



Immigration and  
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration  
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Canada

[Home](#) > [Research](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIRs](#) | [Help](#)

23 February 2007

### CMR102450.FE

Cameroon: The rights granted to people in Cameroon who have been recognized as refugees by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); whether these people can return to Cameroon, work and study there, and receive social services (2000 - 2007)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In Cameroon, a law on the status of refugees (law 2005/006 of 27 July 2005) has been in effect since 27 July 2005 (Cameroon 27 July 2005; US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2d; see also ROCARE 6-10 Mar. 2006). That law is in accordance with the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees that was adopted on 28 July 1951 and amended by the New York protocol of 31 January 1967, and with the 10 September 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (Cameroon 27 July 2005; see also US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 2d).

Article 7 of law 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 sets out the following:

[translation]

No person shall be turned back at the border or made subject to any other measure that would compel that person to return to or to live in a territory where that person's life, bodily integrity or freedom would be threatened (Cameroon 27 July 2005).

Articles 18 and 19 state the following:

[translation]

Persons who, on the date of the coming into force of this law, are found to be in Cameroonian territory as a result of one of the circumstances described in Article 2 [containing the definition of a refugee] ... are subject to the provisions of this law (ibid., Art. 18).

Refugee claimants who were in possession of a refugee certificate issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees prior to the coming into force of this law shall be granted refugee status (ibid., Art. 19).

As for the rights of refugees residing in Cameroon, Article 9 names the following, among other things:

[translation]

Non-discrimination; freedom to practise openly one's religion; the right to property; freedom of association; access to courts; the right to employment; the right to education; the right to housing; the right to public relief and social security; freedom of movement; the right to identity papers and travel documents; the right to transfer assets; and the right to naturalization (Cameroon 27 July 2005).

More specifically, Articles 10, 13, 14 and 15 set out the following:

[translation]

Art. 10:

(1) As regards the right to engage in employment, paid or not, and without exemption from taxes and duties, as well as with respect to the social security benefits associated with engaging in employment, persons recognized as refugees shall be accorded the same treatment as is accorded to nationals.

(2) Such persons shall receive the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to access to education, the payment of school and university registration fees, and the payment of student association fees.

Art. 13:

(1) Any person recognized as a refugee shall be issued a refugee card, the validity period and conditions for renewal of which card shall be set by decree.

(2) Refugees also have the right to the travel document set out in Article 28 of the 1951 Convention and to any other identity document required for the recording of various civil acts or for the application of internal legislation or international agreements that are instrumental to their protection.

Art. 14:

(1) No refugee who is lawfully in Cameroonian territory shall be expelled, save on grounds of national security or public order.

(2) The expulsion of a refugee shall be only in pursuance of a decision reached in accordance with due process of law.

(3) The decision to expel a refugee shall be communicated to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which shall then be responsible for finding a country of asylum within seventy-two (72) hours. This expulsion decision shall also be communicated to the interested party who is under the surveillance of authorities responsible for maintaining order.

(4) The expulsion shall have the effect of cancelling the refugee card.

Art. 15

No refugee shall be extradited, in any manner whatsoever, to the borders of territories described in paragraph (1) of Article 7 above. (ibid.)

According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*, in practice, the Cameroonian government grants refugee status and asylum and cooperated with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees and asylum seekers (8 mars 2006, Sec. 2d). In addition, the authors of a report presented to an international symposium in Yaoundé between 6 and 10 March 2006 cite the example of Caritas, the UNHCR, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees (ICR) and other non-governmental organizations that assist refugees and facilitate their integration (ROCARE 6-10 Mar. 2006). The authors also state that

[translation]

...

Cameroon's enactment of the law on refugees in July 2005 marked a noteworthy evolution in that regional integration strategies now take into account this very specific social category. Despite the ratification of numerous international conventions, the absence of a law continued to create a series of problems that limited the effectiveness of the right to education for these people with a real need for education. (ibid.)

That same report also indicates that, [translation] "notwithstanding this law, refugees for the most part enjoy the same rights to education as Cameroonian citizens" (ibid.)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Cameroon. 27 July 2005. *Loi n°2005/006 du 27 juillet 200 portant statut des réfugiés au Cameroun*. <<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=44eb242e4>> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2007]

Réseau ouest et centre africain de recherche en éducation (ROCARE) and the Réseau Famille et scolarisation en Afrique (FASAF). 6-10 March 2006. *Le droit à l'éducation : quelles effectivités pour les réfugiés au Cameroun?* Paper presented at the international conference "Éducation violences, conflits et perspectives de paix en Afrique," Yaoundé, 6-10 March 2006. <<http://www.rocare.org/MI/mche.pdf>> [Accessed 12 Feb. 2007]

United States (US). 8 March 2006. Department of State "Cameroon." *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005*. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrprt/2005/61558.htm>> [Accessed 12 Feb. 2006]

Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral source:** The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), Ottawa delegation, did not respond within the time constraints of this Response to Information Request.

**Internet sites, including:** AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), government of Cameroon, Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group (ICG), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), ReliefWeb, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI).

**The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.**