LAKE CHAD BASIN: CRISIS UPDATE
No. 23
March - April 2018

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Food insecurity to remain high in the lean season
- 278 Nigerian asylum seekers forced back from Cameroon
- Aid operations resume in Rann in north-east Nigeria
- Military operations underway around Lake Chad
- More than a thousand children abducted since 2013

10.7M people in need
7.8M targeted for assistance
2.4M people displaced
5.0M food insecure people at crisis and emergency level
490k children suffering from severe acute malnutrition
1.6B funding requirement in 2018
**SITUATION OVERVIEW**

**FOOD INSECURITY**

Food insecurity is projected to remain high in the coming months as the lean season gets underway. Currently (March – May) around 4 million are food insecure across the conflict-affected regions of the Lake Chad Basin. The figure is set to increase to almost 5 million at the height of the lean season between June and August. This is, however, lower than the same period in 2017 when 7 million people were food insecure. Nigeria’s north-eastern Adamawa, Borno and Yobe sates have recorded the greatest decline: from 4.7 million people in March – May 2017 to 2.3 million in March – May 2018. Humanitarian assistance and improved harvests in the three-conflict-hit states have boosted food availability, according to the Cadre Harmonisé March food security assessment.

**FOOD SECURITY TRENDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>1,455,076</td>
<td>1,489,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>159,603</td>
<td>123,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>132,966</td>
<td>159,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>118,293</td>
<td>134,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90,758</td>
<td>118,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>4,667,716</td>
<td>5,248,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,321,236</td>
<td>2,985,533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONFLICT**

Armed attacks persist across the region. Civilians, including the displaced, towns and villages frequently come under attack. Humanitarian operations were suspended in Rann town in north-east Nigeria in March following an armed raid. In what is believed to be the worst attack in months on Maiduguri, the capital of Borno, assailants launched a major assault on 26 April, with blasts and gunfire rattling the city home to more than 260,000 displaced people and several aid organisations. The military launched air and ground offensive to repulse the raiders. Borno state has witnessed a rise in insecurity in recent months.

Around Lake Chad and on some of its islands, the Joint Multinational Task Force (MNJTF) has launched new military operations against armed groups in the region. There are fears of population displacement, reduced humanitarian access and the risk of UXO. In Niger, humanitarian missions to Bosso town, a vaccination campaign and mobile clinics have had to be cancelled. Meanwhile in Chad, UNHCR has set up a registration centre in Ngouboua in the western Lac region for potential population displacement. No significant population movement has so far been reported.

As part of security measures, Nigerien authorities in March extended for three months the state of emergency in Diffa. The restriction has been in place in the south-eastern region since February 2015.

**PROTECTION**

Despite the agreement on voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon, asylum seekers continue to be forced back from Cameroon. Since the start of 2018, 385 Nigerians have been forcibly returned from Cameroon’s Far North region. UNHCR voiced concerns on 20 April and appealed Cameroonians authorities to refrain from further forced returns and ensure protection to those fleeing insecurity and persecution. In the latest incident on 10 April, 160 Nigerian refugees and asylum seekers were forcibly returned to the north-east Borno state. The forced returns violate the non-refoulement principle and are a significant setback to progress made by Cameroon in granting asylum to Nigerian civilians fleeing violence, the UN Refugee Agency said.

The devastation of the nine-year-long conflict runs deep. Since 2013, more than a thousand children have been abducted by armed groups in north-east Nigeria, according to UNICEF. Nearly 2,300 teachers have been killed and more than 1,400 schools destroyed, most of which have not reopened because of extensive damage or insecurity. Unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices littering many localities in north-east Nigeria is claiming many civilian lives. In early March, an IED on a path killed six people out fetching firewood near their home in Dikwa in Borno. The Nigerian military has expressed worry over the proliferation of the explosives and difficulties in safely detonating them. Humanitarian actors continue to call for comprehensive demining...
Lake Chad Basin Crisis Update

ADVOCACY AND HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

Humanitarian organisations and Governments have in 2018 requested for **US$1.6 billion to assist 7.8 million people** affected by the conflict across the Lake Chad Basin. Humanitarian needs remain high as the conflict continues to cause adversity. Some **490,000 children** are severely acutely malnourished and **5 million people** are struggling with high levels of food insecurity. The protracted conflict has left around **2.4 million people** displaced in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Relief operations have been ramped up since 2016, with more people receiving assistance. However, insecurity still undermines access to certain localities, depriving affected communities of assistance. In 2017, donors provided 62 per cent of the $1.5 billion humanitarian response budget. Humanitarian response strategies this year are further strengthening collaboration with Governments and development actors to provide urgent relief assistance and address the causes of recurrent emergencies.

From 20 - 27 February, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, visited Cameroon and Chad to witness the human suffering caused by the prolonged conflict in the Lake Chad Basin. She noted the increased need in humanitarian assistance and protection in Cameroon’s Far North and called on the international community and Governments to support humanitarian actors in stepping up operations. In Chad, she noted that **funding for humanitarian operations has not kept pace with increased needs**, especially in regions affected by displacement and food insecurity in the country’s south and east, and called for lasting solutions to the crisis in the Lac region.

FUNDING LEVEL PER COUNTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Funded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIGERIA</td>
<td>Required: 1.05B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded: 395.8M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMEROON</td>
<td>Required: 189.2M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded: 16.0M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAD</td>
<td>Required: 179.4M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded: 41.0M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGER</td>
<td>Required: 167.9M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Funded: 23.9M</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**FUNDED**

| US$ 476.7M |

**REQUIREMENT**

| US$ 1.6 BILLION |
At least 385 Nigerians have been forced back from Cameroon since the beginning of 2018 despite the agreement on voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon. The majority (278) were forcefully returned in April. This marks a significant setback to efforts by Cameroon in granting asylum to Nigerians fleeing insecurity and persecution by non-state armed groups. Cameroon hosts some 93,114 Nigerian refugees in its Far North region.

Humanitarian actors are voicing worries about the plight of some 15,000 conflict-affected people, including 7,000 recently-displaced people in Amchidé in Far North region’s Mayo-Sava department. Food is in short supply and children are without education. Several NGOs have started providing WASH services. As the lean season begins, food distribution and agricultural assistance are urgently needed.

More than 5,500 out-of-camp refugees have been registered at Gourrenguel transit site in Mayo Tsanaga department of Far North region. In March, 1,780 refugees were registered. On average, 300 new people are being registered every week, most of them being out-of-camp refugees.

The humanitarian community is implementing a commitment to address sexual exploitation and abuse. So far, this year, 75 per cent of UN staff in Far North region have taken part in prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse training. Discussions are ongoing to open the sessions to NGOs. The humanitarian community is also exploring the establishment of a community-based complaint mechanism.

Cameroon’s Far North region has suffered recurrent armed raids. Insecurity and attacks continue to displace thousands of people. Food insecurity and malnutrition have deepened. Around 1.5 million people in the Far North region are food insecure. Almost half of all children affected by acute malnutrition in Cameroon are in Far North. Population displacement has risen in 2017 to reach around 310,000. The region is currently home to around 93,000 Nigerian refugees, more than half of whom are living in Minawao camp. Precarious conditions in the camp, reduction of food rations and refugees being swayed to believe that conditions are back to normal in their areas of origin have contributed to the spontaneous return of almost 13,000 refugees between April and June 2017.
The Multinational Joint Taskforce (MNJTF) launched an operation in April in the Lake Chad Basin. No population displacement has yet been reported. However, UNHCR has set up a registration site in Ngouboua locality to monitor the situation and receive potential IDPs. The protection cluster is strengthening community-based protection monitoring to ensure early warning, and preparing a contingency plan in partnership with other clusters, particularly the CCCM/Shelter/NFI cluster.

At a press briefing on 25 April, the MNJTF Force Commander explained that the operation also aimed at stabilising the region through activities to assist civilians during the military operations. This has raised concerns over the respect of the principle of neutrality of humanitarian action and the distinction between military and humanitarian actors operating in the same areas.

More than 159,000 people in the western Lac region will face “crisis” and “emergency” levels of food insecurity during the June – August lean season, and will need food assistance. This highlights the deterioration of the food security situation compared to last year, when some 123,000 people faced the same level of food insecurity during the 2017 lean season.

During the first quarter of 2018, 385 cases of gender-based violence were reported (106 in January; 144 in February; and 135 in March). The majority are physical assaults, psychological violence and resource denials. While around 95 per cent of known survivors received psychological support, less than 25 per cent received medical care and less than 10 per cent received legal support. Holistic care for victims is a persistent unmet need. The lack of legal support is linked to insufficient legal structures in the region, lack of knowledge of the procedures by the victims and the fear of reprisals and stigmatization, which leads the victims to decline legal assistance.

Authorities in Lac region are preparing a security and development plan. The drafting process was launched in April during a visit by the Humanitarian Coordinator, Stephen Tull, EU representatives, and other partners. The delegation visited Kadoulou island on Lake Chad where some former IDPs have returned. Improving access to basic services and livelihood support is critical in areas where formerly displaced people are returning. A committee to develop the plan has been set up by the Governor and the plan is expected by September.

From November 2017 to March 2018, a series of five multisector assessments were conducted to identify vulnerabilities in new displacement sites created in 2017 and in displacement sites with new arrivals of populations in 2017. A total of 95 sites were assessed in Daboua, Liwa, Kaiga Kindjiria, Ngouboua and Kangalom areas. Following these assessments, a workshop was organized in the Lac region on 10 – 11 April with national clusters, regional sub-clusters and regional State technical services to analyse results and recommendations from these assessments and prioritize the humanitarian response. Severity criteria were jointly defined based on the response already provided and the needs in each site to identify priority sites and gaps. The prioritisation effort is ongoing.

Thousands of families have been uprooted in localities around the western Lac region by insecurity and cross-border attacks. The region currently hosts around 135,000 people struggling to survive under difficult conditions with little access to necessities such as potable water, health, nutrition and education. Children associated with armed groups, unaccompanied or separated from their families, are particularly vulnerable, as are displaced women and girls who account for more than 80 per cent of victims of gender-based violence reported so far in 2017. Incidents related to the protection of civilians, one third of which involve men in uniform, have increased worryingly since April 2017. The local population has come under pressure of the influx in a region already beset by poverty and underdevelopment.
Lake Chad Basin Crisis Update

**NIGER**

- The ongoing military offensive against Boko Haram by the Joint Multinational Task Force on the islands of Lake Chad and areas along Komadougou river is restricting humanitarian operations in the nearby Bosso town and other localities. Humanitarian missions to Bosso as well as a vaccination campaign and mobile clinics have had to be cancelled. The operation could displace up to 15,000 people living on Lake Chad islands and along Komadougou river.

- In March, humanitarian actors reported that over 1,250 IDPs had left displacements sites in Gueskerou, Kablewa, Bosso, Toundour and Nguigmi localities due to difficult living conditions, including lack of food among communities living on Lake Chad islands, which have been declared off limits by the military. There are reports that the military mistreated those who have been caught.

- More than 24,000 children were vaccinated against polio between March and April. Despite constraints faced by vaccination teams, the campaign in Diffa region reached 269,148 children in April, 24,000 more than the previous month. Only seven villages were not reached compared to 60 previously. However, the results remain below those achieved in October and November 2017 when respectively 281,588 and 245,475 children were vaccinated.

- Despite large-scale efforts by heath workers, 164 cases (85 men and 79 women) of Hepatitis E have been registered in Diffa since the beginning of the year. During the same period last year, 107 cases were recorded. The most affected areas are Assaga (31 cases) and Chétimari (82 cases).

- Sixty-two children are among 211 people being held at Goudoumaria detention centre for those who have deserted armed group ranks. There are worries over the plight of the children (390 boys and 23 girls) who depend on their mothers for survival. Among the detainees are 32 women. Thirty-six children (30 boys and six girls) were previously released and reintegrated into their home communities.

- The Government announced in March a three-month extension of the state of emergency in Diffa, which has suffered recurrent armed attacks. The state of emergency has been in place since February 2015.

The south-eastern Diffa region is witnessing an unprecedented humanitarian emergency since the first armed attacks in February 2015. Hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced or forced to seek refuge in the region from across the border. By September 2016, around 200 families had arrived in Diffa in search of safety from attacks in Nigeria and Chad. Diffa is home to just four per cent of Niger’s population. However, it accounts for almost 20 per cent of the 2.2 million people in need of protection and life-saving assistance in the country. Across the country, 1.4 million people are struggling to meet their most basic need for food, some 500,000 more than at the beginning of the year. Around 400,000 children under five are at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition.
Nigeria’s north-eastern region has been ravaged by violence for nearly a decade. What started as a protection crisis has also become a major food and nutrition crisis, and one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in the world. Agricultural production has nearly stalled. Protracted displacement has further devastated livelihoods already upended by violence. Humanitarian response has been escalated over the past year. Food assistance is now reaching around 2 million people. Aid agencies have significantly increased personnel and resources to meet the huge humanitarian needs. Despite the progress, insecurity and funding shortfall are major hurdles to providing adequate assistance. Many areas remain inaccessible and armed attacks continue to torment civilians and pose threats.