

Population Movements

Between the period 9 April and 22 May 2017, a total of **12,202** Nigerian refugees returned spontaneously from the Minawao Refugee Camp in Cameroon. The movements have taken place mainly during two periods - 9-16 April which registered **1,754** and 13-22 May with **10,448** returnees. The main areas of return are Banki, Pulka, Mubi, Gwoza and Bama in North-Eastern Nigeria, with the entry points being Banki and Sahuda in Borno State.

UNHCR and its partners have reported no further new spontaneous movements between 27 and 29 May. However, on 27 May, approximately **1,500** returnees mainly women and children were transported to Pulka under an arrangement supported by the Borno State Government in an effort to decongest Banki. Meanwhile, Pulka lacks basic facilities including water shortages for its **22,000** inhabitants. In the meantime, advocacy is ongoing to facilitate family reunification as men were left behind in Banki during the relocation process.

Situation analysis

These movements have taken place under extremely difficult circumstances with conditions in the areas of return not considered conducive for safe and dignified returns. Eventually, majority of those returning are ending up in secondary displacement. Many persons interviewed upon arrival stated that their return was primarily influenced by drastically reduced food rations¹ and water shortages in the Minawao Camp. Some claimed that due to acute water shortages, caused by broken water taps, they walked for more than five kilometres to access safe water for domestic use. Others said they were returning because of the farming season. Majority of the refugee population in Minawao Camp are predominantly farmers.

Response efforts

UNHCR and partners are working to respond to the shelter, food and non-food item needs of the returnees. In Banki, UNHCR is providing **300** emergency shelters while IOM is constructing 500. In Pulka another **690** emergency shelters are being constructed (UNHCR **190**; IOM **500**) to address the accommodation needs of the returnees. In addition, UNHCR is prepositioning **1,000** NFI kits for approximately **5,000** vulnerable returnees who have arrived in Banki with a plan to move additional items to Pulka, Gwoza and Bama. UNHCR is also sending more plastic sheeting to the areas to address the emergency shelter situation while more organized shelter takes place over the next few days. UNHCR is also increasing its advocacy with other humanitarian agencies to intervene in areas where they have expertise within the coordinated response framework. Provision of food for the returnees remains an urgent and unmet need.

Key operational challenges

Security and lack of humanitarian access continue to pose key operational challenges in Banki and other areas of return. While government forces have secured the main Local Government Areas, security around liberated areas remain fluid and unpredictable. The lack of resources is also critically undermining effective response to the surge in the number of returnees over the past few weeks.

¹ Due to financial constraints, the food basket was reduced by 25% in Minawao and of 50% for CAR refugees.