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Hundreds of civilians flee violence in Central African Republic

Hundreds of CAR refugees have fled violence in their villages to seek refuge in border areas of southern Chad, precisely in the departments of Nya-Pende and Lam Mountains.

On 30 December 2017, UNHCR and its government partner CNARR, accompanied by the local authorities, undertook a mission to locations along the border to assess the situation.

As of 1st January 2018, 109 households of 487 people were registered in the village of Odoumian, located 40 km from Bessao, in the department of Monts de Lam. Some 2000 people were reported to have crossed the border in the area.

Asylum seekers hosted in 16 of the 24 villages of Odoumian *Canton* in the sub-prefecture of Bessao, go to Odoumian village to register.

CNARR and UNHCR's Protection teams as well as staff from the NGO ADES, UNHCR's partner for health and community services, are based in this village.

The majority of the new arrivals registered are children and women. During the registration, staff noted that most of the children showed signs of fever and were coughing.

Asylum seekers arriving in Odoumian reported cases of patients who are unable to walk to the registration site.

UNHCR's partner, ADES has deployed a medical team to provide preliminary consultations for the new arrivals who looked exhausted physically and psychologically.

The presence of new asylum seekers is also reported in the Kabaroanga and Began cantons located in the prefecture of Goré and in the Amboko and Gondje camps.

According to information gathered during field visits, this new influx of CAR refugees follows clashes between the SELEKA and the Revolution and Justice (RJ) rebel groups, which erupted on Wednesday 27 December in northern CAR.

The same sources in the border areas report abuses committed by the elements of these armed groups on the civilian populations of the Central African villages along the border with Chad.

Already from April to July 2017, 1,949 Central Africans fled the recurring violence in their country to seek refuge in Chad and were relocated in the villages of Diba and Vom where they joined more 1,757 of their compatriots, arrived in June and July 2016.

UNHCR welcomes the understanding and solidarity shown by the Chadian authorities in accepting these asylum seekers in their country despite the official closure of the borders with the CAR.