

**MR ANTONIO JOSE CANHANDULA  
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR a.i. IN NIGERIA**

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**STATEMENT ON THE EXECUTION AND ABDUCTION OF CIVILIANS IN  
BORNO STATE**

*Abuja, 23 December 2019*

I am horrified by reports received yesterday of the execution of many civilians and the abduction of several others on the Monguno-Maiduguri road, in northern Borno State, and on the Damaturu-Biu road, which is a key road linking Yobe and Borno states. As information is still coming through, the humanitarian community working in the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe condemns the violent incidents that took place yesterday and the increasing practice by armed groups to set up checkpoints targeting civilians.

It is urgent for the Nigerian authorities to do their utmost to prevent further violence and brutality and to protect the civilian population, including aid workers, from such grave violations of international laws, especially women and children who are among the most vulnerable and are caught up in the violence.

Over 36,000 people have lost their lives since the beginning of the conflict, about half of them civilians who continue to pay the ultimate price of a crisis they did not start and do not want. Since the beginning of 2019, nine aid workers have already lost their lives while trying to provide lifesaving assistance to those who desperately need it in Borno State.

The upsurge in violence witnessed over the past year, and especially along the main roads over the last six months, is leading to a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Since the beginning of the year, over 160,000 people have fled looking for safety and arriving in already congested camps, stretching a majority of sites to capacity. Insecurity and violent attacks continue to hamper the ability of people in many areas of Borno and Yobe states, to access basic services, livelihoods, and land for farming and grazing.

Over 7 million people remain in need of urgent lifesaving assistance in the crisis-affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Many are surviving in harsh conditions without humanitarian assistance as UN and humanitarian NGOs estimate 1.2 million people have become unreachable to them.

The humanitarian community in Nigeria reminds all armed groups of their duty to protect civilians and calls for an increased respect of international humanitarian law. The protection of civilians is paramount, and we also call on the general public, including the media, to refrain from sharing any unconfirmed information. Spreading misinformation risks further endangering the safety of civilians abducted and those whose whereabouts are still unknown and could jeopardise their safe return.

*For further information, please contact:*

*Eve SABBAGH, Head of Public Information, OCHA Nigeria, (+234) 9073430290, [sabbaghe@un.org](mailto:sabbaghe@un.org)*

*Abiodun BANIRE, Public Information Officer, OCHA Nigeria, (+234) 7031718735, [banire@un.org](mailto:banire@un.org)*

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