

# Lake Chad Basin

DEC 2015



Photo: OCHA/Brandau

## HUMANITARIAN BRIEF

### AN OVERLOOKED CRISIS IN A NEGLECTED REGION

Violence related to the Boko Haram insurgency in the Lake Chad Basin which straddles Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, has received growing attention since the conflict intensified in 2013. Less reported however and often overshadowed by pressing security and political considerations is the magnitude of the **grave humanitarian consequences**.

#### MASS DISPLACEMENT

**Attacks by the Boko Haram insurgency as well as counter-insurgency measures have displaced more than 2.5 million people. This is fast becoming Africa's largest displacement crisis.**

Population movements in the region are dynamic and have grown in complexity: some people have been displaced several times; others have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, or they have

returned to their countries of origin.

Up to 80% of the internally displaced have sought refuge with host communities, who are generously sharing their meagre resources thereby weakening their own coping mechanisms and resilience.

**Displaced people and host communities are in need of emergency relief and protection.**



29.6 million

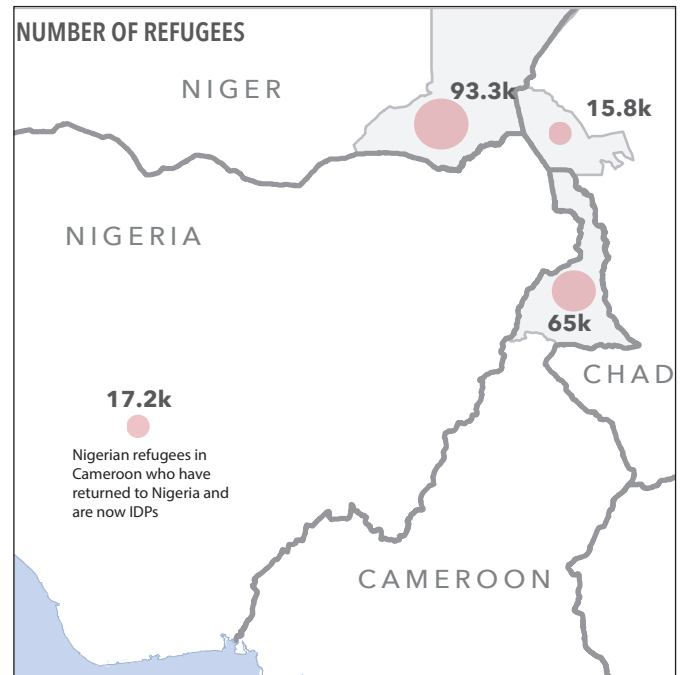
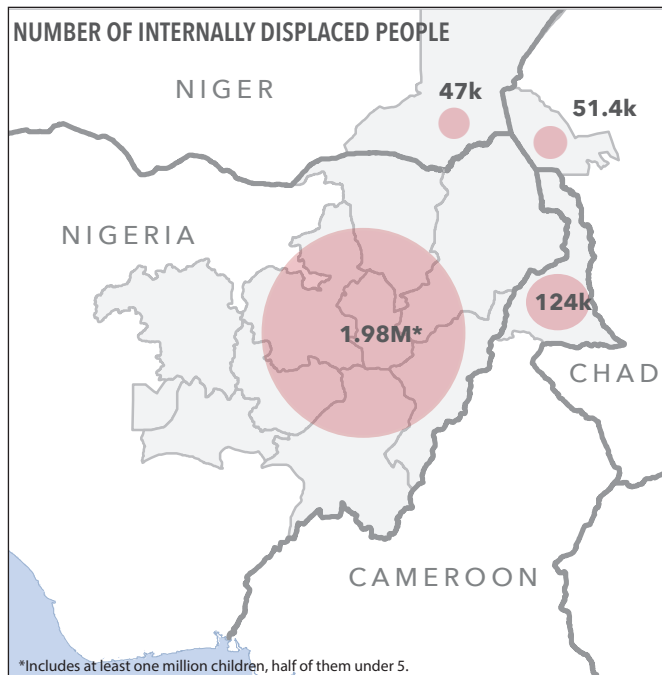
people living in areas affected by Boko Haram insurgency



2.5 million  
people displaced



2 million  
displaced by the violence  
in Nigeria alone



## HIGHLY VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

The Lake Chad Basin embodies the Sahelian paradigm. Cycles of droughts and floods, which repeatedly affected the region over the last decades, have hit the poorest communities and translated into persistently high levels of vulnerability. The region is prone to epidemics that often turn into health emergencies. **Violence and displacement are taking their toll on communities' livelihoods** – whose resources are already stretched. Insecurity has prevented farming, fishing and the highly important cross-border trade, **making communities in ever-greater need of humanitarian**

assistance.

The combined effect of large scale displacement, pervasive insecurity and underlying severe vulnerabilities is translating into record numbers of people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

## THE PROTECTION OF MILLIONS IS AT STAKE

Women and children, who represent the large majority of the displaced, bear the brunt of the violence. Women and girls kidnapped by Boko Haram have been subjected to physical and psychological abuse, forced labour, forced marriage and sexual slavery. Boys have been

forcibly enrolled as combatants. As counter insurgency operations intensify, too many civilians are caught in the conflict. Improvised Explosive Devices and other Explosive Remnants of War pose great danger to the displaced and host communities in affected areas.

**Protection must be central to the humanitarian response.**

Resources and funding are urgently needed to address the issue of protection. Safe spaces for women and children, access to health and psychological support, and training of healthcare staff need further resources.



7 years

estimated youngest boys and girls used as suicide bombers



85%

of communities in Adamawa (Nigeria) report children separated from their families



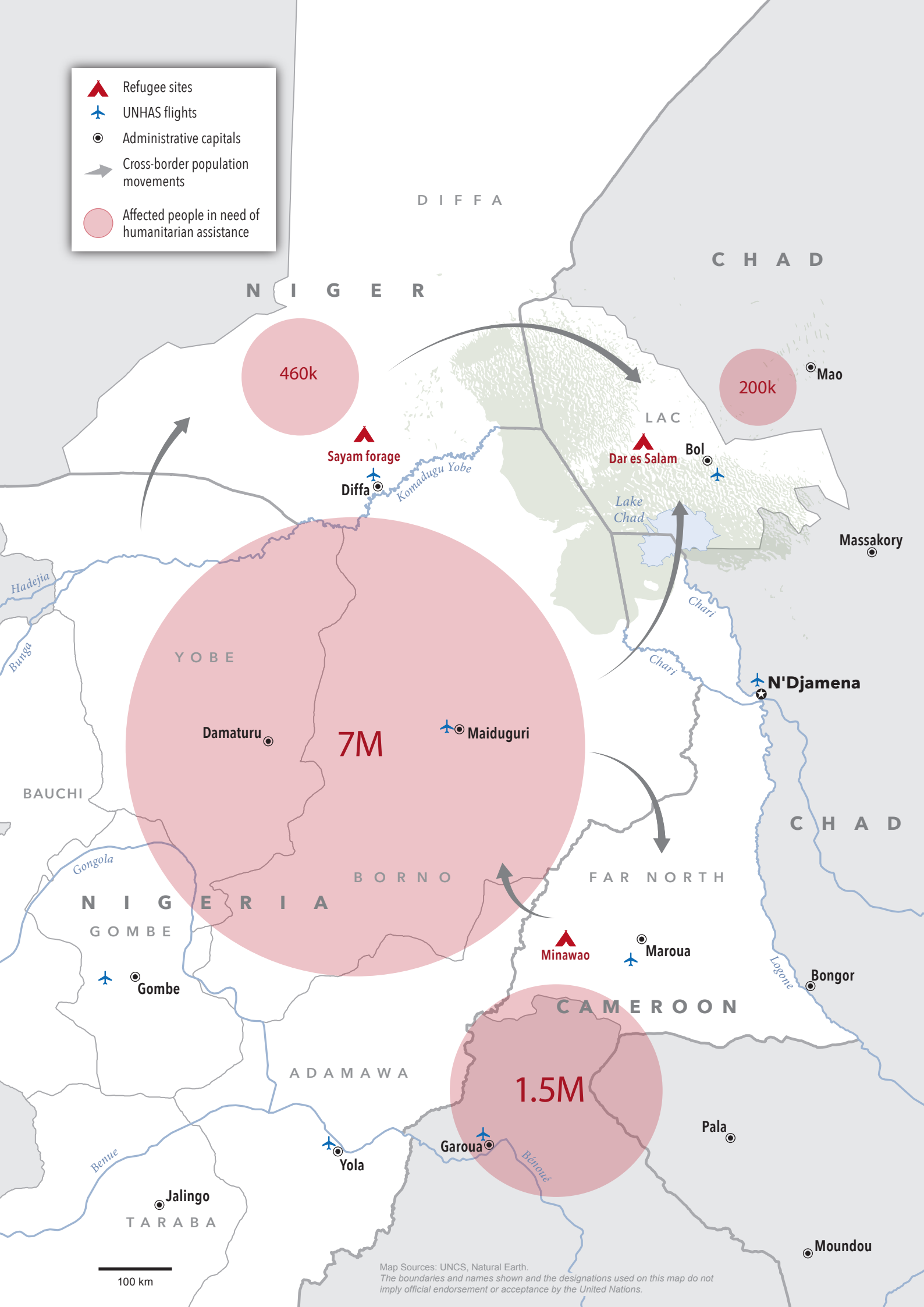
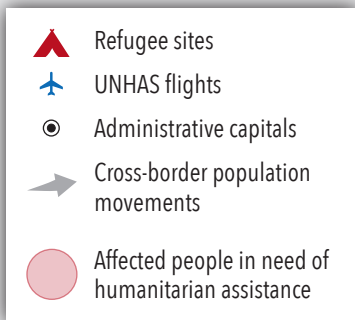
2,000

estimated number of women and girls abducted by Boko Haram since the start of 2014



700,000

children under 5 displaced by violence in 4 countries



100 km

Map Sources: UNCS, Natural Earth.  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

## ACTION NEEDED MORE THAN EVER

Governments in affected countries have shown leadership and initiative in responding to humanitarian needs, with the support from international and national humanitarian organizations.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done – and can be done. Across the Lake Chad region, an urgent scale-up in humanitarian operations is much needed. This requires work by all concerned.

**The response remains woefully underfunded** – donor Governments must urgently step up their financial commitment to the humanitarian response. In 2015, just over 40 % of US\$ 396.8 million funding requirement for the Lake Chad response was received. **For 2016, partners are calling for US\$ 509 million to respond to vital needs** across affected areas in four countries.

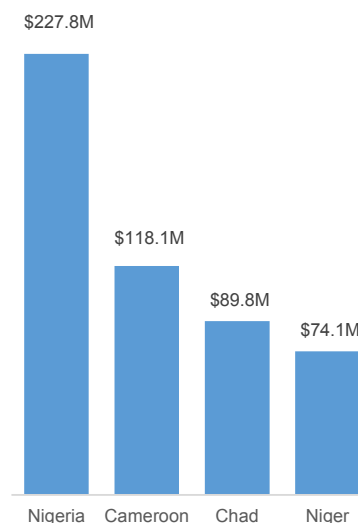
**Member States should take example from the generosity of the host communities and Governments of the region, and mobilize to address**

the political, social, economic and environmental drivers of the crisis and urgently support the humanitarian response.

**Affected Governments, in turn, can support the scale-up of humanitarian assistance** by doing more themselves, facilitating administrative procedures, and supporting unhindered and safe access by humanitarian actors in insecure and hard-to-reach areas. Although protecting and responding to the needs of affected people is the primary responsibility of government, an international humanitarian presence can help advise and coordinate the complex and fast-evolving operation. The international community must come together – to raise awareness and mobilize the support required to address humanitarian needs, and to create the conditions for the safe, sustainable and voluntary return of internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR LAKE CHAD BASIN EMERGENCY BY COUNTRY IN 2016

in million US\$



\*Estimations based on Humanitarian Response Plans and Regional Refugee Response Plans

## WHAT IF WE FAIL TO RESPOND?

**The Lake Chad Basin is at a crossroads.** Violence is disrupting the fragile equilibrium of communities who have long learned to adapt their livelihoods. As displaced communities, in particular farmers, were forced to abandon their fields, they missed a crucial harvest. Border closures impede vital cross-border trade. This damages the economy, adversely affects the terms

of trade and adds to the already grave humanitarian consequences of the situation.

**Without addressing the root of the problems in the Lake Chad basin, and without timely humanitarian assistance, the fragile livelihoods of communities will be destroyed.** Hunger, malnutrition, high

unemployment rates make fertile ground for grievance and radicalization, especially amongst the youth, whom the crisis is affecting the most. **Without concerted and timely engagement by Governments, donors, and aid agencies, we risk further instability, increased need, and losing the next generations.**



**4.4 million**

people in need of food assistance - don't have enough to eat or else lack access to nutritious foods



**225,000**

children <5 suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition risk dying



**1,500**

schools destroyed, damaged or closed since the start of the conflict



**5,312**

people affected by cholera in Nigeria, Niger and Cameroon, causing 193 deaths in 2015