

North-East Nigeria

UNHCR-led vulnerability screening reached nearly **13,000** men, women and children across Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States this month.

UNHCR's protection, human rights and border monitoring visits captured nearly **57,000** internally displaced people and refugee returnees in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States in February.

UNHCR and partners raised awareness on protection and **COVID-19 prevention measures** among **38,000** people across the BAY States.



An IDP woman counting money from sales of harvested fish from a UNHCR-supported fish farm in Bakassi Camp, Maiduguri Nigeria. @AUN/Abdullahi Kaka

Operational Highlights

- In February, the North-East continued to witness intense **attacks by the non-State armed groups (NSAG)**. Additionally, **abductions and killings** occurred at illegal vehicle check points and continued to limit **freedom of movement** of locals, internally displaced people (IDPs) and humanitarians.
- In **Borno State**, several attacks, ambushes, and illegal check points by NSAG continued along main highways such as Maiduguri-Monguno, Maiduguri-Damasak, and Gubio-Magumeri where NSAG collected ID and SIM cards from commuters, robbed motorists of money, phones, food and other valuables. They also attempted infiltration into IDP camps and host communities, resulting in death, looting, abduction, and other related incidents in Dikwa, Rann and Ngala. The State capital **Maiduguri** was **targeted with rockets** killing 13 people and injuring others. An attack on Marte town on 14 to 16 February resulted in the influx of people into Dikwa. In addition, ongoing activities of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) (Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon) continued to force people to move to areas of relative safety, including those led by the MJTF to Monguno, Pulka, Bama and Banki, among other locations. Their movement resulted in the **death of individuals due to improvised explosive devices** near the roadside.
- Incessant attacks forced residents of four local government areas (LGAs Gubio, Magumeri, Kaga and Konduga) in Borno State to **flee to Yobe**. Furthermore, **fire outbreaks** were reported in the farm centre of IDP camps in Monguno, Damasak (Bulama Ari Gwadima and Bulama Sage communities), Dikwa (Kilagoru camp and Zone B of Shuwari camp) and makeshift shelters in Gajiram Nganzai, destroying IDP property, exposing victims to protection risks who were in need of shelter, food and non-food items (NFIs).
- In **Adamawa State**, cases of kidnapping, abductions and demands for ransom were reported in Mubi North (Mayo-Bani and Digil Wards), Mubi South (Lamorde Ward) and Madagali (Duhu/Maiwandu Ward) LGAs. An alleged attack by NSAG in Kirchinga Ward of Madagali was repelled by military forces resulting in panic and tension in the community. Another attack by members of an NSAG **forced people to flee from Madagali LGA** into Michika town for safety which created some tension.
- In **Yobe State**, armed men suspected to be NSAG, attacked INGO staff at Garin Gada community in Yunusari LGA. The humanitarians were in town reportedly on a cash distribution programme when they were attacked and one of their vehicles escaped while the others were trapped in the town. In Geidam town in Geidam LGA, NSAG opened sporadic fire when looting food from many shops leading residents to **flee the town for safety**. In Kaliyari community along Babbangida-Dapchi road, commuters were stopped and robbed of their phones, money, and other valuables at an irregular checkpoint. **Two people were killed** when one driver attempted to escape.

Population Movements

- **Cross border movements** continued through official and non-official border points between Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger Republic and Chad despite the official closure of borders due to COVID-19. In February, statistics show that 827 households comprising of 2,176 individuals were captured by UNHCR border monitors, 76 per cent Nigerians and 24 per cent Cameroonians. Banki border entry point accounted for 54 per cent of the movements, Damasak for 38 percent, Ngala for seven and Pulka for one percent. **Their return was triggered by insecurity** in the country of asylum because of NSAG attacks or fear of attacks including military operations. Other reasons include **family visits**, job opportunities and **seasonal movements**.
- The government of Borno State continued to put measures in place to **facilitate the return of Nigerian refugees from Minawoa camp** in Cameroon to Banki and Bama towns in Borno. This is based on an agreement of the Tripartite Commission on 10 February, which pre-identified 4,982 individuals in principle for repatriation to these towns.
- Those forced to flee from Marte to Dikwa have revealed **consequences of their displacement** when they faced challenges such as **shelter**, NFIs, **food/protection** and **limited access to water**. Other concerns included access to cooking fuels and movement to and from farms, especially areas with on-going military operations. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (**SGBV**) cases have also been reported, particularly denial of resources, physical assaults, child/forced marriages, and sexual exploitation, including in Damboa, Monguno and Damasak. These movements also caused **family separations** as witnessed in Dikwa. In most of these locations, children are forced to either beg or hawk to sustain their

households or caregivers, exposing these children to the **risks of abduction and trafficking**. Lack of documentation, legal and civil status documentation lost or destroyed during NSAG attacks or displacement, are also increasingly reported as a serious concern by the newly displaced people. Killings have caused a feeling of anxiety amongst the affected population, thus **increasing the need of mental health and psychosocial support** services that are unavailable in some of these locations.



PROTECTION

Protection Sector Coordination

In February, protection sector meetings continued to take place at LGA and State levels. At the LGA level, protection sector working group were held in Damasak, Bama, Banki, Gwoza, Pulka, Ngala, Rann, Monguno and MMC (Maiduguri Metropolitan Council). Meetings were chaired by UNHCR and/or its protection partners on the ground. Protection concerns raised during the meetings continued to be related to increased insecurity for civilians and further restriction of access to affected populations for humanitarian responders and how this has impacted the solution-oriented actions recommended for implementation. At State level, due to COVID-19, the meeting was held through tele-conference.

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR and its implementing partners (Grass Root Initiative for Strengthening Community Resilience, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), INTERSOS, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), CARITAS, American University of Nigeria and Borno Women Development Initiative) continued to maintain **presence** within areas of responses in the BAY States, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to reduce risks and address needs of people. Furthermore, UNHCR also continued to coordinate the Protection and Camp Coordination-Camp Management/Shelter/NFI sectors in the BAY States.
- To curb the spread of COVID-19 in Nigeria, UNHCR, partners and humanitarian actors continued to work with stakeholders, internally displaced people and returnees on COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement, including during border monitoring, temperature screening and other preventive measures at entry points.
- In February, a total of **57,114 people were reached** through 1,315 **protection monitoring** missions and site visits (protection, human rights, and border monitoring) in the BAY States by UNHCR staff and partners.
- In February, a total of 2,904 key informant interviews were held and analysed using the **community protection monitoring tool**. Additionally, vulnerability screening, Focus Group Discussions and observations were employed to triangulate the analysis of the protection environment. This has helped to continuously provide direct strategic approach, advocacy, and real-time response to protection issues in the BAY States.
- **Vulnerability screening** and registration of persons with specific needs reached 2,068 displaced families comprising of 12,969 individuals in February. The findings of the vulnerability screening during the reporting period covers ten LGAs in Borno State, four LGAs in Adamawa and two in Yobe State.
- Among the 1,235 women with specific needs, 47 per cent were female-headed households, 40 per cent lactating mothers and 13 per cent pregnant women.
- 70 per cent of the 145 vulnerable children were orphans, 11 per cent unaccompanied/separated children, eight per cent cases of child marriage, seven per cent adolescent parents and five per cent child-headed households. Many cases of forced marriages remain rampant due to limited access to livelihoods to meet the basic needs of families.
- Protection monitoring also uncovered the **high level of drug abuse by adolescents** in some camps and host communities. This has led to involvement in opportunistic crime and SGBV. Furthermore, some of these children have been forced to hawk and beg which again predisposes them to **heightened protection risks of abduction and killing**. Also, limited presence of child protection actors and specialized government agencies especially in locations such as Monguno, Rann and some camps in MMC and Jere has led to a **vacuum in the management of child protection cases**.

- In February, some of the major complaints received through the **complaints** mechanism include **health/medical conditions** (28 per cent), **lack of basic services** (27 percent), vulnerability screening services (11 per cent), child labour/hawking/begging (seven per cent), legal issues/access to justice (five per cent), people with specific needs, domestic violence (four per cent each), and others. Apart from receiving complaints, the protection desks provided information, education, and communication materials on protection services, safety measures including **preventive information on COVID-19 in English, Hausa, and Kanuri**.
- Human rights monitors conducted 61 detention facility monitoring visits in the BAY States. Cases of prolonged detention beyond the legal limit were identified in Borno and Adamawa States and some interventions made. In general, most detention facilities fall short of the international standards with most basic amenities such as water, electricity, and challenges including WASH facilities.

Protection Response

- In the BAY States, 1,398 **awareness** activities were conducted by UNHCR, partners, and community-based protection action groups **reaching 38,113 internally displaced people**, returnees and host community members on protection issues that had been identified during protection monitoring and community engagement meetings. In addition, the team also covered child protection, SGBV, referral pathways, peaceful co-existence, birth registration and documentation as well as fundamental human rights.
- **Protection material assistance/protection safety-nets and livelihood support for vulnerable people** was provided to 404 vulnerable individuals in Bama, Ngala and MMC in Borno who had been selected and enrolled on trainings about micro business, cap making, fishery, livestock production and vocational skills (carpentry, tailoring and ICT). In Bakassi camp, Maiduguri, one of the fish farm cooperative units started harvesting and selling fish to the public.
- A total of 55 **advocacy** and community meeting sessions were held in the BAY States reaching 987 individuals. This advocacy included visits to the probate registry of the High Court of Justice -Yobe State, to inform the probate registrar and its staff about UNHCR's important project on access to justice. While topics covered at the community meetings ranged from peaceful co-existence between displaced people and host community, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, referral pathways, Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues, right to birth registration and documentation, right to education, fundamental human rights and COVID-19 preventive measures, among others.
- A total of 2,154 cases identified through protection monitoring and self-reporting at the protection desks were referred by UNHCR and partners to access various protection services, 66 per cent representing serious medical conditions, ten per cent each food and shelter support, among others.
- Nigerian government authorities carried out a series of missions in Cameroon to promote the **repatriation** of Nigerian refugees which is a joint initiative with the Cameroonian government and responding to the wish of some refugees to go home. Based on decisions of the Tripartite Commission on 10 February, four refugees from the Minawao Camp in Cameroon came on a "**go-and-see/come-and-tell**" visit to Bama and Banki towns in Borno on 27 and 28 February.

Challenges

- The deterioration in the security landscape continues to affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance in deep-field locations.
- Increased prevalence of cases of children resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as begging continues to impact the protection of children in the North-East.
- Inadequate stock of NFIs to meet the material assistance needs of the affected population remains a huge gap in response that needs to be addressed.

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