

## Population Movements

UNHCR in collaboration with the Nigeria Immigration Service, National and State Emergency Management Agencies and its NGO partner, Action Initiative for Peace and Development (AIPD) have registered additional **6,849** returnees from Cameroon who arrived in Banki prior to the influx, which recorded **12,428** between April and May 2017. The total number of registered returnees from Cameroon to Banki since 01 January 2017 has now reached **19,227** individuals in **4,674** households. UNHCR and partners had temporarily suspended the registration of other categories of spontaneous returnees until the influx population was entirely registered. The pre-influx returnee population included mainly individuals unregistered and resided out the official refugee settlements in Cameroon. All the remaining family members of people transferred from Banki to Pulka were transported during period under review. The relocation was part of efforts by government to support individuals who want to move to their final areas of return in Pulka amidst concerns by aid agencies that water and sanitation conditions were not conducive for the new arrivals. Over-crowdedness, severe water shortages and restriction of free movement outside the main Pulka Town also remain principle concerns for UNHCR and other humanitarian actors. Since 2015, more than **270,000** Nigerians driven by the insurgency in the North-East have returned from Cameroon, Niger and Chad, with about 7 per cent recorded to have returned against their will.

## Situation Analysis

The last recorded spontaneous movement from Cameroon to Banki was on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May. Since then, UNHCR staff and partner monitors stationed in Banki have reported no new arrivals. The long pause in further refugee movement from Cameroon to Nigeria could be a result of the joint mission to Minawao, Cameroon by UNHCR and the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon with key messages to refugees about the situation in country of origin. UNHCR and the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon will continue to provide reliable information regarding living conditions in the areas of return in Nigerian and the complexity of the security and humanitarian situations in the North-East of the country. Part of that effort would be to organize 'Come and See Visit' to Nigeria to enable refugees from Minawao Camp see the reality of the situation on ground to enable them make informed decisions about any spontaneous return. UNHCR is also enhancing the process of educating the public and other relevant actors about the Tripartite Agreement.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, UNHCR participated in the meeting of the Emergency Coordination Center of the Government Nigeria in Abuja on the Tripartite Agreement signed between UNHCR and the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon on the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon. The UNHCR presentation provided the understanding of the situation regarding refoulment (forced returns), secondary displacements and the protection implications. Representatives of government agencies and members of the humanitarian and donor communities participated in the deliberations which are also seeking to consolidate an action plan to respond when necessary.

## Response Efforts

To expand the shelter space for the new arrivals in Banki, the government is excavating a security drainage around Banki to facilitate the relocation of returnees and other displaced persons to the new accommodation area. Food remains an unmet need but WFP is planning food distribution this week in Banki for the returnee and IDP populations. Firewood collection is also a concern as returnees and IDPs are no longer allowed to fetch firewood due to security. UNHCR is following up with its State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) on how returnees and IDPs can access firewood. Water shortage continues as there are insufficient pumps. Long queues and quarrels confusion at many water points remain the daily norm, thus presenting serious protection risks for the vulnerable population. With the onset of the rains, there are growing concerns for a possible disease outbreak. Already, there were six deaths recorded in just two days, with the cause unknown. UNHCR continued the distributing non-food items (NFIs) in Banki on 5 June to all new arrivals.

## Key Operational Challenges

In addition to the lack of road access by humanitarian agencies and limited movements around newly liberated areas because of security concerns, there is need for reliable internet connectivity and mobile phone service provider particularly in Banki. Staff in the area rely only on sat phone and the Cameroonian mobile phone service provider to communicate. This is making reporting and coordination extremely challenging. The lack of resources required for UNHCR and its partners to effectively deliver humanitarian response also continues to be hindered.