

North-East Nigeria Operational Update

May 2022

More than **11,000 IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees, and host community members accessed UNHCR's 30 protection desks** located in 10 different LGAs in Borno State with feedback and concerns.

During a visit to North-East Nigeria in May, United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, thanked Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum for giving hope to displaced people and former combatants hope to integrate into society.

UNHCR **visited more than 52,000 individual IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members**, conducted over 1,000 Key Informant Interviews, and carried out vulnerability screening, focus group discussions, and protection monitoring.



A member of a creativity kids club of UNHCR's Child Protection project supported by the Muslim World League (MWL), explaining his artwork to an MWL content-gathering mission team when they visited Borno State in North-East Nigeria from 29 May to 2 June 2022. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Operational Highlights

- Hostilities by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) and clashes between rival groups remained active in the Lake Chad region where Nigerians are also displaced. On 5 May 2022 it is reported that incursions by NSAGs in Northern Cameroon led to a peaceful demonstration by local populations in the affected communities. In Niger it is reported that NSAG members inflicted dual attacks on military positions in the Diffa region at the border with Nigeria. Meanwhile, parts of Chad were rocked by communal clashes and explosions, **signalling the risk most villages situated close to the Lake Chad basin face from mine contamination.**
- In North-East Nigeria, NSAG members resorted to **attacking soft targets and use of increased IED and illegal vehicle checkpoints on main supply routes** in Borno and Yobe States, following sustained military actions in the region. In Adamawa State, organized criminal groups continued to attack communities and abduct civilians for ransom.
- In the BAY States, 68 safety and security incidents were recorded, such as armed attacks, IED, abductions, illegal vehicle checkpoints, and other minor crimes. **More than 100 civilians were affected, with over 80 per cent of them reported in Borno State alone and the rest in Adamawa and Yobe States.** The hardship experienced by the affected populations was exacerbated by rising prices of commodities caused by soaring inflation.
- In May, United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, visited Borno State to personally assess the displacement situation and the level of damage done by the insurgency in North-East Nigeria. While in Maiduguri, the Borno State capital, the UN chief visited Gubio IDP camp where UNHCR runs a Muslim World League (MWL)-supported Child Protection project and a Protection Desk. He later paid a courtesy call on the Borno Governor and thanked him for the support to ensure **that displaced people and former NSAG members integrated into society.** Mr. Guterres also met with Nigerian leaders and other dignitaries in Abuja at the end of his three-nation visit to West Africa.
- On 18 May 2022, the Director, UNHCR Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, Ms. Millicent Mutuli, visited Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum at the Government House Maiduguri. Among other things, **they discussed the impact of the humanitarian crisis in the North-East**, especially on the displaced community and what the government and the entire humanitarian community can do to ensure the safety and dignity of the affected people. The Director reiterated UNHCR's support to the government of Nigeria on coordinated repatriation of Nigerian refugees in neighbouring countries, acknowledging the principle of the right to return for refugees, while emphasising that voluntary returns need to be in safety and dignity, to areas where minimum conditions are met. The Director also expressed UNHCR's willingness to further engage with the Borno State authorities in identifying areas to which returns could be facilitated.
- In May, UNHCR's donor, MWL, visited Borno State on a content-gathering mission of a Child Protection project which they are supporting in the North-East. UNHCR's Head of Sub Office Maiduguri briefed the team on the achievements and challenges of the project following which, **the team interacted with the project beneficiaries, including female-headed households, caregivers of unaccompanied and separated children, orphans, children with disabilities, and other vulnerable beneficiaries** in Bama LGA and in the Maiduguri Municipal Council (MMC).

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- In May, continuous cross-border movements were reported in the BAY States, with 774 individuals (194 households) recorded at major entry points, most of them returning from Cameroon, Chad, and Niger. In Banki, Damasak, Pulka, and Ngala, UNHCR and partners were present to support government's efforts in registration and curbing the spread of COVID-

19. Most of the returnees came in search of seasonal jobs and access to services in the camps in Nigeria. More than **40 per cent of them were children and women at risk**, registered by the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) and later screened for health and hygiene material services.
- During the reporting month, **over 7,000 new arrivals and more than 1,000 departures were recorded across different LGAs in the BAY States**, with their movements reportedly triggered by fear of being affected by the ongoing NSAG attacks and counterattacks by the military, poor living conditions, improved security in their LGAs, and government-assisted relocations. Most of the new arrivals reportedly chose to stay in camps or camp-like settlements where facilities and services had already been overstretched.
 - UNHCR and partner, Nigerian Immigration Service, **recorded more than 2,000 spontaneous refugee returnees (over 500 households) arriving from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger** through Borno and Yobe States. Among them were people with specific needs like lactating women, unaccompanied and separated children, people with serious medical conditions, and people living with disabilities. Upon arrival, they reportedly faced food challenges, though they had easy access to their destinations. More than 90 per cent of them were reportedly not registered in their countries of asylum.
 - Even though the continued surrender of NSAG repentant members to security forces signified de-escalation of hostilities and a gradual move to durable solution, **it was feared that their return into camps without a proper rehabilitation and reintegration process could potentially lead to tension** over food shortage and their possible re-recruitment by NSAGs.



PROTECTION

PROTECTION SECTOR COORDINATION

Under the aegis of Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) and Shelter/NFIs Sector, UNHCR, in collaboration with IOM, the State Emergency Management Agency, and National Emergency Management Agency, held a three-day workshop in Yola on strengthening the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders in the BAY States and other regions of Nigeria on CCCM. Deliberations focused on roles and responsibilities in CCCM, participation, information management and coordination, camp closure and decommissioning as well as protection mainstreaming.

UNHCR continued its lead role in coordinating the Protection and CCCM/Shelter/NFI sectors in the BAY States.

In May, Protection Sector Working Group meetings were held in camps and host communities across LGAs in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. Meanwhile, Protection Sector Coordinators visited Bama, during which they promised to assist the WASH Sector in identifying causes of the vandalization of water installations in the camp through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

- Despite the persistent insecurity, natural and man-made disasters, and harsh economic realities in North-East Nigeria, UNHCR and its partners maintained regular presence in the field **to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to reduce risks and respond to the critical needs of IDPs, returnees (both IDP and refugees), and host community members.**
- UNHCR **visited more than 52,000 individual IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members**, conducted over 1,000 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and carried

out vulnerability screening, FGDs, and protection monitoring. The findings have continued to be **instrumental in key decision-making processes, response, and provision of guidance and strategic direction for advocacy and delivery of humanitarian assistance** in the BAY States. The number of people reached included more than 39,000 individuals in Borno, over 2,000 in Adamawa, and more than 10,000 in Yobe.

- In May, **UNHCR conducted vulnerability screening for more than 13,000 individuals (over 2,000 households), with approximately 2,000 found to be at heightened risk and vulnerability.** The vulnerability screening was conducted in LGAs where UNHCR has presence, including nine in Borno, eight in Adamawa, and two in Yobe. The findings showed that there was an urgent need with the identified most vulnerable people for continuous lifesaving assistance.
- During the month, **more than 11,000 IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees, and host community members accessed UNHCR's 30 protection desks** located in 10 different LGAs in Borno State. The most prevalent protection concerns of the visitors included lack of access to medical and other services, legal assistance, access to justice, child labour, hawking, begging, and other violations of human rights. Most of their major cases were referred to specialized service providers for appropriate intervention and response, while minor disputes were addressed through the existing community mechanisms.
- UNHCR also distributed information, education, and communication materials such as its toll-free line, flood risk mitigation, and COVID-19 leaflets in English, Hausa, and Kanuri languages. Meanwhile, the organisation's **CCCM community help desks in parts of Borno and Adamawa States received more than 1,000 complaints related to shelter, NFIs, livelihoods, and WASH facilities.** Most of these were referred to appropriate organizations for necessary response, while others such as faulty shelters were repaired under the site maintenance component.
- In May, UNHCR and its partners **visited over 100 detention and correctional facilities in the BAY States and met with incarcerated IDPs, IDP returnees, and refugee returnees.** In Borno State, those detained included women and children accused of various alleged offences like minor brawls, domestic violence, harassment, and physical assault. In Pulka, an IDP returnee woman was held for alleged murder of another IDP. Because of lack of facilities and juvenile courts in the deep field locations, minors are detained in the same facilities as adults. The absence of courts also resulted in lack of legal accountability.
- During the month, more than 8,000 civilians were affected by protection incidents in different LGAs in the BAY States, such as NSAG attacks, gender-based violence, fire outbreaks, and windstorms. Others were abductions, community tensions, IED explosions, road crashes, rape, and theft. The crimes/protection incidents were presumably committed by either NSAG members or a family members, or a host community member. **UNHCR and other humanitarian actors have continued to engage with stakeholders to respond and support survivors, while creating awareness to mitigate risks and prevent occurrences.**

PROTECTION RESPONSE

- In May, UNHCR and its partners **sensitised more than 23,000 individuals, including IDPs, returnees, and host community members, on risk reduction.** The sensitisation focused on promotion of peaceful coexistence, human rights, referral pathways, GBV risk mitigation, child protection, prevention of child abuse, and safety and security. Other areas of concern were incident reporting, importance of individual documentation, self-reliance, human trafficking, and flood risk mitigation.
- UNHCR distributed 500 non-food items to the most vulnerable IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members in Borno State, including **female heads of households, the elderly without care, people with serious medical conditions, persons with disabilities,**

and lactating mothers. In the BAY States, no fewer than 455 cases of people with specific needs were identified through individual and household protection monitoring and were referred to various specialized services. Most referrals were for medical care, civil documentation, shelter support, food assistance, child protection services, and NFI-related challenges.

- UNHCR and its partners organised more than 100 community engagement and advocacy sessions for women and youth leaders, government agencies, and response organisations in the BAY States on access to territory and for the repair of WASH facilities and damaged shelters, **reaching over 2,000 individuals, among them officials of the NIS** in Banki, Ngala and Damasak.
- UNHCR's partner, Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), provided legal representation in courts for more than 100 IDPs and refugee returnees in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States concerning matrimonial cases, family issues, rape, monetary claims, and land disputes. To step up access to justice services, NBA also **organised legal counselling sessions for over 80 IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members** in the BAY States.
- NBA secured more than 60 letters of administration (without will) from the respective State High Courts for vulnerable IDPs and returnees in the BAY States. In different LGAs across Borno State, UNHCR and its partner - National Population Commission - **finalized plans to commence the issuance of 30,000 birth certificates for children under 17**. Meanwhile, in Adamawa State, NBA was approached to commence the issuance of 5,000 indigene certificates for IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members.
- UNHCR partner, Caritas Nigeria, enrolled 87 children for case management services in a programme aimed at **addressing children's vulnerabilities caused by the ongoing conflict, such as family separation that requires family tracing and reunification, medical conditions, and alternative care arrangements**. Caritas Nigeria works in collaboration with the government, response organizations, and community structures to provide protection to vulnerable children. So far, 11 community structures with a combined membership of more than 300 men, women, and children in Bama, Banki, Monguno, and MMC are involved in identifying solutions for challenges faced by children at-risk.
- At the Child Protection project locations in Bama, Banki, Monguno, and MMC, Borno State, **UNHCR and partner, Caritas Nigeria, counselled more than 800 individuals** on various issues such as options for child protection services, children's psychological needs, and on addressing bullying among children.
- In May, UNHCR and partners **registered over 40 children at risk, currently undergoing appropriate follow up measures** in MMC, Bama, Banki, and Mungono. They include unaccompanied and separated children, children associated with armed fighters and armed groups, children with disabilities, survivors of sexual abuse, orphans, and other vulnerable children.
- During the month, **more than 1,000 individuals participated in recreational and educational activities at the MWL-supported Child Friendly Spaces (CFS)** in Bama, Banki, MMC, and Monguno. The CFS are equipped with various culturally and age-appropriate recreational and educational tools. Children from three schools in MMC continued to take advantage of the UNHCR established Safe-School Initiative by participating in kids club activities.
- UNHCR and its partners **trained over 600 government officials, community leaders, and partner staff on child protection, self-reliance, and access to justice** in the BAY States. These will be replicated in various areas as part of UNHCR's protection environment building.



- On 3 May, a UNHCR/INTERSOS CCCM team carried out an FGD in Banki that informed that IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members were faced with the **major challenge of not being able to access health services because of insufficient health facilities and they must travel long distances to access such facilities in neighbouring Cameroon.**
- On 31 May, UNHCR and partners **sensitised more than 500 individuals in IDP camps and host communities** in Banki, Bama LGA, on the dangers of drug abuse among adolescents. The sensitization targeted 1,000 people, following a report about rampant drugs abuse in the camps and host communities.



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- Under the protection safety nets and livelihoods project in Borno State, UNHCR and its partner – American University of Nigeria – **graduated the first batch of 60 beneficiaries trained in tailoring, carpentry, cap making, livestock production, and micro businesses** in Bama LGA. Most of the beneficiaries were female heads of households and foster parents of vulnerable children. UNHCR and Caritas Nigeria also distributed wet season farming inputs to 180 beneficiaries in three different communities in Adamawa State, comprising of 34 males and 146 females.
- UNHCR and Caritas Nigeria commenced a livelihoods training **targeting 150 farmers who are beneficiaries of the local integration project for over 400 IDPs and refugee returnees** in Labondo community, Girei LGA, Adamawa State.
- In May, **Protection Sector Working Group meetings were held in camps and host communities across LGAs in Borno**, as well as other locations where UNHCR leads the coordination of protection activities.

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; Cell + 234 901 066 0541

Rahmathullah Mohamed, Associate Reporting Officer, Abuja, mohamrah@unhcr.org; Cell +234 9010660548