

Self-Reliance (Autonomization) and Livelihood Assistance to Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria: Evaluation and Value Judgment

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Abstract:

Humanitarian Action has become one of the top developmental discourses that have taken a greater percentage of media headline news. Within the 21st century, with the geometric increase in the number of humanitarian crises in African and Cameroon in particular, most humanitarians, have been caught between the frames of “autonomization and livelihood” of (to) humanitarian migrants caught within the closets of humanitarian crises. Juxtaposed with politics and monetary strings, against neutrality and humanity notions, 90% of refugees in Africa, South of the Sahara have been rendered dependent on mere food assistance from humanitarian donors, which has given room to high dependency ratio on monthly humanitarian assistance. This article examined the initiatives made by humanitarian institutions, led by UNHCR/WFP in rolling-back the high dependency ratio of Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria on mere foodstuff assistance from the humanitarians. From the quantitative and qualitative analyses made based on empirical evidence, Anglophone-Cameroonians who left North and South West Regions as from 2018 for Nigeria as a result of Violence orchestrated by the separatist fighters and the military, received humanitarian assistance from donors in Nigeria. This work stands on ground that; fewer efforts were made at rendering the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria self-reliance by joint efforts of UNHCR and WFP. This was as a result of the belief in short-live of the Armed Conflict in North and South West Regions of Cameroon, as a result of immense pressure from International Communities (ICs) and from Great Nations for an immediate ceasefire for an inclusive dialogue. These pushed the funders of humanitarian

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organizations to embark on mere livelihood assistance to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, rather than rendering them autonomous.

Keywords: Self-Reliance, Livelihood Assistance, Autonomization and Refugees.

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INTRODUCTION

For the past ten decades, the Republic of Cameroon has gone into historical annals as an oasis in the chaotic CEMAC Sub Region. The reverse became tenable as from October 2017, when violent clashes and extremisms in Anglophone Regions of Cameroon, started taking place between the military and Armed Separatist Fighters, called “Ambasonian (Amba) Boys”. Extreme violence orchestrated by the belligerents drove over hundreds of thousands of Anglophone-Cameroonians from North and the South West Regions of Cameroon, into internally (437.000)¹ and internationally displaced fellows (35.000).² The majority, of whom 60% were women, faced extreme humanitarian situations both in Niger regions of Cameroon and in Nigeria.³ This necessitated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Emergency Refugee Response for Cameroonian Refugees In Nigeria worth \$35.4 000.000 to support the lives and protection of more than half-a-million of Anglophone-Cameroonians from the two English speaking Regions of Cameroon in Cross River, Taraba, Niger Delta and Akwa-Ibom states.⁴ The notion of rendering refugees Self-reliance or autotomized, is a key component that has been devised in recent in Humanitarian Diplomacy, aimed at addressing protracted refugee situations with UNHCR/WFP have found a lot of difficulties in addressing as a result of inadequate finances.⁵ The main aims of this research work are; were Anglophone-Cameroonians refugees in Nigeria extended humanitarian assistance in Nigeria? Did the nature of the assistance render the refugees self-reliance or autonomous? From these two operational objectives, this article will end up giving a verdict on which (rendering of self-reliance or provision of livelihood assistance) carried more weight or which was inconformity with the recent 21th century humanitarian strategy.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

The main notions on which this scientific work, articulates on are: self-reliance, Livelihood Assistance, Refugees, and Anglophone-Cameroonians, which will be defined systematically as seen below. Firstly the UNHCR sees “Self-reliance” as the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs⁶ in a sustainable manner and with dignity.⁷ Self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian assistance. UNHCR’s community development approach gets communities involved in decision-making and planning, and regards refugees as active partners in assistance and protection activities, rather than passive recipients.⁸ The community development approach builds from, and further enhances, self-reliance. Self-reliance builds strong social structures and increases the levels of

¹Those who became internally displaced into other regions of Cameroon like the West, Center, Littoral, North, Far North, Adamawa, East and the South Regions of Cameroon.

²UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation, Responding to the Needs of IDPs and Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria, Supplementary Appeal*, January-December 2019, p.5.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵C. Nkatow Mafany and R. Njingti Budi, “The Integration and Protection of Displaced Persons within the Kadey Division of the East Region of Cameroon: Measures, Impact and Challenges” in *American Journal of Humanity and Social Sciences Research (AJHSSR)*, Vol. 3, 2019, p.5.

⁶This include protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education.

⁷UNHCR, *A Hand Book for Self-Reliant*, UNHCR-Geneva August 2005, p.17.

⁸Ibid.



economic activity, and socio-economic links with local communities. In other words, social self-reliance refers to the ability of a community to function with a level of cohesion, social accountability and mutual dependence-taking decisions, mobilizing resources, building and maximizing interpersonal capacity. This gears at address issues and initiatives for mutual benefit. Economic self-reliance is based upon access to, and management of material and monetary assets.

Self-reliance to an extent, underpins the other elements; that is, refugees can shift from being burdens to benefits to the host community, through being self-reliant, and self-reliance has been one of the fundamental aspect at the center of developmental approach designed to bridge the gap.⁹ One of the main motives of the promotion of Autonomization of refugees is to mitigate refugee “dependency” on relief aids. This creates the paradox evident that self-reliance is therefore defined as a process of reduction of external inputs and support for refugees.¹⁰ In contrasting self-reliance to dependency, this approach fails to analyze the conditions for refugee self-reliance, or what this would mean in practice. A consultancy report prepared for UNHCR states that self-reliance is positioned as the opposite of dependency, which “is seen to be a tendency inherent in refugees”.¹¹ Studies have shown that: dependency is an aberrant behaviour exhibited by refugees, and self-reliance a policy that can mitigate this behaviour.

Etymologically speaking, the word refugee is linked to the Latin word “*refugium*”, meaning *refuge* or to flee back, from *re-* “back” and *fugere* “to flee”.¹² As for the word *asylum*, this was originally derived from the Greek word, meaning “not”, and *sulon*, meaning “the right of pillage”. By putting these two words together, the Greek referred to a place where pillage was forbidden.¹³ The new Encyclopedia Britannica¹⁴ simply defines a refugee as “any uprooted, homeless, involuntary migrant who has crossed a frontier and no longer possesses the protection of his/her former government”. 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 fieldworks, it became clear that the definition of a ‘refugee’, as acted upon within Uganda,¹⁵ was contested and blurry. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as:

A person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, membership in a

⁹S. Meyer, “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-Reliance of Refugees in Practice” in *New Issues in Refugee Approach*, Research Paper No0131, University of Oxford, UK, October 2006, p.17

¹⁰Hanse MBENG DANG and NKATOW MAFANY, “Local Integration of Nigerian Refugees as a Durable Solution to Self-Reliant in the Far North Region of Cameroon: Measures, Challenges and Perspectives”, p.13.

¹¹Meyer, “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-Reliance of Refugees in Practice”, p.19.

¹²G. S. Goodwin-Gill, *The Refugee in International Law*, Second Edition, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, p.221.

¹³V, J. Van Selm, *The Refugee Convention at Fifty: a view from forced migration studies*, Lexington Book, 2003, p.50.

¹⁴The New Encyclopedia Britannica (2003) London: International.

¹⁵Meyer, “The ‘Refugee Aid and Development’ Approach in Uganda: Empowerment and Self-Reliance of Refugees in Practice”. Also see C. Nkatow Mafany, “Social Protection of Central African Refugees in the East Region of Cameroon, 1948-2018: A Historical Investigation” A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment for The Award of a Doctorate (Ph.D) Degree in History of International Relations, The University of Yoounde1, p.20, Still to be Defended.



particular social group or political opinion and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of protection of that country, or return there, for fear of persecution".¹⁶

Deducing from the aforementioned plethora of definitions, this study from its operational frame work, defines a refugee as he or she who is out of his or her country of origin as a result of fear of being killed and other physical dangerous factors to human life. Finally, Anglophone Cameroonians are citizens of Cameroon whose biological parents were/are from the former British Southern Cameroons, which became the state of West Cameroon from 1961, when they decided to reunite with their former brothers of *La Republique du Cameroun* through a plebiscite that was organized by the United Nations Organizations (UNO) in British portion of German Kamerun, on the 11th of February 1961.¹⁷ By 1972 with the referendum that was organized in the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the name of the nation, changed from Federal Republic into United Republic of Cameroon. The state of West Cameroon from 1972 ceased and was balkanized into the North and South West Provinces, which were later changed in 2006 into regions by a special Presidential decree, past by H. E President Paul Biya.¹⁸

BACKGROUND AND OPERATIONAL CONTEXT TO AUTONOMIZATION AND LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE

The UN organized plebiscite of 11th of February 1961 in British Southern Cameroons, resulted to the reunification of British southern Cameroons with *la Republique du Cameroun* in 1961. The form of government adopted at Foumban between 17 to 21st of July 1961 was a Federal System constituting of the two states. By the 20th of May 1972, President Ahmadou Ahidjo through a referendum that was organized in the Federal Republic of Cameroon, resulted to the transformation of the name of the country from a Federal Republic, to a United Republic of Cameroon with the balkanization of the state of West Cameroon into two provinces, namely the South and the North West Provinces. Although the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon have been pursuing self-determination and autonomy since the 1970s when Cameroon moved from federalism to a unitary state, the agitation reached new heights on 1st October 2017, when the Southern Cameroon National Council (SCNC), unilaterally declared independence.¹⁹

Following this declaration, the government responded swiftly with the deployment of huge numbers of security forces into Anglophone Regions of Cameroon. Demonstrations were violently suppressed. The crisis began in 2016 with protests by lawyers and teachers over the influence of French language in court rooms and schools. The root of the grievance includes anger over the region's under-development, its lack of political representation, and the perceived erosion of an Anglophone cultural heritage by the majority French speaking Cameroonians. The government labelled the demonstrators terrorists and muzzled dissents with hundreds of arrests. Internet accessibility in western Cameroon was prevented for three months, arguing that social media was used in fanning

¹⁶The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Geneva, 1951, available at <http://www.unhcr.org>, accessed 19 of March 2020.

¹⁷V.G. Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, Vol II, London MacMillan Publisher, 1989.

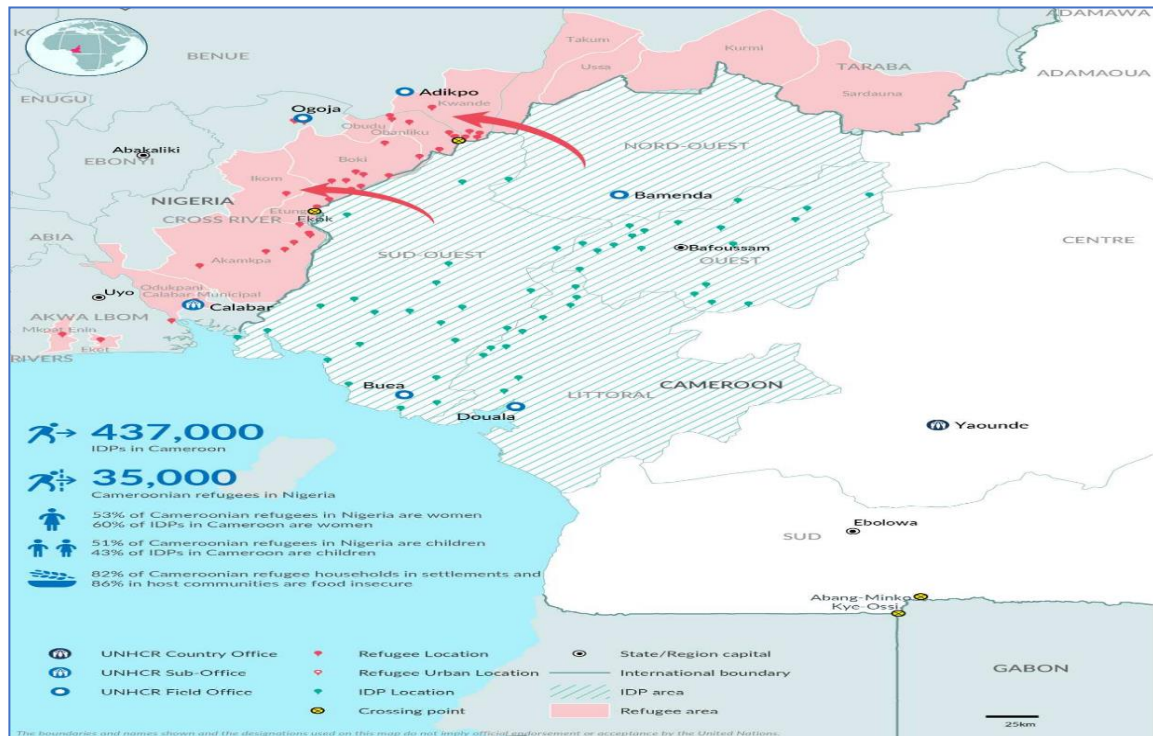
¹⁸Author's analyzes.

¹⁹The Author, *Being an Eye Witness*, 01st October 2016.



the unrest.²⁰ This situation deteriorated even further, following a unilateral declaration of Independence by Anglophone Activists called “Amazonian Governing Council” of Southern Cameroon on 1st October 2017, which resulted in deadly clashes and mass displacement of thousands of Anglophone Cameroonians into the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The majority of these displaced persons sought refuge in Cross River State, while others are found in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Taraba States.

Map Locating Areas of Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria



Source: Map, modified by the Author from: UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation: responding to the needs of IDPs and Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria*, supplementary appeal, January-December 2019, p.5.

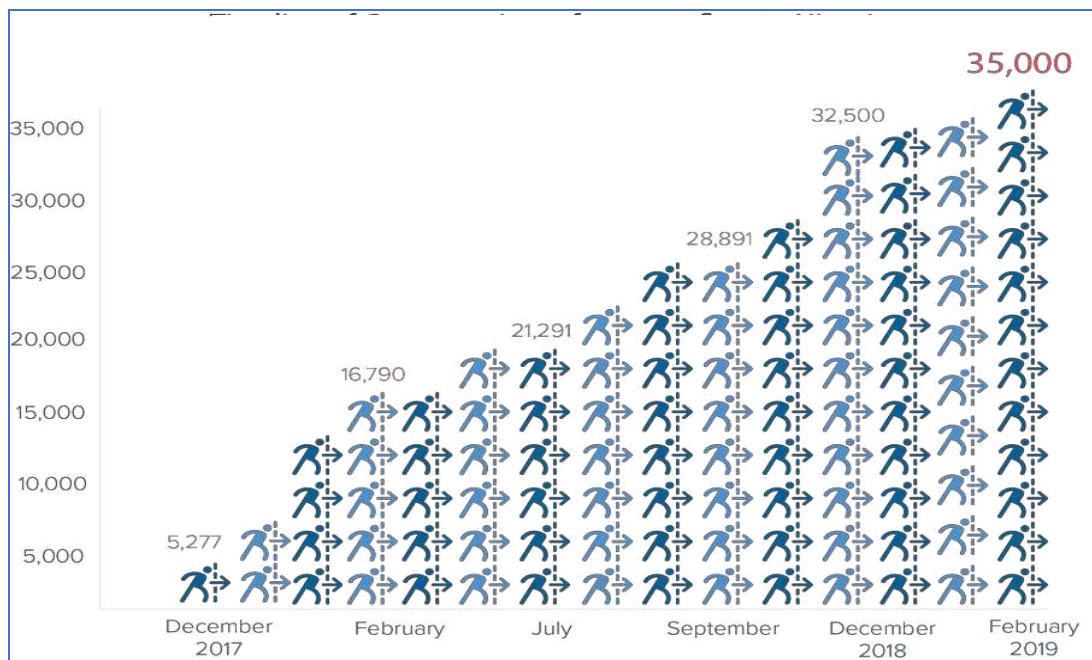
The map above, shows the main trend of movements of Anglophone-Cameroonians from the North and South West Regions, which was principally into the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As seen visible on the map, the UNHCR by 2019 on her registration list, had over 35,000 Anglophone-Cameroonians from, the North and South West Regions of Cameroon as a result of the fear of being killed by the Military of the Republic of Cameroon and also from Ambasonian pro-independent fighters who took up arms for self-defense of the local respective counties, which is a codification in international law. Still on the Map, over 437,000 Anglophone-Cameroonians from the North and South West Regions of Cameroon just between 2016 and 2020, had sought refuge as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in other regions of Cameroon like the West, Littoral, East, South, North, Far North, Adamawa and center.²¹

²⁰Idem.

²¹UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation: responding to the needs of IDPs and Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria*, supplementary appeal, January-December 2019, p.5.

Historically Anglophone-Cameroonians from the North and South West Regions of Cameroon started arriving in Nigeria: Benue, Cross River, Taraba, Akwa-Ibom and Delta along the border areas with South West Region of Cameroon in October 2017. By December 2017, there were over 5,277 registered Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. The number rose to 20,291 by March, 2018 and by October 2018, the number has reached 27,877.²² As of December 2018, there were over 32,600 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees registered within the UNHCR biometric system in Nigeria who were in need of urgent protection and assistance. The figure dramatically rose to 35,000 by the end of December 2019 and was projected to reach 45,000 by January 2020.²³ The Chart below, summarizes time-chart of outflow of Anglophone-Cameroonian to Nigeria as refugees between 2017 and 2019.

Chart showing Timeline of Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees-Outflow to Nigeria



Source: UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation: Responding the Needs of IDPs and Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria, 2019.*

Given the precarious protection situation of refugees settling along the Cameroon-Nigerian border, the Nigerian government together with the UNHCR while recognizing the advantages of refugees settling out of refugees' sites, made an appeal to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees who had settled along the borders that; refugees who wish, should resettle in designated areas where programmes would be delivered at a reasonable distance from the borders. This resulted to the designation of other two additional sites of Okende and Akpakpanga in the Cross River state that accommodated new arrivals. With the influx of these Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees into the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the protection environment became challenging with the risk of arrest, detention and refoulement; maintaining the civilian character of asylum, accessibility to persons of concern

²²Ibid, p. 13.

²³Ibid.

etc. These urged UNHCR to declare a Level two (2) emergency for the Anglophone-Cameroonian situation in Nigeria for an initial period of six months, which was subjected to review thereafter.²⁴ The Regional Bureau for Africa has been authorized to take the necessary actions to scale up UNHCR's operational capacity to respond to this emergency. In March 2018, the Federal Government of Nigeria granted a two-year Temporary Protection Status to Anglophone-Cameroonians seeking asylum in Nigeria.²⁵

Since refugees are always vulnerable to contingencies, international humanitarians were implored to come to the rescue of the yearning Anglophone-Cameroonians in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Taraba States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The autonomization and self-reliance humanitarian initiatives were carried out, based on series of field assessments and consultations with relevant stakeholders. It was also drawn from findings of an Inter-Agency Multi-Sector Rapid Assessment conducted in February 2018 in five Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Obanliku, Boki, Ikom, Etung and Akamkpa; and follow-up field missions in Cross River, Benue and Akwa Ibom States.²⁶ These assessments were all geared toward identifying the needs of an estimated over 35,000 Anglophone Cameroonian refugees in the area. The central implementing partners were Central Emergency Response Funds (CERF) submission by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), UNICEF and UNFPA to respond to the Cameroon emergency.

REASONS FOR THE AUTONOMIZATION OF ANGLOPHONE-CAMEROONIAN REFUGEES IN NIGERIA

Traditionally, Self-reliance is one of the fundamental goals in humanitarian diplomacy, after humanity clause from the humanitarians. This is because self-reliance provides the basis for durable solutions, which is a whole foundation working, towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Traditional humanitarian relief or assistance is increasingly viewed as undermining the capacities of individual Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to cope with crisis, which leads to dependency syndrome. Self-reliance is a process that is feasible in all humanitarian programme setting. Self-reliance is right no matter what the ultimate durable solution will be. There are a number of arguments which still act like preludes or peremptory empowering norms. As a result, self-reliance ensures that refugees are treated in accordance with human rights principles. Self-reliance addresses human development and self-esteem among refugees or returnees.²⁷ It also addressing coexistence issues and enforces peace-building processes. Self-reliant also ensures food security and tackles poverty reduction. It is one of the guiding principles of the UN Development Group (UNDG). It also enables humanitarians to cope with budget constraints. It also builds basis for durable solutions and finally, it promotes jargon learning and recognizes reality.²⁸

Concerning the reasons for mere livelihood assistance, in related refugee discourses, refugees have the right to "first aid" in livelihood assistance. Nkatow Mafany in one of his articles, posits that "a refugee is someone who is out of his/her

²⁴Ibid, p.14.

²⁵UNHCR, *Protection Strategy for Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria 2018-2019*, p.3.

²⁶www.ambazoniafoundation.org > Blog, retrieved on the 20th of March 2020.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

country of origin because of fear of persecution.”²⁹ The person who flees his/her country for fear of being killed, takes nothing alongside nothing with him/her and ends up finding his/herself in a strange land without food, document and shelter. This felled squarely with the case of the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees from the North and South West Regions of Cameroon in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The 1951 status relating to the status of refugees,³⁰ its 1967 protocol³¹, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) convention relating to the status of refugees³² and the 2005 Cameroons law on IDPs³³ are all peremptory codified norms internationally, regionally and nationally known as the bases for refugees’ protection. After categorizing the vulnerability of Anglophone-Cameroonians in Nigeria under “Level B”, the UNHCR through her implementing partners like CERF, FAO, WFP, the Red Cross, UNICEF and UNFPA were given the mandate of responding to the plights of the yarning Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. The question that looms is: which was more important? Empowering (facilitating self-reliant-Autonomization) the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees or granting mere livelihood assistance to the refugees in the aforementioned states. In humanitarian action, which is more important? Mere assistance or empowering refugee. We hope that after the examination and weighting the aforementioned both humanitarian initiatives or concepts of their application on the refugees by the humanitarians, we will be able, to make a good judgment of which out weighted which, with the situation of the Anglophone-Cameroonian in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

AUTONOMIZATION (SELF-RELIANCE) PARADIGMS

Persons of concern by UNHCR are empowered through self-reliance activities. This reduces the dependency syndrome on mere livelihood assistance. This help prepares them to face the future. In discourses of Humanitarian Diplomacy (HD), the different paradigms of autonomization of refugees fall within the frames of resettlement, distribution of cash based transfers, seeds and agricultural inputs, the training of women’s groups in income generating activities and the provision with cash grants for start-up of activities, training of women in food processing techniques, training of men and women in improved agricultural techniques and in food processing.³⁴ As the crisis between the authorities in the majority Francophone-Cameroon and English-speaking protesters in the North West and South West Cameroon continues, tens of thousands of Anglophone-Cameroonians have been forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. As of 8th May 2018, the Government of Nigeria with support from UNHCR has registered 21,291 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees of which children made up about 50% of the population.³⁵ These refugees were located in four states in the Federal Republic, namely Cross River hosting about 17,003, Benue state hosting approximately 3,525, Akwa Ibom state harbouring about 197 and Taraba

²⁹C. Nkatow Mafany, “The Enigmas of Humanitarian Assistance in the East Region of Cameroon”, Upcoming in *Afro-Asian Journal of Arts and Humanity*, p.3.

³⁰The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is available at www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/oc_ref.htm, retrieved on the 1st of January 2017.

³¹The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugee, General Assembly of the UNO, 1966.

³²The OAU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 10th September 1969, by the Assembly of head of states and government, 1969.

³³See The 2005 Law, Relating to the Status of Refugees in Cameroon, Adopted by the Lower House of Assembly, 2005.

³⁴V. Barbelet, *Livelihood of central African refugees in Cameroon*, HPG working paper, March 2017

³⁵Ibid.



hosting about 584 Anglophone-Cameroonians.³⁶ The table below, summaries the total number of Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees from the North and South West regions of Cameroon in the Cross River State, Benue, Taraba and Akwa-Ibom, according to sex ratio and age ranges, grouped between 0-4, 5-11, 12-17, 18-51 and 60 and above registered by the UNHCR with the help from the Nigerian government.

Number of Anglophone Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

States	LGAs	0-4		5-11		12-17		18-51		60+	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
CROSS RIVER	Obanliku	502	528	893	765	523	358	2,024	835	232	90
	Boki	349	329	502	497	358	360	1,247	1,008	151	76
	Akamkpa	142	155	162	172	98	120	774	451	70	42
	Etung	117	112	168	190	103	105	427	674	38	25
	Ikom	84	80	87	69	55	48	351	215	18	12
	Calabar	08	07	08	7	15	19	55	58	04	04
	Obudu	01	05	04	07	01	03	14	08	00	00
BENUE	Kwande	399	415	500	05	212	147	844	381	85	42
TARABA	Sardouna	53	55	72	500	35	29	177	79	10	04
	Mkpat-E	04	03	03	70	00	4	35	35	05	02
AKWA IBOM	Eket	04	00	01	02	02	02	14	21	00	06
	Oron	02	02	01	01	01	02	13	08	00	00
Total		1,005	1,671	2,401	2,281	1,403	1,197	5,978	3,773	619	303

Source: www.ambazoniafoundation.org > Blog, retrieved on the 20th of March 2020.

Concerning the granting of status or status determination, UNHCR was the sole international traditional institution that was responsible for the choice of those refugees or displaced persons to be granted a refugee status. The 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the OAU Convention of 1969 Relating to the Status of Refugees, emphasise that: "refugee Status was to be given on individual basis or grounds."³⁷ By 2019, registration of Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in the host states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, was implemented in a manner that ensured that: every refugee held a certificate or a refugee card. The provision of travelers' documents by UNHCR to the Anglophone-Cameroonians in Nigeria, was according to Article 27 and 28 of the refugee Convention of 1951, stating that:

³⁶C. Nkatow Mafany and Asongwe Christian, "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" upcoming in *Afro-Asian Journal*, p.12.

³⁷Article 12(1-2) of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee, p. 22 and Article 6(1) of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa 10th September 1969, p.4.

the Contracting States shall issue to refugees lawfully staying in their territory travel documents for the purpose of travel outside their territory, unless compelling reasons of national security or public order otherwise require, and the provisions of the Schedule to this Convention shall apply with respect to such documents. [...]. Travel documents issued to refugees under previous international agreements by parties thereto shall be recognized and treated by the Contracting States in the same way as if they had been issued pursuant to this article.³⁸

According to UNHCR special Appeal for Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, by January 2019, over 35.000 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees were registered in Nigeria. 27.000 were varified and enrolled into the UN Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS).³⁹ The registration of these huge number of displaced Cameroonian facilitated the path toward self-reliance within their host sites. It also facilitated the delivery of the right quantity of humanitarian stuffs, to the new Anglophone Cameroonian refugees in Cross River, Benue, Akwa Ibom and Taraba states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who kept on arriving *en masse*, as the Anglophone-Cameroonian crisis kept sky-rocking by the year 2020, due to the unwillingness and unfaithfulness of Cameroon's state authorities in calling for an immediate ceasefire and the organization of a Genuine National Dialogue (GND), in order, to address the root causes of the problems, dispite enormous callings and pressure from the international communities and individual respective countries. In line with some of the measures that were in adopted in ensuring self-reliance of the Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees was the identification of the refugees as provided in Article 28 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of refugees.⁴⁰ As a result, the plates below, show sample of mass arrival and provision of refugees sample identification cards to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in the aforementioned Nigerian States. The refugee identification cards offered by the UNHCR to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria were of two types, which were based on individual identification and the last one, based on the composition of the family. All these were geared at rendering the refugees self-reliance, where ever they were found in Nigeria.

³⁸Article 28 (1 and 2), of the 1951 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, p.30.

³⁹UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation: Responding the Needs of IDPs and Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria, Supplementary Appeal*, January-December 2019, p. 9.

⁴⁰Article 28 of the 1951 Convention, Relating to the Status of Refugees, Geneva, 1951, p. 28.



Sample Identification Cards in Taraba State, Nigeria



Source: UNHCR-Taraba State, Album No. 20, Monthly Captions, p.23.

In order to strengthen the Anglophone-Refugees in Nigeria by 2019, according to UNHCR, 2,235 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Anyeke settlement site in the Benue state in the national health insurance scheme. This was aimed at improving their access to health care services.⁴¹ In addition, concerning self-reliance in the domain of economic initiatives, the UNHCR through her implementing partners put in less efforts in the distribution of farming kits like tools, seed etc to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees to foster autonomization (self-reliant), in order to ensure that the refugees are less dependent on humanitarian assistance from UNHCR/WFP and other field partners, either national or international.⁴² Less self-reliant strategies were carried out for so many reasons. Firstly, the set aside yearly budget that was destined for humanitarian assistance to the refugees was limited compared with the geometric increase in the number of the refugees in Nigeria. Secondly, it was a result of the notion that: the crisis was going to be short-live. This was also coupled with the numerous pressure and calls from the UNO, the European Union, African Union and from other great nations for inclusive and genuine talks. The numerous calls from these directions made the nostalgia of returning back, to grow amongst the Anglophone-Cameroonian

⁴¹UNHCR, *Cameroon Situation: Responding the Needs of IDPs and Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria*, p.9.

⁴²Emmanuel Nfor, 47, Field Assistance Officer UNHCR-Taraba State, Buea, 1st February 2020.

refugees from the two English speaking Regions of Cameroon who were in Nigeria.⁴³ The Anglophone-Cameroonians who were formally business men and women North and South West Region of Cameroon, prior to beginning of the crisis in 2016, who were in Nigeria as refugees as a result of the crisis by 2020, were not given wished cash to kick start a business for their self-reliance.⁴⁴ Emiliane Nsoh, one of the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees from Bafut in the Cross River State, testified that what they received were cash based transfers for their monthly food. She further reiterated that:

I was a business woman in Bafut prior to the crisis of 2016. My house and my provision shop were all burnt. I lack the start off cash. If I have the start-off cash, it's going to help me sustain the daily bread of my four children who are dependent on me with the little monthly Kilograms of rice I receive from the agents of the UN-Refugee institution.⁴⁵

This shows the level of frustration; the Anglophones-Cameroonian refugees were undergoing in their different respective camps in Nigeria. As a result, Emiliane Nsoh between 2017 and 2020 was now involved in cultivation of Maize and vegetable within the small piece of land she acquired from Local Government Authority. In addition, the possibility of self-reliance of Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria was minimal. This was because 90% of the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria were in the Biafrian-Igbo concession, known as the Eastern Region of Nigeria (See Map Above). This is a zone in Nigerian where there is high competition in the private sector in Nigeria, dominated by the influential Igbo community. The Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in this zone, found it very difficult to integrate into the informal economy. This was almost the same situation of political togetherness of British Southern Cameroons with the East Region of Nigeria between 1922 and 1961, whereby they were overrode by the Igbos politically, economically and socio-culturally.⁴⁶ When the wind of change was blowing across Africa by 1960, British Southern Cameroonians during the UN-organized plebiscite of February 1961, decided to vote in order to reunite with their former brothers of *La Republique du Cameroun*. One of the reasons was the Igbo-Factor.⁴⁷ The memories of the "Igbo-Factor"⁴⁸, made Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria to be less interested in integrating into the informal economy. What was in most of their minds, were the solution to the end of the crisis and the desire to return back home. All these made many Anglophone-refugees within Nigeria, to remain dependent on foreign assistance from the humanitarian institutions.

During the time of our research, we fortunately came across some Anglophone-Cameroonian IDPs in Nigeria, who had engaged in the retailing of *Gari* with in most of the refugee camps across the Cross River and other states. Refugees' attitudes to risky businesses varied: in general, most were worried in engaging, due to their status, as

⁴³Idem.

⁴⁴Idem.

⁴⁵Emiliane Nsoh, 45, Housewife (refugee), Onitsha, 12 January 2020.

⁴⁶V. G. Falso, *Cameroon History for Schools and Colleges, From Pre-Colonial to Post-Colonial Era*, Macmillan Publisher, London, p.231.

⁴⁷E. Tambi and B. Robert, *A History of the Cameroon*, Longman-London, 1974, p.56.

⁴⁸"The Igbo-Factor" is also termed the "Igbophobic Factor" in the History of the decolonization of British Southern Cameroons. Igbophobic sentiments was a negative feelings that developed amongst British Southern Cameroonians against the presence of the Igbos in British Southern Cameroons from 1922 to 1961. It was caused by the intimidation, domination, discrimination and harassment of British Southern Cameroonians by the Igbos. These were manifested politically, economically and socio-culturally. That is why during the plebiscite of 11th February 1961, British Southern Cameroonians voted against joining Nigeria for *La Republique*, in order to escape all these.



“refugees”. One girl in Akwa Ibom State, for instance in 2018, was advised by her mother from Mamfe in the South West Region of Cameroon, not to buy a large quantity of flour and *Gari* on credit, fearing the consequences if she was unable to repay the debt. This was because, as refugees, she may face harsher consequences or may not be forgiven as easily by the lender. The lady said “my mother said to me, not to take too much on credit because she fears i will not be able to repay.”⁴⁹ Since we are foreigners in Cross River, it is a priority not to get in trouble.”⁵⁰

Many Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria expressed fear and concern over getting loans from the implementing partners of the UNHCR or buying commodities on credit and shied away from using credit as part of their livelihood strategies. All these show that little efforts were made to ensure self-reliance of Anglophone-Cameroonians refugees in Nigeria. All these expressions, revile that: the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, had limited empowerment means. Economically, the Federal government of Nigeria, through the Cross River State donated over 100 hectares of land and 800 million Naira (Close to 1.4 000.000.000 FCFA) to Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees, seeking refuge in the state by 2019.⁵¹ This was disclosed by Eteng Williams, the Speaker of the Federal House of Assembly, during the Humanitarian Development Nexus meeting between the UNHCR, state ministries and international agencies. Eteng Williams revealed the land will enable the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees to be self-employed but it became a paradox because the accompanying means was limited at the disposal of the IDPs from the humanitarian institutions.⁵² Summarily, concerning additional budget set aside by UNHCR to meet up with initiatives of rendering Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria autonomous (Community empowerment self-reliance) by 2018, stood at 1.134.602 US Dollars.⁵³ Apart from these initiatives geared at autonomizing (self-reliance) the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, we are going to look at the food aid (livelihood assistance) to the refugees from the humanitarian bench to the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria.

LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE TO ANGLOPHONE-CAMEROONIAN REFUGEES IN NIGERIA

As earlier alluded, livelihood assistance are the foodstuffs provided by the implementing partners of UNHCR like WFP for their daily survival. According to a joint WFP-UNHCR strategic assessment of October 2018, concerning the development of a Joint Food Security Development Strategy (JFSDS), implemented through Cash Based Intervention (CBI) for food and livelihood assistance, found that over 8.000 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees had benefited.⁵⁴ From field findings, one of the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria disclosed to us that most of them in Nigeria have being receiving a sum of monthly cash-based interventions of 7,200 naira (\$20) per month from the UNHCR to cover food and basic needs.⁵⁵ But refugees who spoke to *Al Jazeera* said there have been occasional delays in receiving the payments, which have also been reduced to 4,600 naira (\$12) since January.⁵⁶

⁴⁹Ernestine Tambe, 39, Petit Trader, North West Region of Cameroon, 12th of December 2019.

⁵⁰Idem.

⁵¹Local Government Authorities (LGAs), File No. 11, Assistant Projects to Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Cross River State, 2020, p.3.

⁵²<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/10/un-bracing-40000-cameroonian-refugees-nigeria-2/>, retrieved on 23rd of March 2020.

⁵³UNHCR, *Cameroon situation*, p.21.

⁵⁴Ibid, p.10.

⁵⁵Emmanuel Tabe, 50, refugee, Cross River State, 10th February 2019.

⁵⁶Al Jazeera news. Com, accessed on the 12 of February 2020.



One of the refugee emphasized to us that "Before the CBI comes monthly, I have already borrowed money to feed and take care of my baby,"⁵⁷ adding that her monthly payment is not enough to feed her and her four-month-old baby. She also reiterated that "We usually start paying debts with some of the money whenever it comes."⁵⁸

Some refugees living in host communities in Cross River told Al Jazeera they were unable to receive their CBIs because they cannot afford to spend up to 3,000 naira (\$8) to travel to Ogoja where the money was oftenly being disbursed.⁵⁹ The UN agency for refugees within the same year in 2019 emphasized that they were going to invest more funds into livelihood interventions to help the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, become self-reliance. The agency was also hoping to raise an additional \$27.3million for Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, but funding for this supplementary appeal stood at 56 percent in early December 2019.⁶⁰ Adding to livelihood modelled theories, by 2019 through the public health programme that was tailored, over ten (10) boreholes were drilled in Adagom refugee settlement site in the Cross River state by the UNHCR and the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), benefiting the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees and the host community of the site. The UNHCR between 2018 and 2019 conducted targeted distribution of hygiene kits, while the construction of latrines in the refugee settlement of Akpakpanga in the Cross River state were also carried out to foster livelihood of the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria as tailored by humanitarian principles.⁶¹ Concerning the domain of the "Right to A Shelter" as articulated Article 1 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, over 200 Anglophone-Cameroonian benefited from the construction of permanent shelter in Anyeke refugee site settlement, while the construction of permanent shelter to over 600 household in Adagom were also under completion by the UNHCR.⁶²

The October 2018 findings of UNHCR/WFP showed that 99% of Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees, both in and out of the designated camps were largely dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic daily needs. In addition, the WFP Emergency Food Security Assessment found that refugee households in settlement and in host communities were severely or moderately food insecurity. The plates below, demonstrates pragmatic evidences of the dependence of Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria on humanitarian foodstuffs.

Dependence of Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria on Food Assistance from UNHCR/WFP

⁵⁷Glory Tiku, 18, Refugee, Nigeria, 12 February 2019.

⁵⁸Idem.

⁵⁹Al Jazeera news.com, accessed on the 20th of March 2020.

⁶⁰UNHCR, *Cameroon Special Appeal*, p.13.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid, p.14.





Source: UNHCR/WFP-Cross River State, Album No.23, Monthly Livelihood initiatives to Anglophone-Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria, 2019, p.50.

The plates show refugees around distribution units to collect items like rice, groundnut oil, Savon, Maggi, sugar, salt, sachet tomatoes etc. This made majority of the refugees to adopt negative coping strategies for daily survival. That is why the UNHCR/WFP decided to adopt the CBT assistance programme, as expressed by Emmanuel Kante,⁶³ not being as the best strategy in resolving the livelihood requirements. To address the increasing protection and lifesaving needs of Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria in the course of 2018, the UNHCR established a supplementary budget to strengthen protection capacity and respond in Cameroon and Nigeria. The additional requirement for 2019 presented in this appeal, amounted to 35.4000.000 US Dollars of which 8.000.000 was for Cameroon while 27.4000.000 was for the situation in Nigeria. In a more explicit manner, additional food security budget to the Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, stood at 14.941.492US Dollars and for basic and domestic needs stood at 1.867687 US Dollars.⁶⁴

⁶³One of the humanitarian workers.

⁶⁴UNHCR, *Cameroon Special Appeal*, p. 21.

CONCLUSION AND A VALUE JUDGMENT

Nigeria remains one of countries, “*Par Excellent*” in West Africa, concerning the respect of *non-refoulement*, as articulated in Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. From the analyses made, by 2019 she hosted over 35.000 Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees. The provision of livelihood assistance and the initiative aimed at rendering the refugees self-reliant are all embedded in all international and national instruments, guaranteeing the status of refugees. The pending question was; which of the following was better towards the attainment of Sustainable Goal; rendering the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, self-reliant or mere provision of livelihood assistance from humanitarians? Deducing from the analyses made above, we realized that; concerning the notion of autonomizing Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria, the UNHCR/WFP supplementary budget for 2018 stood at 1.134.602 US Dollars for self-reliant while that of livelihood assistance stood at 1.867687 US Dollars. From these numerical-empirical evidences, it clear that less initiative were undertaken by the humanitarians, geared at rendering the Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria autonomous or self-reliance. This was as a result of limited funding, complexity of the crisis, though internal, with an international status, the over-zealous expectation of a short life span of the crisis just to name a few. From a value judgment, this research work stands on grounds that; fewer efforts were initiated in rendering Anglophone-Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria self-reliant. This made a greater percentage of the refugees to be dependent on monthly humanitarian assistance which made the state of majority to be deplorable by 2021 humanitarian year.

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