

REFUGEE PROTECTION IN GHANA DURING COVID-19



The government has largely been silent on the refugees. Refugees (both living in camps and outside camps) were not included as beneficiaries in socio-economic interventions. No targeted education towards especially when the majority of the refugees are from French-speaking countries and may have challenges with the use of English and local languages as the only means of public education on the disease.

– Academic, Ghana



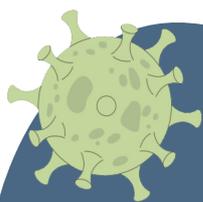
Aside the economic hardships occasioned by the pandemic (unemployment, collapse of businesses etc), there is also a psychological and mental health perspective. Since refugees are dependent on the benevolence of international organizations and the host country, they tend to suffer more psychological challenges.

– Academic, Ghana



Despite of regional free movement under ECOWAS free movement protocols Ghana quickly closed its international borders after first COVID-19 cases were reported in the country in March 2020.

Whereas Ghana hosted many refugees fleeing from Liberia's civil war in the beginning of the 2000s, the numbers of refugees (12,411) and asylum seekers (1,511) in the country have decreased over the last years. Refugees live mainly in urban areas, particularly, in the capital Accra, or in rural camps.



127,016 infected
1,150 people died

(September 2021, WHO)



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

12,411 asylum seekers
1,511 refugees

(2020, UNHCR)

From our research findings:

- In a context characterised by high levels of cross-border mobility and trade, measures against COVID-19 such as restrictions on movement and border closures were felt especially by migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, leaving them stuck at borders or waiting in transit centres.
- The pandemic and measures to curb its spread caused economic hardship as prices increased while income-seeking opportunities decreased.
- Though ECOWAS did react to the COVID-19 pandemic, West African states largely responded individually without a regionally coordinated approach.
- Refugees are widely ignored in state responses to the pandemic, including access to vaccinations, as well as in information sharing campaigns on safety measures for public awareness raising.

Read more about our research [here](#).