

# Local Integration of Nigerian Refugees as a Durable Solution to Self-Reliant in the Far North Region of Cameroon, Measures, Challenges and Perspectives

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## Abstract

“Self-reliance” as the best strategy of refugee integration is a key component aimed at addressing protracted refugee situations and refugees finding durable solutions, relating to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Within the neo-colonial era, Cameroon has been reckoned in the annals of humanitarian records as a “melting sanctuary for humanitarian migrants”. By 2013, over **95,000** Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram violent extremisms sought refuge in the Far North Region of Cameroon. This article thus unravels the different integrationist pragmatic humanitarian self-reliant activities by the implementing partners of UNHCR, which were geared at autotomizing the Nigerian refugees within the Far North Region of Cameroon. This was ensured through the provision of identification card, cash based transfers, and the promotion of agricultural activities which were geared at rolling back refugee dependency syndrome on mere humanitarian assistance. The provision of these self-reliant-integrationist activities were not without challenges. The challenges were financial, xenophobic attitudes emanating from the side of the host, the myth of return, inferiority qualm in socialization, conflict over land tenure and limited basic knowledge on refugees’ rights. All these slowed down the initiatives geared at rendering the Nigerian refugees self-reliant within the local

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economy of the Far North region of Cameroon.

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past six decades, Cameroon has remained a beacon in Sub Saharan African as “an oasis to yearning refugees in a stormed desert”. In 2014, Cameroon had an estimated 44,000 refugees from Nigeria. By 2017, Cameroon hosted a total population of refugees and asylum seekers of approximately 97,400.<sup>1</sup> Of these, 49,300 were from the Central African Republic, 41,600 from Chad, and 2,900 from Nigeria. By 2019, the Far North region of Cameroon shelters **more than 95,000 Nigerian refugees** who fled Boko Haram violence in North Eastern states of [...] because of violent extremisms orchestrated by the Nigerian Islamic sect, called Boko Haram since 2013. Sixty-five per cent of Nigerian refugees live in the Minawao camp, the only official refugee site opened in July 2013.<sup>2</sup> Since the republic of Cameroon is state party to most international and regional conventions relating to the status of refugees (the UN-1951 Convention, its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention) through ratification, as a peremptory un- refutable norm, she had to offer expensive sanctuary to the Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Cameroon as a whole and specifically to the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. The provision of a safe haven resulted to the provision of humanitarian assistance led by United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) through her implementing field partners. This article, investigates the local integrationist measures, adopted by the implementing partners of UNHCR in rendering the Nigerian Refugees self-reliant and the challenges faced within the Far North Region of Cameroon.

### Conceptual Clarification

The notion of “local integration” is frequently used in the refugee context, and yet it lacks any formal definition in international refugee law. The lack of clarity surrounding the concept is reinforced by its frequent confusion with a related but different concept, relating to the notion of “local settlement.” Crisp defines local integration as a process composed of three intertwined dimensions, namely legal, economic and socio-cultural. Firstly, local integration is a legal process, whereby refugees attain a wider range of rights in the host state. Secondly, it is an economic process of establishing sustainable livelihoods and a standard of living comparable to that of the host community. Thirdly, it is a social and cultural process of adaptation and acceptance that enables the refugees to contribute to the social life of the host country and live without fear of discrimination<sup>3</sup>crucially, it is possible for a refugee to acquire and exercise a wide range of rights, to become self-reliant and to develop close social ties with the host country and community, in other words to integrate in the country of asylum, without necessarily becoming a naturalized citizen of the asylum state.<sup>4</sup> Local integration is a complex process in which legal, economic and socio-cultural dimensions are inextricably interlinked. This study specifically zooms in on economic integration, encompassing broader socio-cultural, legal and material dynamics.

<sup>1</sup>C. Nkatow Mafany, “The Enigmas of Humanitarian Assistance in the East Region of Cameroon”, p.5. (Still to be Published)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>A. Fielden, “Local Integration: An Under-Reported Solution to Protracted Refugee Situations” in *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Research Paper No. 158. UNHCR: Geneva, p. 1, Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/486cc99f2.pdf>, Accessed on 16 December 2018.

<sup>4</sup>J. Crisp, “The local integration and local settlement of refugees: a conceptual and historical analysis” in *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper No.102, UNHCR: Geneva, 2004, p. 2, Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/en-my/407d3b762.pdf>, Accessed on 16 December 2018.



Jeff Crisp sees local integration as a process which leads to a durable solution for refugees. It is a process with three interrelated dimensions. First, it is a legal process, whereby refugees are granted a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements by the host state.<sup>5</sup> Under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention, these include, for example, the right to seek employment, to engage in other income-generating activities, to own and dispose of property, to enjoy freedom of movement and to have access to public services such as education.<sup>6</sup> The process whereby refugees gain and accumulate rights may lead to the acquisition of permanent residence rights and ultimately to the acquisition of citizenship in the country of asylum. In accordance with these indicators, refugees who are prevented or deterred from participating in the local economy, and whose standard of living is consistently lower than the poorest members of the host community, cannot be considered to be locally integrated and self-reliant. Also, local integration is a social process, enabling refugees to live amongst or alongside the host population, without fear of systematic discrimination, intimidation or exploitation by the authorities or people of the asylum country.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of local integration does not imply the assimilation of refugees in the society where they have found asylum. While the concept of assimilation is to be found in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, the international community has always rejected the notion that refugees should be required or expected to abandon their own culture, so as to become indistinguishable from members of the host community. As one scholar has pointed out, integration is a more useful term than assimilation, suggesting as it does that refugees “maintain their own identity, yet become part of the host society to the extent that host population and refugees can live together in an acceptable way.”<sup>8</sup> This study thus defines refugees’ integration in the Far North Region of Cameroon, as positive when: Refugees become self-reliant, rather than relying on assistance by humanitarian actors or the host, and should be able of pursuing sustainable livelihoods. This study also agrees refugees’ integration, when refugees have positive interactions with local communities and when local community fellow refugees in their daily lives, in the workplace, when refugees are able to enjoy rights and entitlements that make it possible for them to access work opportunities and employment rights without discrimination based on their legal status.

### **Local Integration as a Durable Solution to Self-Reliant**

Local integration is commonly referred to as one of the three “durable solutions” to refugees, the others being voluntary repatriation to the country of origin and resettlement in a third country. Strictly speaking, it can be argued that the process of local integration of refugees becomes a durable solution only at the point when a refugee becomes a naturalized citizen of his or her asylum country, and consequently is no longer in need of international protection.<sup>9</sup> The definition used in this paper, however, which emphasizes the multidimensional nature

<sup>5</sup>Crisp, “The Local Integration and the Settlement of Refugees: A Conceptual and a Historical Analysis” in *New Issues in Refugee Research*, p.5.

<sup>6</sup>See Chapter 1-7 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Geneva 1951. Also See Chapter III of the 2005 Law Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, 2005, p.4.

<sup>7</sup>Crisp, “The Local Integration and Local Settlement of Refugees”, p.5.

<sup>8</sup>C. Nkatow Mafany., “The Impact of the Integration of Refugees from Central African Republic within the East and Adamaoua Regions of Cameroon and Host Perception, Regarding the Integrity and Security of their Communities”, p.12, (still to be published).

<sup>9</sup>Nkatow Mafany, “*The Enigma of Humanitarian Assistance in the East Region of Cameroon*”, p. 12.



of local integration, casts some doubt upon such a restrictive interpretation of the concept. For it is quite possible for a refugee to acquire and exercise a wide range of rights, to become entirely self-reliant and to develop close social ties with the host community, without becoming a naturalized citizen of the asylum state. In such circumstances, it would be pedantic to suggest that such a person had not attained a very real degree of local integration.<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the notion of local integration of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon is based on the assumption that “the Nigerian refugees will remain indefinitely in the Far North Region of Cameroon and find a solution to their plight in that state”.<sup>11</sup> Ideally, but not necessarily, that will involve the acquisition of legal identification papers.

### **The History of Local Integration as a Lee-Path towards Self-Reliant of Refugees**

When the international refugee regime was established in 1951 by the General Assembly of the UNO in Geneva, the international community recognized the potential for refugee problems to be resolved by means of local integration that will end up in self autonomization of the IDPs. Writing in 1950s, for example, at a time when the International Refugee Organization was being dissolved and UNHCR was being established, the UN Secretary-General predicted:

The refugees will lead an independent life in the countries which have given them shelter. With the exception of “hard core” cases, the refugees will no longer be maintained by an international organization as they are at present. They will be integrated in the economic system of the countries of asylum and will themselves provide for their own needs and those of their families. This will be a phase of the settlement and assimilation of the refugees.<sup>12</sup>

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention also envisaged the local integration of refugees, and in this respect drew particular attention to the role of citizenship in the search for durable solutions.<sup>13</sup> According to Article 34 of the Convention, “The contracting states shall as far as possible facilitate the assimilation and naturalization of refugees. They shall in particular make every effort to expedite naturalization proceedings.”<sup>14</sup> While the principle of local integration may be firmly established in international refugee law, its practice has been very limited in the years since refugee problems became worldwide phenomenon.<sup>15</sup> From the 1960s until the mid-1990s, the industrialized states generally acknowledged that the asylum seekers to whom they granted refugee status would be allowed to remain indefinitely on their territory, to acquire a wide range of rights and entitlements, and eventually to acquire citizenship. That approach has not been entirely discarded, and the option of local integration has continued to be open to individuals who are recognized as refugees in the world’s more prosperous regions.<sup>16</sup> During the past ten decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, however, the industrialized states have demonstrated a growing propensity

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Author’s conception.

<sup>12</sup>Trygvie Lie, the UN Secretary General from Norway. His mandate lasted from 1946 to 1953. See C. Nkatow Mafany, *An Effective Modern World History for Cameroon Schools and Colleges: Initiation into the History of International Relations*, 2019, p.26.

<sup>13</sup>Article 34 of the 1951 Convention Relating to Refugee Affairs, p.30.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>B. S. Chimni, “From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation: Towards a Critical History of Durable Solutions to Refugee Problems”, *New Issues in Refugee Research*, Working Paper No. 2, UNHCR, Geneva, 1999, p.12.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, p.23.



granting limited and temporary forms of asylum to people who have been in need of protection, with the expectation that those people will return to their country of origin, either voluntarily or at the request of the authorities, as soon as it is safe to do so.<sup>17</sup> This approach was implemented and manifested most systematically with regard to those asylum seekers who fled from Bosnia to Western Europe during the wars in former Yugoslavia.<sup>18</sup>

Elsewhere in the world, local integration has been practiced even less systematically. While some notable exceptions can be found, the countries of Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe have not generally favoured or pursued this solution to refugee problems. Resettlement or repatriation has been and continues to be the norm.<sup>19</sup> In Africa and in Cameroon in particular the situation has been more diverse. As indicated earlier, between the 1960s and 1980s, Cameroon adopted an "Open Door Policy" to other nationals, provided them with land and facilitated their efforts through refugee institutions in becoming self-reliant.<sup>20</sup> In a relatively small number of cases, the local settlement approach was a prelude to local integration, with refugees becoming citizens of the states which had granted them asylum. During the past two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, such opportunities have diminished due to the numerous internal upheavals in Cameroon caused by both internal and external forces. Increasingly, refugees in Cameroon from the Federal Republic of Nigerian, Chad and Central African Republic, have been camped or designated to special zones in the East, Adamawa and the Northern Regions of Cameroon, where they have been accorded measures in becoming self-reliant.

The term "refugee" often connotes a range of normative assumptions. Despite the fact that the term refers to a clear-cut legal definition, research on and descriptions of refugees using the term uncritically must be problematized. In fact, through fieldwork, it became clear that the definition of a "refugee", as acted upon within Uganda, was contested and blurry.<sup>21</sup> The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), defines IDPs 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 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.<sup>22</sup> According to Article 1 of The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and its 1967 Protocol, a refugee is a person who:

Owing to a 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 to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup>Nkatow Mafany, *An Effective Modern World History for Cameroon Schools and Colleges*.

<sup>18</sup>Chimni, "From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation."

<sup>19</sup>Chimni, "From Resettlement to Involuntary Repatriation: Towards a Critical History of Durable Solutions to Refugee Problems", *New Issues in Refugee Research*, p.30.

<sup>20</sup>C. Nkatow Mafany and Christian Asongwe, "Compliance and a Breach of the Non-Refoulement (*Jus Cogens*) Norm by Cameroonian Authorities towards Nigerian Refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon" in *Afro-Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol.4, 441-512, 2020, p.15.

<sup>21</sup>M. Grinvald, "Problems of integration of refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia", Master dissertation, Department of Geography, International Development Studies, Palacký University, 2010, p.23.

<sup>22</sup>UN-OCHA: Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 2004, available at [http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdf/UN\\_guidingprinciples\\_intdispl.pdf](http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdf/UN_guidingprinciples_intdispl.pdf), retrieved on the 21 of June 2018.

<sup>23</sup>UNHCR: Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, p. 16, available at

This is a legal definition, internationally recognized and used in determining whether a person fulfils the criteria for being a refugee. A person, recognized as a refugee, is provided with “international refugee protection”, which entitles one to certain rights, benefits, protection and assistance. It also binds them with specific obligations, defined by the host country of a refugee. Apart from the 1951 Convention, there are other regional agreements, which give their own definitions of refugees. Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, also known as Organization of African Unity’s Convention, is a regional agreement accepted in 1969, which expands on the existing definition from the 1951 Convention, characterizing a refugee as a person who:

Owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality.<sup>24</sup>

Deducing from the aforementioned definitions brainstormed, this work sees a refugee as a person that has left his/her natal country as a result of war and phobia for being persecuted for political, economic or socio-cultural reasons. Sarah Meyer sees the notion of “Self-Reliant”, as economic and social ability of an individual refugee, household or community to meet essential needs in a sustainable manner and with dignity.<sup>25</sup> In practice, self-reliance usually means granting refugees access to the economy in the host community, including through access to the labour market, education, micro-finance, language course, vocational training, and access to adequate accommodation and social services can help refugees to become self-reliant.<sup>26</sup>

### Stakeholders and Immigrant Context in the Far North Region of Cameroon

There are a Chain of multi-facet international institutions in the Far North Region of Cameroon that were in charge of local integration of Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. These partners ranged from government ministerial departments, related implementing partners of UNHCR, UN-refugee agencies and operational coordinators. Concerning government ministerial departments, we have Ministry of External Relation (MINREX), Territorial Administration, Decentralization, Economic Planning, Public Health Women Empowerment and Family, Social Affairs, Justice, Education, Water and Energy, Youth and Civic Education, National Employment Fund, *Secretariat Technique des Organs de Gestion du Status des Refugies* etc.<sup>27</sup>

Implementing partners were Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD), *Agence pour le Developpement Economique et Social (ADES)*, CAMWATER, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), FAIRMED, International Federation of the Red

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URL:<<http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf>>, Retrieved on 12 September 2016.

<sup>24</sup>Organization of African Unity (OAU), *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*, 1969, p. 1, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b36018.html>, retrieved on 12 of September 2016.

<sup>25</sup>S. Meyer, “The Refugee Aid And Development Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-Reliant of Refugees in Practice” in *New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper No. 131*, University of Oxford, United Kingdom, October 2006, p. 22.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>UNHCR, *Fact Sheet*, Cameroon, June 2017, p.2.

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Cross (IFRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Plan International, *Première Urgence-Internationale* (PUI) and Public Concern. Operational partners were ICRC, Adventist Relief Agency (ADRA), ASOL and Red Deporte, IEDA Relief, *Action Contre la Faim* (ACF) and CARE International. UN Agencies involved in the local integration of the refugees in the Far North Region were WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UN Women, FAO, UNESCO, IOM, UNDP and UNOCHA.<sup>28</sup> The international operational coordinator incharged with the duty of coordinating the overall humanitarian responses in the Far North has been delegated to UNHCR. UNHCR sectors was utilized to deliver assistance to IDPs and other affected groups. All sectors were operational, holding regular meetings. Each sector was led by a Government entity and co-led by UN agencies. There is also a bi-monthly UNHCR-chaired Multi-Sector Operation Team meeting in Maroua, bringing together more than 40 humanitarian partners intervening in the region. As of 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2013, IRIN reports: "There are 8,128 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon's Far North Region, but only 5,289 are registered by UNHCR."<sup>29</sup> Many of the Nigerians who fled into Cameroon preferred to stay with friends and family near the border areas. The refugee population fleeing from Boko Haram violent extremisms were scattered in very inaccessible localities in the North of Cameroon, and many who refused to be registered and stayed in camps were still at the mercy of the sect (Boko Haram), and were seen as threat to local security.

Between May and July 2014, over 8,000 Nigerians from Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States fled to Cameroon regions in the north. "Food and shelter for those in need were provided by local communities. However, their food stocks were running low".<sup>30</sup> Malnutrition was estimated at 25 percent, and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) has begun distributing food, despite a "volatile" security situation near the Nigerian-Far North Regional border. As of October 2014, "Cameroon hosted over 44,000 Nigerian refugees," according to an UNHCR spokesperson.<sup>31</sup> As of 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2014, it was reported that "some 13,000 Nigerian refugees crossed from Adamawa state after insurgents attacked and captured the town of Mubi in late October. The refugees fled to the towns of Guider and Gashiga in the North region of Cameroon and to Bourha, Mogode and Boukoula in the Far North."<sup>32</sup> However, the "vast majority" of these refugees returned to Nigeria, principally to the city of Yola. As of March, 2017 the number of Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon has grown to 85,000.<sup>33</sup>

### **Mechanisms in Local Integration as a Durable Solution to Self-Reliant**

The Far North Region of Cameroon, also known as the Extreme North Region is the Northern most constituent region of the Republic of Cameroon. It borders the North Region to the South, Chad to the East, and Nigeria to the West. The capital is Maroua. The region is one of Cameroon's most culturally diverse. Over 50 different ethnic groups populate the area, including the Shuwa Arabs, Fulani, and Kapsiki.<sup>34</sup> Most educated inhabitants speak French,

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>N. Hajer, *Five Things to Know About the Humanitarian Crisis in Far North Cameroon*, 22. June 2018, p .2.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Nkatow Mafany, "Compliance and Breach of the Non-Refoulement Norm", p.10.

<sup>31</sup>Harmann Edwine, interviewed on 11 of February 20120 at Ngoundere.

<sup>32</sup>Idem.

<sup>33</sup>Idem.

<sup>34</sup>V. G. Fanzo, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Collages, from Prehistoric Times to the Twenty-First Century*, (Revised And Updated Combined Edition), Team Work Press-Bankika'ay, Limbe-Cameroon, 2017, p.332.

<sup>34</sup>Article 7, Chapter II (Provision Applicable to Asylum Seeker), Paragraph (1) of the Set of Bills Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, 12 July 2005, p.3.





and the Fulani language, Fulfulde, is a common lingua franca. The concept of local integration of refugee is complex and multidimensional construct, referring to pragmatic aspects of economic insertion health, educational and social contexts. It also encompasses structural integration and cultural aspects relating to cultural adjustment, shared norms. Pragmatically in the Far North Region of Cameroon, the compass of the examination of measures of local integration of Nigerian refugees in ensuring their self-reliant, will tilt from legal-social, to economic in dimension as seen below.

## Legal and Social Integration Mechanisms

Diving into the annals of humanitarian affairs, the Republic of Cameroon has been a signatory through ratification to main refugee international and regional instruments. All the international, continental and national instruments, capitalize first on the pathway to local integration of refugees, which is through the non-refoulement (*jus cogens*) of forced migrants, in other words known a refugees.<sup>35</sup> With the outbreak of increasing violent extremism orchestrated by the Nigerian Islamic Sect, called Boko Haram in 2013, the government of Cameroon behaved in compliance with *jus cogens* norm, as refugees' international customary legal aspect. As articulated in the aforementioned instruments. Article 33 of the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees states:

No contracting State shall expel or return [refouler] a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of the territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The benefit of the present provision may not, however, be claimed by a refugee whom there are reasonable grounds for regarding as a danger to the security of the country in which he is, or who, having been convicted by a final judgment of a particularly serious crime, constitutes a danger to the community of that country.<sup>36</sup>

In addition, in pursuant of the Non-Refoulement of refugees or humanitarian migrants as articulated in related universal international instruments, Article II, Paragraph 3 of the 1959 OAU Convention, on "Asylum" also states clearly that: "No party shall be subjected by a member state to measures such as rejection at the border, return or expulsion, which should compel him to return to or remain in a territory where his or her life, physical integrity or liberty would be threatened for the reason set out in Article 1, and 2".<sup>37</sup> Finally, the Republic of Cameroon through her Lower House of Assembly on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2005, came out with her own internal set of Bills Relating to the Status of Refugees in Law No.777/PJL/AN of 2005.<sup>38</sup> This set of Bills in its Chapter three (3), entitled "Provision Applicable to Asylum Seekers" in Section 7, Paragraph (1) states that: "No person shall be turned back at the border, nor subject to any measures, whatever, that may force him to return to or remain in a territory where his or her life, physical integrity or freedom is

<sup>35</sup>C. Nkatow Mafany and Christian Asongwe, "Compliance and A Breach of the Non-Refoulement (*Jus Cogens*) Norm by Cameroon Authorities in the Far North Region of Cameroon" in *Afro-Asian Journal of social science*, p.12.

<sup>36</sup>Article 33, of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, The General Assembly of the UN, 1951, p.30.

<sup>37</sup>Article II, of The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, Adopted on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1969 by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government, CAB/LE/24.3. Addis Ababa, 10<sup>th</sup> September 1969. It Entered into Force on 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1974, p.2.

<sup>38</sup>Article 7, Chapter II (Provision Applicable to Asylum Seeker), Paragraph (1) of the Set of Bills Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, 12 July 2005, p.3.



threatened by any of the reasons mentioned in Section 2, of this law”.<sup>39</sup> The aforementioned international instruments adopted by Cameroon through ratification, offer expansive legal leeways towards the empowerment or self-reliance of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon.<sup>40</sup> More so, an additional legal impetus in rendering the Nigerian refugees self-reliant was exhibited from 2013, with the allocation of the Minawao refugees barrack located within the Far North Region of Cameroon.<sup>41</sup> In 2017, Cameroon hosted a total of approximately 97,400 humanitarian migrants. Out of, 49,300 were from the Central African Republic, 41,600 from Chad, and 2,900 from Nigeria.<sup>42</sup> The allocation of the Minawao site by the government of the Republic of Cameroon grounded the Nigerian refugees from benefiting planned diversified self-reliant local initiatives from implementing partners of UNHCR.

Legally and in reality, the allocation of the Minawao refugees' site in the Far North Region of Cameroon as a religion in humanitarian affairs, was followed by the provision of refugee identification documents to the Nigerian refugees. This was assumed by the UNHCR due to the incapacitation of the Cameroon's refugee eligibility department in the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX). Chapter 3 of Section 9 of Cameroon's 2005 refugee law, under "religious and obligations of refugee", includes a provision for refugee identity cards.<sup>43</sup> In 2007 the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC) authorized UNHCR to issue identity cards to refugees and in 2008 UNHCR started issuing cards to replace the less durable certificates. The cards were credit card size and were laminated. The cards were the only form of identification that the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon held. The GRC's Department of National Security was to take over issuance of identification cards by 2015, but the Anglophone crisis that erupted in 2016 further delayed transfer of responsibility from the UNHCR to the Refugee Eligibility Department of the MINREX. According to facts finding mission of UNHCR, over 75,000 Nigerian refugee were registered in the Far North Region of Cameroon by January 2020.<sup>44</sup> The provision of refugee identification documents to the Nigerian Refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon, helped in smooth integration of the Nigerian refugee in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

More so, pathway to citizenship was another legal paradigm by the GRC in fostering smooth local integration of Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. According to Chapter II of the Cameroon's 2005 refugee law, naturalization is possible. However, it is well beyond the means of refugees to pay for permanent residency which costs approximately US\$500. After holding permanent residency for ten years, refugees over the age of 18 are eligible for naturalization even though few cases according to official of the Republic of Cameroon.<sup>45</sup> This is because the GRC has been so look warm in reducing the price or to facilitate a mass application process like the governments of Tanzania and Zambia. According to Menyong Jones, preference was to those who were of great value to the GRC, even though the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon were not

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>D. Weissbrodt and I. Hortreiter, *The Principle of Non-Refoulement: Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Comparison with the Non-Refoulement Provisions of Other International Human Rights Treaties*, 1999, p.12.

<sup>41</sup>Nkatow Mafany and Christian Asongwe, "Compliance and a Breach of the Non-Refoulement (*Jus Cogens*) Norm by the Cameroonian Authorities towards Nigerian Refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon", p.52.

<sup>42</sup>UNHCR, *Factsheet*, p.2.

<sup>43</sup>See Chapter III of 2005 Cameroon's Law relating to the Status of Refugee, p.11.

<sup>44</sup>Cite the UNHCR

<sup>45</sup>Peter Mafany, MINREX.

in a position to contribute to the national economy because they were living as subsistence farmers/cattle grazers and did not come with any formal education. Politically, if the nearly 240,000 Nigerian refugees currently in the country were to become citizens, the politics of the Far North and Adamawa regions could shift dramatically.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, another local integrationist strategy towards the enforcement of local integration of Nigerian refugee in the Far North Region of Cameroon was through the enhancement of social connections. Perhaps the best indicator of social integration is the extent to which refugees socialize with the local population. There appear to be no social barriers between the Nigerians and Cameroonians in the Far North Region of Cameroon. The two groups socialize at all levels, including at school and community activities and there were no religious nor linguistic conflicts between the Nigerian refugees and the Cameroonians. The level of their local interaction as a durable solution to self-reliant extended to marriage. Inter-marriage was well accepted among both the refugees and the Cameroonians. Even when interviewees reported that no one in their family had intermarried, they did not have a problem with it.

Finally, education was one of the domains through which the Nigerian refugee in the Far North Region of Cameroon were integrated as a means of paving a way of self-reliant into the host community of the Far North Region of Cameroon. This was structural with Article 22 of the 1951 Convention, which states that: "the contracting states shall accord to refugees the same treatment, as is accorded to nationals with respect to basic education."<sup>47</sup> Bases for effective local integration of a refugee as a means of self-reliant into a typical Cameroonian society has been outlined in Chapter III, of the Cameroon's 2005 law relating to the status of refugees entitled, "The Rights and Obligations of Refugees."<sup>48</sup> Adding more weights, Paragraph II, of Section 10 of the same law, states that: "such persons referred as "refugees" shall receive the same treatment as nationals, as concerns the right to education, school and university registration fees and charges for student welfare services."<sup>49</sup>

### Economic Integration

Employment is one of the most important factor in facilitating and in ensuring the local integration of refugees into the society which provides opportunities to build a future in regaining confidence through self-reliant.<sup>50</sup> Mihaela from her operational point of view, opines that "refugees who are working, adjust more easily to the host community than those who are unemployed or those who are not having anything doing in auto-rendering self-reliant."<sup>51</sup> In conformity, Article 18 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee on, "Self-Employment", states that:

The contracting states shall record to a refugee lawfully in their territory treatment favourable as possible and, in any event, not less favourable than that accorded to aliens, generally in the same circumstance, as regards the rights

<sup>46</sup>U.S. Department of State Task Order No. Sawmma-13f2592, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Humanitarian Engagement and Programming in Promoting Local Integration of Refugees in Zambia, Tanzania, and Cameroon*, September 22, 2014, p. 12.

<sup>47</sup>See Article 22 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, p.2.

<sup>48</sup>See chapter III of the 2005 Cameroon's Law, Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, p.3.

<sup>49</sup>The 2005 Law Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, p. 5.

<sup>50</sup>J. Phillimore and L. Goodson, "Problem and Opportunity? As Asylum Seeker, Refugees, Employment and Social Exclusion in Deprived Urban Areas" in *Journal of Urban Studies*, 43 (10), 1715-1736, 2006, p.21.

<sup>51</sup>R. Mihaela, *Refugees And Social Integration in Europe*, Queen College, City University of New York, 2018, p.41.





to engage on his own account in agriculture, micro-projects, handicrafts and commerce and to establish commercial and industrial companies.<sup>52</sup>

In its 19<sup>th</sup> Articles, it also outlines that “refugees who are desirous of practicing a liberal profession should be empowered”.<sup>53</sup> It further illuminates that “the contracting states shall use their best endeavour consistently with their laws and constitutions to secure the settlement of such refugees.”<sup>54</sup> In ensuring self-reliant of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon the UNHCR through WFP provided cash grants and facilitated access to financial opportunities through case based monthly transfers, ranging from 50.000 to 60.000 FCFA. This depended on the size of the family. Between 2015 and 2017, over 25.000 US-Dollars were spent as annual financial grants in promoting livelihoods and economic inclusion of the refugees into the local economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon.<sup>55</sup> Mobilizing, strengthening and expanding community self-management structures and processes as another indigenous initiative of boasting the efforts of the humanitarians in promoting self-reliant of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Also the implementing partners of UNHCR in the Far North Region of Cameroon by 2016 went into negotiating, with local community heads, for pieces of land to support the Nigerian refugee agriculturally in order to auto ensure their livelihoods provision ability. During the time of our research, we discovered ten pieces of land, provided by the UNHCR through the CRS at Amchide, Mokolo and Mayo Sava. In these plots, chickens were reared and we discovered a ten hectares of Maize farm, cultivated by the Nigerian refugee within the Far North Region of Cameroon by 2019 (see the plates below).

### Self-Reliant Economic Activities in Amchide, Far North Region of Cameroon



**Source:** CRS-Far North Region, File No.12, Autonomization projects, p.3.

The two plates above show examples of economic activities that were geared at facilitating the integration of the Nigerian refugees into the local economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon. Critically, beyond purely financial aspects, employment plays a key role in furthering local integration process of refugees by improving their language skills, encouraging the formation of friendships and professional contacts with the host population, and generally helping refugees gain acceptance by their local

<sup>52</sup>Article 18 on “Self-Employment” of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup>Article 19 on “Liberal Profession” of the 1951 Convention, p.23.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>WFP-Far North Regional Bureau, File No.23, A Concise Report on Food by Prescription, 2017, p.2.

communities. At the micro-level of the individual, family or community, achieving self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods concretely translate into: being able to find, and adequately access income-generating opportunities. The village chiefs of the Far North region with the upsurge of the Nigerian humanitarian migrants in the area, assigned the suburbs to the Nigerian refugee herders for rearing of animals. The Nigerian refugees used the land primarily for agriculture even though 80% of the land surface of the Far North Region is desert pruned. Since their traditional history was pastoralism, the Nigerian refugees had to learn agricultural practices supervised by the implementing partners of UNHCR. As pastoralists, the Nigerians had cattle and therefore had more resources when they lived in Nigeria. Unfortunately, most refugees by 2013, lost their cattle before fleeing, either because the cattle were stolen or the refugees needed cash to pay ransoms to have their children returned from members of the terrorist Nigerian Islamic sect called Boko Haram.<sup>56</sup>

Access to credit has the potential to strengthen self-reliance to the Boko haram refugees from Nigeria starting businesses or purchasing greater quantities and varieties of seeds, fertilizers, and ultimately modern farm equipments and means of transportation of crops to markets. Through credit, one can also pay for education which leads to additional economic opportunities and greater self-reliance within the local economy of the region. The 2005 Nigerians interviewed reported having borrowed money only from friends for the payment of health care or from shop owners who were mostly not Cameroonian for the purchase of food between harvests.<sup>57</sup> Since 2013 the UNHCR has been working on a micro-credit program with the Government of the Republic of Cameroon.

For the most parts, the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon were not employed in the formal sector. This was because they do not have the required education or training for such employment, nor has the Government of the Republic of Cameroon made it clear how refugees could go about getting approval to work. Farming and herding were the main forms of livelihood in ensuring local integration as a means of self-reliant. Some refugees were also involved in some livelihood activities like tailoring, Night and Day watch men etc. This was the situation with Faye Ahidjo who started mending shoes with a capital of 5.000FCFA given to him by the CRS in 2017 as Cash Based Transfer.<sup>58</sup> Starting a business was difficult because the registration process was long and complicated, especially for non-citizens. One example of livelihood support is the funding that PRM provided to International Relief and Development (IRD), a U.S.-based organization. For three years (fiscal years 2010-2012), PRM provided a total of \$2.2 million for agricultural and livelihood programs in the Far North and Adamawa Regions.<sup>59</sup> Overall, with PRM funding, IRD has helped teach a nomadic, non-farming culture how to cultivate and harvest crops for household consumption, income generation, and contributing to community crop storage. IRD believes that one of its main contributions has been helping the Nigerian refugees secure land for producing crops for household consumption and for cash income. After doing this for a number of years, they believe that the Nigerian refugees, land owners, and village chiefs were now well-informed and capable of negotiating on their own. Our team interviewed ten people who have benefited from the following income-generating activities. Five years ago the chief offered land for a

<sup>56</sup>Mafany, "Compliance and Breach of the Non-Refoulement Norm".

<sup>57</sup>Issa Hayatou, 45, Herder, Ngoundere, 12 February 20120.

<sup>58</sup>Interview with Faye Ahmadou on the 12 December in Ngoundal.

<sup>59</sup>Nkatow Mafany and Asongwe Christian, "Compliance and a Breach of the Non Refoulement (Jus Cogens) Norm by Cameroonian Authorities in the Far North Region of Cameroon" in *Afro-Asian journal for social science*, p.12.





community farm, which has now grown to 27 hectares. Through IRD, seeds, tools, and training were also provided, along with two cows. The land was farmed by 39 families and it feeds hundreds of people. Community chicken farm, ten women, six Nigerians and four Cameroonians-cooperate in managing 63 chickens.<sup>60</sup> The money from the sale of eggs was kept in a bank until they have a purpose for it. It was reported that a chicken farm in Minawao site has resulted in enough income that the women were able to buy cattle which will then generate more income.<sup>61</sup>

During our mission, several women displayed their manual grinding machines which they were using for ground nuts and white beans. One of the women reported that she made a little more than US\$4 a week from selling the ground beans and nuts. She was able to feed her children at least one meal a day and sometimes two with this income and the maize she grows, plus a little income that her 10 and 12-year old children made gathering and sold firewood.<sup>62</sup> Another woman with a grinding machine made additional income by renting out her machine. Wood Cart-International Medical Corps (IMC) provided a cart for carrying wood to a single mother of three. She made about US\$3 per week selling firewood and the man who helps her also made US\$3 per week, which she fed her family of nine. Every few months she replaced the tire that costs around US\$4. Cassava drying materials, through IRD, a 35year old woman received a drying sheet, bucket, and container used in drying cassava root chips. IRD also provided training and about US\$40 of some of the refugees each benefited and started little businesses within the camps.<sup>63</sup> All these initiatives helped in local integration of the Nigerian refugees in to the local economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon. These local economic initiatives helped in rendering over 70% of the Nigerian refugees self-reliant in terms of livelihood within the Far North Region of Cameroon.

### **CHALLENGES TO SELF-RELIANT OF NIGERIAN REFUGEES IN THE FAR NORTH REGION OF CAMEROON**

The initiative towards the enhancement of local integration of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon as durable solution was not without qualms encountered. The problems were twofold: that is from the side of the refugees and from the stakeholders' involved with the resettlement of the refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. In international humanitarian law, it a peremptory that people who are in a life threatening situation, usually feel lucky enough if they manage to save the lives of their family members.<sup>64</sup> They often have no time to think about grabbing personal belongings, such as basic documents. Subsequently, the lack of documents presents a barrier for obtaining access to social services, health care or employment. This felled squarely with the situation of the Nigerian refugee in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Majority of the Nigerian refugees, found themselves in this situation and some of them who arrived the area by 2013 were still digging their way out of this dilemma by 2019. This was one of the main reasons for their unprogressive integration of Nigerian refugees into the economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon, as their rights and possibilities were notably limited, which retarded and stood as a canyon towards self-reliant of the refugees despite the strenuous self-reliant initiatives untaken by the implementing partners of UNHCR in autonomization of the

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid, p.13.

<sup>62</sup>Maimouna Hawau, 48, Housewife, Minawao, 2020

<sup>63</sup>Interview with Faye Ahmadou.

<sup>64</sup>Author's personal judgment from examination of international humanitarian law.

refugees. To obtain an IDP card, which was issued upon personal request, the refugees needed to show proves of being Nigerians, residing in the Far North Region. Without these documents, it became impasse for the Nigerian refugees to submit for an application for an IDP card at UNHCR head office in Maroua.<sup>65</sup>

More so, temporary residence registration also presented a problem, to Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. This was the situation of most who resided out of managed sites of Minawao, Fotokol and Amchide. They were not able to be registered with a legal address which could facilitate acquisition of legal autonomization of economic activities. Also, some Cameroonian state authorities corruptibly rejected the legal validity of issued documents by the UNHCR in quest for money which also hindered smooth integration of the Nigerian refugees into the local economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon.<sup>66</sup> In addition, financial restraints impeded the IDPs from Nigeria in the Far North Region of Cameroon from having the requested documents for their mobility within and out of the region which slowed down the rate of their integration within the local economy of the Far North Region. It also went along way to slow the rate, towards self-reliant of the refugees within the region.

In international humanitarian law, access to a shelter is one of the key prerequisite related in accessing or measuring the degree of achieved integration of any refugee in a host country.<sup>67</sup> According to the internal and international conventions, refugees have to be provided with a temporary accommodation upon arrival in a host economy.<sup>68</sup> Due to lack of capacity in the collective center of Minawao, many of the Nigerian refugees had settled in "informal collective centers" of Fotokol and Amchide. By 2019 due to lack of government response and insufficiently developed financing from the UNHCR and local initiatives, the housing issues of refugees within the Far North Region of Cameroon were rated the most problematic amongst others like Timangolo, Lolo and Mbile in the East Region of Cameroon.<sup>69</sup> Inadequacy in provision of shelter to the refugees also stood as one of the measure challenges that slowed down self-reliant of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

During a conflict situations, access to the education is often interrupted, and higher priorities are given to number of issues, such as provision of shelter, food or healthcare. The Nigerian refugees in the sites created in the Far North Region of Cameroon, spent over three years in collective centers, without access to education. This was a result of increasing number of refugees which had no correlation with the numbers of schools opened by the implementing partners of UNHCR. Over ninety-five percent of their entire generations grew up uneducated. This stood as one of the main challenges that did not favour rapid integration of the refugees into the local economy of the Far North Region of Cameroon. This reduced greater opportunities for socialization with mates within and out of the camps. It also reduced establishment of networks and possibility of self-expression. This had a great impact on their sense of identity and inclusion. The access to education in the Far North Region of Cameroon has been notably affected due to the encroachment and the activities of

<sup>65</sup>Gideon Fru, 44, Chief identification agent/UNHCR, Far North Region, 12 February 2020.

<sup>66</sup>Abdoulaye Mustapha, 41, Herder, Ngoundal, 14 February 2020.

<sup>67</sup>Nkatow Mafany, "Compliance and a Breach of the Jus Cogens Norm", p.13.

<sup>68</sup>See Chapter III of Section 9, of the 2005 Cameroon's Law Relating to the Status of Refugees, p.4.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid, p.12.

the Boko Haram. This was the situation at Ndomayo from 2017.<sup>70</sup> Some of the schools that were opened within the region in form of *ETAPES* were poorly staffed. The intrinsic learning zeal wasn't in the minds of the Nigerian refugees. This made many to abandon basic camp education prematurely which indirectly affected smooth integration of the refugees as a means of self-reliant. This was also as a result of language barrier.

Xenophobia has been one of the challenges facing the smooth integration of Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Procher et al, indicate that the word "xenophobia" was derived from a Greek word called *xeno*, meaning stranger or foreigner, and *phobia*, meaning fear.<sup>71</sup> From this etymology, xenophobia can be referred to as a strong dislike, hatred or fear of foreigners and strangers, which is built on negative serotype, attitudes or perceptions, which may lead to intolerance, violence, human rights abuses or even death towards foreigners in extreme cases.<sup>72</sup> By 2018, the number of Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region has risen to it prominence. This resulted to the development of the attitude of xenophobia towards the refugees by the host community of the region. This posed a serious threat to refugee integration into the local economy of the Far North Region. In the same light, xenophobia is also a psychological state of the mind and being uncomfortable with anything different and has been used to engage in politics of exclusion and discrimination.<sup>73</sup> More so, security related challenge was one major problem that plagued refugee integration in the Far North Region of Cameroon. This came as a result of the numerous perennial attacked orchestrated by the Boko Haram Islamic sect in the Far North Regions of Cameroon in places like Kolofata, Fotokol, Mayo, Ndomayo etc. Insecurity generated by the attacks from the Islamic insurgent group, had a negative impact on inclusivity of the Nigerian refugees within the Far North Region of Cameroon.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSION

Refugee crisis has taken the lead in international developmental discourses, within the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a result, Cameroon has stayed tune, playing the role of a hospitable sanctuary. This resulted to the migration of Nigerians fleeing Boko Haram violent extremism into the Far North Region of Cameroon. This article examined the various local integrationist initiatives which were carried out by the humanitarians in fostering self-reliant of the refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon. These rotated around the provision of papers, micro-economic activities and the enforcement of social-coexistence with the local community. The enhancement of humanitarian gestures were not without qualms, which were: little knowledge concerning refugees' rights by the refugees, the problem of xenophobia from the host community of the region towards the refugees etc. All these went a long way in hindering initiatives that were geared at rolling back dependency ratio of the Nigerian refugees within the Far North Region of Cameroon on the humanitarians.

<sup>70</sup>C. Nkatow Mafany, "Social Protection of Central African Refugees in the East Region of Cameroon, 1948-2017: A Historical Investigation", A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment for the Award of a Doctorate Degree in History, The University of Yaounde, 2019, p.203.

<sup>71</sup>Procher et al, *Dictionary of Contemporary English*, London, Harlow, 1978. p.175.

<sup>72</sup><sup>72</sup>Author's point of view.

<sup>73</sup>Procher et al, p.1279.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Supporting refugees' integration in society also supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The following are some of the personal proposals to stakeholders in fostering the integration of Nigerian Refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon, which is going to ensure their self-reliant within the local community. Concerning recommendations for refugees' integration on the side of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC), include streamlining of the asylum process to reduce the waiting period. This will go a long way to facilitate refugees' economic and social integration in the host society of the Far North Region and other places. The government through Ministry of Public Health and health implementing partners of UNHCR should facilitate refugees' access to health services. This should be including mental health services within the Far North Region of Cameroon. Also the Cameroon government should include clauses concerning the gaining of access by the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon into the formal sector by facilitating refugees' access to adequate employment commensurate to their qualifications. This will go a long way in ensuring self-reliant of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

More so, the UNHCR as the boss of global refugees' matters should develop multidisciplinary professional teams to work with refugees like the lawyers, social workers, family counselors and provide systematic and coordinated services geared at facilitate the integration of Nigerian refugees within the Far North Region of Cameroon. Also the UNHCR through UNESCO and other field partners, should promote cultural sensitivity talks, when interacting with the different cultural groups with the usage of translators within the sites of the region. Also measures should be taken to developing policies aimed at facilitating families to immigrate together, either into Cameroon or out of Far North Region into Nigeria. This will go a long way to speed up the family reunification process. Furthermore, the local decentralized authorities in the Far North Region should expand protection of Nigerians, by granting Temporary Protection (TP) beneficiaries, a special dispensation from employment restrictions usually granted to aliens and conferring the same rights regarding wage-earning, self-employment and liberal professions as permanent residents or nationals. Access to formal employment should also be increased by economic operators by lifting legal and administrative barriers for self-employment and wage earning for Temporary Protection (TP) beneficiaries. The stakeholders in humanitarian assistance should facilitate refugees' access to financing opportunities. This will permit the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon, to start and develop businesses. The government should struggle to facilitate freedom of movement of the refugees with the identification card. This will encourage legal employment of the Nigerian refugees in other parts of Cameroon, thus ensuring self-reliant rather than dependence on the mere humanitarian livelihoods to them by the implementing partners of UNHCR. The government should also fasten the process of degree and qualification equivalency and acceptance.

Furthermore, the Legal Department of UNHCR should ensure that the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon are aware of their rights. This should be ensured by increasing the number of sensitization teams in creating awareness on basic refugees' rights and by enabling the dissemination of correct information in Fulfulde and English, through local municipalities, employment agencies and social media, on legal procedures for self-employment,





company registration and rights for wage-earning. Also, vocational training programmes should be reviewed, designed to support Nigerian refugees' livelihoods opportunities to focus on the specific local market needs which the Nigerians could fill and be more creative in the selection of programs available, moving away from gender-stereotypical courses. Also gender sensitivity trainings should be incorporated in all livelihood programs tailored to the Nigerian refugees, covering basic modules such as gender norms, gender roles and harassment in the workplace. If implemented, we firmly believe that the level of integration that will be up lifted, which will go a long way in improving and strengthening the level of self-reliant of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

To support a continuation of the current peaceful coexistence of Nigerian refugees and Cameroonians in the Far North Region of Cameroon, the UNHCR should encourage the GRC to work with village leaders, in order to find durable solutions to the agro-pastoral issue as farmers and herders clashed over livestock that destroy crops because of lack of access to grazing areas. While this is not a uniquely refugee issue, it is perceived to be and will continue to intensify as an issue as the number of Nigerian refugees in Far North Region of Cameroon increases. The Cameroon government through the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), together with the UN refugee agency, should ensure that all Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon should be able of having the current bio-metric identification cards and that they understand the importance of taking it along when travelling out of the sites. Project mentors, should monitor the progress of Level three villages while providing increased assistance to Level one and two villages. This will include ensuring that there are teachers in the new schools and monitoring attendance rates, completion rates, and achievement rates. It should also be ensured that the livelihood assistance is being used for its intended purposes. Additional UNHCR staff should be reinforced to oversee the projects out of sites. More so, the stakeholders of humanitarian action in the Far North Region of Cameroon, should implement plans to build the capacities of local institutions to be able of managing birth registration, organizing information and sensitization campaigns around registration and documentation, and assist the GRC in organizing mobile birth-registration campaigns in all the refugees sites of the Far North Region of Cameroon.

More so, the UNHCR should intensify works and collaborations with the GRC in creating a pathway to citizenship. This should be done when the GRC is ready so that they are not pressured into making commitments that they cannot keep or creating expectations that cannot be met fully. All efforts to create the pathway should be completely consistent with GRC laws so that the validity of citizenship cannot be questioned. We also recommend UNHCR and PRM to support the local integration of refugee populations for whom voluntary return and resettlement are not feasible. They should stay focused on the local integration program even though the demands of the current emergency require significant attention and resources. This will require designating staff and budget for UNHCR and implementing partners that will be focused solely on local integration as lee-path towards self-reliant. It will also require orienting new staff of UNHCR and partner governments to help them keep focus during staff transitions and competing priorities. This will go a long way in ensuring self-reliant of the refugees. Also, the Cameroon government should work with humanitarian and development actors in securing funding for much needed infrastructure and public services such as schools, health centers, water points, and latrines for both refugees and host impoverished villages in Far North Region of Cameroon.



The WFP should continue supporting agricultural interventions that will lead to self-sufficiency and finally food-financial self-reliant of the refugees.

Conclusively, funders of humanitarian institutions should continue funding and implementing partners should lay emphases on intensify income-generating activities (autonomization of the refugees), in order to escape the cycle of poverty and instead move towards self-reliant. The GRC should improve and continue providing security at the borders of Far North Region of Cameroon with Nigeria. The GRC could improve security by establishing a community neighborhood watch program that coordinates with police on the communities' security needs. If all the aforementioned recommendations are carried by those involved, we are sure that majority of the Nigerian refugees in the Far North Region of Cameroon will be autotomized rather than continuously depending on mare humanitarian assistance.

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### LIST OF INFORMANTS

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