



COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Cameroon

Situation of single women from Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions in Douala and Yaoundé

1. General situation of single women from Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions in Douala and Yaoundé

Information on the situation of single women from Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions in Douala and Yaoundé was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), as of September 2024, more than 334 000 people were internally displaced in both Northwest and Southwest regions,¹ with conflict being reported as the main reason for displacement.² Women and children amounted to 60 % of internally displaced persons (IDPs).³ While the majority of IDPs from the Anglophone regions were reported to be displaced within the same region of origin,⁴ sources reported that Douala and Yaoundé were amongst the main French-speaking regions where Anglophone IDPs have settled.⁵ Specifically, in a 2024 report UN-Habitat indicated that ‘a significant number’ of IDPs continued ‘to seek accommodation in the Centre, Littoral and West Regions as these areas are not only relatively close geographically, but also host three of the largest cities in the country – Yaoundé, Douala and Bafoussam, respectively’.⁶

Specific information on the number of IDPs from Anglophone regions in Douala and Yaoundé could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. According to data by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 31 March 2025 the Littoral and Centre regions were amongst the main host regions for displaced populations from the Anglophone regions, with 63 965 IDPs in the Littoral region, and 60 088 in the Centre region.⁷ UN-Habitat also noted that Douala was ‘a prominent location and a

¹ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 14

² GPC, Cameroon, Protection Analysis Update: Update on Protection Risks Caused by Protracted Armed Conflicts, and Climatic Hazards – March 2025, 17 April 2025, [url](#), p. 9; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 38

³ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 - Cameroon, 2024, [url](#); UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 84; International Crisis Group, Canada Initiative Offers Opportunity for Cameroon Peace Process, 9 February 2023, [url](#)

⁴ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 13; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 38

⁵ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Cameroun: Crise anglophone et personnes déplacées, 7 February 2024, [url](#), p. 5; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 38

⁶ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 38

⁷ UNHCR, Cameroon Multi Country Office: Refugees and internally displaced persons, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

concentration centre' for IDPs from the Anglophone regions,⁸ with most of the IDPs arriving from the Anglophone regions being women accompanied by their children.⁹ According to the same source, although the exact number of IDPs was 'a challenge to be identified' since 'usually they live hidden in houses declared to be lived by a fewer number of people', approximately 50 000 IDPs resided in the city of Douala, based on estimations of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNOCHA in August 2023.¹⁰

Freedom House noted that women 'have been the most affected by internal displacement driven by the Anglophone crisis'.¹¹ Sources indicated that displaced women and girls were more frequently affected by different forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).¹² According to UNOCHA, displaced children, especially girls, faced risk of 'sexual violence, including sexual abuse and exploitation, survival sex, and child and forced marriages', including in the Littoral region.¹³ Furthermore, displaced women were reportedly coerced into engaging in sex work in the places of displacement,¹⁴ whereas traffickers exploited displaced women and children from 'conflict-affected areas' in Cameroon, including the Northwest region.¹⁵ UNOCHA highlighted that the 'extremely difficult living conditions' relating to housing and lack of subsistence and financial resources among IDPs, including in the Littoral region, 'exposes women and girls' to SGBV.¹⁶ Displaced Anglophone women and girls were reported to resort 'to survival sex'¹⁷ or often had 'to prostitute themselves to earn a living' due to the living conditions in the places of displacement.¹⁸ In addition, according to UNOCHA, women victims of SGBV refrained from reporting due to fear of repercussions and stigmatization, including by the host communities,¹⁹ as well as in order to 'protect the identity of the perpetrator' as the majority of SGBV cases occurred within the same community.²⁰ The same source indicated that in such cases displaced women did not seek medical assistance due to stigma, language barriers or lack of identity documents,²¹ as well as lack of financial resources to cover for specialized healthcare services.²²

Additional information on situation of women without support network in the Anglophone regions can be found in the EUAA Query [Situation of women without support network in Northwest and Southwest \(Anglophone\) regions](#), published on 9 July 2025.

⁸ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 2, January 2025, [url](#), p. 8

⁹ UN-Habitat, Appui à la planification urbaine et des infrastructures dans le contexte migratoire : Douala, Cameroun, April 2024, [url](#), p. 66

¹⁰ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 18

¹¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 - Cameroon, 2024, [url](#)

¹² GPC, Protection Incident Trend Analysis: February 2024, 15 May 2024, [url](#), p. 2; UNFPA, Voices from Cameroon 2023, 11 March 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹³ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 41

¹⁴ Humangle, Women Fleeing Conflict In Cameroon Being Tricked Into Sex Work, 12 July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵ USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Cameroon, 24 June 2024, [url](#)

¹⁶ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁷ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

¹⁸ Belgium, CEDOCA, COI Focus Cameroun, Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire, 28 June 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁹ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 65

²⁰ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

²¹ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

²² UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 65

2. Treatment by society

Information on the treatment of single women from the Anglophone regions by society in Douala and Yaoundé was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

According to sources, the language barrier affected social cohesion of Anglophone IDPs residing in French speaking hosting communities.²³ Furthermore, according to UN-Habitat, the language barrier and difficulties in communication posed ‘a real integration challenge for many’ English-speaking IDPs.²⁴ A February 2024 report by the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) of Switzerland concerning the Anglophone crisis and the displaced persons, cited an interview with the executive president of the Building Africa association, a local organisation based in Yaoundé, according to whom in Yaoundé, people ‘have been speaking pidgin [Anglo-Cameroonian] in some markets or on campuses for a long time, it's hard to distinguish the displaced from the rest of the population’.²⁵ However, according to the same source, ‘when displaced people arrive in a rural area where the local language is spoken and where foreigners are usually charged higher prices, they can feel discriminated against’.²⁶

UNOCHA indicated that during 2023 IDPs encountered ‘exclusion’ from accessing basic services ‘as a result of the refusal of host communities’, and ‘expulsion from certain communities’, including in the Littoral region.²⁷ According to the same source, in some instances, public authorities ‘had to intervene to protect the rights of IDP, or to advance peaceful existence and social cohesion between the host communities and displaced populations’.²⁸ However, according to a February 2024 report by SEM of Switzerland, a 2022 survey carried out by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) in English-speaking regions, as well as in French-speaking cities, including Douala and Yaoundé, found that [informal translation] ‘a slight majority (54 %) of the displaced people questioned’ responded that host communities were [informal translation] ‘friendly towards them’.²⁹

A March 2024 report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), concerning the availability of SGBV services, reported that IDPs faced ‘rudeness’ when accessing treatment, as well as discrimination and harassment ‘based on their displacement status’, by both service providers and host communities.³⁰ According to the same source, ‘[t]ensions between host communities and displaced people sometimes condition access to service provision’.³¹

²³ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 47; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 84

²⁴ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 84

²⁵ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 84

²⁶ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Cameroun: Crise anglophone et personnes déplacées, 7 February 2024, [url](#), p. 13

²⁷ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 61

²⁸ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 61

²⁹ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Cameroun: Crise anglophone et personnes déplacées, 7 February 2024, [url](#), p. 13

³⁰ UNFPA, Voices from Cameroon 2023, 11 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 17, 18

³¹ UNFPA, Voices from Cameroon 2023, 11 March 2024, [url](#), p. 18

3. Access to services, including housing, employment, healthcare, and social services

Information on access to services, including housing, employment, healthcare, and social services of single women from the Anglophone regions in Douala and Yaoundé was scarce among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints. However, the following information may be relevant.

Citing an e-mail correspondence with the Yaoundé-based NGO Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (NDH) Cameroun in February 2024, the Belgian Centre for Documentation and Research (CEDOCA) noted that '[t]he Cameroonian authorities have no specific programs for IDPs or displaced Anglophones'.³² According to UNOCHA, in certain areas 'some programmes have been put in place by national institutions and other actors to support their [IDPs] economic resilience and livelihoods'.³³

IDPs faced obstacles in accessing basic services due to the lack of civil and identity documentation,³⁴ including access to housing and employment, particularly in cases when such documents could 'only be obtained in their place of origin'³⁵ or for reasons associated with the costs of acquiring those documents.³⁶ Access to healthcare,³⁷ adequate housing,³⁸ limited financial resources,³⁹ and high cost of living were further reported as challenges faced by displaced persons from the Anglophone regions.⁴⁰

Furthermore, according to sources, IDPs from the Anglophone regions in the Littoral region, including in Douala, have placed 'pressure' on host communities,⁴¹ especially with regards to 'access to already limited essential services'.⁴²

Sources reported that IDPs from the Anglophone regions encountered difficulties in accessing housing.⁴³ According to UNOCHA, in the Littoral and West regions 60 % of IDPs were renting accommodation 'thereby spending most of their income', while 39 % of these IDPs had no formal agreement with the landowner.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the same source indicated that the

³² Belgium, CEDOCA, COI Focus Cameroun, Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire, 11 June 2025, [url](#), p. 38

³³ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p.

³⁴ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 60 – 61

³⁵ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Cameroun: Crise anglophone et personnes déplacées, 7 February 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 13

³⁶ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 61

³⁷ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 84

³⁸ Belgium, CEDOCA, COI Focus Cameroun, Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire, 28 June 2024, [url](#), p. 30

³⁹ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 30

⁴⁰ Afrique XXI, À Douala, le combat quotidien des femmes déplacées du NoSo, 17 July 2023, [url](#)

⁴¹ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 14; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 14

⁴² UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 14

⁴³ Switzerland, SEM, Focus Cameroun: Crise anglophone et personnes déplacées, 7 February 2024, [url](#), p. 5; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 82

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 49



shelter conditions in the above-mentioned regions were ‘poor with 29 per cent of IDPs living in damaged shelters and 6 per cent living in unfinished shelters’.⁴⁵ Specifically, IDPs in Douala faced ‘reluctance of landlords to grant them a lease’,⁴⁶ requirement of high rent deposit,⁴⁷ as well as increase of rent prices by ‘most landlords’.⁴⁸ As a result access to housing was hindered for IDPs with low incomes,⁴⁹ whereas many IDPs stayed in overcrowded accommodations.⁵⁰

A 2024 academic study, assessing issues relating to the levels of food security and dietary intake amongst the elderly population in Obam Ongola community in Yaoundé, found that single and widowed women were facing higher levels of food insecurity in comparison with married women.⁵¹ Similarly, the same study indicated that single, widowed, and divorced women, as well as single mothers were ‘most affected by food insecurity’, attributed to ‘low monthly incomes’, financial challenges, and limited access to resources.⁵²

⁴⁵ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 49

⁴⁶ UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 82

⁴⁷ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 65; UN-Habitat, Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts: Douala, Cameroon - Douala 3 - Spatial Profile - Volume 1, 2024, [url](#), p. 82

⁴⁸ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

⁴⁹ Belgium, CEDOCA, COI Focus Cameroun, Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire, 11 June 2025, [url](#), p. 38; UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024, April 2024, [url](#), p. 65

⁵⁰ UNOCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 44

⁵¹ Dimala, S. C. et al., Security, Dietary Intake, Foodways, and Aflatoxins-Food Safety Levels amongst the Elderly Population (50 Years and Above) of Obam Ongola Community in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 4 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

⁵² Dimala, S. C. et al., Security, Dietary Intake, Foodways, and Aflatoxins-Food Safety Levels amongst the Elderly Population (50 Years and Above) of Obam Ongola Community in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 4 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

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