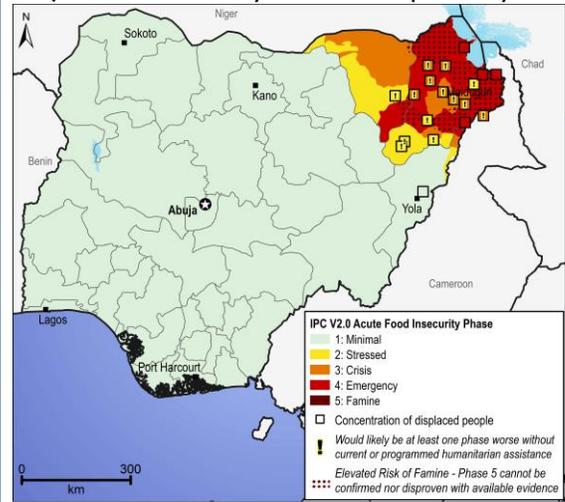


Extreme levels of acute food insecurity in northeast persist as humanitarian access remains limited

KEY MESSAGES

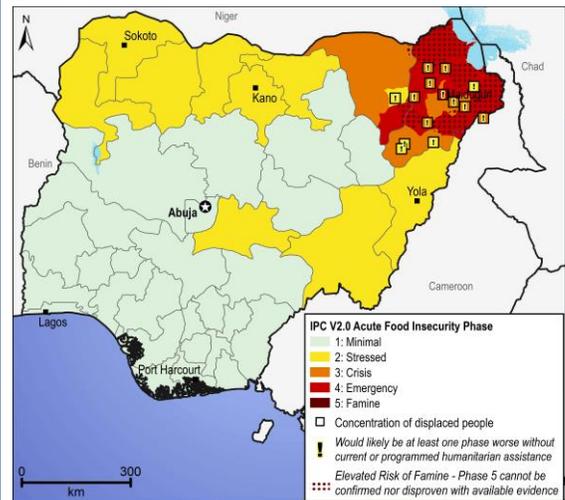
- Large areas of the northeast remain exposed to extreme levels of acute food insecurity. Worst-affected accessible LGAs are facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity with an increased risk of high levels of acute malnutrition and excess mortality. Less accessible areas, likely experiencing similar or worse conditions to neighboring, accessible areas, face an increased risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) in 2017.
- Although conflict remains severe in many areas of Borno State, the geographic extent of conflict in the Lake Chad region is gradually decreasing, with an increase in humanitarian access in many areas, as well as an increasing number of people who are free from immediate physical danger from the conflict. With the reduction in the scale of the conflict in some areas, there is also an increase in the rate of return of IDPs to home areas, and of refugees from neighboring countries.
- Humanitarian actors have continued to scale-up food and non-food assistance to affected populations in the northeast. However, estimates indicate that the emergency response remains insufficient to reach the number of people in need of emergency assistance, even in accessible areas.
- Labor in off-season agricultural activities has been average to above-average in most areas, due to increased government support in the form of inputs and funding as well as above average food prices for crops such as rice, maize, wheat, and vegetables, which incentivize producers. Most poor households are consuming own food stocks and are facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity. However, agricultural activities remain very limited in much of the northeast, due to ongoing conflict and lack of inputs and other government support.

Projected food security outcomes, April - May 2017



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, June - September 2017



Source: FEWS NET

These maps represent acute food insecurity outcomes relevant for emergency decision-making, and do not necessarily reflect chronic food insecurity. Visit <http://www.fews.net/our-work/our-work/integrated-phase-classification> for more on this scale.

CURRENT SITUATION

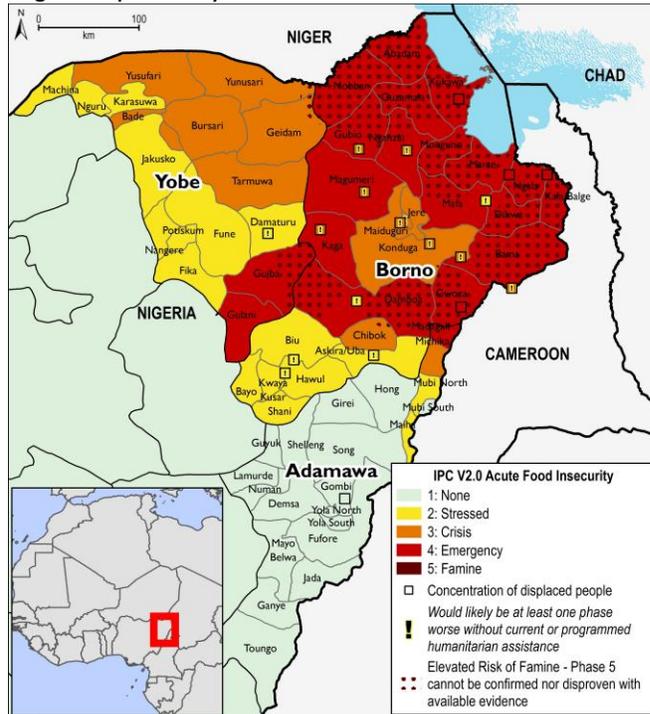
National Overview

Boko Haram related conflict continued to decline in March and April in many areas of the Lake Chad region, particularly in Adamawa and Yobe States, however many areas of the northeast remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors. A [displacement assessment in March](#) by IOM across the six northeast states (Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe) indicated that there are 1.83 million IDPs across the region. The report noted a four percent decline in the number of displaced persons between February and March 2017, reflecting people who have returned to their areas of origin after security improvements in some areas. Borno State, which remains the epicenter of the conflict, hosts more than 1.3 million of the displaced, down from 1.4 million people in February. Approximately 147,000 people are displaced in Adamawa State, while nearly 117,000 people are displaced in Yobe State. The March IOM assessment indicated that approximately 1.2 million displaced people have returned to their Local Government Areas (LGAs) of origin, out of which about 7 percent are returnees from Cameroon, Chad, and Niger during the same period.

The dry season harvest is underway across the country, with generally favorable results being reported in most areas. The elevated staple food prices, and the increased government funding and support for inputs such as fertilizer and improved seeds, led to an increase in area cultivated. Yields have also increased due to improved access to inputs, extension services, and funding needs. The Anchor Borrowers Scheme and the Growth Enhancement Scheme of the federal government have, through the Central Bank of Nigeria, provided input and funding support targeting smallholder farmers to increase dry season production of strategic crops, including major cereals such as rice, wheat, maize, and legumes (groundnut, cowpea, etc.). Increased yields and area planted will lead to greater dry season production, particularly for rice and wheat. The availability of fish is likely to be normal in most areas. Households in the northeast affected by the conflict will likely attempt to engage in off-season activities to access income and food, though at below normal levels.

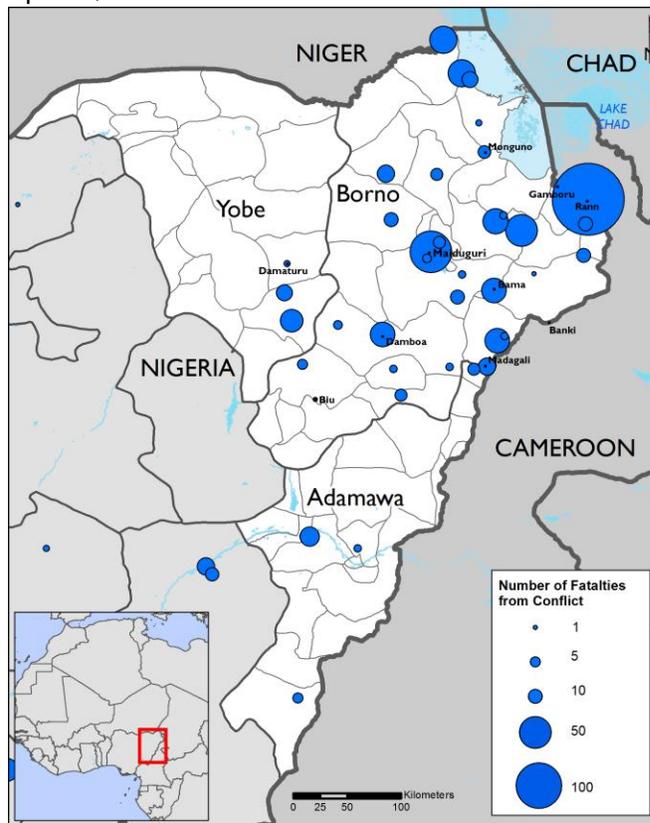
Humanitarian actors have continued to scale up assistance across the three northeastern states of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe, reaching more than 1,700,000 conflict-affected people with food and non-food assistance in February 2017. About 1.42 million people received food assistance, 190,975 persons were assisted with cash transfers, and

Figure 1. Projected food security outcomes for northeast Nigeria, April – May 2017



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. Fatalities reported due to conflict, January 1 - April 22, 2017



Source: Data from ACLED

another 99,697 individuals received livelihood support. Similarly, in March, humanitarian agencies were able to assist 2.1 million people across the three states. Assistance included in-kind food distributions, cash-based transfers, and agricultural support as well as e-voucher pilots in Goni Kachallari (Jere LGA, Borno State) and Kukareta (Damaturu LGA, Yobe State). WFP is extending its activities to Madagali and Michika LGAs in Adamawa State in April, and has planned to assist over 1.3 million people in April across the three worst-affected states. As of April 18th, WFP had reached 560,000 people in Borno State through in-kind food distributions and the Nutrition Assistance Programs.

Reprisal attacks continued in the central states of Kaduna, Benue, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Plateau, due to resource-based farmer/pastoralist conflict. The threat of violence is preventing many pastoralists from accessing available pasture in these areas. Similarly, cattle rustling has continued in the northwestern part of the country (Sokoto, Zamfara, Katsina, and Kaduna States), leading to early transhumance to the less affected areas of southern Nigeria.

Since the Nigerian government allowed the naira (NGN) to adjust to market rates in June 2016, the currency has depreciated against many regional and international currencies. Prior to June 2016, the naira was worth nearly 3 CFA francs (XOF) at official rates, whereas the rate as of April 26 2017 is XOF 1.95/NGN. The deterioration against the U.S. dollar (USD) has been similar. The weakening of the naira has been a key factor driving price increases for staple foods.

Prices of major staples including cereals (maize, millet, sorghum and rice), tubers (yam and *gari* or fermented cassava), and legumes (cowpea, groundnut, and others) remain elevated in most markets monitored across the country as compared to previous months, last year, and the five-year average. Similarly, prices of major cash crops such as groundnut, sesame, soy bean, and cowpea are higher than the previous year and the average prices. Staple food prices are relatively higher in the northeast, as the conflict continues to restrict the flow of food and other goods, increasing transaction costs. In Maiduguri, the main reference market in Borno State, March 2017 prices were more than 70 percent higher than the previous year for millet, 72 percent higher for brown cowpeas, and 103 percent higher for white cowpeas.

The rainy season has begun normally during February/March in the southern part of country. The spatial and temporal distribution of the rain is within normal levels, and farmers are engaged in the normal planting of cassava, maize, pepper, and tomatoes. Early green harvests of yams and maize are underway, and are reported to be near-normal. Seasonal forecasts for the rainy season through September/October indicate a likelihood for average tending to above-average cumulative precipitation.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Off-season activities are underway, including the dry season harvests and fishing activities, which are increasing household and market food supply. Most households across the country are engaged in dry season harvests, land preparation activities, and planting, depending on the area, and are earning income and accessing food normally. These agricultural activities and harvests will sustain most poor households until the main harvest beginning in October, and most areas of the country are expected to remain in **Minimal (IPC Phase 1)** acute food insecurity through at least September 2017. However, as food prices continue to increase with the onset of the lean season and further depreciation of the naira (NGN), many poor households will have reduced purchasing power, at a time when they are relying on markets for food access. Thus, some populations in these areas will likely face **Stressed (IPC Phase 2)** acute food insecurity during the period.

Ongoing insecurity and displacement in northeast Nigeria, however, will contribute to maintaining extreme levels of acute food insecurity as households continue to face significant difficulty maintaining livelihoods. Large areas of Borno State worst affected by the conflict will remain in **Emergency (IPC Phase 4)** and face an associated risk of excess mortality. Information on inaccessible areas remains extremely limited, but it is expected households remaining in these areas face similar or worse conditions as neighboring accessible areas as they remain cutoff from essential trade and humanitarian access, and likely face extremely limited livelihood opportunities. There is an ongoing **elevated risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)** in these inaccessible areas of Borno State. Other areas of the northeast will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as large populations continue to face significant difficulty meeting basic food needs.

Areas of Concern - Northeast Nigeria

Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) and Jere LGA IDP settlements

The level of insecurity within the metropolitan area (MMC and Jere) is gradually declining, although sporadic suicide attacks persist. Similar improvement in the security situation has also been observed in surrounding LGAs, which has led to an increase in the rate of returns to the LGA headquarters and to original homesteads. Thus, the number of people who remain displaced has declined somewhat, from 781,079 in February to 702,415 in March, according to IOM. IDPs in official camps are seeing increased access to humanitarian support, while those in host communities are receiving less assistance. Humanitarian actors have continued to scale-up activities, assisting more IDPs in the city center. However, there is also an influx of IDPs from recently liberated areas and refugees from neighboring Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Dry season agricultural activities in the area will remain significantly below average as IDP households have limited access to land and inputs. This is also compounded by limited access to some areas due to security challenges.

Markets within the city are functioning almost at pre-conflict levels, particularly Monday Market, where most staples are traded in Maiduguri. It also serves as the major market in the Lake Chad region, and is well supplied with major cereal staples including millet, maize, sorghum, and rice to meet market demand. Gamboru Market, a major cross-border market with Cameroon, is also supplying Maiduguri market with cowpea and livestock. Staples are also supplied from neighboring states, such as Kano, Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba. However, the Gamboru livestock market at the city center is functioning far below average, as cattle are restricted by security agents.

Staple food prices continue to increase relative to previous months, due to several consecutive years of limited harvests, high transaction costs, and high dependence on market purchase, as well as the depreciation of the naira (NGN). However, price increases have been slightly tempered by the increase in humanitarian assistance in the northeast. Food prices remain very high as compared to last year and the five-year average.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Elevated staple food prices, the influx of IDPs into the city center from newly liberated areas, below-average wages, and competition for available labor opportunities will continue to limit food access and increase food needs for displaced households throughout greater Maiduguri. The scaling up of humanitarian assistance remains insufficient and unlikely to satisfy the increasing needs for the vulnerable population in the city center. Thus, most of the affected populations will remain in **Crisis (IPC Phase 3!)** through May, as they remain dependent on food assistance and continue to experience food consumption gaps. During the lean season from June to September, food prices will increase further, adding additional constraints to food access and leading most of these households to face **Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes**.

Inaccessible areas of the northeast in Borno (Bama, Dikwa, Ngala, Kala Balge, Mafa, Monguno, Marte, Kukawa, Damboa, and Gwoza) and Yobe (Gujuba)

Access to communities throughout most areas in these LGAs remains restricted for humanitarian actors. Most displaced people are residing in LGA centers and some other major settlements in the area. In general, only major roads are accessible, and movements along these roads are conducted with military escorts whenever possible. Market functioning is poor, and in some areas they are no longer functioning. Joint military operations are underway in some areas, also limiting humanitarian access and increasing the rate of population displacement as more areas are liberated.

With the gradual improvement in the security situation, there has been an increase in the rate of returns to the LGA centers. Many IDPs are eager to return to engage in the upcoming main growing season, starting in June/July across the region. However, this is constrained by the sporadic attacks by the insurgents and intense military operations in the area. Thus, substantial populations are unable to return to their homesteads. Almost 2,000 IDPs have returned to their LGA headquarters and, in some cases, to their homesteads in April, according to recent IOM-ETT data. The number of returns is increasing almost on daily basis, including some returnees from Cameroon and Chad.

Dry season activities are substantially limited, as most areas along the major river channels are difficult to access due to insecurity. Thus, harvests are expected to be significantly limited. Similarly, agricultural and non-agricultural labor demand is largely unavailable due to limited income opportunities. Most IDPs continue to depend on humanitarian assistance and market purchases for food. Others rely on personal relations, wild food collection, and intense labor work for income to meet food needs.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Information on inaccessible areas remains extremely limited, but it is expected households remaining in these areas face similar or worse conditions as neighboring accessible areas as they remain cutoff from essential trade and humanitarian access, and likely face extremely limited livelihood opportunities. Large gaps in basic food needs are expected among much of the population remaining accessible areas. There is an ongoing **elevated risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)** in these inaccessible areas of Borno State. The onset of the rainy season in June/July is expected to further limit humanitarian access to the area, exacerbating the typical difficulty in accessing food during the lean season through September.

Central-west Borno State: Kaga, Magumeri, Gubio, and Nganzai LGAs

The improvement in the security situation in this area has also led to an increased rate of population return. However, this has been limited by the intense military operations in localized parts of the region, where insurgents remain in hiding and engage in sporadic attacks. Crop cultivation during the dry season is restricted. The usual dry season sorghum production in this area is not feasible at this time, due to ongoing insecurity. Landmines and other explosives in rural areas within the region have also restricted access to agricultural activities, markets, and pastoral activities. Markets are either functioning at below-average levels or are no longer functioning. Populations that remain displaced in these areas remain dependent on assistance for food and non-food needs. Humanitarian access remains restricted in the area, and travel is only conducted with strict military escorts.

FEWS NET contracted a rapid food security assessment conducted in February and March 2017 in parts of Nganzai LGA. The survey frame included areas safe for research for the survey firm, with about two thirds of Nganzai LGA being identified unsafe for research. 544 households were surveyed in two-stage cluster sampling for the accessible area. The survey found 66 percent of households having a Household Hunger Scale (HHS) of two or higher and 46 percent of household having a Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) less than four. Proxy GAM by MUAC (< 125 mm and/or edema) for children 6-59 months (n=750) in households surveyed was 28.7 percent (25.5-32.0 95% CI). The survey team ultimately sampled many clusters with newly displaced households as active military operations during the survey period led to high levels of displacement in the area.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Increased IDP returns to the area, continued livelihood and market disruptions, intense military operations, and sporadic attacks by the insurgents are limiting income and food access. Dry season activity is substantially below average, compounded by the security situation. Elevated food prices are exacerbated by restricted food flow into the area. These factors are likely leading to a widening of food consumption gaps, with many households facing **Emergency (IPC Phase 4)**. This condition will persist through at least September, as households will be unable to engage in the rainy season cultivation.