

# Nigeria crisis

IOM regional assessment findings and recommendations // 23 Jan – 06 Feb 2015



## REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Over the course of 2014 and the beginning of 2015, North East (NE) Nigeria has witnessed an increase in violence conducted by the insurgency group Boko Haram (BH) also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awatiwal-Jihad – JAS), leading to widespread displacement in the country with a spill-over effect to neighbouring Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. At the end of 2014, the estimated number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria's NE stood at close to one million and over 200,000 were reported displaced in neighbouring countries at the time of IOM's regional assessment mission.

Country (region)	Estimated # of forced migrants	Source
Nigeria (NE)	912,000 (IDPs)	NEMA, IOM
Cameroon (Extreme Nord)	70,000 circa (40,000 in Mora + 30,000 at the border IDPs) 33,000 (refugees)	ICRC UNHCR
Chad (Lac)	17,567 (refugees) 1,113 (returnees) 400 (stranded migrants)	UNHCR/CNARR Nat. Authorities Nat. Authorities
Chad (Kebbi)	Additional 1,276 (refugees)	CNARR
Niger (Diffa)	70,000 (returnees) 30,000 (refugees)	DREC, UNHCR DREC, UNHCR
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,135,356</b>	

Whereas BH has been active in Nigeria since 2009, the severity and impact of its attacks has been felt most severely during 2014. Originally using "hit-and-run" tactics focused primarily on government targets and banks, the group is now increasingly targeting the civilian population and taking control of territory purportedly with the aim of establishing a "caliphate". Meanwhile cross-border hit-and-run attacks into Cameroon have become more frequent, lately also expanded to Niger. In light of the tactics used by BH in Nigeria, ideological support for the aims of the insurgents has been dropping sharply, with a shift to paid and forced recruitment, including of children. BH operates in a region of Nigeria where the poverty rate is the highest and where central government has been less present in the past. Thus, disenfranchised youth might be more prone to recruitment by BH, a concern which is also shared by neighboring Cameroon and Niger. Already there are reports of BH members originating from neighboring countries. In addition, the crisis has caused severe disruption to traditional trade routes as well as agricultural and pastoralist activities.

Niger, Cameroon and Chad are now fighting BH along the border areas and even within Nigeria. Chad is the most militarily engaged among all neighbors. The African Union has recently

approved the deployment of 8300 troops to increase military response capacity. The AU's deployment decision is based on a request to expand on an existing Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) made up of armed forces from Nigeria, Chad and Niger - originally conceived as a counter-smuggling initiative, with limited cross-border collaboration, then later extended to fight BH. In the aftermath of the Baga (Nigeria) attacks at the beginning of January 2015, MNJTF has been confirmed insufficient.

Within the Lake Chad region, there exist ethnic and family ties which transcend national boundaries. The ethnic groups living in NE Nigeria share the same roots with the residents of the Extreme North region of Cameroon, Lac region in Chad and Diffa region in Niger. Multiple and cross-border movements complicate the understanding of displacement patterns and people's identity is not defined along national boundaries. The majority of the displaced population is seeking refuge in host communities, benefiting from prior links with them. Whilst host families have been very accommodating, their means to support IDPs are meager and reaching a point of exhaustion. There are insufficient programmes targeting the needs of IDPs outside camps and seeking to increase the resilience of host communities.

According to the latest Nigerian census (2006), roughly 1 million foreign migrants reside in Nigeria, 51.4% of whom are originating from ECOWAS countries. For those fleeing BH across the border, a lack of access to identity documents makes it difficult to discern who is a returnee, refugee, IDP, or stranded migrant / Third Country National (TCN).

There are only blurred scenarios on how the displacement situation will evolve further. Both the on-going military operations as well as the Nigerian presidential elections (initially scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> February and now postponed to the end of March) will have an impact on possible scenarios. The presence of BH along the Cameroon and Niger border currently acts as a buffer zone for cross-border displacement, with the Damaturu road in Nigeria remaining as the sole exit route to leave Borno state. Further encroachment on territory in Borno, including the 2 million city of Maiduguri, might hence prompt internal displacement towards Yobe rather than the neighbouring countries. However, military interventions might open up additional escape routes and could be a factor causing further displacement of civilians currently trapped in BH controlled areas.



## CAMEROON

### Situation analysis

The three districts most affected by cross-border BH attacks are Mayo-Sava, Mayo- Tsanaga and Logone-et-Chari areas in the Extreme-Nord region which have been characterized by recurring malnutrition, food insecurity and cholera. UNHCR has registered 33,000 Nigerian refugees in the Minawao refugee camp. ICRC believes that many more refugees are indeed living with host communities but they are not accounted for. Following an attack on Mubi in the North of Nigeria's Adamawa state in November 2014, a group of 13,000 Nigerians transited through Cameroon before voluntarily returning to safer areas of Adamawa's South, highlighting the fluidity of status from IDP to refugee and back to IDP.

There is uncertainty about the number of IDPs in Cameroon. ICRC has recently conducted a registration exercise and indicates a figure of 37,000-40,000 IDPs in Mayo Sava (Mora) and its surroundings as well as an unverified number of nearly 30,000 IDPs at the border between Nigeria and Cameroon. The Governor through the Prefect of Mayo Tsanaga (Mokolo) has identified a number of 23,383 IDPs from Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga (respectively 17,957 IDPs in Mozogo, 5,136 in Mouskota; 208 in Mokolo and 82 in Koza). This number will probably increase in light of further BH attacks. To date, only data from Logone-et-Chari are missing. Meanwhile the Government is using a planning figure of 50,000 IDPs until the end of 2015, an estimate which is below the currently available numbers. IDPs are reported to be staying mainly with host families, in some cases initially taking refuge in public buildings. So far, as indicated by the Prefect of Mayo Tsanaga there are no returnees or other migrant populations fleeing from Nigeria. There were only a few cases reported of Chadian migrants, all of whom reached their final destination through own means.

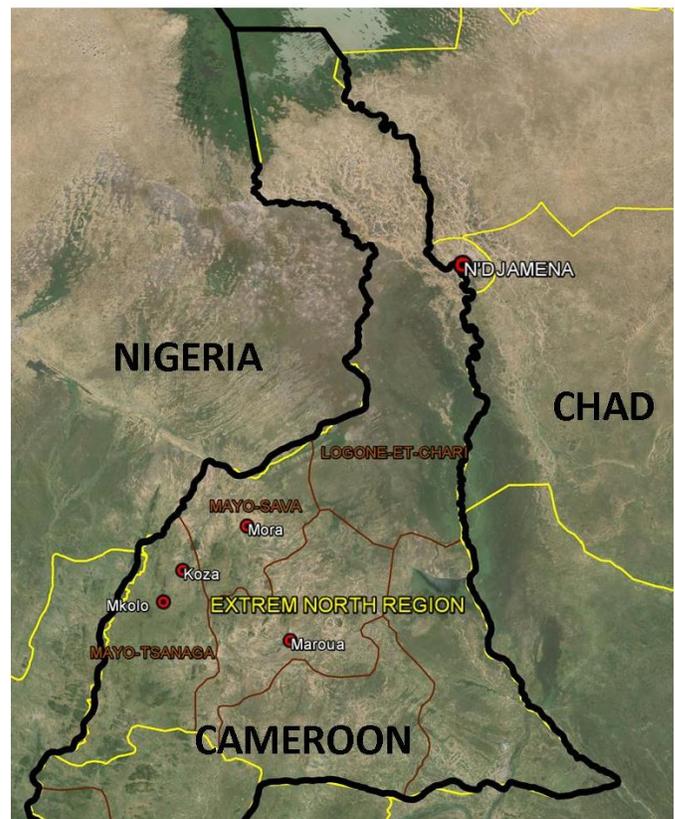
### Current response

The humanitarian response is very limited and mostly geared towards assistance to refugees, with IDPs' presence being acknowledged only recently and lack of access to the Extreme North particularly in Logon-et-Chari posing a challenge. For security reasons, the two other areas (Mayo Tsanaga and Mayo Sava) are accessible only with armed escorts. In January 2015, the government has officially requested the UN to assess and respond to IDPs' needs and also upgraded its own efforts to address the situation. An intergovernmental task-force headed by the Minister of Interior and chaired by the Director of the Civil Protection has been created and a fund of 20 million USD has been made available by the government to deal with this humanitarian crisis. In addition, The UNCT has created a humanitarian task-force on IDPs, comprised of key UN agencies, the Civil Protection and humanitarian NGOs. Currently, the first

respondents are national authorities; the Civil Protection relies heavily on the local Governors and Prefects in collecting data and providing assistance. Due to the security situation, WFP works with local NGOs (SAILD, SANA LOGONE and PUBLIC CONCERN) while ICRC works with the Cameroon Red Cross. The French Red Cross and IMC are the only international NGOs operating in the Extreme North. A UN hub has been created in Maroua. The RC, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM representatives have conducted visits the Extreme North in February.

The donor community seems to be interested in responding to the crisis, but lacks comprehensive, quantitative and qualitative information. A series of high level donors' visits are scheduled for mid-February.

### Extreme-Nord Region of Cameroon



#### Coordination mechanisms

Clusters – not activated

Sectors – None activated, but an inter-agency crisis taskforce focused on IDPs has been established

**Situation Analysis**

The Diffa region shares a border with two Nigerian local government areas under BH control and has come under attack since the first week of February. The population in Diffa is very concerned about the threat posed by BH, with reports of increasing support for BH insurgents – partially motivated out of a concern to come under attack if cooperation is denied. Recent attacks on the border towns of Bosso and Diffa were reprimanded by joint armed forces, but the security situation in Diffa is quickly deteriorating and large parts of the population are reportedly fleeing to safer areas, including Zinder and Goure. The situation is bound to become even more complex as the border dividing Nigeria and Niger is marked by a river which is expected to dry out by mid-March, further facilitating cross-border movements of displaced people and BH alike. Niger’s armed forces will be joining Chadian and Nigerian forces to fight BH on Nigerian territory.

The attitude of host communities towards displaced populations was initially welcoming, but there are several challenges to host community support. Already scarce resources are being exhausted, displaced populations are being stigmatized and sometimes regarded as infiltrators, and host communities themselves are now coming under attack and forced to flee. Furthermore, a change in profile of the displaced population, with less or no prior links to host communities, might decrease the willingness to accommodate them. The Diffa region has seen an increased influx of displaced people in the past four months; the latest attacks have shifted displacement patterns to now also affect the neighbouring Zinder region.

A study funded by UNHCR and conducted in June 2014 indicated that 82 percent of the circa 13,000 displaced interviewed at the time did not have identity documents. For the time being, the humanitarian community has agreed to provide assistance to displaced and host communities according to vulnerability, not status, in order to decrease the risk of internal tensions. This approach is also favoured by the donor community. In January 2015, UNHCR reported that Nigerian authorities organized return transports of refugees to Nigeria.

**Current Response**

In Diffa, UNHCR and REACH have already identified over 140 locations (spontaneous sites and host communities) where IDPs are present and IRC is also monitoring population movements. Weekly meetings with representatives of all organizations providing assistance in the region are held in Niamey. These include, among others, UNHCR, IOM, COOPI, WFP, IRC, Niger Red Cross, Acted and REACH, though the latest attacks are compelling agencies to withdraw most staff until the situation has stabilized. There is no CCCM sector / working group yet.

UNHCR has completed one refugee camp and is in the process of constructing three more, all located some 50km away from the border. The remote location of the camps makes camp residents heavily dependent on international assistance and there are reports that refugees are hesitant to move to the camps from their current location in host communities. Only 700 refugees are so far hosted in the first refugee camp, Sayam Forage. Needs and gaps are big in all sectors, including Shelter, NFIs, food, WASH and livelihoods. There is poor access to water and health facilities and the capacity of host families to accommodate displaced populations is severely stretched.

Information on displacement to Zinder has not been provided by any international agency to date, with data collection exercises by REACH and IRC focused on Diffa only. Following the cross-border attacks in February and subsequent wave of displacement, this gap needs to be urgently addressed.

The national authorities expressed interest in capacity building to provide information on the location, number, and needs of the displaced population in a systematic way. IOM has a presence in Diffa since 2013, conducting emergency and community stabilization/transition programmes, as well as shelter and NFI interventions, including emergency shelter kits, construction of transitional shelters, and cash for work. IOM also has an office in the adjacent Zinder region. In cooperation with COOPI and the Niger Red Cross, IOM undertook a protection-focused rapid assessment in December 2014 on twelve islands of the Lake Chad.



**Coordination mechanisms**

Clusters – Protection, Health and WASH activated

Sectors –activated for areas not covered by clusters

IOM engagement: Shelter/NFI sector

**Situation analysis**

In 2015, Chad has been stepping up its efforts to defeat BH by sending troops to Cameroon and Nigeria, with President Idriss Deby claiming that the fight against BH will be over in the next four months. Chad’s Lac region has seen arrivals of Nigerians, Chadians and other mobile populations due to the BH insurgency since 2012. The January 2015 attacks on Baga (Nigeria) have induced another wave of arrivals across the Lake Chad. The lake’s size has decreased tremendously in the past years and it is now characterized by a constellation of small islands. Arrivals tend to gather on the islands, either remaining stranded or moving on to the mainland.

To date UNHCR indicates a total number of 17,567 Nigerian refugees. In addition 1,113 Chadian returnees and 400 stranded migrants from Cameroon are reported by national authorities (January 2015). National Commission for Refugees And Returnees (CNARR) also indicates the arrival of a mixed group of Nigerian and Cameroonian refugees in Kebbi (Southern Chad) of 1276 people.

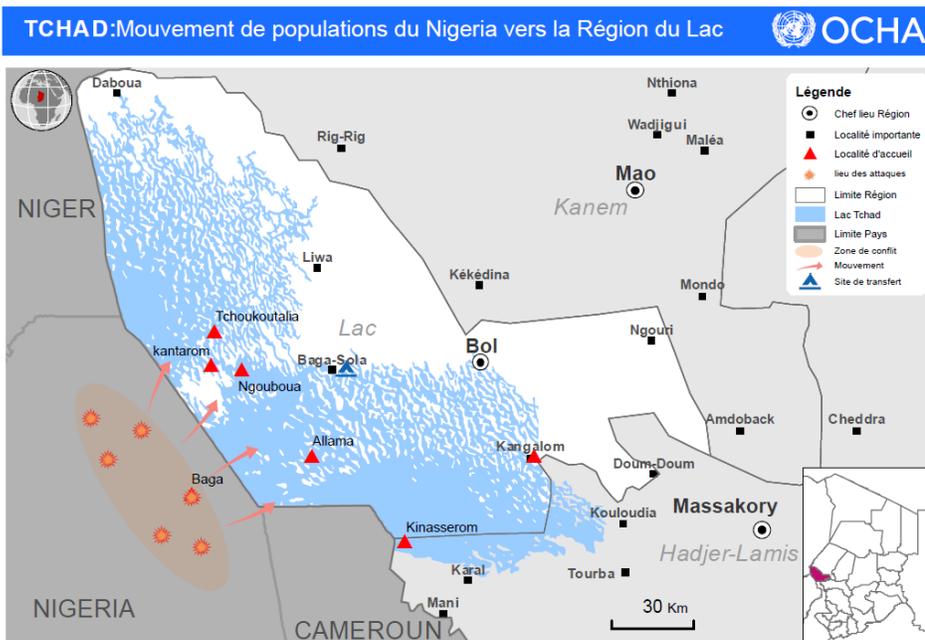
Currently, the national authorities’ preferred approach is to move all refugees from host communities to a site called Dar Es Salam, located just outside Baga-sola in Lac with a capacity up to 15,000. A screening process undertaken jointly by CNARR and UNHCR aims to determine who among the arrivals are refugees, but it is very difficult to distinguish between different nationalities of the affected populations in the Lake Chad region. Furthermore, providing assistance to just a specific group among the displaced persons could be a potential source of conflict. With some refugees as well as other displaced populations seeking refuge in host communities, identifying gaps and providing assistance outside of camps is a top priority.

A striking number of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are reported among the arrivals, as Nigeria is a traditional destination of koranic students entrusted to a *marabout* (religious scholar). Chadian security forces are on high alert as they have identified several BH elements among the persons fleeing Nigeria. Ad hoc security checks on foreign nationals and their whereabouts are carried out in the capital N’Djamena by National Security Forces. The rate of arrivals in Lac is not expected to rise significantly, as BH attacks are now focused more on central areas of Borno state, where a flight route via Lake Chad is unlikely and movement on the lake is highly restricted since Chadian armed forces have become operational there.

**Current response**

CNARR and UNHCR are screening arrivals in the Lac and have offered to refer cases of returnees and stranded migrants to IOM, the modality to do so remains to be established. IOM has conducted a mission to the Lake Chad region and has started to work on profiling and assistance arrangements. UNICEF sent five trucks of NFI and WASH assistance at the onset of the crisis. IMC is providing medical services and has reported a severe shortcoming in sanitation infrastructure, with open defecation practices widespread and insufficient latrines available. This is of particular concern considering the recent cholera outbreak and previous epidemics originating in the Lac region. There remain gaps in addressing the needs of those displaced outside the Baga-sola site. There is also a lack of psychosocial support for all affected populations.

While UNHCR is launching a Refugee Response Plan (RRP), OCHA and HCT are considering launching a regional CERF to respond to all humanitarian needs, including the non-refugee population, i.e. returnees, TCNs and host communities. ECHO is considering the allocation of additional funds for Cameroon and Chad. Other donors have also voiced interest in contributing to the humanitarian response.



**Coordination mechanisms**  
 Clusters – activated for CAR response, not yet for Nigeria crisis  
 IOM engagement: co-leading  
 CCCM/Shelter cluster



### Recommendations for the regional IOM response

1. **Treat the crisis as a regional crisis:** Given the regional nature of the displacement crisis, the humanitarian response should be harmonized and coordinated across the four affected countries, by sharing expertise, lessons learned and standardizing approaches.
2. **Understanding the patterns of displacement and identifying needs and gaps:** More comprehensive coverage of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) in Nigeria and neighboring countries would benefit the region at large, provide much needed quantitative and qualitative information to both national authorities and humanitarian actors, build capacities of local and national first respondents and ultimately inform a comprehensive and integrated response.
3. **Strengthen assistance for displaced populations, both in camps/camp-like sites and host communities:** Given the limited support available to those displaced outside camps/camp-like sites, strategies to assist displaced populations should pay particular attention to the host community dimension. Culturally sensitive and inclusive measures should be implemented to decrease the strain put on host communities, prevent stigmatization and neutralize possible tensions. This could be achieved through direct assistance, livelihoods and cash for work projects engaging both IDPs and local population in a mutually beneficial way. In addition, improving access to basic services and essential infrastructure in underserved host communities would enhance absorptive capacities and decrease the risk of tensions arising as a result of poor access to services. Shelter/NFI interventions will include NFIs such as cooking sets, hygiene kits, sleeping mats, hurricane lanterns, tarpaulin and ropes. Furthermore, construction of T-shelters with local materials should be considered and shelter materials for housing extensions be provided to avoid the use of tents.
4. **Facilitate screening of all mobile populations:** Foster greater acknowledgement of the mixed nature of forced migration in Nigeria's border areas and facilitate access to identity documentation in cooperation with national authorities and humanitarian partners, in order to identify the most appropriate durable solution.
5. **Support coping mechanisms of affected populations:** Provide psychosocial assistance to affected populations with priority given to those most in distress. Through psychosocial mobile teams and humanitarian assistance providers, identify harmful practices, prevent, refer survivors and address violence in cooperation with other specialized humanitarian actors.
6. **Reinforcement of peace and resilience:** Build affected communities' resilience to violence and extremism, improve governance and support positive engagement of at-risk groups in North East Nigeria as well as neighboring countries affected by extremism including by strengthening dialogue between communities and local government, improving basic service delivery, strengthening social cohesion and creating livelihood opportunities.
7. **Comprehensive analysis of the regional migration crisis:** Gain further in depth understanding of the root causes of the Nigeria humanitarian crisis and its consequences on migrants, IDPs and other mobile groups, to be published as part of the Migration Crisis Working Paper series.



## Recommendations per country

### Nigeria

- **Progressively enlarge coverage of DTM:** Strengthen the quality of on-going DTM data exercises and NEMA/SEMA capacity building. Extend the DTM to Kano, Nasarawa, Plateau, Zamfara, Kaduna, and the Federal Capital Territory. DTM exercises could be expanded to household level registration.
- **Increase IOM direct assistance** in shelter and NFI, site planning and WASH particularly focusing on IDPs in host families. Livelihood opportunities could be strengthened through cash-for-work initiatives focused at improving community infrastructure. Such projects will inject much needed resources into the local economy and may help to prevent disenfranchised youth joining BH.
- **Provide capacity building** for national authorities and counterparts on CCCM, shelter design, site planning and NFI distribution. Deploy CCCM staff to mentor NEMA, SEMA and Red Cross staff in the field. All activities should seek to strengthen national capacity and not undermine local responses.
- **Maintain psychosocial support and develop protection activities:** Through the psychosocial mobile teams and DTM enumerators, improve identification of vulnerable cases, develop referrals to other agencies and institutions and assist specific cases when feasible (UASC, GBV and other vulnerable cases).
- **Reduce the risk of tensions arising between host communities and displaced populations** by improving service provision and livelihoods in coordination with local authorities
- **Build the resilience of communities vulnerable to violence** associated with extremism by strengthening dialogue between communities and local government, improving basic service delivery, strengthening social cohesion and creating livelihood opportunities.
- **Stabilize communities as a precondition for return** by rehabilitating/improving basic service provision in coordination with local authorities

### Cameroon

- **Data collection and profiling:** In light of the acute need for accurate information on displacement patterns and needs analysis, the roll out of DTM in the Extreme North is recommended. While access remains severely limited, capacity building activities and use of mobile teams comprised of national authorities and local NGOs could be envisaged. DTM should be put in place soon in the accessible areas such as Mayo Tsanaga and Mayo Sava and later extended to Logon-et-Chari. Furthermore, the possibility of new technologies for remote assessment of the situation may be considered.
- **Protection and psychosocial activities** for both IDPs and host communities is an area of interest of all partners consulted. Capacity building at national and local level on the profile of the various forced migrants crossing the borders and the different legal frameworks applicable to each should be undertaken. Psychosocial assistance would complement the ongoing efforts of other humanitarian actors.
- **Possible NFI, shelter, livelihood, cash for work assistance** to all groups affected by the crisis (host communities, IDPs, returnees etc.) should be further assessed
- **Reduce the risk of tensions arising between host communities and displaced populations** in Northern Cameroon by improving service provision and livelihoods in coordination with local authorities
- **Build the resilience of communities vulnerable to violence** associated with extremism by strengthening dialogue between communities and local government, improving basic service delivery, strengthening social cohesion and creating livelihood opportunities.

## **Niger**

- **Strengthen information management initiatives:** Rapidly set up DTM in Zinder to capture new displacement patterns and inform the humanitarian response. Build capacity and work together with national authorities and other actors in Diffa and Zinder to gain a comprehensive picture of the displacement situation. The DTM should complement ongoing information management initiatives and could function as a monitoring tool to ensure services are put in place where most urgently needed and accountability to affected populations is maintained.
- **Strengthen ongoing Shelter/NFI interventions:** Build shelters, rehabilitate existing houses and undertake WASH interventions in host communities, using local materials and cash-for-work schemes to strengthen the local economy. IOM already has a pool of trained youth who have been involved in previous projects, keeping them engaged can serve as a preventative measure to avoid their recruitment by BH. Security permitting, activities should focus on both Diffa and Zinder.
- **Establish psychosocial mobile teams** – Continue to explore avenues for providing psychosocial support to displaced populations as well as host communities in border regions.
- **Expand current stabilization activities:** Support social cohesion in Diffa and Zinder through the implementation of community projects.
- **Documentation for returnees/TCNs** Facilitate access to documentation for returnees and other forced migrants, working in collaboration with the Commission Nationale d'Eligibilite, DREC and UNHCR.

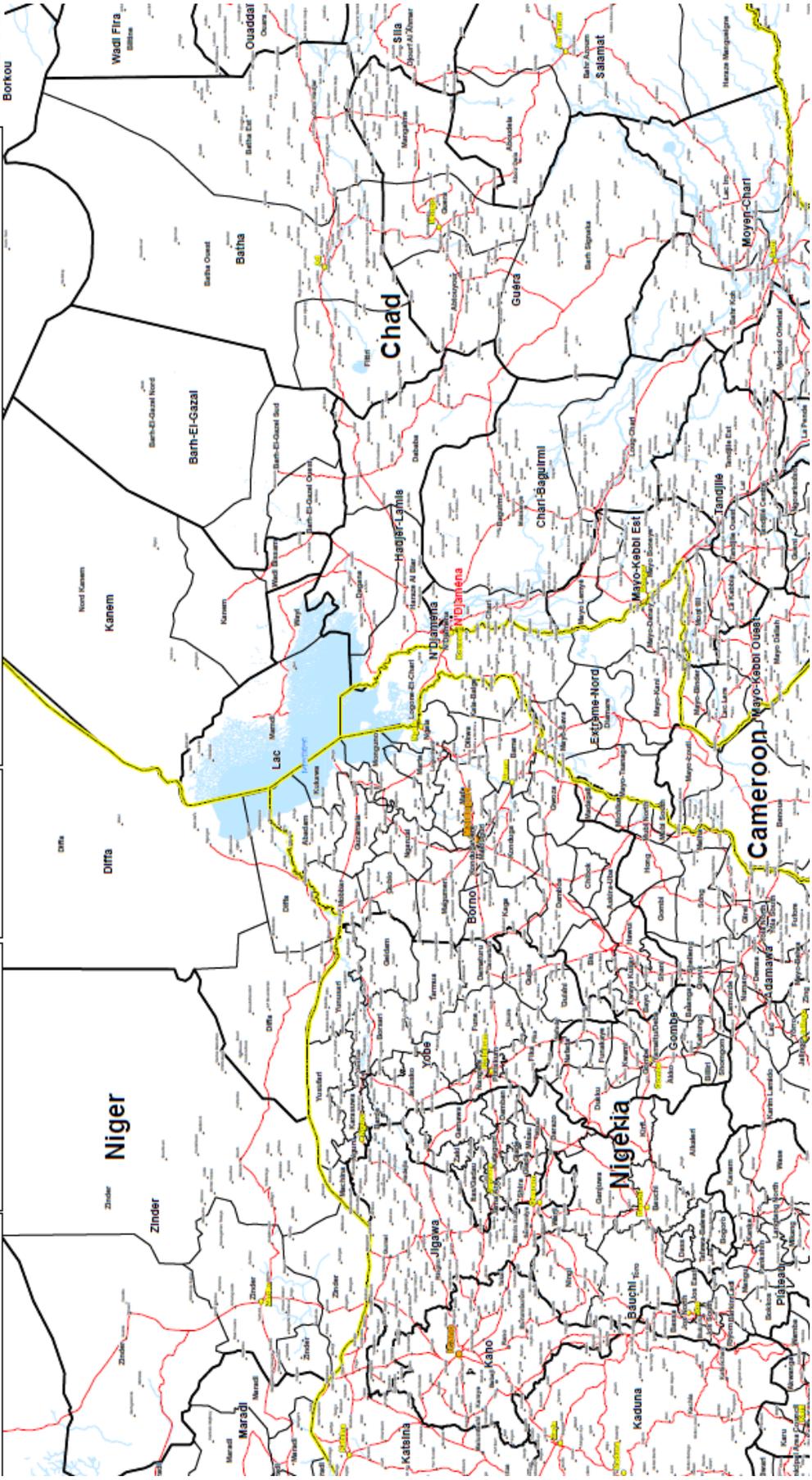
## **Chad**

- **Strengthen data collection and gaps analysis,** seeking to create links with DTM exercises in the region and establishing a more systematic approach for data collection on returnees, stranded migrants/TCNs, and IDPs.
- **Consolidate referral mechanism and scale up assistance for non-refugees.** Increase presence in the Lac region, during UNHCR-led screening processes and through direct shelter/NFI assistance to affected populations.
- **Provide psychosocial assistance and referrals of vulnerable cases.** Consider to deploy psychosocial mobile teams to assist Nigerian refugees as well as other displaced populations in the Lac region. Refer and assist cases such as UASC in cooperation with the Ministry for Social Action, Women and National Solidarity, UNICEF and other partners.
- **Carry out family tracing and reunification activities** for unaccompanied minors and separated children (UASC) and other vulnerable cases.
- **Reduce the risk of tensions arising between host communities and displaced populations** in the Lake Chad region by improving service provision and livelihoods in coordination with local authorities.
- **Participate in the search for durable solutions** for returnees, stranded migrants/TCNs and IDPs. Where desired, provide onwards transportation and return to preferred destinations in Chad (returnees) and countries of origin (stranded migrants) and reintegration assistance.
- **Build the resilience of communities vulnerable to violence** associated with extremism by strengthening dialogue between communities and local government, improving basic service delivery, strengthening social cohesion and creating livelihood opportunities.

Source: CIA, USGS, IOM  
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- Capital City
- Major Town
- International Border
- ADRC Department Level
- Village
- Country
- ADRC Region Level
- ADRC Department Level
- Water Bodies
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Water Body



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