The COVID-19 outbreak is rapidly spreading throughout the Lake Chad Basin countries with the potential to wreak havoc on their fragile health systems. Meanwhile, armed attacks are escalating in many localities, uprooting thousands of people and prolonging displacement and adversity faced by millions of civilians across the region. Violence continues to traumatize populations and to disrupt relief operations. Over 2.7 million people have fled their homes – finding themselves under physical and emotional strain, lacking shelter, food and adequate access to clean water, hygiene and basic sanitation – all of which makes them more vulnerable to the pandemic. While food insecurity is on the rise due to increasing attacks and insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic is aggravating the situation as the closure of markets, borders and imposition of measures such as curfews will further impact livelihoods and access to food. Currently, 3.6 million people are severely food insecure in the region, a number that was already expected to increase to 4.6 million during the lean season of 2020, without taking into consideration the impact of COVID-19. Malnutrition in conflict-affected areas risks deteriorating fast. 400,000 children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition. All schools have been temporarily shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the region, in a context where more than 1,000 schools were already closed due to insecurity. The compounded crises risk devastating the region, putting millions at risk and require an urgent scale-up of support and resources. As of late April 2020, only 8 per cent of the US$1.5 billion needed for the response was received.

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