Displaced But Not Forgotten
Assisting Those Affected By Boko Haram in Nigeria
“I dream of a country where all men would live in peace and there would be nothing like wars or Boko Haram to break us apart.

I dream of a time when all tribes would speak one language called peace.

And there is equality for all.”

- Victor Igiri, Nigerian Poet

Cover Page: Makeshift shelters in the Farm Centre Camp for internally displaced people in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Right: A group of displaced children at the Buzu Camp in Maiduguri, Nigeria.
The West African Nation of Nigeria is the most populous country on the African continent, with a wide spectrum of wealth, traditions and faiths across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. As a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), it is the 12th largest producer and 8th largest exporter of petroleum in the world. Despite that, economic instability and insecurity continue to impact the country.

In the north-east of the country, Boko Haram – an Islamic extremist group whose name roughly translates to “western education is forbidden” – has been staging an insurgency since 2009, which advanced to take control of large territories in 2014. The Nigerian Military campaign has since liberated most communities and pushed Boko Haram back to a large extent. They now rely on the use of terrorist tactics against “soft” targets in urban areas, such as public markets and mosques, and sporadic attacks on rural villages. On at least two occasions to date (September 2015 and January 2016), Boko Haram has detonated bombs inside camps sheltering displaced people.
Estimates by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicate that approximately 1.9 million people have been displaced in Nigeria, as a direct result of Boko Haram’s insurgency, since 2014 (as of April 2016). Some areas, including parts of Adamawa, Yobe and southern Borno states, have settled sufficiently to make returns possible and safe, and tentative returns have begun. However, for many hundreds of thousands of people, multiple protracted displacements have become the norm, and life remains uncertain.

Through the efforts of the Government of Nigeria and humanitarian stakeholders, thousands of displaced persons have been assisted with essential basic services including food, housing, water, sanitation and psychosocial support. However, much more needs to be done to address their plight and ensure dignified and durable solutions for the affected populations.
Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, was once a major regional trade centre. It became the epicentre of the Boko Haram insurgency, and the military campaign against it. Today, Maiduguri is ringed with protective trenches and military roadblocks, making the city a comparatively safe haven. As a result, more than 1,180,000 people from surrounding areas have flooded into Maiduguri, resulting in a growing displaced population which almost doubles Maiduguri’s original population. Tens of thousands of people have moved into 16 government-managed camps, and even more into numerous informal settlements, living with friends and family, or renting accommodation if they are able to afford it.

Those displaced in Maiduguri struggle every day to meet their basic needs, but they can still be considered among the luckier ones. Hundreds of thousands are displaced beyond Maiduguri’s trenches, with a much thinner line of protection, and supply routes for food and other basic needs heavily constrained by insecurity. Tens of thousands of people live in high density camps under military protection, with no or few civilian actors present to provide support.

The leading agency for emergency response in Nigeria, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Borno State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) have been there since the outset, and continue to address the needs of the displaced population to the extent of their means. Resource constraints leave urgent gaps, including in shelter and camp coordination.

International agencies have been supporting the Government’s response, re-establishing presence in Maiduguri, Borno state, in early 2015. More than a year later, international actors and supplies are only just beginning to reach out beyond the trenches that surround Maiduguri to bring humanitarian aid into Borno state’s worst affected areas, and into the hands of those most in need. The response is stretched far beyond capacity: more help is needed.

In the midst of this upheaval, classes continue to be held in Maiduguri’s University, albeit diminished; weddings are celebrated on weekends; and football matches are held daily before sunset between state-level teams. Heavy traffic bustles all over town with licence plates donning the state’s slogan “The Land of Peace”.
Maiduguri, Nigeria.
Malam Musa Abba.
Malam Musa Abba
Repeated Displacement

Malam Musa Abba became a community leader within the Gubio Camp in Maiduguri for the people of his village since their displacement over a year ago. When Boko Haram initially came in small groups to his village of Ashegashia, they were made to believe that they had no intention of harming civilians. With time however, it proved otherwise, leaving Malam Abba and fellow villagers with no alternative but to slowly and discreetly escape in small groups.

Malam Abba and his family made it across the border into Cameroon, living in a village near the border for five months, under the protection of the Cameroonian military. While there, the town was attacked by Boko Haram and Malam Abba was yet again forced to flee to Gargara, another village nearby, losing four of his children in the chaos.

Some months later, Malam Abba and his people were forced to return to Nigeria. After moving several times inside Nigeria, they finally reached Gubio Camp in Maiduguri, where they remain in displacement, waiting for a time when they feel safe enough to return home. The long journey for him and his people cost 10 lives, most of them children. Malam Abba was able to reunite with three of his missing children in Maiduguri. The fourth one, his daughter, is still missing to this day, and is believed to have been captured by Boko Haram.
Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) and Biometric Registration
An IDP gets his fingerprints scanned as part of the registration process in Maiduguri.
Good data is the crucial underpinning of an informed humanitarian response, in which the right kind of aid can reach everyone who needs it. IOM gathers data through its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in Nigeria in two main ways. The first is through broad and far-reaching assessments, gathered across 13 of Nigeria’s states every two months, which give an overview of numbers and needs. The second is biometric registration, collecting detail on households and individuals to facilitate the delivery of aid. Information gathered provides useful insight on displacement trends, and the profiles of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

IOM, NEMA and SEMAs initiated displacement tracking assessments at the onset of the crisis in 2014 to accurately determine the numbers of displaced. As of April 2016, 2.2 million were displaced in Nigeria, 1.9 million of them displaced because of the Boko Haram insurgency. Biometric registration of IDPs was initiated in December 2015. By May 2016, 219,532 people had been registered.

The typical biometric registration day begins shortly after sunrise with IOM, NEMA, and SEMA staff setting up tents, booths and finger print scanners that are used in the registration process. Registration booths are moved to where the people are, registering up to 1,000 households at each location – many households consist of large families including multiple children and wives.

The identification of people takes place before registration. IOM staff go into the camps or host communities to distribute tokens to the heads of households that are entitled to be registered. Once registered, heads of households are given a card with details of all the household members. This is used for the collection and recording of assistance; to inform voluntary relocation processes; and to help humanitarian actors to better track IDPs’ movements.

According to Abubakar Tayib, the team leader for the biometric registration: “This exercise gives us the opportunity to be in direct contact with the affected population and to have the feeling that something concrete is being done for them. We know that partners will be using this information to provide assistance to them.”
IDPs waiting in line to be registered by IOM.
Non-Food Items (NFI) Distributions
A man from Buzu camp receives a Non-Food Items (NFI) kit containing a kitchen set to meet the cooking needs for many within the camp.
Within the city of Maiduguri lies the Buzu Camp. As of early 2015, it houses roughly 4,100 displaced people, the majority of whom are from the nearby Mafa, which has been badly affected by Boko Haram.

The light green buildings in Buzu Camp are unique in Maiduguri. They are built on land owned by Alhaji Garba Buzu, who has permitted his land to be used to house some of the displaced population. He also offered space for IOM to conduct efficient distributions of basic household items.
IOM distributed non-food items (NFIs) to people in need in multiple locations, including this camp, where the clear need was essential household cooking items. To ensure a well-managed distribution, IOM conducts a head count in the camp in the late evening hours with the help of a local authority figure. Vouchers are quickly and methodically delivered to the heads of households that have been counted, ensuring disbursement before crowds gather.
Alhaji Garba Buzu  
Communities Supporting Displaced People

Originally from Damagaram, Niger, Alhaji Garba came to Maidiguri, Nigeria, 39 years ago, where he invested heavily in property deals and built his fortune. When he wasn’t conducting business deals including buying and selling land for profit, Alhaji Garba was often selling land, homes and even cars to locals at agreeable prices with no interest. “If a man comes to me with a family and wants to buy a home for them but does not have all of the money right away, I give him a home which he can pay back over as long as he needs without interest.”

Alhaji, which means “the one who has performed pilgrimage”, has garnered a name of himself within the community as someone who consistently gives to those less fortunate than him – a position that is often cultivated by Nigeria’s elite. “From a young age, I always enjoyed what little I had. Despite the success I might have garnered over the years I never lost sight of helping those in need.”

Once he saw the influx of people from Mafa running away from Boko Haram, he decided to open up his land and allow people to build a displacement settlement on it. His own personal home is a sprawling neighbourhood featuring homes for his four wives and 38 children as well as homes for dozens of other people connected to his family, and even includes a Qur’anic school for children and youth.

As a man with a strong sense of faith, he feels appalled by some people’ actions and their twisted interpretation of the same religion he himself uses to help others. “I see these people, the havoc they cause and what they do is entirely different than what the Qur’an teaches. Whenever I find pupils at my school developing an ideology that is twisted, and they are not willing to change, I banish them because I do not want them to corrupt the minds of others.”

The contribution made by Garba Buzu is just one example of the significant private contributions made by individuals and communities to support the displaced in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region.
On this page: Distribution of IOM NFIs consisting mainly of household cooking items.
When NFIs are being distributed, trucks arrive early in the morning with several dozen boxes ready to be handed out. Beneficiaries are called in by groups in order to manage the flow of the distribution in an orderly and rapid fashion. In total, the distribution itself takes only a few hours to conclude. The risk involved in working with displaced populations is worth it, Kazi Made, an IOM staff, who says: “The desire to help people and see change in the society is what brings me back every day. I heard once that evil will prevail if good men do nothing.”
While thousands of families have received needed basic household items, gaps remain, especially among those who have been newly displaced or displaced again, and have left most of their belongings behind.
Shelter and Camp Management
Makeshift shelters at Farm Centre Camp, Maiduguri, Nigeria.
Al-Haji Mustapha
Fleeing From Their Homes

Al-Haji Mustapha, from Gamboru Ngala, Borno state is the local leader in the Bakassi displacement camp representing nearly 4,000 people from the local government area of Ngala. He left his home with his family 19 months ago where he was a farmer and businessman, growing his crops during the rainy season and selling water from his borehole, as well as managing a shop selling food and basic provisions.

“As a family man, I miss being able to address the various needs of my large family of four wives and 14 children, including being able to provide clean clothes. Despite this, I have little incentive to return to Ngala, as my home, crops and shop have been burned to the ground”.

“They came to my village in the morning when most of us were sleeping. Once they started to attack, the next thing I know we are all running for our lives. If they captured you or you got hit by a stray bullet, there was no one coming back for you. I didn’t even know where my family was because we were all running in different directions.”

Thankfully, Mustapha managed to reunite with his family afterwards in a border town in Chad where they stayed for 11 months. Later, Al-Haji Mustapha and his family moved several times within north-eastern Nigeria before finally arriving to Maiduguri.

Living in a camp means that privacy, personal space and livelihood opportunities are scarce commodities. Despite this, Mustapha counts his family as one of the luckier ones; as they arrived earlier to the camp, they were able to live in one of the unfinished buildings in a sprawling housing project, one of several pending completion in Maiduguri’s suburbs which are now occupied by displaced people.

These unfinished projects have been allocated to those arriving in Maiduguri when the crisis peaked. “Recently, I have seen so many new families arrive to the camp, but there are no more homes for them. I have seen pregnant women and children sleep outside in the open and it breaks my heart.”

No longer able to farm, Mustapha must for now rely on humanitarian assistance from outside sources to provide food for him and his family. “I used to grow tomatoes, maize and pretty much anything I wanted to put on my table. Now I have to accept whatever comes my way. I feel helpless.”
Al-Haji Mustapha.
On this page: Displaced families pose in front of their makeshift homes.
“I left my hometown of Bama, 19 months ago where I was a tailor. What I miss most from my old home is my jewellery, my eldest daughter who has been kidnapped by Boko Haram and my husband, whom they killed.” - Atai
Atai’s story is similar to thousands of families who have been impacted. Uprooted from their homes and displaced without shelter, makeshift homes have sprung up in available spaces both in camps and communities. In more extreme cases, families cannot even scavenge sufficient materials for makeshift shelter.

People also sought shelter in public and unfinished buildings, including schools. As a direct result of the crisis, education for most of Borno state’s children has stalled. In late 2015 when the Borno state government asked IDPs to vacate schools, the humanitarian community rallied behind a planned, voluntary and dignified relocation so that education could resume.

IOM, as co-lead of the Shelter, NFI and Camp Management Clusters alongside NEMA, coordinates shelter design, site planning and construction at the new sites for the relocation. This includes advocating for a full range of basic services in line with international guidance and local conditions. IOM played an important role in facilitating the relocation of people from occupied schools into their
newly made homes. IOM’s site facilitation teams, who work in camps on a daily basis supporting NEMA camp managers, have helped with this.

New shelters have been constructed with solid wood frames, concrete foundations, corrugated galvanized iron roofing and adequate ventilation, intended to weather the harsh hot and rainy seasons in urban Maiduguri, ensuring a minimum level of hygiene and privacy. Common facilities such as toilets and water points are also included at a safe and convenient walking distance.

The family shelters are a far cry from the crowded classrooms people had been living in. Many families have been reunited in the new sties after a long time apart, due to gender segregation and restrictions on movement that have been enforced in many of Maiduguri’s camps. Safe family unification has been a primary objective of the broader effort to upgrade camps and free up schools in Maiduguri.

On the next page: Construction of emergency shelters and numbering each unit to ease allocation of shelters and camp management.
A makeshift shelter made from straw, grass, fabric, rope and sticks.
An IOM Shelter constructed from concrete, tarpaulin, iron sheeting and wood.
Through collaboration between SEMA, NEMA and the humanitarian community including IOM, work continues so that classes can resume and children, displaced or not, will be able to resume their much needed education in Maiduguri.

Ensuring that relocations are voluntary and dignified, and that minimum standards are continuously met in new and existing camps, is an ongoing process of community engagement and coordination – the work of camp management. Beyond access to essential basic services – not least adequate
shelter - many displaced people in camps miss the ability to farm and fend for themselves, having gone from being largely self-sufficient to relying on humanitarian assistance to meet their needs. More support is needed to ensure strong and effective camp management that can not only help to meet immediate needs, but also bridge to durable, long term solutions for Nigeria’s displaced.

On this page from top left: Families living within occupied classrooms in Maiduguri are relocated to newly built shelters across a number of IDP camps within the city.
Psychosocial Support
The conflict affected population and survivors of Boko Haram attacks can suffer from several forms of psychosocial distress, which are amplified by displacement. The impact on children is very apparent in children’s drawings, which often depict weapons, militants and lost loved ones.

Following the abduction of 219 girls from a school in Chibok, Borno state in April 2014, IOM rolled out its psychosocial programme with the aim of protecting and promoting the psychosocial well-being of returning Chibok girls, their families and the affected communities. Forty-seven of the girls who managed to escape within a few days of the abduction have benefited from IOM psychosocial services. The issue extends far beyond the Chibok group: teams have since expanded to reach those in need in the capitals of Adamawa and Borno states.
Psychosocial support is given based on detailed family assessments and profiles of the affected families. Direct psychosocial assistance, including lay counselling, recreational activities, referrals to specialized mental health services and case follow-up is given through mobile teams. The teams also support health and hygiene promotion. They are in daily contact with displaced communities, conducting rounds of the camps, holding health awareness sessions, and handing out flyers sensitizing people on the importance of practising good hygiene and how to improve the cleanliness of their environments. Education and capacity-building of families and relevant authorities on psychological first aid, so they can support their own, is an important part of the work.

With the strain of protracted displacement, and with continued new displacements including people escaping from Boko Haram strongholds, the need for psychosocial support will not diminish in the near future.
Zaynab Hassan is the headmaster of the teaching programme at Teacher's Village IDP camp. He, among many of the teachers at the camp, has been displaced as he fled his village from the violence of Boko Haram. "When people talk about this crisis they never put enough focus on the teachers. When Boko Haram comes to our villages, teachers are among the first people they kill because they believe what we teach is haram (forbidden)."

The education of displaced children is a high priority for all humanitarian actors. A number of the camps found in Borno state lack designated schools. In the largest camps, tents and converted freight containers allow for teaching sessions, some of which are supported by IOM psychosocial staff, as well as former teachers from within the IDP population.
On the next page: An embroidery class is underway in Women’s Teachers College Camp, IOM psychosocial staff is carrying out a group session sensitizing women on the importance of maintaining their personal hygiene at Teacher’s Village Camp, a woman is comforted as she speaks out during a group counselling session at Arabic Teachers College Camp, women do an exercise demonstrating the importance of maintaining a clean home environment at Teachers Village Camp.
On this page: IOM organizes a football match between teams representing different IDP camps.
Displaced But Not Forgotten

The Government of Nigeria continues to lead efforts to address the needs of the 1.9 million displaced by the insurgency, with the assistance of the international humanitarian community. Further resources are urgently required to provide an adequate and holistic response that can meet life-saving needs, and lay the foundations for dignified and durable solutions for Nigeria’s displaced.

In north-east Nigeria, continued insecurity and the consequent displacement of people across the region will make a return to normalcy for most people a distant and unlikely prospect. Even in Maiduguri, within the Nigerian Military’s protective ring of trenches, the threat of Boko Haram never seems far enough away.
Thousands of displaced people are likely to continue to live in camps and informal settlements, separated from their homes, lifestyles, families and traditions. Some will make tentative moves back to their homes in relatively stabilized areas, and begin to rebuild. Some may remain in their areas of displacement, reworking the fabric of urban populations. Some may move even farther away from their original homes in the hope of a better life and some semblance of normalcy. We must remain alongside to assist those affected by Boko Haram in Nigeria, as they search for the best way forward for themselves and their families.
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