

CAMEROON

In a context of increasing complaints from English-speaking communities in a majority French-speaking country, violence in the northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon has intensified sharply since 2016. The restricted humanitarian access to the two regions, and the significant presence of spontaneous refugee settlements along the border with Nigeria, make it difficult to monitor displacement. However, the anglophone crisis counted almost 600,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 417,500 returnees in Cameroon (OCHA), and over 82,000 Cameroonian refugees registered in Nigeria (UNHCR).

The main humanitarian needs of Cameroonian refugees and IDPs are related to protection, food and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Attacks on villages, and atrocities against civilians are increasingly frequent, and education and healthcare providers, also Churches and priests, face threats and direct attacks, falling victims of kidnappings or even killings.

Furthermore, since the beginning of fighting in 2017 the education sector has been particularly affected, as attacks against school staff and students continued with the result that more than 700,000 children have been deprived of education across the two regions.

“Initiatives to foster fraternity among all local cultural, ethnic and religious groups” are needed, as Pope Francis stressed when speaking of the situations of conflict and humanitarian crisis affecting Cameroon. He also joined in the appeal of the bishops of Cameroon for the liberation of nine people kidnapped in the diocese of Mamfe, including five priests and a religious sister.

The archbishop of Bamenda remarked on the Church’s commitment in the service of peace and dialogue in the country. He also affirmed the Church neutrality in the conflict: “My focus is the people of God, the people who are suffering, the children that can’t go to school, the families that have been displaced.”

For further information:

Institutional Websites and NGOs

OCHA_ Situation Report

<https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/cameroon/>

UNHCR_ Nigeria: Cameroonian Refugees Overview Aug 2022

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/95527>

Catholic Relief Services: “Cameroon Conflict Displaces Families”

<https://www.crs.org/stories/cameroon-conflict-displaces-families>

Online Newspapers and Periodicals:

THE AFRICA REPORT_ Children should be able to return to school

<https://www.theafricareport.com/241506/camerouns-anglophone-conflict-children-should-be-able-to-return-to-school/#continue-reading>

CNA_ Catholic church burned, priests and religious sister kidnapped in war-torn Cameroon

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/252326/catholic-church-burned-down-priests-and-religious-sister-kidnapped-in-cameroon>

VATICAN NEWS_ The Church in Cameroon is in service of peace and reconciliation

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2022-06/archbishop-nkea-bamenda-church-crisis-anglophone-cameroon-peace.html>

VATICAN NEWS_ Cameroon: Armed conflict can't resolve Anglophone crisis

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/news/2021-10/cameroon-archbishop-of-bamenda-says-the-anglophone-crisis-can-t.html>

FIDES_ The commitment of the Capuchin friars in times of crisis

http://www.fides.org/en/news/70394-AFRICA_CAMEROON_Alongside_displaced_people_and_children_in_the_name_of_the_Gospel_the_commitment_of_the_Capuchin_friars_in_times_of_crisis