

**CONFLICT IN WESTERN CAMEROON DRIVES UP HUMANITARIAN NEEDS,
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT URGENTLY NEEDED**

Geneva, 24 January 2019 - The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Cameroon, Ms. Allegra Baiocchi, and Cameroon's Civil Protection Director, Ms. Yap Mariatou, today in Geneva warned key donor countries of the worrying developments in Cameroon and the drastic increase in humanitarian need in the country.

"Hundreds of thousands of people on Cameroon's territory need urgent assistance and protection," Ms. Baiocchi said, presenting, in coordination with Cameroon's Government, the United Nations and partners 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan. "Attacks against civilians have increased and many conflict-affected people are surviving in harsh conditions without humanitarian assistance due to the dramatic underfunding of the response. Cameroon today can no longer be a forgotten crisis; it needs to be high on our agenda."

With needs rising by 31 per cent in a year, the UN today estimates that around 4.3 million people in Cameroon – one in six people and mostly women and children - require lifesaving assistance. The joint Humanitarian Response Plan 2019 seeks US\$299 million to assist 2.3 million vulnerable people, more than half of those in need. Last year, a US\$320 million response plan for Cameroon was only 40 per cent funded.

The aggravation of the conflict in the North-West and South-West regions is the main driver behind the increase, with armed attacks in the Far North region and new refugees coming from the Central African Republic also resulting in more people requiring aid.

Insecurity and violence in these regions have uprooted 437,000 people from their homes and forced over 32,000 to seek refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. Four million people are affected by the conflict in Cameroon's west. In addition, due to the deteriorating situation in northeast Nigeria, more than 10,000 new refugees arrived in Cameroon in 2018, bringing the number of Nigerian refugees to 100,000.

"The Government of Cameroon is responsible for the protection and wellbeing of its people and has been at the forefront of the response with its national and international partners," added Ms. Yap Mariatou. "We acknowledge the scale of the different crises we face, and we encourage all the actors to work in close partnership to address the needs of Cameroonians and of the people we host."

"Humanitarian needs are likely to increase in coming years," said Ms. Baiocchi. "This is worrying as humanitarian response budgets have rarely been adequately funded over the past years. Underfunding means we cannot do all we can to make a difference in the life of most vulnerable people across Cameroon, whether it is the girl who is missing school due to violence, the displaced mother struggling to feed her children, or the father who has lost his entire family."

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