

Northeast Nigeria Operational Update

March 2022

UNHCR local pilot integration project for IDPs and host community members kickstarted in Labondo village, Adamawa State, and will see **the construction of 226 units of semi-detached durable houses for 452 households.**

UNHCR provided **2,847 improved Non-Food Item (NFI) kits to 674 male households and 2,173 female households affected by fire** in Monguno, and new IDP returnees in Pulka, Banki, Ngala, and Damasak Local Government Areas (LGAs).

As of March 2022, the **Borno State government had relocated an estimated 3,710 IDPs (343 households)** from Government Senior Science Secondary School Bama camp to Soye village in Bama LGA, with about 2,597 of them being children.



A beneficiary receiving NFI kits distributed to over 800 IDPs and returnees from different camps in Girei and Fufore LGAs, Adamawa State, by UNHCR Field Office Yola. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Operational Highlights

- The activities of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) continued unabated, resulting in the loss of civilian lives. The persistent attacks, ambushes, abductions, and illegal vehicle checkpoints have impacted the general protection environment. Several fire outbreaks occurred in some camps in Jere, Monguno, and Dikwa despite sustained awareness on fire safety and prevention measures. At least 71% of the 92 safety and security incidents reported in March have taken place in Borno State, amidst massive number of NSAG members, reportedly **7,000 were reported to have surrendered to the military.**
- In Borno State, NSAGs mounted illegal vehicle checkpoints on some major supply routes, abducted passengers, and in another incident ambushed civilian vehicles injuring 6 persons affecting the free commute along these routes. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) killed one person and injured two others. At least three people were abducted from an INGO guest house in Monguno by NSAG. **Targeted attacks against the humanitarian community and facilities in deep field locations** is a huge concern for the safety of humanitarian workers that negatively impacts the delivery of assistance to the affected population. Similarly, NSAGs attacked Gubio town, looted pharmaceutical items from a health facility, and abducted one medical doctor and burnt down a primary school in Ngala town. These **attacks further exacerbated the fragile security situation in the deep field locations** and fuelled the continued displacement of IDPs and returnees to already crowded camps and host communities. NSAGs attacked passengers and planted IEDs in the main roads, while mounting ambushes and illegal vehicle checkpoints on some major highways where they abducted passengers and deprived them of their money, mobile phones, identification cards, and other valuables. **These acts caused general fear among the population and affected their freedom of movement.**
- In Adamawa State, organized criminal gangs attacked and robbed a UN staff member on the street, causing injury requiring medical attention. A suspected case of human trafficking was reported in Jada LGA involving the alleged trafficking of six children who were apparently sold under the pretence of enrolling them in a school in Yola. The incident underscores the heightened child protection risks and possibility of undetected **child trafficking in some of these locations in connection to the insurgency.** At least 36 persons (including women and children) associated with NSAGs were surrendered to Security Forces in Madagali. UNHCR is working on a pilot durable solutions /local integration project with government and local authorities in Yola, aimed at providing permanent shelters and a start on livelihoods opportunities for affected population.
- In **Yobe State**, suspected NSAGs mounted two illegal vehicle checkpoints along Buniyadi-Biu road in Magza community where they intercepted three passenger buses and a truck, abducting 30 people for ransom after burning the trucks. **These incidents continued to prevent the free movement of people and goods, especially in return locations.**
- On 22 March 2022, the Swiss Embassy in Nigeria comprising of the Humanitarian Advisor of the embassy, visited UNHCR Sub Office Maiduguri. A briefing was provided on the key protection issues with highlights on the ongoing camp closures and return/relocation of IDPs by the Borno State government, as well as UNHCR's planned work on durable solutions. UNHCR presented **an Urban IDP Outreach Programme designed to respond to thousands of IDPs who have decided to locally integrate within the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC). The focus of the project is to respond to IDPs unable or unwilling to** return to their original Local Government Areas (LGAs) due to insecurity and lack of basic social services since the Borno State Government closed four out of eight formal camps in the municipality as of March 2022. The team visited Polo Livelihood Centre in the MMC where UNHCR and its partner, American University of Nigeria, are training vulnerable women on tailoring, groundnut oil extraction, and cap making, as well as youth on ICT skills.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- In March, some 3,425 individuals (699 households) are documented to have moved **across the Nigerian borders with Cameroon, Niger, and Chad, using official and non-official entry points**. The returnees, who were mainly Nigerian nationals, came in through Damasak LGA and Banki, Gamboru Ngala, and Pulka in Gwoza LGA. The spontaneous returns were attributed to the current crisis, search for access to better services in camps in Nigeria and job opportunities, among others.
- In Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States **many people continued to move from inaccessible areas into camps and host communities, fleeing from crossfires between NSAG and the military**, fear of forced recruitment of men and young people by NSAG, and fear for life. Others moved due to lack of basic amenities such as medical facilities and schools, forced marriages of girls below 18 years by NSAG members, as well as the restriction of movement of the villagers by NSAGs. These population movements continue to exacerbate the already stretched resources in camps, causing overcrowding in shelters and reception centres. Limited access to food and livelihoods exposed newly arrived families to protection risks such as survival sex and child exploitation.
- In March, UNHCR and its partner, the Nigeria Immigration Service recorded 1,469 individuals (671 households) who returned from Niger. Among them 92 per cent were not registered in their countries of asylum. Most of the spontaneous returnees entered through borders in Borno and Yobe States. **They returned mainly because they received information on relative improvement in security in their respective LGAs**. Unfortunately, their return ended in secondary displacement as some of them were unable to go to their ancestral homes due to the presence of NSAGs and the absence of government forces.
- As of March, the **Borno State government had relocated 3,710 IDPs (343 households including 2,597 children) from Government Senior Science Secondary School Bama camp to Soye village in Bama LGA**. The government said its action aims to decongest the overcrowded camp. The humanitarian community was not involved in the relocation exercise. People also continued to move because of the closure of camps by the Borno State government, military operations, or **spontaneous return in quest for durable solutions and sustainable livelihood**. The reduction in food supply due to limited funding and the inability of IDPs and returnees to access their farmlands continue to increase exposure to protection risks. Urgent empowerment programmes and improvement of the general security atmosphere by state are needed to resume their traditional occupation i.e., farming.

**PROTECTION****Protection Sector Coordination**

UNHCR participated in Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) meetings which held in a few camps across Borno State with the aim of strengthening communication, coordination, and collaboration among various actors on issues related to protection and assistance at the field level. The meetings were also intended to identify protection gaps and share solution-oriented actions and recommendations with Protection Sector Northeast (PSNE) at the State level. During similar PSWG consultations in Adamawa State, participants observed the need to enhance the capacity of national actors especially on drafting Project Proposals that can attract funding by the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF), while also suggesting the formation of a consortium between national and international NGOs to make access to NHF, especially for national NGOs. It was also agreed that PSNE should organize a workshop to train actors on the processes to write project proposals, while advocating to WASH Sector in Maiduguri to come

to the aid of displaced people in Mubi, Michika, and Madagali in Adamawa State who do not have reasonable access to WASH intervention.

PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

- Despite the persistent security and COVID-19 challenges, UNHCR and its partners remained present in the field to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services, thereby reducing protection risks and addressing the immediate needs of the people they serve. UNHCR also continued to play its lead role in coordinating the Protection and CCCM / Shelter / non-food item (NFI) sectors in the BAY States.
- During the month, UNHCR and partners conducted 5,366 Key Informants Interviews and carried out vulnerability screening which helped to inform real-time responses to protection issues and provide services, advocacy, and timely referrals in the BAY states. Also, UNHCR and partners conducted 1,423 protection monitoring visits, reaching a total of 105,574 IDPs, returnees, and community members in the BAY States.
- Considering that registration and vulnerability screening of people with specific needs is critical to ensuring effective response towards the most vulnerable households and advocacy to stakeholders on gaps and needs of IDPs and returnees, UNHCR and partners reached 31,693 individuals (5,897 households) in projection locations in the BAY states, with 6,456 of them screened as vulnerable. The vulnerability screening data allowed early referral of vulnerable people to appropriate service providers for the required support.
- In March, 1,862 IDPs and returnees (449 households) accessed 30 UNHCR protection desks in 10 locations in Borno State for various complaints centred on health, lack of access to basic services and resources, forced marriages, and child fighters, especially abandoned children and school dropouts. The protection desks served as the most appropriate places for the IDPs and returnees to lodge their protection-related complaints, which either provided immediate response or forwarded to partners for assessment and referred to service providers such as the National Human Rights Commission and the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) and the Community Mechanisms for Dispute Resolution for appropriate interventions.
- In March, UNHCR and National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria, as part of human rights and detention facility monitoring, visited 121 corrective and detention facilities, especially in remote areas in the BAY States. The team focused on recommending mitigating measures against violation of rights and abuse by state detention structures. It was observed that most of the detention facilities lacked international standards, as they had issues of poor access to water and electricity, challenges with WASH facilities, and inadequate intervention by state actors.
- In Borno State, eight fire incidents were reported which affected 362 individuals (81 households), including the death of a three-year-old girl at Waterboard IDP Camp in Monguno. UNHCR responded to these fire incidents by providing 700 standard NFI kits to the affected population in Monguno, while together with its partners sensitizing IDPs and returnees on safety and fire preventive measures. The sensitization included radio broadcast on fire prevention in the three main languages used in Borno State, including Kanuri, Hausa and Shuwa.

Protection Response

- In March, UNHCR and partners conducted 2,362 awareness sessions for 56,293 IDPs, returnees, and host community members in the BAY States on peaceful co-existence, importance of girl child education, referral pathway, safety, child protection, and GBV, among others. UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies marked the International Women's Day with the theme "#Break the bias" through a focus group discussion and talk shows in Mubi, Adamawa State. These sessions helped to empower the target population to make necessary decisions about their displacement situation.

- UNHCR Child protection partner, Caritas Nigeria, continued to observe and organise class debate and quiz competitions for Kids Clubs in Gubio and Dalori IDP camps, as well as in primary and secondary schools, while also monitoring child friendly spaces. These activities were aimed at fostering healthy relationship among children, enabling them to express freely, showcase their talents, and develop the zeal to learn.
- On 1 and 2 March, UNHCR organized a capacity building workshop for 30 staff members from its partners in Damaturu, Yobe State on the vulnerability screening, protection monitoring, spontaneous refugee return, and the harmonized protection monitoring tools. The training aimed at improving data collection and management. In Adamawa, UNHCR and partners trained 40 individuals comprising of site planning committee members, community leaders, and volunteers on protection, COVID-19 prevention, CCCM, and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse.
- UNHCR provided 2,847 improved NFI kits to 674 male households and 2,173 to female households that were affected by fire in Monguno, as well as new IDP returnees in Borno state. In addition, 1,234 dignity kits were provided to 554 girls and 680 women in Muna El-Badawee and El-Miskin camps in Borno State. The gap in NFIs remains huge in all locations prompting urgent advocacy for NFIs, especially for IDPs from inaccessible areas.
- UNHCR visited 31 different camps and host communities to respond to protection concerns in sectors like CCCM/NFI, WASH, shelter, food security, livelihood, and early recovery in project locations in the BAY States for IDPs, refugee returnees, and new arrivals. The organisation also held 74 consultative community meetings with gatekeepers, stakeholders, women, and youth leaders, as well as Protection Action Group members. Targeting 793 IDPs, returnees and host communities, the objective of the consultative meetings aimed at ensuring greater participation in community-based protection activities in the places of displacement and host communities of the beneficiaries.
- UNHCR and its partner, NBA facilitated to obtain 37 letters of administration on behalf of IDPs and returnees across the BAY States who were challenged with claiming properties left behind by their deceased parents due to absence of wills. They carried out 10 group and individual counselling sessions on GBV prevention and response, domestic violence and human rights violation, alternative dispute resolution, and court rooms decorum targeting 189 IDPs and returnees in the BAY States. To ensure proper access to justice, NBA deployed nine para-legal officers to monitor and follow-up on legal issues in eight LGAs in the BAY States.
- In March, UNHCR and partners referred 118 cases, on infringement of fundamental human rights and degradation, rape, fraud, criminal intimidation and extortion, denial of resources, alleged witchcraft, illegal custody of children, and matrimonial and domestic violence, to appropriate service providers or provided representation during court sessions in the BAY States.
- UNHCR local pilot integration project for IDPs and host community members, including shelter, NFI, and livelihood components started in in Labondo community, Girei LGA of Adamawa State. Under the shelter component, the project aims to construct 226 semi-detached durable houses for 452 households and has secured a 15-hectare land for the construction of the settlement given by the Girei District Council, with the support of the Adamawa State Emergency Management Agency.
- UNHCR and its partners continued discussions with stakeholders, IDPs and returnees on risk communication and community engagement in the BAY States in support of efforts by the Government of Nigeria to combat COVID-19. In effect, some 352 sessions were held with 7,084 IDPs, returnees, and host community members under strict compliance to preventive measures and protocols by government and WHO. During the discussions, UNHCR and partners encouraged the affected populations to receive the COVID-19 vaccines.

**CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS**

- UNHCR and its CCCM partner, INTERSOS, continued to facilitate site activities in camps and out of camp settings, while reaching out to the community through stakeholders' consultative meetings and engaging with the affected population in all the areas of response in Borno and Adamawa states. Through the Complaint and Feedback Mechanisms under the CCCM accountability to affected population, 208 cases were reported on WASH, food, Shelter/NFI, livelihood, and protection safety net support, which were either resolved, referred or followed-up with partners/actors for response. During March, 101 complaints were received through UNHCR's toll-free line, mainly from women.

**LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS**

- UNHCR and the American University of Nigeria (AUN) commenced the training of 410 most vulnerable IDPs, refugee returnees, and IDP returnees in vocational skills, micro businesses, financial literacy, business development, cap making, livestock, and fisheries. Beneficiaries were selected through a vulnerability screening exercise in Borno and Yobe States. When completed, the trainings are expected to empower households for self-sustenance and mitigate against dependency on aid. Meanwhile, AUN has completed market assessment in their operational locations, while Caritas Nigeria was able to profile 2,830 most vulnerable IDPs and returnees in return and host communities in Adamawa State for enrolment into livestock, tailoring, bead, shoe, and soap making, and carpentry-related training.

External/Donors Relations

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