

Nigeria: Nigerians arriving from Niger

Flash Update 2

Date: 11/05/2015 Time: 4.20 pm (GMT)



According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the number of Nigerians that have arrived from the Niger side of Lake Chad now stands at about 11,000.

This means the initial approximate number reported to be about 14,000 on 8 May has been revised. But even the current numbers are rough estimates and subject to change, say NEMA officials.

According to NEMA, between 6,000 and 7,000 Nigerians have been transported to their states of origin in Nigeria, while between 3,000 and 4,000 returning Nigerians remain at the two transit camps in Geidam, a local government area (LGA) in Yobe state that borders Niger.

Communication from Geidam remains problematic as mobile phone network towers were destroyed by Boko Haram, when it was in control of the LGA.

According to authorities, most of the returnees were exhausted after having travelled through the desert. The returnees told Nigerian authorities that they were given an option to relocate to camps in Niger. Fearing what they perceived as “harsh conditions” in the Niger camps, they opted to return to Nigeria, some on foot, others on trucks and trailers at their cost. An unknown number of people have died in the journey back to Nigeria, according to the returnees.

According to NEMA, the returnees are being provided with packages of food and non-food items as they leave Geidam for their respective states. The returnees are then screened at another transit camp in their states of origin before being transported to their communities.

Most of the returnees are from Borno state, which already has almost a million (939,290) internally displaced persons (IDPs), who have been unable to go home to their villages. With the enormous caseload of IDPs, the state has opened another camp to house at least 4,000 returnees from Geidam in its capital Maiduguri, which already has more than half a million IDPs. According to the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Borno, it is providing food, water and non-food items to the returnees. The State Women Affairs ministry is on the ground to address child protection concerns. The UN Children’s Fund, UNICEF has provided medicines for treatment.

Nigerians have been told to leave the islands that fall under Niger’s control because of a planned military action against Boko Haram, said local authorities.

NEMA is expected to release a report of confirmed number of returnees by next week. As of now NEMA and the SEMAs are managing the situation.

OCHA does not plan to issue a Situation Report. This may change if assessments reveal more serious needs.

The next Flash Update will be issued as soon as more information is available. For more information, contact engborg@un.org



Map Sources: UNCS, ESRI, Natural Earth, The Times Atlas of the World.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in May 2015.