

UNHCR NIGERIA WEEKLY UPDATE

22 April 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

1,235,294

Internally Displaced Persons (IOM and NEMA, February 2015 DTM)

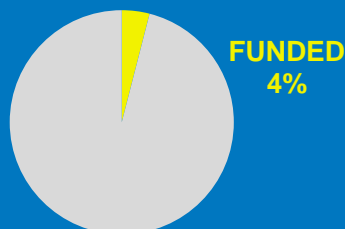
**2,120 refugees/
asylum seekers**

Refugees and Asylum Seekers of mixed nationalities as of 17 January 2015

FUNDING

USD 23,024,553

Requested for the IDP operation



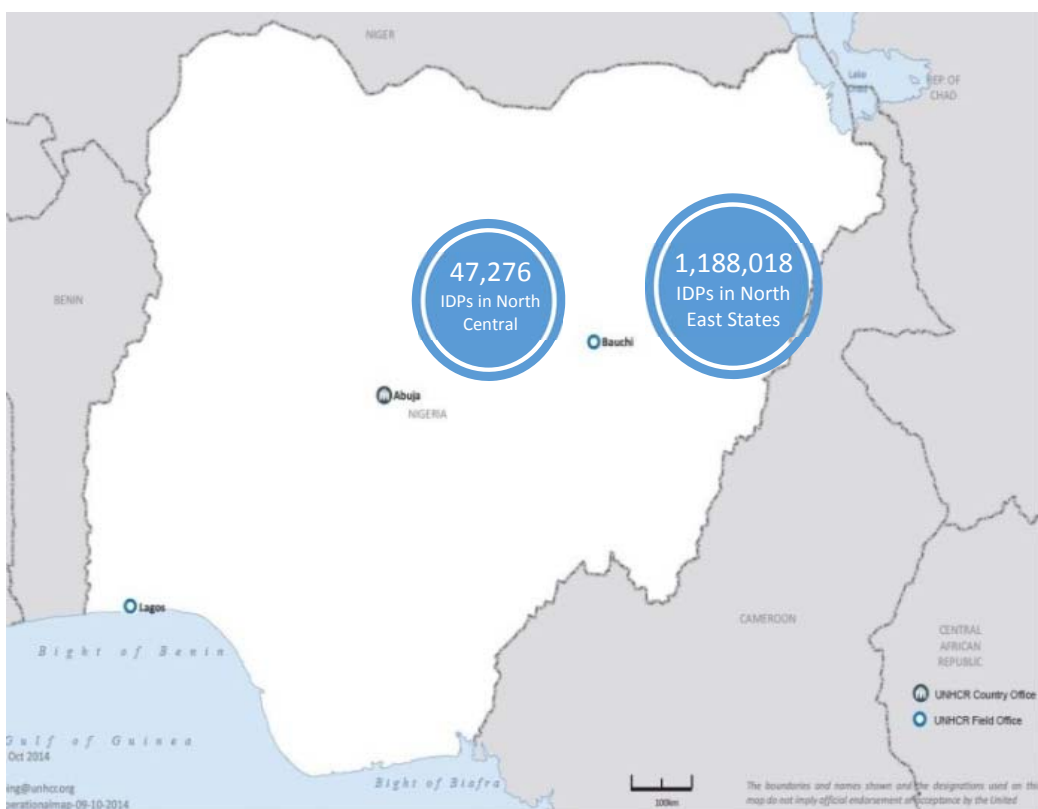
PRIORITIES

- Profiling of IDPs
- Protection monitoring
- Capacity strengthening in protection
- Advocacy for policy and legal framework
- Implementation of comprehensive durable solutions for refugees
- Support for RSD



(Photo: UNHCR and Partner Staff at the closing of the IDP protection training at Kubwa, Abuja, 21 April 2015, Solomon Momoh @UHNCR)

- UNHCR staff and partners completed a two-day training program on the protection of IDPs. Presiding at the closing ceremony, the UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Angele Dikongue-Atangana, called on participants to take the principles learned through the workshop to continue to improve and scale up the implementation of the protection response in Nigeria.
- UNHCR, in partnership with the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), has commenced the distribution of Non Food Items (NFIs) in Gombe State, targeting 3,000 of the most vulnerable households.
- Benue State Governor, Gabriel Suswam, has commended its partnership with UNHCR, which recently provided agricultural materials to IDPs in Benue State to enable them to resume their agricultural livelihoods.



UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Operational Context

- There is relative calm in Nigeria as a whole, and to a certain degree, in the North East of the country. Agencies are taking advantage of the lull to fast-track humanitarian activities on the ground. The IDPs are reported returning to their homes in large numbers. However, despite the liberation of towns and other localities from insurgents, many IDPs from affected communities cannot return home yet. After the military announced its liberation of areas previously under occupation by the insurgents, residents of Monguno staged a mild protest at their camp expressing their discontent with the level of care being provided them and asking to be allowed to return to their homes to rebuild their lives. Security agents have cautioned returning IDPs that reclaiming towns from the insurgents does not necessarily make the towns safe for return. There are unconfirmed reports that the insurgents might have land mines around the towns they had captured.
- So far, there is no clear government position on the return of IDPs to their areas of origin. Before the elections, some authorities sought to hasten returns for electoral purposes, but that is no longer the case now that most of the elections are over. Further, insurgents still pose a threat despite grounds gained back by the government and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). For example, two soldiers were reportedly killed after the extremists attacked a military vehicle in Baga, Borno State. According to residents of the volatile Baga community, six soldiers and a member of the civilian vigilante were critically injured when their vehicle hit a mine planted by the Islamists just outside the town on the 19 April 2015. On 17 April, militants slit the throats of 12 people in a North East town as the army was trying to evacuate civilians from the area.
- Preparations are ongoing by the incoming administration for the transition of power. The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) met on 22 April to resolve the issues outstanding from the zoning of principal office positions in the party as recommended by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party last week. The deliberation of the party's highest decision-making body is expected to quell rising anxiety within the party over the allocation of party positions that has seen zonal leaders position their interests against those of other zones.
- In a related development, the seamless transition from President Goodluck Jonathan's administration to incoming President Muhammadu Buhari's administration is gaining international recognition as representatives of Buhari's team took part in the recently concluded World Bank spring meeting in Washington, DC. Meanwhile, Ghanaian President John Mahama, has called on Nigerians to work towards sustaining the current peaceful atmosphere in the country after the elections and congratulated President Jonathan on his concession of defeat to Gen. Buhari.
- A total of 79 senators and 229 members of the House of Representatives are not returning to the National Assembly, according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). There are 469 members in both chambers and this means that more than two-thirds of them are not coming back when the 8th assembly opens in June. Figures released by INEC this past weekend showed that APC won 61 senate seats while PDP has 48. The list showed that only 122 lawmakers succeeded in their bid to retain their seats. APC has now attained simple majority in the senate, although the number fell short of the two-thirds required to pass major legislations. APC will need an additional 12 PDP senators to pass legislation in the senate. Speculation is that PDP senators may be able to negotiate for some Grade 'A' committees in return for their loyalty and support. At the beginning of the 7th assembly, the PDP had 75 senators, which gave the party absolute majority.
- Further analysis of the election results indicate that only 30 out of the 109 serving senators have won their re-election bid. Fifty of the senators had lost their return tickets during the primaries in December, while 29 others lost out in the actual elections on March 28. The turnover of senators is one of the highest attrition rates recorded in the senate since 1999.
- Anger over xenophobic attacks on foreigners, including Nigerians, in South Africa has provoked protests in several Nigerian cities. Protests have taken place in Abuja, Lagos and Benin City thus far, with Nigerian protesters targeting South African businesses in Nigeria.

IDP Operation

- UNHCR staff and partners have completed two-day training on the protection of IDPs. Presiding at the closing ceremony, the UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mrs. Angele Dikongue-Atangana, called on participants to take the principles learned through the workshop to continue to improve and scale up the implementation of the protection response in Nigeria. She thanked the facilitators from the UNHCR Global Learning Centre and underscored the importance of the training, which enables UNHCR and its partner staff to augment their understanding of key protection principles involved in responding to the IDP crisis. Participants to the training were key partners for the IDP protection response in Nigeria, from government, UN agencies, INGOs and national/local NGOs. Participants expressed satisfaction with the knowledge obtained from the training, expressed their wishes to be involved in further such trainings and praised UNHCR for its initiative in planning and carrying out the workshop.

The facilitators of the training were Ms. Valerie Svobodova, Mr. Habiba Garba Mohammed, of the UNHCR Global Learning Centre in Budapest, Hungary, and UNHCR's Senior Protection Officer, Mrs. Paulette Dadey.

- On 21 April 2014, the UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mrs. Angele Dikongue Atangana, held discussions with the Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Mr. Raphy Favre, from the Swiss Cooperation Office in Mali and members of the Swiss Embassy in Abuja. Their exchanges focused on UNHCR Nigeria operation for refugees, IDPs and ECOWAS as well as the humanitarian situation in the North East. The Swiss delegation of three persons expressed their interest in learning about UNHCR's perspectives in the context of the Northeast in view to possibly review their positioning accordingly. Although, a relatively small donor, they are nevertheless willing to consider a further contribution to the response to the Nigerian crisis.
- UNHCR Nigeria, in partnership with NRCS, has begun the distribution of NFIs in Gombe State, targeting 3,000 of the most vulnerable IDP households. The distributed items include blankets, kerosene stoves, solar lanterns, mosquito nets, bathroom slippers, detergent and vaseline oil. In presenting the materials on 22 April 2015, the head of UNHCR Sub-Office Bauchi, Mr. Cesar Tshilombo, said the materials were meant to reduce the vulnerabilities of IDPs in the State. This distribution is simultaneously taking place in Bauchi State, targeting 2,000 most vulnerable households. By next week, UNHCR and NRCS will proceed with the distribution in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno States. UNHCR plans to reach out to 65,000 individuals by the end of April 2015.



UNHCR and the NRCS arranging NFIs for distribution at Gombe, Tshilombo ©UNHCR

- UNHCR Nigeria has provided eight LGAs in Benue State with agricultural materials to support the IDPs residing there. The provisions include basic items to allow the IDPs to resume their agricultural livelihoods, including herbicide, high-yielding maize and rice seeds, aluminum pots, aluminum zinc and mosquito nets. On April 17, While handing over the agricultural provisions to the Benue State Government for distribution, Benue State Governor, H.E. Gabriel Suswam, commended the partnership between UNHCR and the Benue State government, stating that the Benue State government will continue to work with partners like UNHCR to find a lasting solutions to the IDPs crisis.
- In an interview with Testimonial Archive Project (TAP), the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Dr. Chidi Odinkalu, spoke about NHRC's work with media partners to bring to light sexual and other abuses of the IDPs and how both political parties exploited IDPs during the recently-concluded elections. Dr. Odinkalu further called for better inter-agency work to provide a fulsome response to the needs of IDPs.

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Websites

<http://data.unhcr.org/SahelSituation/country.php?id=502>

<http://nigeria.humanitarianresponse.info/Protection>