



Protection Update for the Northwest and Southwest Regions - Cameroon

August 2023

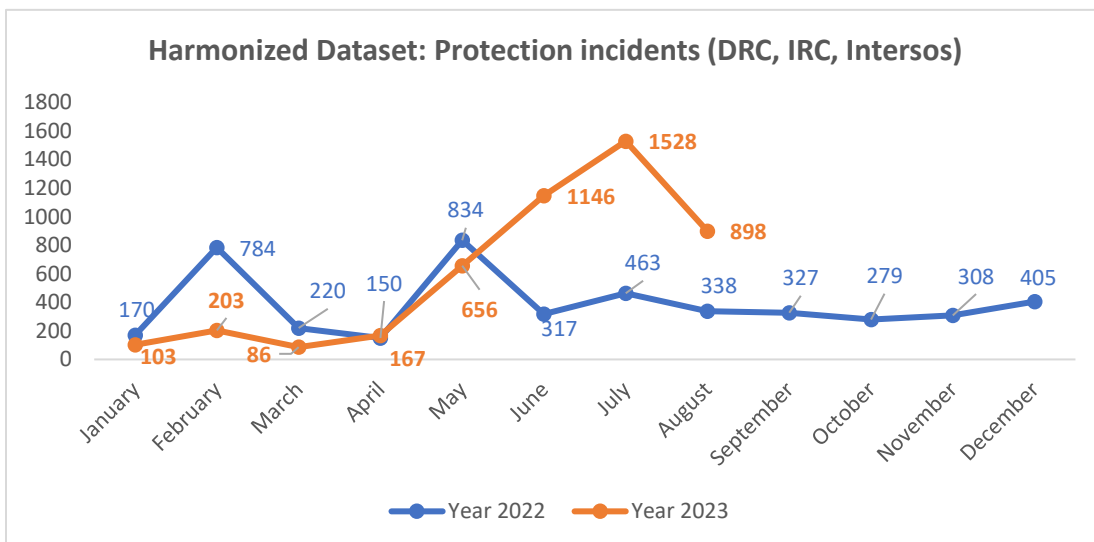
Protection Environment

The general security situation of the NWSW regions since January 2023 till present has remained preoccupying and continues to deteriorate. Armed conflict, Crime and Terrorism are very present in both regions, with NSAGs internal divisions (various factions evolving), disorganization and power struggles. These groups also face a lack of funding, with dissolving control by the main NSAG commanders and leaders of the Diaspora. Civilians -who are both directly and indirectly targeted- bear the brunt of hostilities between Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) and Government Defense and Security Forces (GDSF).

In August, the declaration of the Back-to-School lockdown (02-18 September) by NSAGs to disrupt the 2023-2024 school resumption, as well as their threats to attack schools contributed to a general psychosis within communities.

The increased military presence in the last weeks of August (in preparation of the lockdown) as well as ensuing gunshot exchanges between Non-state Armed Groups and State Security Forces, the mounting of roadblocks on the Buea-Mamfe, Buea-Kumba, Kumba-Mamfe and Ekok axis, and the specific curfews imposed worsened the already fragile protection environment.

Protection Monitoring (PM) partners reported a total number of 898 priority protection incidents in August 2023. Compared to last year, a clear deterioration of the protection situation is outlined. While an estimated 4,584 incidents were reported throughout the year of 2022, within 8 months of this year this is already surpassed, with a total number of 4,787 estimated incidents from January to August 2023.



Comparing the security situation during the same period last year, UN Security reports (including UNHCR and UNDSS weekly sitreps) indicate a 38% increase between August 2022 and August 2023 with regard the number of security incidents recorded. These specifically refer to armed crime, crime, armed conflict, and terrorism.

In both regions, men are still the most affected by human right violations, namely arbitrary arrests and/or detention, destruction of property and abductions. Women are most affected by sexual and Gender-Based Violence. Protection Monitoring reports as well as UN security reports indicate a higher number of incidents in Northwest compared to the Southwest region during this reporting period. The armed conflict appears most severe in the Northwest region, where clashes are more recurrent between soldiers and armed groups.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) data gathering organizations (partners) reported a total number of 93 GBV incidents in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Most cases were physical assaults (30%), rape (25%) and denial of resources (22%). Over 80% of GBV survivors were Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Access to basic services particularly health, food, administrative services such as acquisition of civil documentation remains a major challenge in remote communities such as Dumbu in Donga-Mantung (NW) and Akwaya in Manyu (SW).

Protection Response

Protection actors reached 5,706 people through **general protection** activities in Northwest and Southwest regions, 3,253 people through **HLP** activities, 22,113 through **GBV** activities, 17632 through **Child Protection** activities.

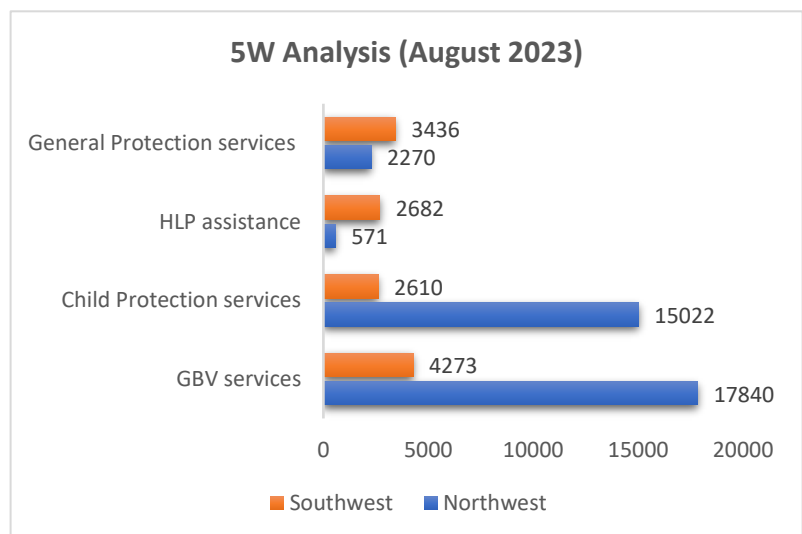
In the Northwest region:

2,270 received general protection services, including civil documentation support (775), legal aid and counselling (140), sensitization on peace-building and social cohesion (573), protection monitoring (289)

571 people received HLP assistance (individual counselling, community sensitization, legal assistance, capacity building)

15,022 people received Child Protection services including MHPSS to children and caregivers (6457), sensitization on child protection risks, GBV risk mitigation and 138 received child-sensitive case management.

17,836 received GBV support mainly through awareness raising (16,935), holistic support to GBV survivors, safety audits, capacity building for WLOs.



In the Southwest region:

3,436 received general protection services, including MHPSS (1004), sensitization on peace-building and social cohesion (1169), protection monitoring (528)

2,682 received HLP assistance (individual counselling, community sensitization, legal assistance, capacity building)

2,610 received Child Protection services including MHPSS to children and caregivers (1477), sensitization on child protection risks, GBV risk mitigation. 464 received child-sensitive case management.

4,273 received GBV support mainly through awareness raising (3,765), holistic support to GBV survivors (415), safety audits, capacity building for Women-lead Organizations (WLOs).

Advocacy

Adequate funding is needed for Response through Protection service delivery (case management). Currently, available funding is mostly allocated to conduct prevention related activities through awareness-raising and sensitization.

The humanitarian crisis in Cameroon must be characterized (with evidence) as a Protection crisis to raise funds that will allow for protection service delivery.

The systemization of ghost towns and lock downs, recurrent armed clashes between soldiers and armed groups, and other security and protection incidents are contributing to the near collapse of the school system and to socio-economic disintegration. The roll out the Triple Nexus approach in the context of Northwest and Southwest crisis must be raised at HCT level.