

Security Context

The month of February saw a significant reduction in the number of attacks and security related incidents in the Diffa region, in comparison with the month of January. Nevertheless, incidents of intimidation and high numbers of arbitrary arrests of those suspected of association with Boko Haram continue to be reported in the region.

- Despite the reduction in the number and frequency of security incidents, there are high levels of paranoia amongst the population, leading to internal population movements, many moving in search of security. An increased military presence in the town of Diffa and surrounds has added to paranoia among the population.
- Population movements to Toumour from the state of Borno in Nigeria were reported in February. Additionally, traditional herding routes for livestock have been disrupted due to insecurity and theft of livestock by the insurgents. This situation has caused more than 20 conflicts in the region between nomadic herders and farmers, which led to 3 deaths and many injuries.
- Widespread military search operations are underway in Nigeria since the last week of February, which could have an effect on population movements from Nigeria to Niger. Similarly, a large-scale military operation on the Lake Chad islands is due to begin in the coming days, which may result in increasing numbers of arrivals.
- In the commune of Maine Soroa, a mine explosion injured 3 civilians, whilst a suicide belt was found, but deactivated. Increased awareness raising and sensitization on explosive devices is necessary throughout the region.
- February saw mass demonstrations against the closure of the weekly market in Gagamari, while at the spontaneous site of Garin Wanzam, members of the displaced population protested against and attacked vehicles of humanitarian workers, in protest against distribution and targeting methods. Meetings and dialogues were carried out with authorities, beneficiaries and local communities, which has calmed tensions.
- As regards to the Governments demobilization and 'surrender programme' for former Boko Haram combatants, the Protection Cluster prepared a joint note for the Humanitarian Coordinator and Government regarding the positioning of the humanitarian community. The key points of the note emphasised the need for a regional approach, taking into account national specificities, and to focus on sharing key messages with the host population. The protection actors are now able to visit the transit centre housing the former combatants and their families, which several actors did in February. There are currently 129 surrendered former combatants in the government run transit site.

Analysis of the political and security situation

- There Government of Niger have declared a State of Emergency in the two regions of Tahoua and Tillabery following an attack in the last week of February, resulting in the deaths of at least 16 military personnel. These two regions border Mali, the west of Niger, and have seen increasing numbers of attacks and incursions in recent month. Thus 3 of 7 regions of Niger are currently in a State of Emergency. It is expected that this may lead to increased numbers of arbitrary arrests.
- Much civil unrest and a national protest against the Government were reported in Niamey at the end of February / beginning of March. Government opposition state that they seek justice and equality for the population.
- An envoy of delegates of the UN Security Council will carry out a mission to Niger in March.

Mission Highlights

- On the 17th of February, a mission including the Deputy Secretary General of the High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace, a member of the EU delegation and the Diffa Governor, as well as other partners, carried out an evaluation mission of the gas distribution project, financed as part of the Instrument for the Consolidation for Peace and Stability (ICSP). The results will be shared shortly.
- UNHCR assisted the government to relocate 42 households of 137 people from Toumour, to safety in Sayam Forage refugee camp, on the 17th of February.

Protection

Protection Monitoring

- A total of 57 protection incidents were recorded during the month of February in Diffa. These included 16% related to accidental fires, 12% inter-communal tensions related to access to energy and natural resources, 11% related to kidnappings of women and children, 9% related to incursions in Diffa and Gueskerou, 5% related to physical aggression, as well as one murder, and three cases of kidnapping with subsequent release.
- Ongoing military actions, including large-scale search operations in Niger and Nigeria, are resulting in new arrivals across the border, as well as internal movements away from border areas.
- In the month of February 42 households arrived from Touboum Guini to Toumour, fleeing Boko Haram attacks and MNJTF military actions. These households were then assisted to voluntarily relocate to Sayam Forage camp, following stigmatization by the local population who suspect that they are affiliated with Boko Haram. Another relocation of 215 people is planned for the first week of March, while additional population in Diffa town have requested to the Governor to be relocated to the camp, due to the harsh living conditions for displaced persons in the town. Search for Common Ground will carry out sensitizations with the community regarding the conditions in the camp and available services. Key messages are being developed with UNHCR.
- An additional 50 households arrived from Goudoumbari and Fere in Borno state Nigeria, to the commune of Toumour in February.
- At the same time, around 250 households returned to Nigeria, to Damaska, Baga, Gaidam and Maiduguri. The reasons for departure cited were to check on their homes and villages, to prepare for agricultural planting and harvesting, and register their families for assistance.
- In the commune of Gueskerou, 5 incursions and attacks were reported close to the border (Kindjandi, Gueskerou village). Approximately 230 households fled Gueskerou and moved to Diffa town.
- Many households have moved several times, many stating that they are searching for food assistance. This has multiple negative effects, particularly in terms of school attendance, the separation of children from their families, a lack of monitoring of persons with specific needs and complications in terms of health.
- The figures in terms of displaced population in the region remain the same as at 31st December. However, the DREC-R will update the figures during the month of March.
- The AGDM evaluation was carried out in 11 sites in the Diffa region from the 30 January to 3rd of February. A total of 1,036 people were interviewed. The aim of the exercise was to collect and analyze information on problems and their causes, the capacities and resources available to the community, and to identify possible solutions. The information gathered will be used to formulate protection objectives and to analyse risks in order to formulate specific recommendations.
- A Cash Transfer feasibility study was coordinated by the protection section from the 14th – 17th of February. It revealed that 11 actors are already using the modality in the region. Recommendations will be released shortly, however the key recommendation is targeting based on vulnerability rather than status.
- The Protection Working Group continue to monitor the incidence of accidental fires in several of the spontaneous sites, including Gagamri and Boudouri.
- The action plan for 2017 of the Protection Working Group is in the final stages of editing, and will be put forward for validation in March.

SGBV: Prevention and Response

- From the 9th to 12th of February, an SGBV evaluation was carried out in Sayam Forage camp, Chateau, Gagamari and Assaga by UNHCR, in order to better understand the causes of SGBV, the strengths and weaknesses of the response and threats to existing programmes, as well as opportunities to improve actions and reduce the prevalence of SGBV in the region. A total of 72 people were interviewed throughout the sites (50% male, 50% female). The principle recommendations are included in the 'Recommendations section' below.
- In February, 5 cases of SGBV were reported, identified and provided with appropriate support in the communes of Kablewa and Gueskerou.
- 4 training sessions for women's groups, and 1 for religious and community leaders were delivered in February, focusing on SGBV – causes and consequences, FGM, psychosocial support etc. 102 persons benefitted (11 men and 91 women).
- SGBV related 'tea-debates' were carried out in 9 sites in Diffa commune, benefitting 476 people (340 women, 22 men, 32 boys and 80 girls).

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- 7 women's spaces were equipped in N'Guigmi, Kablewa, Kindjandi, Toumour, Assaga and Djalori, to strengthen meetings and discussions for women.

Recommendations: SGBV

- Strengthen IGA activities for women and girls;
- Establish properly functioning referral mechanisms at all sites and improve coordination and case management
- Strengthen capacities of health professionals in handling SGBV cases, and provide PEP kits to all health points;
- Strengthen coverage of domestic gas to include more sites and beneficiaries;
- Strengthen FDS capacities on SGBV causes and consequences.

Child Protection

- 2 capacity development sessions on child protection were carried out in February. These focused on referral mechanisms, for teachers, health workers, and focal points, including 42 men and 38 women in Toumour, Garin Wanzam and Chetimari, and for peer educators in Assaga, Gari gogo and Chetimari (48 girls and 51 boys).
- 3 sensitization campaigns on children's rights and in particular on the right to education were organized in Diffa town, benefitting 427 men, 973 women, 1,163 boys and 1,134 girls, through a theatre group, while 93 children received motivation kits.
- In Sayam Forage refugee camp, 117 boys and 132 girls benefitted from socio-recreational activities, enabling them to discuss traumatic events. Those who required additional psychosocial support were identified for follow up.
- Training for the members of the Best Interest Determination (BID) panels was carried out in February by UNHCR for relevant state structures, DREC/CNE and DRPE, as well as justice partners and child protection partners, including SOS VE, Save the Children, and IRC. Evaluation and the superior interests of the child, as well as determination of the BID were discussed. A document for reporting on BID sessions was elaborated, and enriched with new elements, to enable the members of the panel to have the most complete information possible for all cases submitted to them.
- The Child Protection Sub-Working Group, in line with Resolution 1612, created an advocacy note on Child Protection in the Diffa region.

Recommendations: Child Protection

- A follow up practical training session for the BID panels will be held in March to enhance their capacities, decision making processes and reporting.

Registration and Documentation

- The first meeting of the year of the Reception and Registration Working Group was held on the 21st of February, with the following actors: WFP, IOM, OCHA, MAH/GC, CNE, Save, REACH, Oxfam, UNHCR. It will now be carried out on a monthly basis. This will enable other Working Groups to take into account recommendations in terms of planning upcoming activities.
- Following the relocation of 137 persons from Tomour to Sayam Forage, and the arrival of an additional 412 spontaneous arrivals since the beginning of the year, the registered population of the camp has increased to 7,664 persons. The levels of spontaneous arrivals show that more people see the conditions in the camp as favourable to outside of the camp, thus measures must be taken to ensure the capacity to assist in voluntary relocations on a regular basis.
- The registered population of Kablewa camp has increased from 10,292 in December to 12,186 at the end of February. Challenges are reported in the management of the camp, due to its proximity to the local town and other sites, and the mixing of local population who are also seeking assistance.
- An identification and registration mission was launched on the 25th of February for the new arrivals in Chetimari and Maine Soroa, from Nigeria. The data will be incorporated into the global statistics for the region.

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Recommendations: Registration & Documentation

- Carry out a physical door-to-door verification at Sayam Forage camp using smartphones. This will enable a full update of registration figures and an update regarding persons with specific needs.
- In Kablewa, carry out sensitization with the local community regarding the impact of fraud in the camp.



Health

Curative activities:

- In the month of February, a total of 1,448 refugees in Sayam Forage and 763 IDPs in Kablewa were seen for consultations. The majority of illnesses in both camps were respiratory disorders, severe diarrhea and conjunctivitis.

Preventative Activities:

- Between the two camps, over 165 women attended the health centres for prenatal consultations, showing an increase in engagement from women in reproductive health, while 46 births were declared in the two camps. All women who attended the clinic for prenatal consultations in Kablewa were screened for HIV / AIDs, due to reports of elevated rates in the camp. Additional actions will be taken in the next months. Mass sensitization on reproductive health and birth declarations was carried out in both camps.
- 285 children under 5 years in both camps received general vaccinations and supplementary Vitamin A.

Recommendations: Health

- Additional screening and preventative measures for HIV / AIDs are required in the camp of Kablewa. These joint actions will be implemented in the coming months, including screenings, sensitizations etc.



Education

- UNHCR and partners are seeking support for the establishment of an accredited examination centre in Diffa town, to facilitate the examinations of the Nigerian refugee students, through the Nigerian secondary school curriculum. A follow up mission from the Department of Education of both Niger and Nigeria will go ahead in March 2017 to plan for the establishment of the centre.
- In December, the 3 existing centres were upgraded, including through the provision of solar panels for energy, additional classrooms and an interactive learning platform which is currently operational. Tablets have been provided at each of the centres to enable the students to access curriculum and other educational materials online.

Recommendations: Education

- To cater to the increased number of students in the Distance Education centres, approximately 15 new qualified teachers are required.
- The possibility of creating a Distance Education Centre in Sayam Forage is being considered, where at least 80 students have expressed interest.

WASH

Following major challenges in terms of the provision of adequate levels of drinking water in Sayam Forage in 2016, the needs of the population have now been covered. In terms of access to latrines and showers, the current ratio stands at 34 persons / latrine and 56 per shower.

In Kablewa camp, due to the drastically increasing population, the need for water has not yet been fully met.

Recommendations: WASH

- In Sayam Forage 100 family latrines are required to respond to the needs of persons with specific needs.
- The water provision network of Kablewa town must be fully extended to the entire camp, and a source of energy supplied for the proper functioning of the system.

Shelter & NFI

Emergency shelter / NFI

- Throughout February, 200 emergency shelter kits and NFI kits were distributed in Sayam Forage camp, to respond to the needs of the newly relocated population from Toumour. These shelters will be gradually replaced by transitional shelters, to ensure that all population receive the same level of shelter assistance in the camp.
- In Kablewa camp, a distribution of 300 emergency shelters and NFI kits was launched on the 27th of February, for the newly registered IDPs in the camp.

Urbanization

- In the two communes of Chetimari and N'Guigmi, 'Phase 2 ' of the urbanization project has been launched, involving the construction of 160 houses per site, without the use of wood. A total of 80 masons were trained at each site, in specialized architecture techniques, for construction without using wood. Over 100 persons (host and displaced) are also employed at each site to manufacture and transport bricks for construction. The beneficiary families have been selected based on their levels of vulnerability.
- Construction will be scaled up to the other 5 targeted communes during 2017, while the plan is to construct 4,000 houses in the next 2 years.

Access to Energy

- Distributions of gas to new arrivals in the camp are ongoing, while UNHCR have begun the targeting process for an additional 5,000 out-of-camp beneficiary households, who will receive gas kits in 2017.
- However, some challenges have been reported, including ruptures at some gas provision centres, hindering access for the population.

Recommendations: Access to Energy

- Accelerate the process of the installation of a sixth GPL gas provision centre to avoid ruptures and delays.
- Include the local authorities in the selection and targeting of the next 5,000 beneficiaries.

