

Disease plagues refugees in Cameroon

by UPI

YAOUNDE, Cameroon -- Thousands of Central African Republic refugees in eastern Cameroon are suffering from disease and malnutrition, United Nations officials said Monday. Workers for the U.N. and other humanitarian agencies say most of the 45,000 Mbororo animal herders and others fleeing violence in their country enter Cameroon in a weakened and traumatized state after walking for many days. Once settled, their health does not improve significantly, The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported. Three to seven of every 10,000 refugees are dying each day, U.N. officials said. Refugees settling in Cameroon have limited access to healthcare largely due to bad roads and ill-equipped medical centers. In addition, the U.N. reports that many refugees lack access to fresh water. A spokesman for Doctors Without Borders says Cameroon authorities lack the human or material resources to prevent diseases like tuberculosis, or a paralytic illness that is caused by excessive consumption of the manioc plant.

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