



West & Central Africa – Nigeria – Baga events

ECHO CRISIS FLASH N°1-2015

Period covered
3/1/2015 to 13/1/2015

Time of validity

DISPLACED POPULATION

Nigeria
1,5 million IDPs in
Northern Nigeria at least

Chad
11,300 refugees

Niger
155,000 refugees

Cameroon
36,383 refugees
At least 50.000 IDP

DEATHS

Most casualties from
direct Boko Haram or
security forces attacks
are under-reported.

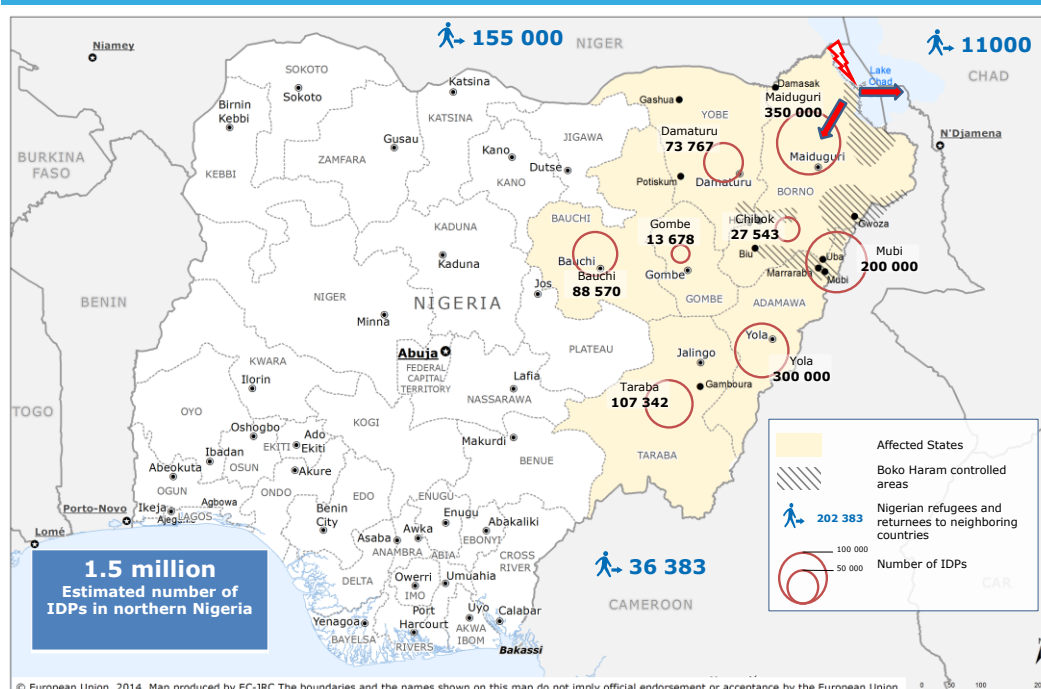
Since January 15, up to
2000 person killed in the
Baga events only (3 Jan
2015).

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1. Map

Nigeria – IDPs and Refugees (as of January 2015)



2. Situation

Nigeria

The Boko Haram insurgency has taken new dimensions in the past weeks. The militant Islamist group has gained control of new territories in North-Eastern Nigeria and is increasingly setting its sights on territories in Northern Cameroon.

Boko Haram's aggressive advancement, counter insurgency and heavy handed response by the armed forces are devastating the region with an increasing death toll and massive population displacement both within Nigeria and towards neighboring Niger, Cameroon and Chad. The population is desperately seeking refuge in extremely adverse conditions, with new families arriving daily in poor condition, carrying no personal assets. The humanitarian situation is devastating while the remoteness and insecurity for humanitarian workers represent a serious constraint to the response.

The latest developments are further revealing the regional dimension of the unfolding humanitarian crisis and the urgent need to significantly strengthen the humanitarian response

Boko Haram insurgents stormed Baga city - North-Eastern Borno, border of Lake Chad - on January 3rd 2015. After having taken control of the city and overrunning the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (NMJTF) – a regional border force of Nigeria, Niger and Chad - the insurgents reportedly burned down the city and 16 other nearby villages. Several communities were also attacked by the insurgents on their way to Baga.

2,000 people in Baga, a city with a population of 5,000, are reported to have been killed. No independent reports exist yet confirming the killings, which would be the largest death toll in a single attack since the beginning of the conflict in 2009. The massacre is believed to have been conducted as retaliation to the assistance provided by the vigilante groups of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to the army in combatting Boko Haram in the North-East. The army is reportedly fighting back the insurgents to regain control of Baga and has officially called for reinforcement.

Following the attack and subsequent killings, large population movements from Baga and nearby villages have been reported towards **Maiduguri** - Borno state capital. Humanitarian sources report that around 8,400 IDPs (3,500 household) arrived from Baga region during the weekend. The IDPs initially settled at Arabic/teacher's village and were transferred to NYSC and Government College camps in Maiduguri where some assistance should be provided for them. Over 500 IDPs are equally hosted at a construction housing estate at the Bulunkutu area of Maiduguri. The number of new arrivals are said to be growing rapidly.

The week of 5 January witnessed a dramatic upsurge of Boko Haram attacks. Sunday 11th January, two explosions occurred in a busy market in **Potiskum** (Yobe state) killing 8 and injuring 46. The same day, a ten year old girl blew herself up at the entrance of a market in **Maiduguri** (Borno State), killing 19 people.

Damaturu city (Yobe State) was again attacked on 9th January, though not taken by the insurgents. Damaturu is in a pivotal position regarding access to Maiduguri city and most of Borno state and explain the tactical interest of both Boko Haram and the Nigeria Armed Forces (NAF). The road from Damaturu is the only access point for bringing food and other basic commodities to Maiduguri and Northern Borno state.

With the fall of Baga area to the insurgency, large parts of Nigeria's border with Chad, Niger and Cameroon are no longer controlled by the Nigerian authorities. **The conflict is increasingly developing into a regional crisis and has to be considered as such by all humanitarian actors.**

Consequences in Niger

Following the events in Baga, 3 vehicles with 93 people arrived Sunday 11th January from Baga transiting through Diffa to Lake Chad Islands. There are indications that additional persons are arriving to Niger, with around 30 vehicles on their way through Gadam up North towards Diffa. Bosso, on the shores of lake Chad also received 230 persons (both Nigerians and Niger returnees) from Baga. 255 people from Baga also arrived in N'guiguimi further North.

Increasing numbers of both Nigerian and Niger nationals have started to seek asylum in the Diffa region since April 2014. On average, 7000 persons have crossed the border to Niger every week since the summer. Some 155,000 persons are now accommodated in makeshift camps, with poor water, food and sanitation conditions. The first official camp was created at the end of December. Every refugee has been given a choice between three alternatives: seek asylum and settle in a camp; seek asylum and live outside the camp in a host family or settle on his own; pass through Niger to reach Nigerias less affected regions. At the moment, the preferred option by the Nigerians is to stay in Niger. Assistance to refugees is therefore likely to increase in the Diffa region.

Consequences in Chad

Ensuing from the Baga attacks, 7,300 persons are reported to have arrived to Lake Chad area (UNHCR). Combined with the 3.800 refugees who arrived before 2015, the total number of Nigerian refugees in Chad now totals at 11,100.

Refugees are temporally located in the transit site of Kousseri (Ngouboua), but due to the lack of appropriate infrastructure, some will be temporally re-settle in the host community at Ngouboua village. Chadian authorities and the humanitarian community are expecting and preparing for a further arrival of refugees in the coming days and weeks. This represents an additional burden to host communities, already living in precarious conditions, lacking all basic services. As in Niger and within Nigeria, the refugees arrive in extreme state of exhaustion and without any belongings. In the last days, 17 people with gunshot wounds have been cared for by IMC in Bagasola.

Consequences in Cameroon

The number of refugees registered in Cameroon is continuously increasing. By the 3rd of January 2015, UNHCR pre-registered 36,383 Nigerian refugees, 72% of whom were transferred to the Minawao camp now sheltering 26 349 person in January 2015.

Cameroon authorities estimate that there are at least 20 000 IDPs in the Far North. WFP, providing food assistance to the IDPs, estimate twice as many IDPs, but the situation is likely to be worse as humanitarian actors report that many villages in the border area have been totally emptied and access to some areas is restricted.

3. Response

In **Nigeria**, efforts by national and state governments to address the needs of the affected populations are insufficient and support from international organizations and Nigerian civil society is limited due to insecurity and lack of access to the remote areas. Displaced living in or near camps are receiving limited assistance, however, at insufficient level. The full impact of the conflict in Nigeria is unclear due to lack of data collection capacity at the state level and often conflicting and unconfirmed figures related to casualties and displacement. Poor road condition and communication infrastructure further hamper data collection. As a result, credible figures for guiding humanitarian strategy are still lacking in Nigeria. What is evident, however, is the fact that the magnitude of the crisis is not met with sufficient humanitarian presence and response.

Although the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was appointed as the national response coordinator, the complexity of the crisis and the decentralised governance in Nigeria has prevented a consistent and predictable response from both national and State authorities.

Following the latest attacks in Baga, the Governor of Borno has visited the camps in Maiduguri and expressed his concerns and support for the IDPs. Little assistance, however, has been provided so far by the state. 30 buses were also sent to Diffa by the Governor to transport affected persons to Maiduguri. Meanwhile, large numbers of people are crossing into nearby countries.

In Chad,

Although close to the capital, the geographical characteristics of the area - small islands along the lake - represent a difficulty for the humanitarian actors as assistance is to be distributed to small groups of people spread along the shores, accessible only by boat.

The Chadian authorities and partners have delivered food and non-food item, and reinforced the security setup in the Lake region. Humanitarian actors have started emergency activities. WFP supplied 2,4 MT of protein enriched biscuits (covering energy needs of 6200 persons for 2 days). UNHCR provided essential non-food items and started to assist the Chadian authorities to register the refugees and to consolidate data, as well as transferring the refugees from Lake Chad islands to more accessible areas, where additional humanitarian assistance can be provided. Motorboats have been placed in the area to transfer the isolated refugees to Bagasola. Almost 2000 refugees have already been transferred. UNHCR is also taking the lead to adapt the Kousseri site for the new influx of refugees while simultaneously identifying with the local authorities a new site in Bagasola to accommodate the new waves already foreseen for the coming weeks. IMC is in charge of the medical assistance, including vaccinating the refugees. IMC has also distributed medical kits (OCHA, UNHCR,IMC).