



Analysis of Human Rights Needs of Internally Displaced Persons and the Role of Social Work Practice: The Case of the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral Regions of Cameroon

Paul Nkemngu Acha-Anyi¹

Accepted: 23 January 2024
© The Author(s) 2024

Abstract

The scourge of internal displacement has continued unabated despite efforts from the international community to address its root causes. Ironically, the so-called Anglophone crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon has been widely ignored on the world stage despite the toll and misery it has caused the local people, many of whom have been internally displaced. The purpose of this ethnographic study was to explore the human rights situation of internally displaced victims of this violent insurgency and reflect on the role social work practice can play to alleviate the suffering of displaced people. A quantitative research approach was employed through the use of a questionnaire in collecting data from 529 respondents in the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions of the country. The major finding of the study is that most of the internally displaced respondents live under immense fear of either losing a family member or being killed themselves. Moreover, they have been deprived of their basic freedoms and live in indignity as there is hardly water, food, or other means of subsistence. The greatest aspiration of most of the respondents is to reunite with their families and return to their livelihoods. An important implication from this study is the potential contribution that social work professionals can make in the rehabilitation of IDPs. This study contributes to literature on forced migration and human rights, and practical suggestions on how to improve the human rights situation of internally displaced persons.

Keywords Internally displaced persons · Human rights · Human rights theory · Needs · Social work practice · Cameroon

Introduction

Research on the living conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has received significant attention over the past decade (Adesina et al., 2020; Dirikgil, 2023; United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), 2021). The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa, commonly referred to as the Kampala Convention, provides an overarching framework for assessing the welfare and humanitarian situation of IDPs in countries that have ratified the treaty on the continent (African Union (AU), 2012). Internally displaced persons are defined in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID)

as “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 generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border” (United Nations (UN), 2004, p. 1). Despite efforts by world leaders and various organisations to curb the scourge of forced migration and internal displacement, the number of IDPs continues to rise (UNHCR, 2021). There were 59.1 million people living in forced displacement from their homes at the end of 2021, with 38 million of these occurring in the same year (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), 2022). Sub-Saharan Africa is reported to have the unenviable lion’s share of 14,112,000 (37.1%) of all IDPs in 2021 (IDMC, 2022).

Since 2016, Cameroon has been plagued by armed conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions of the country. The remote cause of this armed insurgency can be traced back to the dual colonial heritage of Cameroon, where these two

✉ Paul Nkemngu Acha-Anyi
Pacha-anyi@wsu.ac.za

¹ Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Management, Walter Sisulu University, 9 Abbotmews, Abbotsford, East London 5241, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

regions (Northwest and Southwest), formerly colonised by the British, feel aggrieved by the marginalisation from their counterparts in the eight other regions previously colonised by the French (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2019). Hence, armed separatist groups are fighting to establish an independent state comprising the two English-speaking (Anglophone) regions. Even though the Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2023) reports that 6000 people have been killed and 562,807 internally displaced (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2022), research by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) (2019) has revealed that the armed separatist fighting in the two Anglophone regions of Cameroon is the most under-reported conflict in the world. Women and children have suffered the brunt of the conflict through sexual violence and loss of family members, as well as lack of food, shelter, and healthcare, among other life-sustaining necessities (ICG, 2022).

Most studies on the predicament of IDPs in Cameroon have focused on specific aspects of their needs, such as healthcare (Omam et al., 2021), security concerns (Mafany & Budi, 2019), sustenance (Osagioduwa & Oluwakorede, 2016), access to education (Safotso, 2020), and disaster management (Bang & Balgah, 2022). The current study adopts a more comprehensive approach by exploring the needs of the IDPs from a human rights perspective. This is motivated by the fact that human rights are considered to be the universal baseline on which the living conditions of any human being can be assessed (Amnesty International, 2022). A similar stance is asserted by the United Nations (UN) in their Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), in which “human rights” is described as “a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations” (UN, 1948, p. 72). Examining the living conditions of IDPs from a human rights perspective therefore provides an opportunity to determine the extent to which their basic life requirements are met. In this regard, the following key questions will guide this study:

- What is the profile of IDPs in the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions of Cameroon?
- What are the key human rights needs of IDPs in the three regions under study?
- What differences exist between the IDPs, based on geographical location, age, and gender?
- What role can social work professionals play in alleviating the conditions of IDPs?
- What implications can be drawn from findings on the human rights situation of IDPs under study?

Literature Review

The ushering in of the UDHR by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (UNGA, 2013) formally affirmed the inherent and inalienable rights of all human beings to

freedom, equality, dignity, and life. To this end, the first article of the declaration states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (UN, 1948, p. 4). It is also acknowledged in the same article that every person is equipped with reason and a conscience which should enable them to “act towards other human beings in a spirit of brotherhood” (UNGA, 1948, p. 4). Human rights, as articulated in the UDHR, have certain distinguishing features. Firstly, even though the UDHR has 30 specific articles, the respect for human rights means upholding and defending all aspects of the declaration. Secondly, the respect for human rights should not be considered as a reward for good behaviour, or giving something in return because human rights represent an entitlement. Thirdly, embedded in the declaration is the promise of political, cultural, economic, and civic rights to all of humanity as a means of ensuring that everyone lives a life devoid of fear and destitution (UN, 2015). Raising awareness among community members about human rights prescripts equally empowers them to demand recourse when necessary. Hence, “human rights” has been described as a mechanism to delimit the powers of government, and define the relationship between individuals and power structures around the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2016).

Social Work Practice and Theory

Reflecting on the needs of IDPs, Holmes (2008) asserts that the experience of being forcefully uprooted from their place of permanent residence due to natural disasters, armed conflicts, and discrimination leaves affected children and adults traumatised and hurt in many aspects of their lives. A needs analysis of IDPs should therefore go beyond the loss of physical property and livelihoods to explore the effects of family separations, being subjected to various acts of indignity, emotional trauma, and loss of hope (Alston et al., 2019; Frederico et al., 2007). Given the broad range and complex nature of the humanitarian needs of IDPs, Crisp (2011) argues that adopting a silo approach in the rehabilitation of IDPs will be simplistic, shallow, and ineffective.

The Role of Social Work

Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities, and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance well-being. The above definition may be amplified at national and/or regional levels (International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), 2014, p. 1). This definition has nonetheless come under

intense scrutiny and criticism, not least because of the polarised position regarding the nature and context of indigenous knowledge (Feng, 2014; Gray, 2008). Further criticism has involved what has been described as linguistic imperialism (Brydon, 2011; Phillipson, 1992), as evidenced in the dominant use of the English language in social work literature and the accusation that the current global economic paradigm is skewed in favour of neo-liberal forces which retain the lion's share of the world's financial resources (Ornellas et al., 2016). In the context of this study, these criticisms suggest the existence of socio-economic situations that necessitate the implementation of measures beyond the scope of social work, in order to alleviate the problems faced by IDPs. This study subscribes to the definition of social work proposed by the IFSW (2014).

From a theoretical perspective, Payne (1991) argues that given its nature and complexity, social work practice should be grounded and informed by appropriate theory. Echoing a similar sentiment, Teater (2015) emphasises that social work theory provides the basis for understanding, explaining, and predicting human behaviour and social structures. A number of these theoretical paradigms commonly cited in social work discourse include development theories used to explain biological, psychological, social and emotional development over various life stages such as childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age, etc. (Crain, 2011); psychosocial theories which delve into the subconscious mind to gain an appreciation of unresolved issues that affect behaviour and personality (Sharf, 2012); humanistic theories directed at the ultimate human good, creativity, meaning, and fulfilment (Crain, 2011); and systems theories aimed at explaining the connectivity and functionality of the human person within their physical and social environment (Gitterman & Germain, 2008). While there are many other theories associated with social work, the abovementioned suffice to illustrate the point in this study.

With regard to social work practice, Zang et al. (2020) assert that social workers are generally prominent at the frontline of assistance to vulnerable children, families, and other community members. Alston et al. (2019) add that while the assistance offered by social workers may come at the request of community members, this is not always the case because social workers occasionally use their professional judgement and discretion to offer assistance to people who might be in harm's way. In the performance of their duties, social workers sometimes play a supporting role to other professionals in education, in health, or in providing safety. Hence, Teater (2015) considers the key element in social work practice to entail making critical interventions that enable people to connect with their environment.

Contextualising IDPs and Human Rights Provisions In Cameroon

Having ratified the Kampala Convention in 2015 (Fomekong, 2021), Cameroon therefore subscribes to the provisions of the treaty. The Kampala Convention has been lauded as the first international treaty that provides a comprehensive response to the escalating challenge of internal displacement (Bilak, 2016). Importantly, the AU convention draws on both international humanitarian law and international human rights law (Ojeda, 2010). This therefore creates a connection between the Kampala Convention and the current study which assesses the human rights needs of IDPs in Cameroon. Considering the fact that the AU convention tailors international human rights prescripts to address the specific situation of IDPs in Africa, it is therefore deemed appropriate to summarise key aspects of the convention that will be used to analyse the situation of IDPs in Cameroon. The prescripts of the AU convention (2012) require governments and persons in position of authority to ensure that the following are adhered to:

-
- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| • Special care given to children, mothers and people living with disabilities | • No recruitment of children as fighters |
| • No arbitrary displacement of people | • Freedom of movement |
| • Respect for humanitarian law | • IDPs know about missing relatives |
| • No discrimination against IDPs | • Respect for family life |
| • No enslavement or forced labour | • Food, water, shelter, sanitation, etc |
| • Dignity, physical, mental and moral integrity of IDPs | • Education |
| • Protection of IDPs against sexual and gender-based violence such as rape, torture, etc | • Right to life |
| • Liberty and security of IDPs | • Equality |
| • Freedom of speech for IDPs | • Protection and humanitarian assistance |
-

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are defined as people who have been forced to flee from their places of permanent residence due to armed conflict, conditions of excessive violence, violation of their human rights, or man-made or natural disasters, and who have remained within the borders of their national territory (AU, 2012; UN, 2004). Cantor et al. (2021) hold the view that IDPs are generally more vulnerable than refugees because IDPs often stay closer to the events that forced them to flee. International attention, however, tends to be more focused on refugees than on IDPs mainly because refugees move across national borders to other countries (Hendrickx et al., 2020). Further, Olufadewa et al. (2022) point out that while refugees are considered

to be the responsibility of the international humanitarian community, IDPs are primarily the responsibility of the host government. The liability for ensuring the human rights and welfare of IDPs in Cameroon thus rests squarely on the government of the country.

Background and Study Context of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon

The Anglophone crisis, as the armed insurgency in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon is commonly called, remains deeply rooted in the complex colonial history of the country (ICG, 2022). The initial phase of the colonisation of Cameroon began on 14 July 1884, when the German explorer Gustav Nachtigal annexed the Douala coast and set up the German administration as colonial masters (Ngoh, 2001). Following the defeat of Germany in the First World War, however, German Kamerun was relinquished to Britain and France who split the territory into two parts, with 80% under French administration and 20% under British colonial rule (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997).

Whereas in 1960, French-administered Cameroon gained independence under the name La République du Cameroun (the Republic of Cameroon), their counterparts under British rule were asked in a plebiscite in 1961 to choose to either join Nigeria or reunite with La République du Cameroun (Ngoh, 2001). Under the auspices of the United Nations, the results of the plebiscite on 11 February 1961 revealed that the majority of the British-administered Southern Cameroonians voted to reunite with La République du Cameroun (Lazar, 2019).

Despite the terms of the founding agreement stating that the “new” republic would be governed as a federation (Federal Republic of Cameroon) with two centres of power, the first president of the country, Ahmadu Ahidjo, changed the governing structure of Cameroon to a unitary state in 1972, and his successor (Paul Biya) further changed the name of the country back to La République du Cameroun in 1984, thereby effectively obliterating the British administrative system that Southern Cameroonians brought to the union (Bang & Balgah, 2022). Since the reunification of the two regions, English-speaking Cameroonians (Anglophones), who constitute 14% of the population (World Bank, 2017), have complained about being marginalised by their French-speaking counterparts (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997).

The spark that started the armed insurgency did not, however, ignite until October 2016, when a peaceful march by the lawyers’ and teachers’ unions to protest about, among others, the use of French in the courts and classrooms, was forcefully dispersed by the security forces (Lazar, 2019). Leaders of the protests were arrested and locked up. Some of the protesters and their sympathisers ran into the bushes and forests where they took up arms to fight for an independent state.

Amnesty International (2022) reports that both the separatist fighters and the government forces in Cameroon have committed various human rights violations in the Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions of the country. While women and children have been said to endure most of the suffering from the war, it has also been observed that some women have fought alongside the rebels, led peace marches, and taken care of their families, due to internal displacement (ICG, 2022). Mafany and Budi (2019) argue that the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon has significantly aggravated the problem of internal displacement in the country, as it was already grappling with (a) internal displacements caused by Boko Haram attacks in the North, and (b) refugees from the war in the Central African Republic in the Eastern region of the country.

This study focuses on IDPs from the insurgency in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, because unlike other humanitarian situations in the Northern and Eastern regions, this crisis is self-inflicted from within the country, and resolving the contentious issues lies within the influence and authority of local actors. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) asserts that most IDPs from the Anglophone regions have fled to safer areas either within the region, or to the Littoral region which shares boundaries with the Southwest region (OCHA, 2021). Data released by the HRW (2023) reveals that there are 598,000 IDPs as a result of the ongoing fighting in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

Human Rights Theory

Human rights theory is introduced in this study for the purpose of giving perspective, and, further, providing a basis on which to analyse the perceptions of IDPs who participated in this study. The English philosopher and political theorist Locke (1690/1948) is credited with laying the foundation for the development of human rights theory and human rights through his critical writings on equality and the natural rights of all human beings. Locke (1690/1948) argued that people have certain inalienable rights that they are born with, by virtue of their humanity. The implication of all human beings having these innate rights is that state power or political authority is limited to the extent where individual human rights begin. In support of this view, Locke explained that human beings are rational creatures endowed with the capability of thinking for themselves and pursuing happiness within the limits of natural laws. This implies that although governing authorities usurp certain powers of the people in order to protect and defend individual rights, human beings still retain their natural rights to life, liberty, freedom, and property (Heyman, 2022). Reflecting on the concept of

natural rights and human rights, Myers (2017) observes that there have been significant changes over time, especially following the declaration of human rights by UNGA in 1948. Myers (2017) points to the fact that the 30 articles contained in the original version of the declaration in 1948 have been extended to 667 legal provisions distributed across 27 human rights documents by 2013 (UNGA, 2013).

A systematic review of human rights literature reveals three notable conceptual transitions from the natural rights proposed by Locke in 1690 to human rights (UN, 1948) and human rights as the fulfilment of human needs (UN, 2004). The nexus between human rights and the fulfilment of human needs has revealed a number of gaps in the theory of human rights (Arndt, 2008). Firstly, the inability of many people around the world to meet their basic needs, due to poverty, while the wealthy continue to accumulate more wealth, has exposed gross inequalities in the world (Bradlow, 2004; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1990). Secondly, it has become increasingly obvious to the global community that the use of economic growth as the sole indicator of development is inadequate and misleading; hence, the introduction of a more integrated and comprehensive definition that considers economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions of development (De Man, 2018). In response to the identified gaps in the human rights theory, the UN, scholars, and industry bodies have advocated for a human rights-based approach to development (De Man, 2018; Gauri & Gloppen, 2012; UNDP, 1990; UNGA, 2013).

Methods

The following sections explain the processes that were followed to explore the perceptions of IDPs on their human rights needs. Specific details regarding the research design, research instrument, population and sampling, ethical considerations, and data collection and data analysis are provided below.

Research Design

A quantitative survey research approach was followed to gather information from as many IDPs as possible about their perceptions of their human rights needs. Data was collected simultaneously from IDPs in three regions that are reported to be hosting people who have fled from their homes, namely the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions of Cameroon (OCHA, 2021). Hence, the following cities were purposively selected for data collection: Bamenda in the Northwest region, Buea and Limbe in the Southwest region, and Douala in the Littoral region.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was developed to serve as the data collection instrument. This survey instrument was divided into three sections. Section A focused on gathering demographic information to answer the first research question, aimed at understanding the profile of the IDPs. This section comprised seven close-ended questions requiring respondents to select options that best described their demographic characteristics. Section B explored perceptions of the respondents on the extent to which various aspects of their human rights are met. The 18 questions in this section were structured in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, giving respondents the opportunity to indicate how often they have encountered various human rights situations during the period of their displacement. The 5-point Likert scale was described as (1) never, (2) hardly, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) always, referring to the frequency with which the action took place. The three open-ended questions in section C gathered data on the IDPs' motivations and aspirations regarding the human rights needs they most desire to see met. The questionnaire was presented in the English language since all the trained enumerators were local people who had engaged with the questionnaire during the training sessions. Questions on the human rights section of the questionnaire were mostly informed by the Kampala Convention (AU, 2012), the UDHR (UN, 1948) and Human Rights Indicators: A Guide to Measurement and Implementation (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2021).

Pre-testing of the Instrument

The research instrument had to be tested to avoid any language ambiguity and ensure clarity of expression and understanding. In this regard, 20 IDPs in Durban, South Africa, were invited to complete the questionnaire. Results of the pilot study revealed a few ambiguities in some of the questions, which were immediately addressed. For example, the question on the availability of space for privacy was misinterpreted by a few respondents to mean ownership of land for economic activities. After this, the questionnaire was finalised, formatted, and printed.

Ethical Considerations

As is the case with credible research, and particularly because of the sensitivity associated with human rights issues due to their personal nature, an application for ethical clearance was submitted to the relevant structure for

approval. After studying the application, the faculty structure referred it to the institutional ethics committee for further consideration. The application for ethical clearance for this study was approved by the ethics committee at Walter Sisulu University on 26 April 2022, with the reference number 2022/STAFF/THS/1352.

Population, Sampling, Sample, and Sample-Size Validation

Data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2022) indicates that there were 562,807 IDPs from the Anglophone crisis in 2022. The Northwest region had 231,281, while the Southwest region hosted 137,461 and the Littoral region 95,677 (IOM, 2022). Since this study was conducted in those three regions, the population of the study was 464,419.

The non-probability sampling method was employed in this study, as the respondents were conveniently selected among the IDPs living in their temporary communities. Since the IDPs live in groups, it was relatively easy to identify them; however, 11 community members were wrongly identified as IDPs, due to the fact that their houses were quite close to those of the IDPs. Once these people identified themselves as permanent residents, the invitation to participate in the study was withdrawn. On the other hand, correctly identified IDPs were approached and asked if they would agree to take part in the study. IDPs who gave their consent were handed a copy of the questionnaire to complete if they could read and write in English. Respondents who could not read or write in English had the questionnaire read and explained to them by the enumerator, who then marked the responses chosen by the respondent. Despite the invitation extended to all available IDPs to participate in the study, about 100 people declined the invitation, generally with the excuse that they were in a hurry to carry out their chores. It is also important to note that 22 potential respondents were politely refused participation in the study because they did not meet the minimum age of 18 years. At the end of the data collection exercise, 577 completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents. After checking through the collected questionnaires, however, 47 were found to be unusable because some were not fully completed and others had multiple ticks on some of the questionnaires. Thus, 530 questionnaires were retained as fully completed without multiple responses on the same question.

Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) Table to determine the appropriate sample size based on the population of interest, it was determined that the sample size of 530 exceeded the recommended minimum of 384 participants needed for a population of one million.

Due to the potential sampling bias of a non-probability sample, however, there was no guarantee that the full diversity of

perspectives was included. Further research would be needed to validate the findings.

Data Collection

Data for this study was simultaneously collected from the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions of Cameroon from 15 July to 30 October 2022. Prior to the data collection, field workers were selected and trained to ensure the respect of ethical conduct, understanding of questions in the instrument, and familiarity with the research sites or communities. Two male lecturers with expertise in research, from two local universities, volunteered to work with the researcher during the training of field workers and the data collection exercise. The field workers were selected based on their previous exposure to research, ability to communicate in the local language and English, and expert knowledge of the study site or communities in which the IDPs lived.

Training of the nine field workers consisting of three females and six males took place between 5 and 10 July 2022. Once in the field, the protocol to approach IDPs for data collection was streamlined as follows: the field worker initiated the conversation with the traditional greeting, asked questions aimed at ensuring that the potential respondent was an IDP, explained the purpose of the study, and asked if they would be willing to take part in the study. Those IDPs who gave their consent to participate in the study were either handed the questionnaire to complete or had it read to them, and their responses were noted on the questionnaire. While around 80% of the respondents were able to complete the questionnaire on their own, the rest of the 20% of the respondents had the questions read to them and the oral responses marked on the questionnaire by the field workers.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using both descriptive and exploratory statistics. While the descriptive analysis focused on obtaining the general profile and characteristics from the participants, the exploratory analysis was aimed at checking for any underlying patterns and associations. The data was initially captured on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.

Results

Table 1 provides a descriptive analysis of the demographic variables of IDP respondents who took part in this study.

From Table 1, it is evident that a plurality of IDP respondents came from the Northwest region (43.3%), followed by the

Littoral region (37.8%). The most frequently given answer to the question regarding the community whence the respondents fled was Kumba (33.3%), followed by Santa (23.1%) and Bafut (14.6%). Fighting between the separatists and government forces accounts for almost all displacements (97.7%). A profile of the displaced persons shows that females constituted a significant majority (69.2%), with a plurality of the IDPs aged between 26 and 35 years (40.8%), self-employed (49%), and having only primary school education (45.6%).

This study also sought to understand the perceptions of the IDPs regarding their most urgent needs. Table 2 indicates the views of the respondents on ways in which their situation could be improved.

According to the results in Table 2, a plurality of the respondents (43.3%) aspire to get back to work or start a business in order to provide for their families. This number is even more significant when the respondents who want to earn money (20.8%) are added to the number of people

who want to work (64.1%). On the other hand, when asked to mention the one thing that needs to change or stop for their lives to improve, the most common answer from the respondents (30.6%) indicated that the fighting should stop, followed by the livelihood situation (24.2%) and safety and security for families (20.7%). For the purpose of emphasis, the respondents were asked to point out one thing they wished to add. The most frequent response from the respondents reiterated the fact that the fighting should stop (24%), followed by freedom to work (21.4%).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Results of the mean scores and standard deviation (Table 3) indicate that the respondents perceive security to be the greatest concern, with the lowest mean values of 1.78

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Location of IDPs	Northwest region	229	43.3
	Littoral region	200	37.8
	Southwest region	100	18.9
Origin of IDPs	Kumbo	73	13.8
	Fundong	14	2.6
	Njikwa	48	9.1
	Nso	19	3.6
	Santa	122	23.1
	Bafut	77	14.6
	Kumba	176	33.3
Reasons for displacement	Flooding	5	.9
	War	517	97.7
	Fire	7	1.3
Gender	Male	163	30.8
	Female	366	69.2
Age	18–25	182	34.4
	26–35	216	40.8
	36–45	87	16.4
	46–55	28	5.3
	56–65	6	1.1
	65+	10	1.9
Employment status	Unemployed	168	31.8
	Self-employed	259	49.0
	Government employee	53	10.0
	Private sector employee	49	9.2
Education status	No formal education	25	4.7
	Primary school	241	45.6
	Pre-university	161	30.4
	University	46	8.7
	First degree	15	2.8
	Postgraduate degree	41	7.7

Table 2 Most significant needs among IDPs

Variable	Perception	Frequency	Percentage
One thing that will make a significant positive difference in your living conditions	Continue with my education or send my child to school	55	10.4
	Get a job or start a business	229	43.3
	Peace	54	10.2
	Shelter/accommodation	66	12.5
	Earn money	110	20.8
	Be together with my family	10	1.9
	Have food	5	.9
Total		529	100
One thing that keeps you worried	Killing and the war	162	30.6
	No livelihood	128	24.2
	Not knowing where my family is	30	5.7
	My safety and that of my family	110	20.7
	Fear of being kidnapped	13	2.5
	Not being able to go to school	27	5.1
	Not having food or water	59	11.2
Total		529	100
One thing you would like to add	Stop the war and killing	127	24
	Nothing	165	31.2
	Desire to live with my family	17	3.2
	Freedom to do my activities	113	21.4
	Continue with my education	18	3.4
	To have a job and work	15	2.8
	Stop corruption	12	2.3
	Have food	62	11.7
Total		529	100

(standard deviation of 0.93) for security response, and security assistance of 1.87 (standard deviation of 0.91). On the other hand, freedom of communication and freedom of religious practice with mean scores of 3.77 (standard deviation of 1.20) and 3.65 (standard deviation of 1.44), respectively, suggest a more convenient atmosphere.

It was deemed necessary to subject the data set to exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in order to understand possible underlying patterns in the IDPs' perceptions of their human rights needs. Prior to engaging in EFA, the suitability of the data was assessed using SPSS version 27. The results reveal an acceptable Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of .89, high above the minimum recommended value of .6 (Kaiser, 1974), and produced a statistically significant Bartlett's test of sphericity result of .001, below the maximum accepted value of .05 (Bartlett, 1954), thus validating the factorability of the dataset.

The results of the EFA are presented in Table 3.

The 18 human rights items were subjected to principal component analysis (PCA) using the oblimin rotation with the Kaiser normalisation method. The PCA revealed four elements with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 37.8%,

11.5%, 10.1%, and 6.2%, respectively. These four elements explained 65.6% of the total variance. The four components were labelled according to their similarity and alignment with various human rights needs, as presented in Table 3.

A close examination of the EFA reveals four key underlying concerns that preoccupy the IDPs who took part in this study: (1) living in dignity and freedom (involving being treated humanely, no enslavement, equal treatment, safety, and freedom of communication); (2) security needs; (3) having a sense of belonging, such as practising their religion and culture; and (4) physiological needs such as having food, water, education, and privacy.

Comparison of Human Rights Needs Based on Location of IDPs

To obtain a clearer understanding of the human rights situation of IDPs in different regions, a Kruskal–Wallis test was performed on the three sets of data from the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions. Results obtained from the Kruskal–Wallis test are captured in Table 4.

Table 3 Results of the EFA for human rights experiences of IDPs in Cameroon

Human rights attributes	Factor loading				Mean	Standard deviation
	Living with dignity and freedom	Security needs	Belonging and wellbeing	Physiological needs		
Inhumane treatment	.888				2.51	1.24
Enslavement	.829				2.44	1.29
Equal treatment in host community	.715				3.14	1.44
Safety concerns	.656				2.88	1.59
Freedom of communication	.621				3.77	1.20
Freedom of Religious practice			.324		3.65	1.44
Free movement			.383		3.21	1.28
Freedom from arrest and arbitrary detention	.481				2.10	1.23
Security response		.850			1.78	.93
Security assistance		.770			1.97	.91
vote			.917		2.89	1.39
Cultural practice			.714		3.42	1.36
Health			.609		2.45	1.44
Food				.771	2.66	.92
Accommodation				.731	2.55	1.28
Access education				.705	2.80	1.84
Water				.662	2.64	1.19
Privacy				.550	2.13	1.28
Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	.872	.500	.781	.793		
Bartlett's test of sphericity	.000	.001	.001	.001		

An important point of interest in the data in Table 4 was to explore for any statistically significant differences in the human rights experiences of IDPs, based on the host communities in which they were located. Considering the three different regions of Northwest ($N_1 = 229$), Littoral ($N_2 = 200$), and Southwest ($N_3 = 100$), where the data was collected, the Kruskal–Wallis test was deemed appropriate to explore for differences. Results of this test (Table 4) revealed statistically significant differences in the perceived human rights experiences of the respondents on all 18 variables. A closer look at the data reveals that IDPs in the Northwest consider arrest and arbitrary detention (mean rank = 362.55) and being enslaved (mean rank = 352.48) as the most abused human rights elements. Their most urgent human rights needs are therefore freedom from the harassment of arbitrary arrest and detention and being kept as slaves. To their counterparts in the Littoral region, however, the most desired human rights needs are having the opportunity to vote (mean rank = 408.22) and access to healthcare (mean rank = 382.20), while the IDPs in the Southwest region are in dire need of reliable potable water (mean rank = 427.40) and equal treatment with other members of the community.

Comparison of Human Rights Needs Based on Different Age Groups

It was also deemed necessary to explore the data for possible differences between the age groups of IDPs. Results of the Kruskal–Wallis test of comparison between the six age groups are presented in Table 5. The age groups were coded as follows: 18 – 25 years old (group 1), 26 – 35 years old (group 2), 36 – 45 years old (group 3), 46 – 55 years old (group 4), 56 – 65 years old (group 5), and above 65 years old (group 6).

Results of the Kruskal–Wallis test (Table 5) revealed statistically significant differences in human rights perceptions among all age groups. While the younger-aged respondents (18–35 years) are more concerned about living in dignity and freedom, as evident in humane treatment (mean rank = 303.05), freedom from arbitrary arrest (mean rank = 291.61), and freedom from enslavement (mean rank = 288.06), the middle-aged respondents (36 – 55 years) express a strong longing for equal treatment (mean rank = 340.63), privacy (mean rank = 346.01), and

Table 4 Results of the Kruskal–Wallis test on perceived human rights needs of IDPs in the three regions: Northwest, Littoral, and Southwest

Human rights indicator	Location of IDPs			Asymp. Sig
	Northwest region (N1 = 229)	Littoral region (N2 = 200)	Southwest region (N3 = 100)	
As an IDP, I have experienced:	Mean rank			
Inhumane treatment	346.49	249.76	108.87	.001
Enslavement	352.48	240.90	112.88	.001
Unequal treatment in host community	148.64	326.99	407.50	.001
Safety concerns	154.82	329.42	388.46	.001
Not being free to communicate in my preferred language	142.78	338.24	398.41	.001
Arrest and arbitrary detention	362.55	193.73	184.16	.001
Total	1562.21	1679.04	1600.28	
Mean	260	280	267	
Failure by security forces to protect me	320.45	229.68	205.66	.001
Failure by security forces to assist me	333.40	235.19	167.99	.001
Total	653.85	464.87	373.65	
Mean	327	232	187	
No freedom to practise my religion	132.97	348.42	396.57	.001
No freedom to move around	167.94	338.11	341.05	.001
No opportunity to vote	221.61	408.22	77.93	.001
No freedom to practise my culture	173.02	371.18	263.29	.001
No access to health care	148.61	382.20	297.15	.001
Total	844.15	1848.13	1375.99	
Mean	169	370	275	
Not enough food	237.76	250.33	356.72	.001
No accommodation	165.78	321.19	378.33	.001
No access to education	239.82	282.27	288.11	.002
Not enough water	173.79	288.24	427.40	.001
No privacy	146.51	358.39	349.56	.001
Total	963.66	1500.42	1800.12	
Mean	193	300	360	

freedom of choice (mean rank = 372.48). The older participants (above 55 years), however, attribute greater urgency to physiological needs such as food and water (mean rank = 484.58), accommodation (mean rank = 450.83), and safety (mean rank = 403.35).

Considering the prevalence of youth (75.2%) between the ages of 18 and 35 years among the respondents, it was deemed important to explore the data for possible relationships between age and location. Results from the Chi-square tests revealed statistically significant differences ($P < .001$) between the age groups and location of the participants. Further scrutiny of the results indicated that while most of the participants from the Northwest and Littoral regions were within the youth groups, respondents from the Southwest region were mostly older than 35 years.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to assess the human rights needs of IDPs in the Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral regions of Cameroon and the role that social work practice can play in offering assistance to affected people. While human rights are universal precepts endorsed by UNGA as an entitlement of all human beings, it is a common truism that people in some parts of the world, particularly in war situations, are deprived of their human rights (HRW, 2023). Consequent to the armed conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, many people were forced to flee from their homes to other parts of the country for safety. This study hence explored the extent to which the human rights needs of these IDPs are

Table 5 Results of the Kruskal–Wallis test on perceived human rights needs of IDPs based on age

Human rights indicator	Age group of IDPs (in years)						Asymp. Sig
	18 – 25 (n1 = 182)	26 – 35 (n2 = 216)	36 – 45 (n3 = 87)	46 – 55 (n4 = 28)	56 – 65 (n5 = 6)	65 + (n6 = 10)	
<i>As an IDP, I have experienced:</i>	Mean rank						
Inhumane treatment	303.05	283.25	199.43	158.05	166.17	107.60	.001
Enslavement	285.85	288.06	208.82	201.95	162.08	114.65	.001
Unequal treatment in host community	230.18	242.37	340.63	367.43	299.92	421.75	.001
Safety concerns	227.71	244.88	340.59	355.80	370.25	403.35	.001
Not being free to communicate in my preferred language	226.71	256.74	314.43	352.29	373.67	400.65	.001
Arrest and arbitrary detention	280.06	291.61	216.20	168.96	121.00	196.10	.001
Total	1553.56	1606.91	1620.1	1604.48	1493.09	1644.10	
Mean	259	268	270	267	249	274	
Failure by security forces to protect me	284.20	270.56	235.90	210.82	276.42	156.17	.004
Failure by security forces to assist me	285.46	272.85	252.23	161.13	242.25	138.75	.001
Total	569.66	543.41	488.13	371.95	518.67	294.92	
Mean	285	272	244	186	259	147	
No freedom to practise my religion	229.71	248.50	320.24	372.48	376.83	386.90	.001
No freedom to move around	247.90	245.51	327.07	279.73	441.67	310.00	.001
No opportunity to vote	258.39	277.45	297.60	165.82	140.33	185.10	.001
No freedom to practise my culture	245.21	249.48	333.74	291.46	365.08	228.25	.001
No access to healthcare	238.42	252.28	335.07	280.63	302.92	347.35	.001
Total	1219.63	1273.22	1613.72	1390.12	1626.83	1457.6	
Mean	244	255	323	278	325	292	
Not enough food	268.04	245.34	266.47	344.71	368.67	336.35	.002
No accommodation	249.50	240.14	295.27	367.16	450.83	399.80	.001
No access to education	296.07	229.37	272.97	315.25	160.75	321.80	.001
Not enough water	252.78	241.27	286.36	376.91	484.58	368.95	.001
No privacy	226.28	247.89	346.01	342.70	436.00	314.40	.001
Total	1292.67	1204.01	1467.08	1746.73	1900.83	1741.3	
Mean	259	241	293	349	380	348	

being met. The findings of this study reveal the following insights:

Firstly, findings from the demographic profile of the respondents indicate that there are more females (69.2%) than males (30.8) among the IDPs who took part in this study. This finding is in alignment with previous studies (ICG, 2022; OCHA, 2021), which affirm that women and children have been disproportionately affected by the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon. This highlights the critical role that social work practice can play in supporting these vulnerable children and women to heal from the trauma.

Secondly, the demographic data reveals the desperate situation in which most of the IDPs find themselves because the majority of the respondents (75.2%) are either young or in the youthful segment of the population (18 – 35 years old), unemployed or fending for themselves (80.8%), and have no education or have barely completed primary school (50.3%). These statistics do not present an encouraging

future for the IDPs because without proper educational grounding it is difficult to be hopeful of being gainfully employed. This situation is aligned with OCHA (2021), which states that 4.4 million Cameroonians are in need of humanitarian assistance—52% of those being children.

It therefore comes as little surprise that the respondents express the view that their most urgent human rights need is the opportunity to work (43.3%), earn an income to support their families (20.8%), or obtain an education (10.4%). This overarching desire for self-reliance and self-sustenance among IDPs is in line with findings by Ekezie (2022) and Olufadewa et al. (2022).

Most of the IDP respondents are of the view that the one thing which keeps them worried is the fighting (30.6%) and losing their livelihoods (24.2%). This fact goes to support the finding that the IDPs are preoccupied with re-establishing their basic human rights to live in peace and provide for their families. This is the essence of natural rights proposed

by Locke (1690/1948) and the foundation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948).

Using EFA to explore the data for underlying constructs further revealed that the IDPs are in dire need of living in dignity, freedom, security, a sense of belonging, and physiological needs such as food, water, and a place to rest. The violation of these basic human rights of IDPs has been echoed in previous studies (Bang & Balgah, 2022; Fomekong, 2021; HRW, 2023).

Results from the Kruskal–Wallis analysis reveal that IDPs in the Northwest region, who are disproportionately younger (age 18–25) perceive security as most important, while IDPs in the Southwest, who are disproportionately older (age 65+) express the need for physiological needs. This finding on differences in the perceived needs of IDPs based on demographic statistics is similar to results reached in previous studies such as those of Adesina et al. (2020) and Olufadewa et al. (2022).

Implications and Contributions of the Study

This study devoted attention to the human rights needs of IDPs resulting from the fighting between separatists and the government of Cameroon. It is evident that social workers stand to play a role in offering various forms of assistance to children, families, and community members beyond interventions for trauma. The following implications arise from the reflections done in this study:

Beyond the plight of IDPs who have been traumatised by the fighting, the role that social workers stand to play in offering various forms of assistance to children, families, and community members should be highlighted. The implications of the destitution, loss of family members, and feelings of insecurity that many of the IDPs express clearly point to the need for some form of psychosocial (and other) support.

Previous studies have focused on the specific needs of IDPs in Cameroon, particularly on health needs or other physiological requirements such as food and living conditions. This study is therefore more comprehensive by examining IDPs' needs from a human rights perspective. Moreover, the approach adopted in this study delves into the personal human rights experiences of the respondents in their current living environments. This adds value by ensuring that the memories of the respondents are fresh and more authentic than if the respondents were removed from the scene of the experiences.

This study contributes new knowledge to the human rights situation of IDPs in Cameroon through empirical evidence provided by the participants. The quantitative research paradigm employed in the study ensured that the views of many IDPs are considered.

From a cognitive perspective, this study has illustrated that even though IDPs tend to live in groups, their needs can be differentiated, based on geographic location and age. This

new information can be particularly useful to humanitarian agencies, governments, and other stakeholders who cater for the needs of IDPs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emanate from the results and implications of this study. The urgency of addressing or mitigating the dire living conditions of IDPs cannot be overstated. The following four policy and practical measures could significantly improve the human rights situation of IDPs:

Develop a policy or legal framework that speaks to and addresses the human rights lapses identified in this study. This could be done by adapting the provisions of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) to the Cameroon contexts.

Ensure the active involvement and participation of IDPs in discussions that seek to uphold their human rights and improve their living conditions. This provision is clearly articulated in the guiding principles of internal displacement (OCHA, 2004).

Effect policy provision and clear articulation of the role of social workers. Evidence from literature points to the critical role that social workers play in meeting both the material and psychological needs of IDPs.

Establish seamless and broad stakeholder engagement and collaboration in the implementation of IDP support programmes. This will ensure effective co-ordination of IDP relief programmes.

In conclusion, this study adds to previous studies (Fomekong, 2021; HRW, 2018, 2023; ICG, 2019, 2022) which continue to draw attention to the extensive human rights abuses committed as a result of the fighting in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. In addition, the study has pinpointed specific human rights needs that the IDPs require urgently, and how those needs would improve their living conditions, if met. It is evident that the needs of IDPs in Cameroon are not extravagant, but rather life-sustaining requirements, hence pertaining to their natural rights.

Limitations

It is important to note that this study involved only a sample of the IDPs living in the three regions of Cameroon mentioned in the study. Any generalisation of the findings of the study should therefore be done with caution, as some IDPs could hold different views.

Another limitation to the generalisability of the findings of this study relates to the use of a convenience sampling approach. Since this approach does not give all IDPs an equal

chance of participation in the study, the findings can therefore not be said to be representative of all IDPs in Cameroon.

Recommendations for Future Research

The human rights situation of IDPs can change quickly, due to the makeshift accommodation, security threat, and general vulnerability that they experience daily. Regular and updated research is therefore necessary, in order to establish their current needs and alert the international community on possible human rights abuses. It is also recommended that further research be conducted using qualitative approaches such as focus group discussions and interviews, in order to obtain more in-depth information on the welfare of IDPs.

Ethical Considerations

As already pointed out, ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the higher education institution where the authors work and from the local authorities in Cameroon. Participants also consented to taking part in the study.

Acknowledgements The author is indebted to the reviewers for the constructive comments made towards improvements in this paper.

Funding Open access funding provided by Walter Sisulu University. The author received funding from Walter Sisulu University to undertake this study.

Data Availability The data from which the findings of this study emanate are available upon request from the corresponding author (PNA).

Declarations

Ethics Approval Ethical clearance to carry out this study was obtained from the institutional ethics committee at Walter Sisulu University. The ethical clearance certificate was reference 2022/STAFF/THS/1352.

Informed Consent All participants in this study signed an informed consent form as required in the ethical clearance prescriptions.

Conflict of Interest The author declares no competing interests.

Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

References

- Adesina, M. A., Adesanya, T., & Olufadewa, I. (2020). Mental health and conflict in Nigeria: An overview. *European Journal of Environment and Public Health*, 4(1), em0038. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejeph/7806>
- African Union (AU). (2012). *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-kampala_convention.pdf
- Alston, M., Hazeleger, T., & Hargreaves, D. (2019). *Social work and disasters: A handbook for practice*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsw.12437>
- Amnesty International. (2022). *Amnesty International report 2021/2022: The state of the world's human rights*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/WEBPOL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf>
- Arndt, H. W. (2008). Economic development: A semantic history. *Economic Development & Cultural Change*, 29(3), 457–466. <https://doi.org/10.1086/451266>
- Bang, H. N., & Balgah, R. A. (2022). The ramification of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: Conceptual analysis of a looming "Complex Disaster Emergency." *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 7(6), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-022-00114-1>
- Bartlett, M. S. (1954). A note on the multiplying factors for various Chi-square approximations. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society (Series B)*, 16, 296–298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1954.tb00174.x>
- Bilak, A. (2016). L'Afrique face à ses déplacés internes. *Politique étrangère*, 2016(1), 39–51. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-etrangere-2016-1-page-39.htm>
- Bradlow, D. D. (2004). Development decision-making and the content of international development law. *Boston College International Comparative Law Review*, 27(2), 195–217.
- Brydon, K. (2011). Promoting diversity or confirming hegemony? In search of new insights for social work. *International Social Work*, 55(2), 155–167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872811425807>
- Cantor, D., Swartz, J., Roberts, B., Abbara, A., Ager, A., Bhutta, Z. A., Blanchet, K., Bunte, D. M., Chukwuorji, J. B. C., Daoud, N., Ekezie, W., Jimenez-Damary, C., Jobanputra, K., Makhshvili, N., Rayes, D., Restrepo-Espinosa, M., Rodriguez-Morales, A., Salami, B., & Smith, J. (2021). Understanding the health needs of internally displaced persons: A scoping review. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 4(2), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2021.100071>
- Crain, W. (2011). *Theories of development: Concepts and applications* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Crisp, J. (2011). *Mind the gap! UNHCR, humanitarian assistance and the development process*. (Working Paper No. 43). <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/research/working/3b309dd07/mindgap-unhcr-humanitarian-assistance-development-process-jeff-crisp.html>
- De Man, A. (2018). Critiques of the human rights framework as the foundation of a human rights-based approach to development. *Journal for Juridical Science*, 43(1), 84–116. <https://doi.org/10.18820/24150517/JJS43.v1.5>
- Dirikgil, N. (2023). Addressing the prevention of internal displacement: The right not to be arbitrarily displaced. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 24(2), 113–138. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-022-00935-4>
- Ekezie, W. (2022). Resilience actions of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in camp-like settings: A Northern Nigerian case study. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 6(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2022.100115>
- Feng, C. (2014). Thoughts on the professionalization and industrialization of social work in China. *Chinese Education and Society*, 46(6), 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.2753/CED1061-1932460613>

- Fomekong, S. T. (2021). The implementation of the Kampala Convention in Cameroon: Trends, challenges and opportunities. In *African Human Rights Yearbook*, vol. 5 (pp. 93–115). Pretoria University Law Press. <https://doi.org/10.29053/2523-1367/2021/v5a5>
- Frederico, M., Picton, C., Muncy, S., Ongsiapco, L. M., Santos, C., & Hernandez, V. (2007). Building community following displacement due to armed conflict: A case study. *International Social Work*, 50(2), 171–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872807073964>
- Gauri, V., & Gloppen, S. (2012). Human rights-based approaches to development: Concepts, evidence and policy. *Polity*, 44(4), 485–503. <https://doi.org/10.1057/pol.2012.12>
- Gitterman, A., & Germain, C. B. (2008). *The life model of social work practice: Advances in theory and practice* (3rd ed.). Columbia University Press.
- Gray, M. (2008). Editorial. Postcards from the West: Mapping the vicissitudes of Western social work. *Australian Social Work*, 61(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03124070701827204>
- Hendrickx, M., Woodward, A., Fuhr, D. C., Sondorp, E., & Roberts, B. (2020). The burden of mental disorders and access to mental health and psychosocial support services in Syria and among Syrian refugees in neighboring countries: A systematic review. *Journal of Public Health*, 42(3), 299–310. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdz097>
- Heyman, S. J. (2022). Natural rights, natural religion, and the Free Exercise Clause: An essay by Michael Kent Curtis. *Wake Forest Law Review*, 57(4), 865–95. <https://deliverypdf.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=21111702700702710800009600912408606702602100006007905002808506401006800402511402410505805503906010303114030069068127020099016114044064023023008024015006109119023010045075098120103083115091110069019015015108078082028116091103111126090093086076127085&EXT=pdf&INDEX=TRUE>
- Holmes, J. (2008). Foreword. *Forced Migration Review*. <https://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/FMRpdfs/GP10/GP10.pdf>
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2018). *These killings can be stopped: Abuses by government and separatist groups in Cameroon's Anglophone regions*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/07/19/these-killings-can-be-stopped/abuses-government-and-separatist-groups-cameroun>
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2023). *World report: Cameroon*. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/cameroon>
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). (2022). *Global report on internal displacement 2022*. https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/IDMC_GRID_2022_LR.pdf
- International Crisis Group (ICG). (2019). *Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: How to get to talks?* <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arrive-aux-pourparlers>
- International Crisis Group (ICG). (2022). *Rebels, victims, peacebuilders: Women in Cameroon's Anglophone conflict*. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/rebels-victims-peacebuilders-women-cameroun-anglophone-conflict>
- International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). *Global definition of social work*. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2022). *Displacement tracking matrix: Cameroon Northwest and Southwest crisis*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-crisis-displacement-tracking-matrix-monthly-dashboard-2-26-october-2022#:~:text=Sixty%2Dsix%20per%20cent%20of,to%20West%20and%20Littoral%20regions>
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2016). *Human rights: Handbook for parliamentarians*, No. 26. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HandbookParliamentarians.pdf>
- Kaiser, H. F. (1974). An index of factorial simplicity. *Psychometrika*, 39, 31–36. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02291575>
- Konings, P., & Nyamnjoh, F. (1997). The Anglophone problem in Cameroon. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(2), 207–229. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X97002401>
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308>
- Lazar, M. (2019). *Cameroon's linguistic divide deepens to rift on questions of democracy, trust, national identity*. Afrobarometer. <https://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad283-cameroun-linguistic-divide-deepens-riftquestions-democracy-trust-national-identity>
- Locke, J. (1948). *The second treatise of civil government and a letter concerning toleration*. Blackwell. (Original work published 1690). <https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/LockeJohnSECONDTREATISE1690.pdf>
- Mafany, C. N., & Budi, R. N. (2019). The protection and integration of displaced persons within the Kadey Division of the East Region of Cameroon: Measures, challenges and impact. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, 3(9), 24–40. e-ISSN: 2378-703X.
- Myers, P. C. (2017). *From natural rights to human rights – and beyond*. The Heritage Foundation. https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/SR-197_0.pdf
- Ngho, J. (2001). *Southern Cameroons, 1922–1961: A constitutional history*. Ashgate.
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). (2019). *Cameroon tops list of most neglected crises*. <https://www.nrc.no/news/2019/june/cameroon-tops-list-of-most-neglected-crisis>
- OCHA. (2004). Annual Report 2004. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ocha-annual-report-2004>
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2021). *Annual report 2021*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/annual-report/ohchr-report-2021>
- Ojeda, S. (2010). The Kampala Convention on internally displaced persons: Some international humanitarian law aspects. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 29(3), 58–61. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdq028>
- Olufadewa, I. I., Adesina, M. A., Oladele, R. I., & Ayorinde, T. A. (2022). Watching my family being killed by terrorists made me really depressed: Mental health experiences, challenges and needed support of young internally displaced persons in northern Nigeria. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 6, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2022.100121>
- Omam, L. A., Jarman, E., & Ekokobe, W. (2021). Mobile clinics in conflict-affected communities of Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon: An alternative option for differentiated delivery service for internally displaced persons during COVID-19. *Conflict and Health*, 15(90), 90. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-021-00427-9>
- Ornellas, A., Spolander, G., & Engelbrecht, L. K. (2016). The global social work definition: Ontology, implications and challenges. *Journal of Social Work*, 18(2), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017316654606>
- Osagioduwa, E., & Oluwakorede, O. T. (2016). Management of internally displaced persons in Africa: Comparing Nigeria and Cameroon. *African Research Review*, 10(1), 193–210. <https://doi.org/10.4314/afrr.v10i1.15>
- Payne, M. (1991). *Modern social work theory: A critical introduction*. Macmillan.
- Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.
- Safotso, G. T. (2020). Internally displaced and refugee students in Cameroon: Some pedagogical proposals. *English Language Teaching*, 13(11), 140–144. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v13n11p140>

- Sharf, R. S. (2012). *Theories of psychotherapy and counseling: Concepts and cases* (5th ed.). Brooks/Cole.
- Teater, B. (2015). Social work theories. In J. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopaedia of social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed., pp. 1–24). Elsevier Science.
- United Nations (UN). (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>
- United Nations (UN). (2004). *Guiding principles on internal displacement* (2nd ed.). Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). <https://www.unhcr.org/43ce1cff2.pdf>
- United Nations (UN). (2015). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (1990). *Human development report 1990: Concept and measurement of human development*. Oxford University Press.
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2013). *A life of dignity for all: Accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and advancing the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015*. Report of the Secretary-General. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/A%20Life%20of%20Dignity%20for%20All.pdf>
- United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). (2021). *Refugee data finder*. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics>
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2021). *Humanitarian needs overview: Cameroon*. <https://www.unocha.org/cameroon>
- World Bank. (2017). *Country partnership framework for the Republic of Cameroon for the period FY17-FY21*. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/480711490925662402/pdf/CPF-CM-Board-vf-February-28-03062017.pdf>
- Zhang, M. L., Boyd, A., Cheung, S. Y., Sharland, E., & Scourfield, J. (2020). Social work contact in a UK cohort study: Under-reporting, predictors of contact and the emotional and behavioural problems of children. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 115(5), 105071. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2020.105071>

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.