F. PROSPECTS FOR PROTECTING IDP WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CAR

Prospects for a more effective and reinforced protection of women and children hinge on a combination of factors.

First of all, there is need for a thorough quantitative analysis on displaced women and children in CAR. So far, a succinct gender and age

aggregated data is still missing. A statistical panorama of the situation of displaced women and children in CAR would help emphasize the urgency, and serve the purpose of effective planning and targeted delivery of needs.

Effective protection is gauged when IDPs eventually feel safe to return to their homes, thus is it important to work on the improvement of the overall security context of the country.

Most of the challenges plaguing displaced women and children are issues relating to human rights violation, such as sexual violence. The UN Women is pressing for the creation of a Special Tribunal for the Trial of UN Peacekeepers charged with sex abuse. Effective mechanisms for the repression of perpetrators would go a long way to instill confidence in the victims and create an atmosphere favourable for post conflict reconstruction. Already, the United Nations, following a fact finding mission, has ordered the repatriation of the 120 Republic of Congo soldiers who were deployed to Bambari from 17 September to 14 December 2015 based on allegations of sexual abuse, noting that: “sexual abuse and exploitation is a serious breach of the UN regulations and a human rights violation; a double crime that affects the vulnerable women and children you were sent here to protect²⁹.” Similar measure are advocated for French troops, alleged to have committed similar crimes.

Finally, prospects for an optimal protection of IDP women and children depend on addressing the root causes of the conflict, and promoting infrastructural development (schools and hospitals etc.)

Furthermore, due to the prolonged nature of the conflict and its impacts on state institutions, the government of CAR lack the capacity to sufficiently guarantee the protection of displaced women and children. There is therefore need for a sustained support from the international community and other NGOs, in the provision of gender and age specific assistance, but also in view of rebuilding the relevant state institutions gravely affected by the conflict.

26-See more at: <http://www.ifrc.org/en/news-and-media/news-stories/africa/central-african-republic/access-to-medical-care-in-central-african-republic-a-major-challenge-for-the-internally-displaced-65689/#sthash.KtizWU6J.dpuf>

27-IRC, “Protecting Women and Girls in CAR”, <http://eudevdays.eu/news-views/protecting-women-and-girls-central-african-republic>

28-See more at: <http://www.unfpa.org/transparency-portal/unfpa-central-african-republic#sthash.DWZbcKcd.dpuf>

29-UN News Centre, “New allegations of sexual abuse emerge against UN peacekeepers in Central African Republic”, available online at: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53163#.Vrfz4twSzIU>, accessed on February 06, 2016

Conclusion

From the above, it seems fair to state that the challenges facing women and children IDPs cannot be effectively addressed under broader sex and age blind policy interventions. Women and children have distinct protection needs. In CAR, women and girls face systematic sexual violence, have special health and reproductive needs that are often overlooked, and are deprived of protection previously afforded by their families and communities. Displaced children are often malnourished, separated from their caregivers, and put risk of sexual assault, exploitation, mortality and forced conscription by armed forces. Their entire childhoods have been reversed by protracted insecurity and perpetual displacement, little or no access to education, and limited prospects to eventually attain, let alone shoulder, the responsibilities of adulthood. While all these issues also affect refugees and IDPs in general, this article illustrates that the situation of IDP women and children in CAR is disproportionately extreme and urgently demands specific attention. If for nothing, but the demographic preponderance, as well as legal and

moral obligations, the specificities of their challenges and needs cannot be overlooked.

While a considerable effort has been made by the government of CAR, including ratification of relevant legal instruments for their protection, such remains hampered by the depleted government's ability due to on-going conflict. The international community through specialized UN and Humanitarian agencies notably UN Women, UNICEF, Red Cross, UNFPA etc, have spared no effort to deploy various forms of humanitarian assistances in view of relieving the agonies of displaced women and children. This should be encouraged and untiringly prioritized as prospects for lasting peace in CAR remain pecked to the extent and quality of protection, reserved for displaced women and children.

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Refugee women group in search of settlement



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