

## The challenges and measures put in place by some international organizations in charge of the management of refugees in the Eastern Region of Cameroon: Case of Gado Badzere refugee camp in Garoua Boulai

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**ABSTRACT:** The fleeing of people for security purposes nowadays is alarming. The increase in security challenges has led to the multiplication of the number of refugees in the world in general and Cameroon in particular. Cameroon has been a refuge for thousands of Africans from different countries fleeing persecutions in their countries. Unfortunately, these refugees who live on camps live in deplorable conditions due to some challenges which the international organisation in charge of refugees are faced with. This paper seeks to show the challenges faced by the international organisations in charge of refugee management in Cameroon. As such, we have used diverse written and oral sources to write this paper. We then used analytic and confrontational methods to attain an object truth from all the materials which we gathered. At the end of our analyses we discovered that there are so many international organisations in charge of refugee management in Cameroon. We equally discovered that these organisations are faced with enormous challenges such as the partial implementation of the laws regarding refugees, the drop in finances, the multiplication of crises across the globe and many others which makes their work difficult. However, we discovered that some measures like the sensitisation of people concerning refugees and the advocacy for finances have been put in place to counter these challenges.

**KEYWORDS:** International organisations, Refugees, challenges, management, Gado Badzere.

### 1 BACKGROUND

As the years goes by, the number of international organisations in charge of refugees are constantly increasing due to the increase in the number of refugees worldwide caused by an increase in natural catastrophes, civil wars, terrorist attacks and many other phenomenon's which oblige people to live their homes in search of safety. The globally accepted definition of a refugee following the 1951 convention is: " a refugee is a person who owing to fear of persecution for reason of race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group or political opinion is outside his country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of his country<sup>1</sup>. Cameroon has been a refuge to so many Africans fleeing persecutions from their countries<sup>2</sup>. Considered as the relatively peaceful country in the central African sub region and owing to the continuous collaboration between countries in the sub region<sup>3</sup>, Cameroon welcomes refugees from different countries on its territory. Cameroon welcomed refugees from Chad, Central African Republic (CAR), and Nigeria etc. So far, international organisations have done well as far as refugee management in Cameroon is concerned though much is still to be done for the refugees to feel comfortable on the Cameroonian territory. Thus, what are some of the challenges faced by international organisations on the Gado refugee camp? Throughout this paper we will show some of the difficulties faced by international

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<sup>1</sup> Beigbeder, Yves, *le haut-commissariat des nations unies pour les réfugiés*, paris, PUF, 1999.

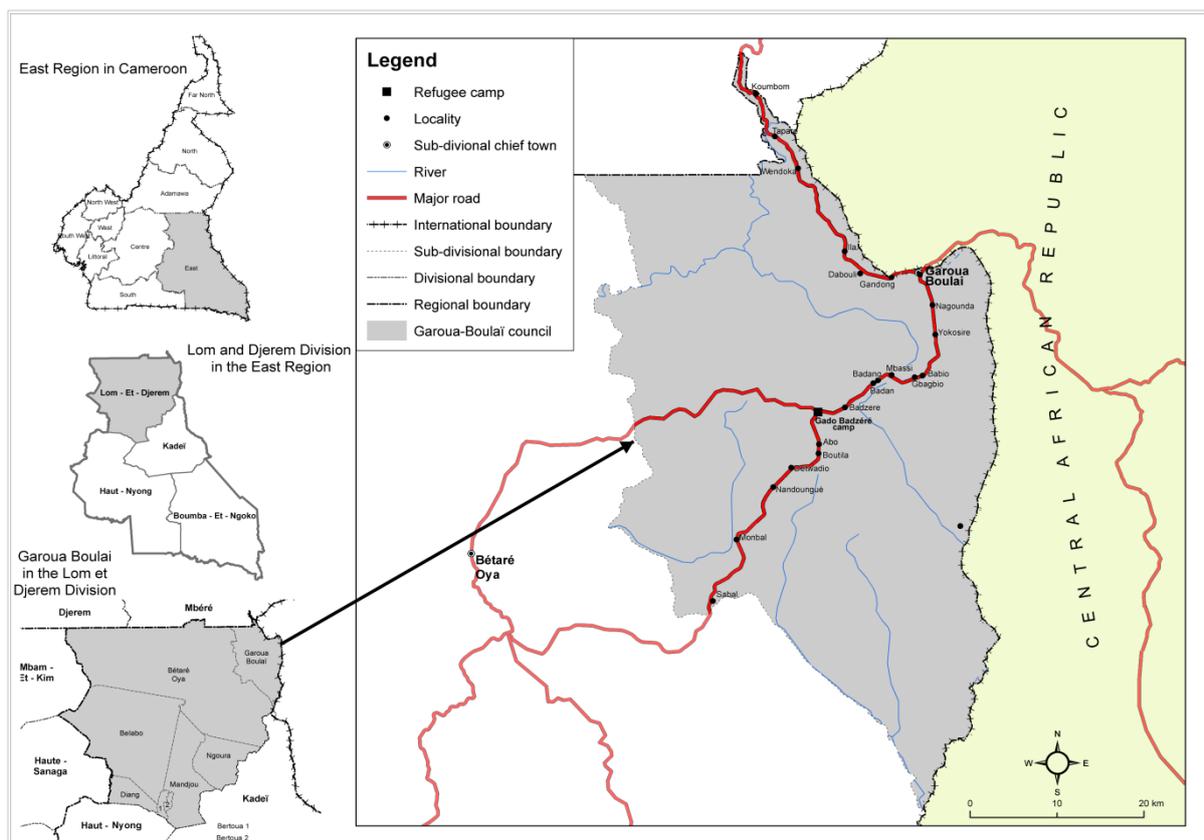
<sup>2</sup> Boubou, Pierre, *Guide juridique du refuge en Afrique*, Douala, Edition Avenir, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer Angela, *Peace and security cooperation in Central Africa : developments, challenges and prospects*, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrika institute, 2011 .

organisations managing refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) who are found on the Gado Badzere camp in the Eastern region of Cameroon. As such we will briefly present the Gado refugee camp and the international organisations present on the camp, their challenges and some measures put in place to counter these challenges

**BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE GADO BADZERE CAMP**

The Gado camp is one of the refugee camp in the East region of Cameroon. The camp is located some few kilometres away from the head quarter of the Lom and Djerem (Garoua Boulai). The Gado camp is the largest out of the four camps in the East region of Cameroon with a population of 24.365 refugees from the CAR. The camp is found in the Lom and Djerem division and occupies a surface area of 55 hectares. The camp is about 75km<sup>2</sup> from the boundary between CAR and Cameroon. 50% of the refugee population is uneducated and 18% are people with special needs.<sup>4</sup>



**Fig. 1. Location map of Garoua Boulai**

Source: An extract from the Administrative map of Cameroon produced by the National Institute of Cartography (NIC), November 2013.

The refugee crisis is a humanitarian one which thus interest so many international organisations reasons there are so many of them which are represented. This part of the work will present some of them and their various objectives.

**2 MATERIALS AND METHODS**

In order to carry out this work effectively, we made use of various types of materials. We went to the field that is the Gado Badzere refugee camp and at the UNHCR office in Meiganga where we interviewed some refugees, field officials of some of

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, profile de site de Gado, 2017, P1.

the international organisations on the field (site manager of the Gado camp, Protection officer UNHCR Meiganga, Field agent PUI, Field agent AHA, Field agent PLAN International etc). For the secondary source documents, we made use of books, chapters of books and articles which we collected from universities libraries, private libraries, internet and other information from websites.

The data which was collected from the above-mentioned sources were analysed using the confrontational and analytical methods. Through the confrontational method we had to confront what we had from different sources to what we saw on the field. We further analysed the different information in order to attend the objective truth about the challenges faced by both the international organisations and the refugees themselves.

### 3 RESULTS

Our collected data after being treated enabled us to bring forth the results in the paragraphs below. These results are presented in three main parts. The first part shows the different international organisation partaking in this activity. The second part shows the challenges they (the organisations and the refugees) face on a daily basis. The last part presents some of the measures put in place to solve some of these problems.

#### 3.1 MAIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN REFUGEE MANAGEMENT IN THE EAST REGION

Many international organisations have taken upon themselves to take care of refugees and to bring lasting solutions to the problems of refugees. During our work, we realised that specialised organisations of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) as well as other organisations are actively present on the camp and are trying their best to assist the refugees.

##### 3.1.1 SPECIALISED AGENCIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANISATION

These are organisations which fall under the platform of the UNO. At the creation of the UNO in 1945 with the aim to ensure peace and security in the entire world, the founders understood that there was need to decentralise the organisation into different specialised agencies in charge of health, labour, human rights, children, refugees etc.

##### 3.1.1.1 THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

UNHCR is the acronym for the United Nations High Commission for refugees created in 1951 to cater for the needs of refugees in the world. Though refugees exist since the creation of mankind, much interest was given to the issue of refugees after the First World War when the problem was considered as an international one.<sup>5</sup>UNHCR is the office of the United High Commissioner for Refugee. The office was created in December 1950 by Resolution 428 (V) of the United Nations General Assembly, and began its operation on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1951. UNHCR is a Humanitarian<sup>6</sup> and strictly non political organisation devoted to protecting and assisting refugees. Refugees are people who have been forced to sever links with their home government. They cannot rely on their home government for legal protection this is the difference which exists between a refugee and other set of migrants. Because refugees do not have access to legal and social protection that a properly functioning government is supposed to extend to its citizen, the international community has had to make special arrangements to respond to their individual plight. The conviction that the international community rather than individual countries and charitable organisation has the responsibility to provide refugees with protection and find solutions to their problems dates as far back as the time when the League of Nations was established in 1920. In 1921, to provide a focal point for coordination of relief efforts the League of Nations appointed Nansen as the First High Commissioner for refugees', role he performed tirelessly until his death in 1930.<sup>7</sup> The organisation has two main objectives; the protection of refugees and the provision of durable or long-lasting solutions.

The protection of refugees is one of the fundamental objectives of the UNHCR. As to what concerns protection of refugees, since the creation of the UNHCR, it sees to it that all the rights of the refugee are respected in order to ensure their protection which has always been the major task of the organisation<sup>8</sup>. The second objective of the UNHCR is that of promoting durable

<sup>5</sup>UNHCR, *les réfugiés dans le monde: l'enjeu de la protection*, Paris, La découverte, 1983, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>A person who is connected with improving on people's living condition and reducing sufferings.

<sup>7</sup> Oxford University Press, *The state of the world's refugees 2000. Fifty years of humanitarian action*. Pdf, p 23, in [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch) downloaded on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR, *Mandate and organisation.pdf*, p18, in [www.unhcr.ch](http://www.unhcr.ch) downloaded on 4<sup>th</sup>-11-2017 at 03:26am.

solutions to refugee problems. The statute defines durable solutions under two distinct headings: voluntary repatriation and assimilation into new national communities which may involve local settlement in the country of first asylum or resettlement in a third country<sup>9</sup>. In seeking for durable solution to the refugee problems, UNHCR attempts to help those who wish to go home. Durable solutions or long lasting solutions are vital for the refugees, to ease them from the feeling of dependency and help restore their self-respect. Durable solutions which are some of the measures majors put in place by the UNHCR to solve the refugee problems. They are grouped in to three compartments; voluntary repatriation, local settlement and resettlement. Resettlement is the third durable solution for refugees<sup>10</sup>, when neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration is possible. While the number of refugees resettled by the UNHCR since the late 1980s has decline dramatically, resettlement still remains an important instrument of international protection and a durable solution for refugees where no option is available. Refugees requiring settlement may be facing serious protection problems in their country of first asylum in many cases related to refoulement, expulsion, undue detention or a treat to their physical safety. Resettlement to a safe third country would therefore be the only solution. <sup>11</sup>

### **3.1.1.2 WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP) AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)**

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the frontline UN agency in the fight against global hunger. It is responsible for the distribution of food to millions of needy people including refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees. In emergencies, it takes food to where it is needed thus saving the lives of war victims, civil conflict and natural disasters victims<sup>12</sup>. The collaboration between the WFP and the UNHCR is very vital because it helps to provide for the alimentary need of the refugees especially those found on refugee camps thus saving them from famine and saving the host country from food insecurity and shortage.

The WHO is the principal directing and coordinating authority within the UN system on international health work.<sup>13</sup> WHO is mandated to prevent and eradicate epidermis and to improve the nutritional, sanitary, hygienic and environmental conditions of people around the World. It also provides emergency medical aid at the request of governments and provides services and facilities to groups with special needs. The activities of the WHO help to assure the good health of those living in the camps and avoid the propagation of epidermis within the camps. It is worth noting that most refugees reach the camps in terrible health conditions thus the medical assistance given by the WHO agents helps to bring the refugees back to their feet.

UNAIDS and UNHCR are committed to greater collaboration, building on a relationship of mutual support, exchange of ideas, sharing of expertise and furthering of a fruitful partnership. They have been collaborating on scaling up HIV prevention, treatment, care, support interventions for refugees and other forcibly displaced people. They are also working together, along with other partners, on developing guidance and tools for addressing HIV in humanitarian crises.

### **3.1.1.3 UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)**

The UN children's fund (UNICEF) is the world's leading advocate for children's rights which was set up in 1946 to provide emergency food and health care to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. Millions of worlds forcibly displaced people are children reason why the UNICEF has always worked hand in hand with UNHCR since 1996 when a memorandum of understanding was signed by both organisations. The sister agencies work together around the world with the aim of promoting protection, health care and education rights of displaced children including refugees, IDPs and stateless individuals. The two organisations work particularly closely in water and sanitation, child protection and education projects. UNICEF provides humanitarian and development assistance to vulnerable children and mothers. It focuses on five key areas: child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, children protection, children living with HIV/AIDs and policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights.

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<sup>9</sup> Gil Hoescher, *The UNHCR and world politics: A perilous path*, Oxford university press, 2002.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid* p12.

<sup>11</sup> Tirlamo Norbert Wirnkar, 38 years, chief of service of relations with UNHCR at the ministry of external relations, 15-05-2018 at Yaounde.

<sup>12</sup>www.UNHCR.org

<sup>13</sup> ABC des Nations Unies (1995), D.I.N.U, New York.

#### 3.1.1.4 OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Established in 1991 as an entity within the United Nations Secretariat, the office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs (OCHA) supports mobilisation, funding and coordination of humanitarian action in response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.<sup>14</sup> The relationship between UNHCR and OCHA goes back to early 1990s and is extremely broad, ranging from engagement in the UN's cluster approach for internal displacement crises to establishing common mechanisms of humanitarian coordination. This organisation is out to ensure that refugees are provided with all the social facilities needed to ensure their stay in their country of refuge.

The office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights is the principal UN organisation mandated to promote and protect human rights for all. To this end, it focuses on three main areas: standard setting, monitoring and implementation on the ground. UNHCR is responsible for integrating human rights into all areas of its work. It thus works closely with the OHCHR both in Geneva and the field to ensure that the forcibly displaced, stateless and others of concerns to UNHCR have full access to their human rights regardless of their situation. Specifically, UNHCR looks to OHCHR for expertise on how to integrate human rights into its work in practice, including how to conduct human rights-based programming. UNHCR coordinates advocacy efforts with OHCHR, it sometime conducts joint advocacy for groups of individuals of concern to both organisation especially in countries where the human right organisation is present<sup>15</sup>.

#### 3.1.2 OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED BY THE REFUGEE COURSE IN THE EAST

The course of human wellbeing has always occupied an important place in the purpose of international organisations in general and humanitarian organisations in particular. Reasons why international organisations like PLAN International, Premiere Urgence Internationale (PUI), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), and Action Against Hunger (AAH).

##### 3.1.2.1 PLAN INTERNATIONAL

PLAN International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation which was created or founded in 1937 by the British journalist John Langdon-Davies<sup>16</sup> assisted by a refugee called Eric Muggerridge during the Spanish civil war. The original aim of the organisation was to provide food, accommodation and education to children whose lives had been disrupted by the Spanish civil war. Plan International is one of the world's largest organisations which operate in about 71 countries across the world, working for children's right and gender equality. The organisation strives for a just world that promotes children's right and equality for the girl child. The organisation put an emphasis on working with children, young people and communities to tackle the root causes of discrimination against girls<sup>17</sup>, exclusion and vulnerability. Plan International focuses on child protection, education, child participation, economic security, emergencies, health, sexual and reproductive health and right, and water and sanitation. It is in this light that plan International works hand in hand with other international organisations in order to better the situation of refugee children. Plan International sees to it that the children's rights are respected especially that of the girl child. They equally participate in educating refugee children.

##### 3.1.2.2 "PREMIERE URGENGE INTERNATIONALE" (PUI)

"Premiere Urgence Internationale" (PUI) is a French NGO of international solidarity. PUI brings assistance to victims of civil marginalisation, wars, and natural disasters.<sup>18</sup> PUI came up as a result of a merge of Premiere Urgence and Aide Medicale Internationale in 1979 and since its creation it intervenes in humanitarian crises in the whole world. This organisation helps to register the refugees when they arrive on the different camps in the East region of Cameroon.

##### 3.1.2.3 THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION (LWF)

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of national and regional Lutheran churches headquartered in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva. The federation was founded in the Swedish city of Lund in the aftermath of the Second World

<sup>14</sup> United Nations (1998), Human Rights Today: A United Nations priority, New York.

<sup>15</sup> Andre Gervais Bilong, 35years, Site manager of the Gado refugee camp, 28-05-2018 at Gado.

<sup>16</sup> www.Plan-international.org

<sup>17</sup> Talla Linda, 27year, field agent of Plan international, 22-05-2018 at Gado.

<sup>18</sup> Diopaulin Pegoue, 33years, field agent of Premier Urgence Internationale, 28-05-2018, at Gado.

War in 1947 to coordinate the activities of the many differing Lutheran churches. The Department for world service is the LWFs humanitarian and development arm. It has programmes in 24 countries and is the UNHCR 9<sup>th</sup> largest implementing partner<sup>19</sup>.

#### **3.1.2.4 ACTION AGAINST HUNGER (AAH)**

Action Against Hunger (AAH) is a global humanitarian organisation which originated in France and is committed to ending world hunger. The organisation helps malnourished children and provides communities with access to safe water and sustainable solutions to hunger. The purpose of this organisation is to end child malnutrition whilst providing communities with access to safe water and sustainable solutions to hunger. AAH saves lives by preventing, detecting and treating severe acute malnutrition particularly in emergency and conflicts situations. The organisation has an integrated approach with various sectors of intervention; nutrition and health, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and livelihood<sup>20</sup>. It is worth noting that these organisations work in collaboration with the local populations, the state of Cameroon and the refugees themselves.

### **3.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ON THE GADO BADZERE CAMP**

The African continent being one with many difficulties since the independence of its countries has serious problems which make day to day life difficult for the Africans in general and refugees in particular<sup>21</sup>. The host of International Organisations in charge of refugees in the East region of Cameroon are faced with so many challenges which hinder the smooth functioning of their activities. Some of these challenges are discussed below

#### **3.2.1 THE PARTIAL IMPLEMENTATION OF 2005 CAMEROONIAN LAW ON REFUGEES AND DIVERSE SOCIETAL ILLS IN CAMEROON**

Though Cameroon has signed so many conventions in relations to refugees and has even adopted national legislation regarding the status of refugees in 2005<sup>22</sup>, much is still to be done in the implementation of this law and it does acts as a hindrance to the activities of the organisations in charge of refugee management in Cameroon in general and the East region in particular. Article 16 of the 2005 law indicates that the government will create a national committee for determining refugee status and appeals, however, this has not been done thus the International Organisations (especially the UNHCR) still shoulders the responsibility in determining refugee status<sup>23</sup>. This is contrary to the UN convention of 1951 which states that the state parties of the refugee convention would establish appropriate procedures having regard to the particular legal tradition, constitutional and administrative arrangement in their respective country<sup>24</sup>. In addition to providing a commission for refugee status determination and appeals, Article 9 of the 2005 refugee law indicates that refugees are entitle to identification documents issued by government. This documentation has not yet been issued and has been quite problematic for many refugees living in Cameroon. This is due to the fact that the general population has not been educated on the refugee identification documents and as such some refugees face difficulties moving around with the identification documents given to them by the UNHCR.

The numerous societal ill in Cameroon affect the International Organisations concerned with the course of the refugee's activities in Cameroon. Administrative bureaucracy in Cameroon hinders the activities of the organisation especially in establishing identifications papers (birth certificates) for children born on refugee camps. Those born on the Gado camp are not exempted from this societal ill. There is a negative police attitude towards refugees. This is due to the fact that most police official's belief that refugees should be restricted to camps. They have not been well educated on the issue of refugees. Refugees equally face problems of xenophobia in Cameroon due to the fact that some citizens fear to collaborate with the refugees they task them of "refugees" and do not collaborate with them.

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<sup>19</sup>[www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

<sup>20</sup>Desjeux, JF, "Definition and evaluation of therapeutic food for severely malnourished children in situation of humanitarian emergencies" in [WWW.actioncontrelafaim.org](http://WWW.actioncontrelafaim.org)

<sup>21</sup> Crips, Jeff, "African refugees: patterns, problems and policy challenges", *New Issue in Refugee Research*, working paper n° 28, 2000.

<sup>22</sup> Eloundou Mbua, Emmanuel, "law n° 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 relating to the status of refugees in Cameroon: An additional hurdle or a major step forward for refugee protection" in, *Journal of law, policy, and Globalisation*, vol38, pages63-77, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> - Mattheisen, E., "Because I am a stranger" urban refugees in Yaounde Cameroon, in *new issues in refugee research*, working paper n°244, 2012, P1.

<sup>24</sup>Gorlick, B., "common burdens and standards legal elements in assessing claims to refugee status" *new issues in refugee research*, working paper n°66, 2002, P10.

### 3.2.2 CONTINUOUS INFLUX OF REFUGEES INTO THE CAMP AND INSECURITY WITHIN THE CAMP

The political crisis in CAR is ongoing and this results in the constant influx of new refugees in the Gado camp. This is a major challenge because the camp is already over populated coupled with the fact that there is limited space for the extension of the refugee camp this has resulted to some tents housing more than the number it was suppose to receive. The continuous influx of refugees in to the camp makes it difficult for them to be identified and given identification papers immediately. Some of these refugees go as far spontaneously settling on the refugee camp and are only discovered months later. The refugees use continuation of the crisis, to move from one camp to another causing a double identification because once they arrive a new cap, they are not honest enough to say they were in a different camp they rather lie and are registered as new refugees. Some villagers have also endorsed themselves in to such activities and are given the status of refugees while they are nationals.

Some refugees on the Gado camp do not respect the civil and humanitarian nature of the camp; they go about creating troubles on the refugee camp and even in the village. This has resulted to the arrest of some refugees who were found with weapons in their possession<sup>25</sup>. There are equally reported cases of theft by the refugees in the villages, they are accused of entering the farms in the villages and harvesting the crops of the villagers, some especially women are accused of snatching peoples husbands and are constantly accused of prostitution. This makes things complicated for the organisations who seek the peaceful cohabitation between refugees and the local population.

### 3.2.3 DROP IN FINANCES AND DIFFICULTIES TO ENSURE OTHER SOCIAL FACILITIES

The International Organisation in charge of refugees are mostly non profit making organisation or institutions whose activities are financed by members of the UNO, private individuals and other donors' worldwide. These organisations are obliged to take care of refugees in all the countries of the world at any moment. With the multiplication of humanitarian crises worldwide, these International Organisations operates in several countries at the same time and is thus oblige to share the available resources amongst these countries. It is important to note here that attention is always intensified at the beginning of the crises. In the East region for instance we were told that the finances and other aids turn to decrease as time goes on making it difficult for the authorities of the camps to actually accomplish its entire task. The continuous influx of CAR refugee's further complicates the situation because the existing finances are insufficient for the existing population of the camp.<sup>26</sup>

In the domain of health, there is an urgent need to strengthen health care and nutrition activities in host communities. The massive influx of refugees in the region resulted to the shortage of the already insufficient medical personnel in the East region. The lack of qualified medical personnel (that is doctors, paramedics, nurses) and the need for additional technical equipments makes it difficult for the UNHCR to accomplish its protective objective towards refugees. On the Gado camp for instance, there is just one health unite which is not well equipped with all the necessities. This makes life difficult for the refugees on the different camps who do not benefit from adequate medical attention. There is equally need for an increase in the number of personnel to ensure the monitoring of possible epidemiological outbreak within the refugee sites and amongst host communities. An assessment released on 4 July 2014 indicated that in Cameroon up to 1 out of 3 refugee children from CAR suffer from malnutrition, the risk of severe acute malnutrition, which can be deadly if left untreated, is particularly high.

Though the UNHCR has done much to ensure that refugee live in a minimum level of comfort in the camps by constructing houses for them, it still faces a lot of difficulties in this domain due to the fact that the refugee camps in the east region are overpopulated. In Gado, only about 22% of the refugees live in decent houses the rest live in tents which are made with local materials and thus dilapidates quickly most especially during the rainy seasons.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Andre Grevais Billong, 34years, site manager of the Gado camp, 28-05-2018 at Gado Badzere.

<sup>26</sup>Bazel Bertrand, 44years, protection officer UNHCR Meiganga, 24-05-2018 at Meiganga

<sup>27</sup> -UNICEF: Cameroon humanitarian situation report, <<http://www.unicef.org/refworld/pdfid/51194.pdf>>, P4.



**Fig. 2. A dilapidated refugee tent and toilet on the camp of Gado**

Source: by, Vanessa M. Kehdinga Gado Badzere, 24-05-2018

Fig 2 above shows an example of the tents in which CAR refugees live in on the Gado Camp. These tents are common on the camp due to the insufficiency of decent tents (build with long lasting materials) and the constant increasing number of refugees on the camp. Unfortunately, these tent made with local materials quickly deteriorate thus making life difficult and uncomfortable for the refugees.

### **3.2.4 DIFFICULTY TO EDUCATE ALL THE REFUGEE CHILDREN**

The UNHCR which grants education to just 7331 children out of the 25000 found in the East region faces a major difficulty in educating all refugee children. This number represents only 29% of the total refugee children population making the remaining 71% to be left with two options either attaining the public schools in the region or being uneducated during their stay in Cameroon. However, most of these children's join the Public schools causing an explosive increase in the number of children in the classrooms, leading to the increment in the number of children per bench from 2 to at least 5 per bench in a classroom. The schools on the camp do not contain all the children and there is shortage in the teaching staff. The cultural ties of the refugees make it difficult for the education of the refugee children in general and that the girl child in particular. 98.8% of the refugee population on the Gado refugee site are Muslims who believe in early marriages for the girl child thus making it difficult for their parents to allow them go to school they prefer to send their daughters out for marriage at a tender age. Most of these girls wish and are willing to continue schooling but they are oblige to get married to please their parents and avoid being stigmatise by their community<sup>28</sup>. The mobility of most refugees makes it difficult for their children to pursue their education, most refugees migrate from one refugee site or camp the other and as they move along with their children they do not border about the education of their children.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Maimouna Zenaba, 21years, CAR refugee, 28-05-2018 at Gado Badzere.

<sup>29</sup> Karim florien, 34years, Plan International field agent, 22-05-2018 at Gado Badzere.



**Fig. 3. An overcrowded classroom in the East region of Cameroon**

Source: [www.refugeesimagesintheeastregionofcameroon.com](http://www.refugeesimagesintheeastregionofcameroon.com)

### **3.3 MEASURE PUT IN PLACE TO COUNTER THE CHALLENGES FACED BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

Some measures have been put in place by the UNHCR to counter the challenges faced by the UNHCR through collaboration and sensitisation as seen in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### **3.3.1 COLLABORATION WITH THE REFUGEES, LOCAL AND STATE AUTHORITIES**

In order to ensure the registration of new refugees, the UNHCR works in collaboration with the old refugees in the camp who help them identify the new comers. The UNHCR equally works hand in hand with the chiefs in the villages to ensure that the refugees and the population cohabit peacefully. The chiefs have moral authority and are familiar with the villagers thus they play an important role as far as collaboration between the refugees and the local population is concerned. It is in this light that the pacific cohabitation committee was put in place to ensure that the refugees and the local population live in peace<sup>30</sup>. Improve collaborations with MINSA for the integration of people with specific needs and handicaps. In order to solve problems related to education, the UNHCR has constructed two (2) classrooms and rehabilitated six (6) other classrooms in the Gado primary school to ensure that the classes are less crowded. There has been advocacy for the creation of a Secondary Civil Status Registration Centre in the Gado Badzere to ensure that establishment of birth certificates for refugee children in particular.

#### **3.3.2 SENSITISATION OF THE LOCAL POPULATION AND REFUGEES**

To solve the problems of insecurity on the refugee camp, there has been the sensitisation of the refugees on the civil and humanitarian nature of the refugee camp. As such the refugees are sensitised on what they can and what they can't do on the camp in order to ensure their own security. The refugees are equally sensitised on their rights as refugees and their duties towards their country of asylum. In order to prevent gender based violence, the organisations sensitises the community leaders and the refugees on the rights of the woman. This is done to create awareness on the punishments which awaits anyone guilty of such crime on a woman. Sensitisation is equally done in the domain of education. This is done through talks with the refugee parents on the importance of education to both the boy and the girl child. These parents are sensitised on the disadvantages of early marriages on the girl child.

#### **3.3.3 ADVOCACY FOR FINANCIAL AIDS NEAR THE DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS**

In order to overcome the financial drop, those in charge of refugees advocate for more funds near the different financial partners and organisation concerned by the refugees. The UNHCR is a non profit making organisation and as such, it depends on Member State of the UNO, individual countries and other donors for its finances. Thus, when funds drop they advocate for an increase in the funds in order to accomplish their mission. Faced with the challenges outlined above, the UNHCR agents in Cameroon do not advocate for funds only from outsiders, they plead also with the different ministries in Cameroon for support.

<sup>30</sup>Bazel Bertrand, 44years, protection officer UNHCR Meiganga, 24-05-2018 at Meiganga

The continuous drop in funds which the UNHCR faces in the East makes it difficult for them to carry out their activities they thus advocate for funds from the different funding bodies in order to respond to the problems of the refugees.<sup>31</sup>

### **3.3.4 INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES (IGAS) AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF REFUGEES**

IGAs consist of small businesses managed by a group people to increase their household income through livelihood diversification. These activities are geared towards making the refugees independent and provide some of their needs. The UNHCR and partners have always accelerated efforts to develop income generating and livelihood activities for refugees to facilitate their integration in host communities. This is equally done in order to reduce the rate of conflicts between the refugees and the local population. The UNHCR through the IGA provides financial aides to the refugees in the domains of agriculture, poultry, small scale businesses and many others. Generally in the East region, there has been the creation of 33 community poultries for 495 refugee women and 156 local women; the UNHCR has provided land for the refugees to do market gardening.<sup>32</sup>

## **4 CONCLUSION**

At the end of our analyses, it is worth reminding that our aim was to show the challenges faced by International Organisations on the Gado Badzere refugee camp in the East region of Cameroon. With that in mind, we started by showing some of those International Organisations present on the Gado camp, their challenges and some measures put in place to solve the problems. Our findings revealed that; there are so many International Organisations on the refugee camp, with some under the United Nations Organisations (WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF etc), and other humanitarian organisations. Our research equally revealed that refugees on the Gado camp are not totally comfortable due to the challenges faced by the organisations present on the camp. Some of the challenges are the partial implementation of the refugee's laws, a drop in finances, and the continuous influx of refugees on the Gado camp. Fortunately some measures have been put in place to counter these difficulties. There has been massive sensitisation of both the refugees and the local population on the rights of the refugee in order to avoid segregation and discrimination. International Organisations have advocated for funds from funding bodies in order to improve on the living standard of the refugees and fund income generating activities just to name a few. All this is done to make the refugee feel comfortable in his/her country of asylum. On a personal note, the only way for refugees and the International Organisations in charge of refugees to stop facing challenges will be to ensure the end of the refugee crises itself which is difficult because of the continues crises (political, religious, social, environmental etc) in the entire world. However, the ongoing voluntary repatriation of these refugees to their home country without complete ceasefire remains problematic.

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<sup>31</sup> Bazel Bertrand, 44years, protection officer UNHCR Meiganga, 24-05-2018 at Meiganga

<sup>32</sup> Kembou Mbougoung, S., "l'impact de la presence des refugie au Cameroun" rapport de stage academie, Université de Yaounde II IRIC, 2012, P.22.

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