



# IRC Cameroon Country Program

## Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE)

January 2019

South West Region

### GBV Rapid assessment – Key findings

**Context:** Since late 2017, long-running tensions in Cameroon's North West and South-West regions have escalated. More than 1,200 cases of civilian protection rights violations have been registered, mainly involving physical abuse or threats, and lack of legal protection.

The humanitarian situation of the affected population has fast deteriorated. Insecurity and violence have forced more than 400,000 people to flee their homes and continue to have serious consequences on livelihoods and living conditions. There are Human rights violations such as unlawful killings, extra-judicial executions, destruction of houses and businesses, arbitrary arrest, and torture, many women have been widowed and are particularly at risk of gender-based violence, especially sexual exploitation and abuse.

In January 2019, The IRC conducted a GBV rapid assessment in the locations of Limbe, Tiko and Kumba in the South West region to better inform and support efforts of GBV programming.

The assessment was conducted using qualitative research methods through focus group discussions (FGD). Each FGD group was comprised of 7 – 9 participants and in total 238 people (127 M, 111F) participated in the FGDs.

#### Key findings:

- More than 85% of respondents said women and girls experience rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence, denial of resource/opportunities, psychological abuse, physical violence, and early marriage.
- More than 70% have expressed an increase in security concerns affecting women and girls and a noticeable increase of reported rape cases since the start of crisis.
- Women and girls are facing or have faced psychosocial abuse: in Limbe subdivision 54 %, in Tiko 50 % and in Kumba 73 %. Fifty percent of respondents confirmed that women and girls are facing psychological and emotional abuse.
- 58% of respondents stated that most survivors do not tell or seek assistance when they experience violence because they think that people will not believe them.
- Girls and young women aged 15 to 35 are more exposed to sexual abuse and exploitation than older women; 52% of responders stated this concern.

#### Psychosocial Services

- More than 60% of respondents reflected that there is no psychosocial support at the community level. Some informal systems are providing support such as women's groups, quarter heads and the church.
- More than 80% confirmed that there is no formal referral pathway to refer cases among the agencies.

#### Health Services

- All the health institutions mentioned in all the subdivision are owned by the government and people prefer to use them because they are accessible and affordable compared to other existing private health institutions.
- From the service mapping conducted with the health centers in the targeted subdivisions which are providing GBV services, it was identified that the health institutions don't have private and confidential rooms to provide services to GBV survivors and they usually use the same consultation rooms where they treat all patients.
- The health centers don't have proper storage facilities for safe-keeping of survivor's data.
- The service mapping conducted confirmed the accessibility concerns which include lack of financial support to pay medical bills, unavailability of complete rape kits such as Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP), Hepatitis B and tetanus vaccination.
- Participants stated that the absence of referral pathways impacts on survivors accessing comprehensive services.

#### Legal and Basic services

- People are not reporting to the police in some locations. Due to fear of being arrested and detailed, investigative questioning from the police rather than the safety and security of the survivor being prioritised.
- IDPs are sharing shelters using the existing available water points, latrines, showers and other facilities which has been provided for the host community and consequently results in denying the privacy of women and girls when they are sharing rooms, latrines and showers which expose them to risk.
- Women and girls are at risk of being exploited and put their safety and protection at risk while trying to meet their basic needs.