

# Northeast Nigeria Operational Update

December 2021

During the **commemoration of the 16-Days of Activism for 2021** in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States, UNHCR and partners **reached nearly 2,600 individuals** through community engagements and advocacy.

The Borno State Government unilaterally **closed Bakassi and Teachers Village IDP camps** in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, **hosting nearly 63,000 women, men and children** (12,294 households).

UNHCR and partners reached over **83,000 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees, and host community members** through some 1,600 protection and human rights border monitoring missions and site visits in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States.



*Though displaced from her home in North-East Nigeria, little Zainabu is not as unlucky as other children who remain trapped by insecurity. She is a pupil at a school in Gubio Camp, Maiduguri, and a member of the Kids Club of a child protection project supported by the Muslim World League. © UNHCR/Francis Garriba.*

# Operational Highlights

- In Borno State, NSAG used short-range military type projectiles to launch attacks in parts of Maiduguri metro and Rann in Kala Balge LGA (Local Government Areas). Some members of the NSAG surrendered to the military. Armed attacks, mounting of illegal checkpoints, abduction of civilians, petty crime, fire hazards/ outbreaks across the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States. Some **88 civilians were affected** by incidents such as ambushes, while road movements remained risky for humanitarian workers and cargo. Because of the insecurity involved, UN Security classified most roads in Borno State as “no go” areas.
- In Adamawa State, NSAG members threatened to attack Mubi and Michika LGAs. To avert such attacks, the military attempted to disrupt market activities in Michika on 11 December 2021 but **NSAGs** still succeeded **to attack parts of the LGA** a few days later, killing four Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Another attack mounted by gunmen in Ndula settlement, Fufore LGA, left six IDPs seriously injured. Abductions for ransom continued with a host community leader and three members kidnapped in Yola North and Maiha LGAs. A ransom demand of 13 million naira was made as a condition for their release.
- Meanwhile, in Yobe State, ISWAP and Boko Haram members **burned a newly renovated police station** in the town of Buniyadi on 1 December 2021, and freed suspects in detention. On 27 December 2021, the armed groups attempted to infiltrate the town again, prompting a movement restriction on the busy Damaturu-Biu road. When their attempt on Buniyadi failed, the NSAG members are reported to have later **attacked Goniri returned community** with the use of short-range military type projectiles, injuring seven individuals.
- December was characterised by a **resurgence of COVID-19 infections** but the Nigerian government did not impose any lockdown in the country. The UN, however, adopted measures to curtail the fast-spreading Omicron variant of the virus and took preliminary measures including the reduction of personnel footprints in offices.

## POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- In November, UNHCR recorded nearly **1,000 individuals (315 households)**, mainly of Nigerian nationalities, at both **the regular and irregular borders** between Nigeria and Cameroon, Niger and Chad. About 75 per cent of the cross border movement was captured at the Banki entry points, 16 per cent in Damasak, and nine per cent in Pulka community of Gwoza LGA. Major reasons for the movements included returns from asylum country, seasonal movements, job search, movements forced by the insurgency or conflict, and move to access services in camps in Nigeria. Others were economic migration, movements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and family visits.
- In December 2021, UNHCR recorded nearly **1,800 individuals (500 households)** in Banki, Damasak, Ngala, and Pulka, Borno State, who used **official and irregular entry points** at the borders with Cameroon, Niger, and Chad to reach the BAY States. These movements, where Nigerians and Cameroonians accounted for 99 per cent, were triggered by many factors, including continued NSAG attacks, communal clashes, and search for survival. No refoulement was recorded.
- UNHCR and its partner the Nigeria Immigration Services documented more than **1,200 individual spontaneous refugee returnees (more than 600 households)** who arrived from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, mainly through the Ngala entry point in Borno State. About 20 per cent of the refugees were forced to return mainly because of persistent communal clashes in the Far North Region of Cameroon, while 80 per cent were forced to return because of hunger.
- UNHCR also recorded more than **27,000 new internal displacements**, with 24,000 in 11 LGAs of Borno State and 3,600 in 12 LGAs of Adamawa State. Most of the displacements in Borno State were attributed to the Borno State-led camp closure and relocation of IDPs, which resulted in secondary displacements in most cases, amid ongoing military activities in Sambisa forest and surrender of NSAG members. Besides the Borno State Government’s relocation/camp closure programmes, the internal movements were also caused by military actions, conflicts, attacks, fear of attacks, and poor living conditions.

- The Borno State Government, under its return plan, closed Bakasī and Teachers Village IDP camps in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council of the State, hosting **62,650 individuals (nearly 12,300 households)**. Before the closure of the camps, **the government assisted the IDPs with food and cash**, giving them the option of returning to their LGAs of origin or relocating to any other part of the State. Most of these people were displaced from Kukawa, Ngala, Gwoza, Monguno, Guzamala, and Marte LGAs, which remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors and the minimum conditions for return have also not been assessed. Some of them also expressed concerns about the security situation in the areas of return. The Borno State Government had earlier banned any humanitarian response such as food assistance in return communities, thereby generating confusion among humanitarian actors and concerned individuals.
- Unfortunately, most of the spontaneous refugee returns from countries of asylum reported until now continue to happen under unfavourable conditions characterized by insecure environments in most parts of the North-East and uncertainties over the existing basic social amenities or repeated imminent displacement.



## PROTECTION

### Protection Sector Coordination

Within the sphere of Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) coordination meetings, Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) met in Gwoza, Monguno, Bama, Jere, Maiduguri, Banki, Pulka, Damboa, and other locations in Borno State where UNHCR leads the coordination of Protection activities. Six camp-based coordination meetings were held with service providers in Borno and Adamawa states. Meanwhile, UNHCR and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MoWASD) co-chaired the Adamawa State PSWG meetings held in Mubi and Yola, attended by members of Government, UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs. In Yola, participants discussed a report submitted by a committee set up by the Adamawa State Government regarding the detention of some IDPs at the Mubi Correctional Centre for years without trial.

### PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

- In December, despite the security challenges and the rise in COVID-19 spread, UNHCR and partners-maintained presence in the operational locations to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to reduce risks and address needs of beneficiaries. The organisation also continued to play its lead role in coordinating Protection and CCCM / Shelter / Non-Food Items (NFI) Sectors in the BAY States.
- UNHCR and partners conducted and analysed **406 Key Informants Interviews** (KIIs) using the Harmonized Protection Monitoring Tool. Their findings were instrumental in key decision-making and provided guidance in strategic direction for advocacy and real-time life-saving response in the BAY States.
- UNHCR and partners **visited and monitored 1,637 protection sites** in the BAY States where they reached **83,129 IDPs**, IDP and refugee returnees, and host community members (16,654 men, 25,005 women, 20,126 boys, 21,344 girls). Among them 57 per cent was from Yobe State, 27 per cent from Borno, and 16 per cent from Adamawa.
- UNHCR reached **5,373 IDPs**, IDP and refugee returnees (1,297 households) through Registration and Vulnerability Screening to identify the most vulnerable households and people at high risks and prioritise them for assistance. Of the total number screened in 19 Local Government Areas (nine in Borno State, eight in Adamawa, and two in Yobe), 1,338 individuals were identified as the most vulnerable. Among the vulnerable population were **629 women with specific needs**, thereby underpinning the need for continuous lifesaving assistance to this category of people.
- Within the context of Accountability to Affected Populations - Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms, **2,078 IDP returnees, refugee returnees, and host community members** accessed 28 UNHCR Protection Desks in ten LGAs in Borno State. Their major protection concerns included the need for medical services and lack of access to services such as legal assistance/access to justice. They equally raised issues of denial of resources or opportunities, child labour, hawking, begging, and violation of human rights. Most of these cases were referred to specialized service providers and partners for appropriate intervention while disputes between neighbours were addressed through the



Community Mechanism for Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice project. The 406 KIIs revealed that the affected population and stakeholders recognise the Protection Desks as the most preferred places for lodging complaints.

- UNHCR distributed education and communication materials on protection services, such as UNHCR's toll-free line, flood safety, and COVID-19 awareness in English, Hausa, and Kanuri languages. Also, UNHCR received a total of **1,869 complaints and feedbacks** at the CCCM community Help Desks in Banki and Damasak, including on NFIs, shelters, livelihoods, WASH, health, food, and security. Other complaints received were on Housing, Land and Property, the need for cash assistance, medical/health assistance, access to livelihoods support, concerns over safety of areas of return, reaction to COVID-19 vaccines, and the need for palliatives for individuals. Beneficiaries expressed gratitude to UNHCR and partners for the services rendered to them.
- UNHCR and partners visited 56 detention and correctional facilities in the BAY States where they **encountered 129 detainees** (114 men and 15 women). In Borno State, the detainees included 25 individuals suspected of theft of food, non-food items, and phones. Among them were four females detained in connection with witchcraft accusations. Two Civilian Joint Task Force members accused of excessive use of force on an IDP were also detained. During the visit to Damboa LGA, UNHCR Human Rights monitors secured the release of a 19-year-old IDP on bail who was accused of stealing a phone without evidence. Meanwhile, criminals took advantage of the absence of a court in Ngala to continuously operate with impunity in the area. In Adamawa State, UNHCR and partners visited correctional and detention centres under strict compliance with COVID-19 preventive measures. All 21 detention facilities were visited in Yola North, Yola South, Mubi North, Michika and Madagali LGAs to ensure the prevention of violations. Generally, four arbitrary arrest cases were identified in general and referred to Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) for response.
- Within the sphere of Protection and CCCM coordination meetings, the PSWG met in Gwoza, Monguno, Bama, Jere, Maiduguri, Banki, Pulka, Damboa, and other locations where UNHCR leads the coordination of protection activities. Six camp-based coordination meetings were held with service providers in Borno and Adamawa states. Meanwhile, UNHCR and MoWASD co-chaired the Adamawa State PSWG meetings held in Mubi and Yola, attended by members of eight Government, UN agencies, NGOs, and NGOs. In Yola, participants discussed a report submitted by a committee set up by the Adamawa State Government regarding the detention of some individuals at the Mubi Correctional Centre for years without trial.
- In December, **incidents of GBV**, armed attack, physical assault, fire outbreaks, kidnapping, for ransom and other incidents related to release from captivity, and forced eviction **remained rampant** in the BAY states. Most of these incidents were attributable to NSAG and some community members. These attacks continued to impede freedom of movement, access to livelihoods, and the search for durable solutions. For instance, in Borno and Yobe states, NSAG members caused widespread fear any time they launched any attacks on military and civilian targets. There were many reported attempts to infiltrate civilian populations. Meanwhile, individuals overstretched by the prevailing insecurity, hardship and hunger were forced to scavenge for food in the neighbouring villages in Cameroon, defying the risk of NSAG attacks and putting themselves in harm's way. In Adamawa State, communities on the fringes of the Sambisa Forest were constantly exposed to criminal activities such as kidnap for ransom, evoking apprehension among the civilian population, and in some cases resulting in deaths and injuries. These incidents affected an estimated 1,112 civilians, prompting UNHCR and other humanitarian actors to engage stakeholders to respond and support survivors while ensuring that perpetrators were brought to justice through the Access to Justice project. UNHCR and partners continued to advocate with the relevant organizations to ensure timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected population to mitigate negative coping behaviours.

## Protection Response

- In December, UNHCR and partners **reached 37,302 individuals** (7,629 men, 13,151 women, 6,110 boys, and 10,412 girls) **with 652 awareness and sensitization activities** in the BAY States. Discussions focused on the promotion of peaceful coexistence, GBV prevention and risk mitigation, respect for human rights, citizens' responsibilities, dangers of child marriage, and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Participants were further sensitized on good practices on personal hygiene, nutrition, referral pathways, cholera prevention, and preservation of the environment.

- UNHCR and partners **trained 602 individuals (286 men, 253 women, 31 boys, and 32 girls), including government officials, community leaders, and NGOs** in the BAY states, especially in the four **Child Protection Project** locations of Bama, Banki, Mungono and MMC. The training targeted mainly duty bearers, caregivers, and foster parents on child protection, risk identification and mitigation, and best interest of the child determination (BID) procedures, including BID assessments and panels.
- UNHCR and partners **trained about 227 individuals, including community leaders, on leadership skills and community governance** under various projects and programmes in different LGAs in the BAY States. The trainings were aimed at strengthening the capacity on PSEA, community volunteerism, and community-based Protection of community leaders, government officials, security forces, and members of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons.
- UNHCR **assisted 1,582 IDPs with protection materials** in different parts of the BAY States. The beneficiaries received shelter repair kits and US\$ 100 cash assistance to repair their damaged houses as a way of decongesting crowded IDP camps. Another **1,232 IDPs**, mainly new arrivals from hard-to-reach areas, who had surrendered to the military, **benefited from standard NFI kits** in some locations in Borno State. Meanwhile, in Adamawa State, PSWG donated some 1,525 blankets to IDPs in three LGAs to bridge NFI gap in the State and reduce the risks run by the elderly, pregnant and lactating mothers, children, and people with medical conditions. Beneficiaries, especially women and girls of reproductive age, also received 209 dignity kits. They included ten GBV survivors and 199 vulnerable women and girls (22 under-18 and 187 adult women). Under the UNHCR/CARITAS Livelihood project in Adamawa State, 15 IDPs completed two months of vocational skills training on carpentry and soap making, while 17 groups shared cash to members from their Savings, Loans, and Investment Cooperatives (SILC) activities in four LGAs. SILC is a UNHCR platform that enables IDPs to save and borrow money in a flexible manner.
- In December, UNHCR and partners reached 2,570 individuals, including community leaders, government officials, response organizations and the military, through advocacy and community engagements in the BAY States. As a result of the advocacy efforts, **new arrivals benefited from quick distribution of food**, improvement of WASH through the repair of damaged water points in some camps, and commencement of GBV registration of vulnerable women for skills training by actors. Most of the community engagements and advocacy efforts took place during the commemoration of the UNHCR-organised 16-Days of Activism in the BAY States.
- Under UNHCR's Access to Justice and legal documentation project implemented by the Nigeria Bar Association, panellists discussed the fundamental rights and importance of documentation to IDP returnees on the Yobe State Broadcasting Corporation. This was done in Hausa language to capture a wider audience and gave IDP returnees the opportunity to call in and ask questions relating to legal documentation during the programme. In the various Mobile Courts within the BAY States, NBA also provided legal representation services to 27 IDP returnees and community members who needed support on matrimonial matters such as missing husbands, divorce, disputes, as well as other unlawful detention, assault, and domestic violence. NBA also distributed **10,024 birth certificates to IDP returnees and host community children** between 0 and 17 years old in Adamawa State with the aim of increasing access to services like education and health, as well as to reduce the risk of statelessness for the beneficiary children.



## CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS

- Six camp-based coordination meetings were held with service providers in Borno and Adamawa states. Meanwhile, UNHCR and MoWASD co-chaired the Adamawa State PSWG meetings held in Mubi and Yola, attended by members of Government, UN agencies, and I/NGOs. In Yola, participants discussed a report submitted by a committee set up by the Adamawa State Government regarding the detention of some detainees at the Mubi Correctional Centre for years without trial.

## External/Donors Relations

**UNHCR is grateful for the following support:**

**Direct contributions to UNHCR in Nigeria:** UN Cerf | European Union | Foundation Probitas | France | Japan | Muslim World League| Nigeria | Private donors Nigeria | Other private donors | Spain | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security | United States of America.

**Unearmarked contributions:** Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 55.7 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 28.5 million | United Kingdom 28.4 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Japan 23.6 million | Japan 23.4 million | France 20.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Italy 14 million | Private donors Sweden 13 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million.

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy Sea | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors.

**Softly earmarked contributions:** Germany 37 million | United States of America 33 million | Private donors Australia 8.7 million | Canada 5.6 million | Private donors Germany 2.6 million.

### **CONTACT US**

**Mohammad Irfan Adil**, Head of Sub-office, Maiduguri  
[adil@unhcr.org](mailto:adil@unhcr.org); Cell + 234 901 066 0541

**Roland Schönbauer**, Senior External Relations Officer, Abuja  
[schoenb@unhcr.org](mailto:schoenb@unhcr.org); Cell +234 901 066 0695

[Data portal](#) - [Twitter](#) – [Facebook](#) - [Instagram](#)

[www.unhcr.org/ng](http://www.unhcr.org/ng)