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AN APPRAISAL ON THE PREDICAMENT OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND REFUGEES OF THE ANGLOPHONE ARMED CONFLICT IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

As a result of the outbreak of the contemporary Anglophone crisis in late 2016, an armed conflict broke out in the Anglophone North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon between the military and Ambazonians separatists called "Amba Boys". The unprecedented violence and egregious violations of human rights and humanitarian norms in the armed conflict led to a daunting and grave humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone regions (South West and North West Region), with tens of thousands forcefully displaced as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and hundreds of thousands as refugees in neighbouring Benue and the Cross River State of Nigeria living under dire conditions. United Nations humanitarian agencies and several national and international non-governmental humanitarian agencies have been concerned and overwhelmed by the scale and gravity of the humanitarian disaster in the Anglophone regions, which they have qualified as one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises South of the Sahara. This paper is meant to examine the predicament of Anglophone IDPs in Cameroon and Anglophone refugees in Nigeria, with emphasis on the humanitarian relief efforts undertaken by various stakeholders to alleviate their plight. The paper is essentially a case study and adopts the qualitative research approach with data obtained from secondary sources through the desk research method.

KEYWORDS

Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees, Armed Conflict, Anglophone armed conflict, Crisis/Regions.



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INTRODUCTION

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) asserts that new or aggravated features of contemporary violence present huge challenges in terms of protection of civilians and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) application. While the justifications for and qualifications of some of these situations of violence may be in dispute, there can be no disagreement about the magnitude of human suffering that any armed violence causes. Where international humanitarian law is not respected, human suffering becomes all the more severe and the consequences become all the more difficult to overcome. Deliberate attacks against civilians, indiscriminate attacks, forced displacement of populations, destruction of infrastructure vital to the civilian population, use of civilians as human shields, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture, destruction of civilian property and looting have been perpetrated by governmental forces and non-state armed groups around the globe. Likewise, access to populations in need of humanitarian aid remained a constant problem, aggravating the already desperate plight of millions of people caught up in war (ICRC, 2003).

Situating the Background of the Anglophobe Crisis

From the off shoot of the Anglophone armed conflict in October 2016, the civilian population of the Anglophone North-West and South-West Regions became victims of gratuitous violence and human rights violations perpetrated by the Cameroonian defense and security forces and Non-state armed separatist groups. This situation forced the population to abandon their homes and move to secured locations in the Anglophone Regions and in some localities in the Francophone Regions as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), meanwhile, others fled to neighboring Nigeria as refugees. According to United Nations services and some non-governmental humanitarian organizations, there are more than 679,000 IDPs within Cameroon and about 52,000 refugees in Nigeria, all of who are from the conflict-torn Anglophone North-West and South-West Regions of the country. By virtue of the scale of the humanitarian crisis, several humanitarian agencies, including the Cameroonian government with its emergency humanitarian assistance plan, carried out extensive humanitarian relief efforts to provide assistance to the displaced population. However, these efforts appeared insignificant in the face of the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis.

This paper therefore set out to examine the predicament of Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons in Cameroon and refugees in Nigeria, and also to critically analyze the efforts made by the government of Cameroon and different national and international humanitarian agencies to alleviate their suffering. Section one addresses conceptual discussions on humanitarianism, displacement, Internally Displaced Persons and refugees; section two examines the plight of Anglophone IDPs and refugees, section three provides an account on national efforts, while section four lays out international efforts to provide humanitarian relief to Anglophone IDPs and refugees; finally, section five concludes and offers some recommendations.

Statement of the problem

The upsurge of the Anglophone crisis from the year 2016 has resulted in the displacement of thousands of people fleeing to other towns and cities of the country and beyond. This, as has been observed has affected the lives of children, women and men physically, economically and psychologically. The ongoing socio-political crisis has also rendered these persons vulnerable, exposed and dependent on others. In this wise individual, the government, nongovernmental organizations and other international bodies have resorted to ways of seeing how these IDPs can be

provided with financial, material and psychological assistance in order to help alleviate their sufferings.

Objectives of the study:

- To highlight the predicament faced by internally displaced persons from the English-speaking regions.
- To analyze the efforts made by the government, Non-governmental and humanitarian organizations in the provision of physical and psychological assistance to IDPs
- To highlight the efforts made by international organizations towards the provision of relief to IDPs

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSIONS

Humanitarian Crisis

There is a vivid and refined academic debate over the definition of the concept of humanitarian crisis. However, Humanitarian Coalition (2020), posits that a humanitarian crisis or humanitarian disaster is defined as a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or wellbeing of a community or large group of people.

However, Jørgen Carling (2015), provides a comprehensive definition by defining humanitarian crises as 'any situation in which there is a widespread threat of life, physical safety, health or basic subsistence that is beyond the coping capacity of individuals and the communities in which they reside'. Such crises may evolve slowly or erupt suddenly, and they may result from either natural or human factors (Carling, 2015).

Humanitarian crises can therefore emerge from natural and human factors such as conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics, famine and other emergencies outbreaks. However, the focus of this research is limited to human factor, most especially conflicts, in analyzing the human rights and humanitarian crises in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, which are the cause of the displacement of several hundreds of thousands of people internally and externally.

Displacement

On the issue of displacement, Azar (1990), asserts that the present day phenomenon of displacement of people within countries and across borders is a defining feature of the contemporary context of insecurity, violence and conflict, both as a consequence of conflict and a contributing factor to conditions of deprivation and violations of rights of personal security and freedom, contained within assertions on preconditions for protracted situations of conflict across borders and internally within states (Azar, 1990). The term displacement indicates an element of force, involuntary or coerced movement as opposed to where an individual or group chooses to migrate. A refugee is a person who flees across an international border, while a displaced person is forced from his/her community but remains in the territory of the country of origin (International Bureau for Children's Right, 2010). In this regard, Carrasco et al. (2014), states that:

- Refugees are persons 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, are 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' (Article 1 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees).

- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), are persons or groups of persons 'who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border' (Para. 2 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement) (Carrasco et al., 2014).

The causes of displacement have been described in five broad categories: displacement related to conflict; generalized violence and human rights violations, natural disasters and the effects of climate change; development projects and, the fifth, other circumstances. Regarding displacement, whether internal or external, three perceptions of the concepts are presented: human rights violations can lead to displacement in the first instant; human rights violations can occur during and following displacement; and arbitrary displacement can be considered a human rights violation in itself. In this aspect, while the right not to be displaced, outside of the limited protections afforded by international human rights law, does not exist as a distinct right explicitly formulated in any international human rights convention, it could rely instead on the unlawful acts leading to displacement or the combined violation of several human rights resulting from displacement and on the state's national systems within which the displacement occurs as primary duty bearer (Morel, 2014). The focus of this paper is on displacement related to conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations.

The recognition that the rights of refugees and displaced persons can be addressed not only through humanitarian means began to surface within the United Nations and non-governmental organizations during the 1980s and resulted in a still fragmented approach to the issue of displacement. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the main international agency responsible for refugees and internally displaced people. In situations where there are large numbers of displaced people fleeing at the same time, UNHCR and the host country establish together camps for refugees or the Internally Displaced Persons. Due to considerations of administrative efficiency, the host governments may require the refugees or internally displaced to be registered and resident in a camp in order to access social services. Those persons that do not follow these requirements are called 'self-settled' refugees. They are often deprived of identity cards and cannot access basic services (Carrasco et al., 2014).

The elements of the definitions of refugees and internally displaced people status are relevant as determined by the applicable international legal framework consisting of a complex web of legal instruments. Thus, legal and institutional frameworks have been developed regarding Internally Displaced Persons and refugees in certain provisions of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law, and also within institutional frameworks of the United Nations Human Rights System, United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the United Nations Special Reporter on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons. Meanwhile, the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) includes forced displacement into the definition of crimes against humanity, where displacement of groups occurred through expulsion or other coercive acts not permitted under International Law, as part of widespread or systematic attack directed against civilian population (Carrasco et al., 2014). These legal and institutional frameworks

apply on the Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons and refugees displaced by the armed conflict in the Anglophone Regions, and also on the relief actions of humanitarian agencies at home and abroad.

The Plight of Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons (Idps) And Refugees

The violence and human rights violations in the Anglophone Regions due to the separatist armed conflict have produced an unprecedented number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees, which, according to humanitarian experts, is on the scale of a humanitarian crisis. From the onset of the armed conflict, the Cameroonian government was in denial of the existence of a humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone regions and as such disputed the number of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees advanced by Human Rights and Humanitarian Organizations, and did nothing to assist them. During the first few months of the armed conflict, which broke out in late September 2016, Amnesty International (2017), revealed that by April 2018, people in the Anglophone regions were caught up in the increased violence from individuals and groups suspected of sympathizing with or supporting the armed struggle on the one hand, and in the human rights violations committed by security forces on the other hand. Many continued to flee the Anglophone regions into neighboring Nigeria and to other regions in Cameroon. As a result of the security operations and the consequent violence, over 150,000 people became internally displaced and more than 20,000 fled to Nigeria where they were living in remote locations, requiring humanitarian support.

Human Rights Watch (2018), further states that by July 2018, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that since December 2017, the violence had resulted in the internal displacement of over 160,000 people in the North-West and South-West regions, with many of them hiding in the forests. Between 20,000 and 50,000 more, according to UN Refugees Agency (UNHCR), fled across the border to Nigeria's Benue and Cross River states. But government figures put the number of Internally Displaced Persons in the two regions at 75,000 (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Nonetheless, the number of internally Displaced Persons and Refugees continued to increase dramatically as the armed conflict continue to exacerbate and spiral out of the control.

Meanwhile, the U.S. House of Representatives revealed in a hearing on the 7th of May, 2019, that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated in April 2019 that more than 530,000 people were internally displaced in areas affected by the Anglophone conflict and more than 32,000 Cameroonian refugees have registered in Nigeria. However, by the end of January 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs put the number of Internally Displaced Persons to 679,000 and 52,000 refugees in its Situation Report No. 15 of the 31st of January, 2020. However, these numbers keep increasing exponentially as the conflict rages on.

The Internally Displaced Persons living in the country found refuge in the bushes and relatively secured localities in the Anglophone Regions and in some communities in the Francophone Regions. Those living in the bushes who are essentially women, children and elderly persons are exposed to all types of difficulties, risks and dangers. The *Journal du Cameroun* (2018), asserts that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) declared that the majority of the displaced persons fled into the bushes with little to survive on. Others were hosted by local communities who

are also grappling with adverse living conditions (*Journal du Cameroun*, 2018). Furthermore, David Manan, the Country Director for the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) intimates that many people are hiding in the bushes with no support, fearing for their lives and are left without any support, as insecurity is hindering organizations from accessing many areas. People are without proper shelter and sanitation facilities, clean water, food and access to medical care (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2018). Most of these people who live in open air, under trees and in shelters made of leaves under the scorching sun or heavy torrential rains, were exposed to snakes and dangerous insects' bites. They also became free targets to the belligerents.

Meanwhile, most of the displaced persons living in relatively secured communities in some parts of the Anglophone Regions and the Francophone Regions were abandoned to themselves by the government. While the most fortunate ones were accommodated by family members, friends and the churches and at times N. G. O's, the less fortunate ones slept in the streets and in abandoned buildings. Women and children were hard hit as they were forced to do menial jobs, sometimes prostitution to survive. In this light, Catholic Relief Services (2018), postulates that since the start of the crisis in the Anglophone Regions, men were more likely to remain in the forests to continue working the agricultural fields and were less likely to displace to urban areas, whereas women have fled to safety with their children. This ultimately led to the dislocation and separation of homes and marriages. Some displaced women reported being forced to take traditionally male jobs, such as working as security guards, and other women have had to engage in transactional sex as a coping mechanism for support to household financial needs. These findings suggest that sexual abuse and gender-based violence cases exist but are not regularly reported because of the survivor's fear or shame. Informants report that the rate of teenage pregnancy is rising in the area (Catholic Relief Services, 2018). Vulnerable groups such as the elderly women and children are the hardest hit by the violence of the armed conflict in the Anglophone Regions.

Several women have been killed, kidnapped, raped, maimed, tortured, unlawfully arrested and detained, rendered homeless and forcibly displaced as Internally Displaced Persons in the bushes and in other localities in the country, and also as refugees in neighboring Nigeria. Most young girls from the Anglophone regions have been deprived from education due to the separatist school boycott, while many others have been enlisted as female fighters by armed separatist groups. Human rights groups have reported the shooting of some old women and the burning of others alive in their homes by soldiers, while others have simply disappeared. The humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict on women are catastrophic on the affected communities because women form the majority of the population in the Anglophone regions and many of these women have become stranded as Internally Displaced Persons and as refugees.

The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA, 2019), states that in addition, women and girls have been subjected to sexual violence, including rape and other atrocities, as a direct result of their displacement and their enhanced vulnerability at the hands of government armed forces, criminals, and local armed groups.

Children have also been highly affected in the armed conflict in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon as several of them have been killed, kidnapped, maimed, raped, rendered homeless and became orphans. Furthermore, some were displaced as Internally Displaced Persons in the bushes

and in other localities in the country and as refugees in Nigeria. Meanwhile, others have been enrolled as child-soldiers by armed separatist groups. Also, as a result of the school boycott instituted by the separatists, many children from the Anglophone regions have been deprived of school since 2016 as their education was used as a bargaining chip by separatists against the government. Female children stood the risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment like rape by the military and armed separatist fighters. The Anglophone armed conflict is projected to have had devastating consequences on these children in the short and long-term as several children have been displaced from their localities of origin and have also been separated from their families.

In this light, the Centre for Human Rights and democracy in Africa (CHRDA 2019), posits that some children have been separated from their families; some have been injured; some have been killed; some have lost parents, brothers and sisters before their very eyes; some have been recruited as child-soldiers because of frustration, while others have joined the insurgents willfully for vengeance. Children's rights to education is in a state of jeopardy, where their rights to education, food, care, shelter and freedom have been abused to the highest level. It is easy to say with certainty that children's rights are grossly ignored during the conflict.

Regarding the plight of Anglophone refugees in Nigeria, it should be noted that as soon as the flow of refugees started moving towards Nigeria, the Nigerian government and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs immediately set up refugee camps to accommodate them. The first refugee camps were set up in neighboring localities with Cameroon in Ogoja, Ikomand Calabar, however, with the continued exponential influx of refugees in Nigeria; other refugee camps were set up in other localities across the country. Even with the status of refugees, their security and safety were not guaranteed. 47 registered refugees purported to be the leaders of Anglophone movement were unlawfully arrested in Nigeria by the Nigerian government and extradited to Cameroon, where they faced criminal charges with the high prospects of death penalty at the Military Tribunal in Yaoundé. 10 out of the 47 of these refugees were finally convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, while the others are still in detention awaiting trial.

In a nutshell, it is evident that the rights of the Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons in Cameroon and refugees in Nigeria have been trampled upon by the government of Cameroon, which has the primary obligation under international law to cater for them. Several displaced persons and refugees have been abandoned to themselves with no significant humanitarian assistance from the government apart from some laudable but insignificant assistance received periodically from some human rights organizations. Shelters were not created in peaceful areas to accommodate the displaced persons and as a result, they were shattered all over the country with no possibility of properly identifying them. Nonetheless, some of the government's efforts were limited to its emergency humanitarian assistance plan alongside other humanitarian organizations, which are examined in the next subsection.

National Humanitarian Relief Efforts

National humanitarian relief efforts kick off with governmental efforts. As a result of virulent criticisms by many stakeholders, the Cameroonian government launched an emergency humanitarian assistance plan on the 20th of June, 2018 Headed by former Prime Minister, Philemon Yang. Nkongho and Molua (2019), asserts that according to the plan, all Cameroonians were expected to contribute,

with the main objective being to raise the sum of at least 12 billion Francs CFA. However, the Cameroonian government's plan sparked serious controversy. Critics of the government's humanitarian plan made the argument that the initiative was lacking in humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, which are norms sacrosanct to International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL). In addition, separatist activists and armed separatist groups vowed to oppose the government's plan, with some of the refugees in Nigeria openly expressing their intention not to accept assistance from a government which they say is the cause of their plight. Nonetheless, the government proceeded to put in place an ad-hoc committee chaired by the Minister of Territorial Administration, AtangaNji Paul, to coordinate the effective launching of the emergency humanitarian assistance plan.

Through its emergency humanitarian assistance plan, the Cameroonian government was able to provide assistance to several hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons living in dire conditions in the North-West and South-West Regions and across the country. Kimeng Hilton (2019), asserts that in order to promote greater accountability in the distribution of humanitarian assistance in the country, the Prime Minister, on the 22nd of November, 2018, created the Centre for the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance in the North-West and South-West Regions, with the objective to ease work for aid agencies working on the ground (Kimeng, 2019).

On Thursday the 13th of June, 2019, the largest convoy of 55 military and civilian loaded trucks left Yaoundé and Douala for the affected regions, a gesture appreciated by the Ambassador, Head of the European Union Delegation to Cameroon, Hans-Peter Schadek, who praised the putting in place of coordination centres by the government. The relief materials consisted of basic needs and household equipment, which were already in the regions to be distributed to concerned persons as per Divisions in each Region, under the guide of their humanitarian coordination centres. Going by the Minister of Territorial Administration, an estimated 70,000 persons were expected to benefit from the consignment with over 100,000 persons already having benefitted from previous humanitarian assistance (Amabo, 2019). However, were muted criticism on the modus operandi and criteria for distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Also, the *Journal du Cameroun*(2019), states that the head of state Paul Biya and his wife Chantal Biya offered 100 truckload of humanitarian relief to Internally Displaced Persons in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon. The relief was dispatched to the two regions over the weekend of the 28-29th of December, 2019, in an operation conducted by the Minister of Territorial Administration, AtangaNji Paul. The humanitarian relief comprised of blankets, mattresses, as well as food stuff meant to be enjoyed by the IDPs as end of feast, gifts \ provisions left Yaoundé, Douala and Bafoussam for the two regions. As a result of the insufficiency of the government's relief initiatives, other national groups came to the rescue of Anglophone IDPs and refugees (*Journal du Cameroun*, 2019). However, the Cameroonian government's efforts, coupled with those from President Biya and his wife, proved to be insufficient to meet up with the needs of the increasing number of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees as the armed conflict raged on.

In spite of the Cameroonian government's laudable efforts, the number of displaced persons kept growing exponentially due to the raging armed conflict, so too their needs, thus necessitating more assistance. Moreover, the government relief efforts were limited to Internally Displaced Persons in the

country only, while the refugees in Nigeria were completely excluded. In this light, some of these assistances came from national human rights and humanitarian groups that were able to reach out to the displaced people in Cameroon as well the refugees in Nigeria. Meanwhile, as a result of the insufficiency of government's humanitarian efforts, other national humanitarian actors like Ayah Foundation tried to fill the void left by the government by reaching out to the affected population.

The Ayah Foundation has been delivering humanitarian and medical assistance to the afflicted population of the English-speaking regions of Cameroon and its services has also been extended to refugees in Nigeria. On the 24th of April, 2018, the *Journal du Cameroun* reported that the Anglophone refugees who are in dire need of help across Nigeria were provided relief by the Ayah Foundation. That it was the second visit in over four weeks that the foundation had undertaken in Nigeria to bring aid to the Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria (*Journal du Cameroun*, 2018). The Ayah Foundation provided several other assistances to displaced persons in the bushes and in other parts of the country, to noncombatant wounded victims of the armed conflict and to Anglophone detainees incarcerated in different prisons in Cameroon. It also received funds from donors at home and abroad and coordinated the distribution of assistance to the population. In fact, in spite of several hurdles and threats, especially from the government, the Ayah Foundation played a significant role in alleviating the suffering of the affected population of the Anglophone Regions.

The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA), through its founder and President, Barrister Agbor Felix Nkongho, has been monitoring human rights violations perpetrated by the Cameroonian defense and security forces and armed separatists in the Anglophone Regions. The human rights group has been denouncing these violations in its reports and has also been assisting the affected population in the conflict-torn Anglophone Regions and the refugees in Nigeria. The CHRDA has been engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to Anglophone IDPs in Cameroon and refugees in Nigeria. This involves the distribution of food items, cloths and mattresses to the IDPs and refugees.

Women's groups and organizations have also played major roles in trying to resolve the Anglophone crises. Staking as major stakeholders of peace and development, women's coalitions such as South West North West women task force (SWNOT) and South West women for peace and development (SWWOPDEN), have been advocating for peace and have been able to provide alternate disputes resolutions in a myriad of ways. The women have been able to provide physical and material support, counselling and psychological support. In all. Female peace builders have been able to execute mediation in many war-stricken villages and towns of the affected areas in Cameroon. In championing the fight towards resolving the conflict, women have employed strategies including education and sensitization of the grass root population, public cries and ululations, social media write ups, consultations with stake holders etc. These mediation and peace building processes were strengthened and continued amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

Religious organizations such as the Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church and the Anglophone Moslems Community have been involved in looking for ways to resolve the Anglophone crisis and to bring an end to the human rights violations perpetrated by the belligerents and the resultant humanitarian crisis. It should also be noted that these religious organizations have been providing assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and refugees, and they have also been

organizing ecumenical services to pray for the victims of the armed conflict and for a return to peace in the country. These religious organizations provided shelters, food items, cloths and medication for several thousands of Internally Displaced Persons, and also provided their children with education. It should be noted that several other national actors both at organizations level and individual level not mentioned here also made significant humanitarian contributions towards the IDPs and refugees.

International Humanitarian Relief Efforts

From the onset of the armed conflict in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon, international humanitarian groups play a significant role in providing assistance to the hundreds of thousands of people displaced internally and externally. On the 30th of May, 2018, the United Nations declared a humanitarian crisis in Southern Cameroons and started organizing aid. Through the declaration, the United Nations assumed responsibility for the safety of civilians (Pan African Visions, 2018). This therefore put the United Nations and its humanitarian agencies at the forefront of the humanitarian efforts in the Anglophone regions and in Nigeria where there is an important number of Anglophone refugees.

- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)

In its report of the 24th of June, 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reveals that Cameroon faces three humanitarian challenges. First, the Far North Region continues to be impacted by the Boko Haram related armed conflict and Cameroon remains the second most-affected country by the Lake Chad Basin Emergency. About 1.2 million people living in the region need urgent assistance. 527,000 persons in the Far North Region are displaced due to the armed conflict. Second, Cameroon's and Eastern Regions are still home to over 272,000 vulnerable refugees from the Central African Republic as a result of the civil war. The influx of refugees continues to exert significant pressure on natural resources and basic social services in host areas and exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities. A third challenge arose in November 2017 when a socio-political crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions turned into a situation of violence with increasing reports of human rights violations and abuses, including extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests and destruction of property, and rising humanitarian needs. Almost 680,000 are now internally displaced and an additional 58,000 persons have sought refuge in neighboring Nigeria. Yet in 2019, the humanitarian response in Cameroon was the least funded in Africa (UNOCHA, 2020).

- World Food Program (WFP)

As a result of the unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, the World Food Program (WFP) has been providing humanitarian assistance to the affected population of these regions who have fled either to the bushes or to other localities within the country as Internally Displaced Persons. They have also been providing assistance to the tens of thousands of refugees in Nigeria. According to Enow Tabi (2018), on the 29th of October, 2018, the Cameroon WFP boss, Abdoulaye Balde, made a revelation during a press conference in Douala that:

The malnutrition rate in the North-West and South-West Regions was mounting and an urgent solution was needed. He revealed that WFP has already started training members of the Cameroon Red Cross who will assist in the distribution of the 1,900 metric tons of food to the affected persons and that the WFP will stay in the trouble regions until the needs of the people are met. The plan to

distribute food to Internally Displaced Persons was to take effect by early November 2018 in Cameroon's crisis-torn English-speaking regions (Enow Tabi, 2018).

Since then, the WFP and its local partners have been busy on the ground providing the necessary humanitarian assistance to the affected population of the violent armed conflict in the Anglophone regions.

- **The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)**

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) started activities in Cameroon in April 2017 and is currently responding to three humanitarian crises simultaneously. In response to the needs of people affected by the insecurity in the Far-North region, NRC opened a country office in April 2017. Since then, we have responded to the urgent needs of Internally displaced people and host communities in this region. We opened an office in the South West region in June 2018, a sub-office in North West region in March 2019, and we are providing emergency assistance to internally displaced populations here. They opened a sub-office in the East region in July 2019 to provide information, counseling and legal assistance to refugees from CAR (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2020). In partnership with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the Norwegian Refugee Council provided emergency shelter kits and hygiene and sanitation items to the affected population of the North-West and South-West Regions.

The State Of The Precarious Humanitarian Crisis In The North-West And South-West Regions

Handy and Djilo (20210, asserts that after four years of armed conflicts, the figures are telling: refugees rose from 20,485 in January 2019 to 63,235 in January 2021. In November 2020, the number of internally displaced people stood at 705,000 compared to 679,000 a year earlier (Handy and Djilo, 2021). The humanitarian impact of the Anglophone conflict has been extensive. Hundreds of Thousands of people have been internally displaced and tens of thousands have sought in Nigeria. One in three people in the Anglophone regions are in need of the humanitarian aid. Many of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP'S) remained in the Anglophone regions, hiding in remote bush areas. Sexual assault, exploitation and rape are frequently reported by female IDP's. Humanitarian Assistance is hampered by the volatile security situation, especially in remote areas. Many anglophones have moved to other area of Cameroon, including neighboring West and Littoral Regions. Around 700,000 children have been deprived of an education for the last four years (IAGCI, 2020: 8). The influx of Internally Displaced Persons and refugees continue to rise as the armed conflict raged on in the Anglophone regions.

The effect of natural or health emergency like COVID-19 Pandemic to aggravate the plight of Anglophones.

- Over-crowded homes, schools and neighbourhoods
- The decline of the pink economy "Pink recession".
- The aggravated poverty and the debt trays of Anglophones
- Psycho-social trauma and depression etc.

The sustainable way forward

- It's important to factor in more physical, economic and socio-emotional provisions for IDP's and refugees

- Government, organizations and other stakeholders should consider the use of digital and social influences
- It will be more rewarding when concerned parties employ the services and involvement of women leaders and grassroots women, community leaders and managers in conflict resolution.
- The involvement of political leaders of parties with various ideologies and with respect and influence on particular divisions and regions
- The involvement of local authorities, chiefs and quarter heads in the emergency distribution scheme.
- Education, sensitization and conscientization programs through the use of the local media will help to bring in more positive changes.
- Psycho-social support and counselling should be made available to the afflicted persons and communities

CONCLUSION

This paper was set out to examine the predicaments of Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons in Cameroon and Anglophone refugees in Nigeria, and also to analyze the efforts made by the government of Cameroon and different national and international humanitarian agencies to alleviate their suffering. This paper examined the conceptual discussions on humanitarianism, displacement, Internally Displaced Persons and refugees; assesses the plight of Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons and refugees; analyzed national and international humanitarian efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees; and also evaluated the degree of the humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone Regions caused by the violent armed conflict.

In conclusion, this paper contends that there is an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon caused by the armed conflict raging in those two regions. Several hundreds of thousands and tens of thousands of people were affected by the violence in the armed conflicts and hundreds of thousands of children were deprived of education and also suffering from malnutrition. National and International humanitarian responses to assist the affected population were largely insufficient due to the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis. Also, the belligerents attacked humanitarian workers and thus rendered efforts to reach most of the affected population in conflict-torn areas very difficult. As the conflict rages on, there is the likely prospect of a serious humanitarian disaster in the Anglophone North West and South West Regions.

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