

LAKE CHAD EVACUATION

FLASH UPDATE

11 May 2015

BACKGROUND

On 25 April 2015, insurgents violently attacked the Karamga Island on Lake Chad. Consequently, the Government of Niger, on 4 May, decided to evacuate the population on the Niger region of the Lake Chad. The population on the islands comprises Nigerian local population, Nigerian nationals whom have lived on the islands for decades and Nigerian refugees who fled recent attacks in northeastern Nigeria. According to the government of Niger, the evacuation will permit a military counter attack on insurgents. On 5 May the concerned population, living in about 100 villages spread over 74 islands was given a 48 hours deadline to leave the islands and move to the Niger mainland town of N'Guigmi, about 150 kilometers North of Diffa. From N'Guigmi they were transported to Diffa.

The evacuation exercise was conducted in an ad hoc manner by the Niger authorities; hence proper assistance by the Niger Humanitarian Country Team was not provided to ensure safe and dignified evacuation and transportation of the concerned population. Hence, Niger's Prime Minister, Mr. Brigi Rafini on 7 May acknowledged the failure to ensure a dignified evacuation process and invited UN agencies and partners to set up an appropriate evacuation response. The evacuation exercise will be carried out for at least 3-4 weeks for an estimated total of 28,000 people living on the Lake Chad islands.

HIGHLIGHTS

NIGER

- About 6,000 Nigerian returnees on 7 May have opted to go back to Borno State where the Nigerian authorities have today put up a special site to cater for them.
- A group of 45 individuals who already were expelled to Nigeria stated upon arrival in Nigeria that they preferred to be registered by UNHCR as refugees in Niger. Today, UNHCR Niger requested stated its wish that *refouled* Nigerian refugees should be re-admitted to Niger's territory.
- UNHCR and IOM in Niger have proposed the Niger Government to assist in transporting Nigerian evacuees to safe areas other than Borno and Yobe states.

NIGERIA

- UNHCR Office in Bauchi on 7 May reported the arrival of about 8,000 Nigerian returnees at the Nigerian border/Yobe State (14,000 according to OCHA). Lack of access to the border due to the security situation (Level 4 and 5 across Borno and Yobe States) is limiting direct action by the UNHCR and the UN team in Nigeria.

- The Nigerian Government through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Yobe has made available 4 trucks and 16 buses to transport returnees back to their places of origin. Returnees also receive cash assistance upon arrival for feeding en route to their places of origin.
- According to the Permanent Secretary of Yobe SEMA, in Geidam reception center, SEMA will organize the transportation of some 6,414 returnees awaiting onward transportation to their places of origin, located in ten different states.

CHAD

- About 2,000 Nigerian refugees from Lake Chad islands have arrived in Chad.
- The Chadian Government is equally preparing military actions against insurgents in the Lake Chad area and has asked populations living on the Chadian side of Lake Chad islands to move out. It is foreseen that the number of Chadian IDPs will therefore rise.
- Nigerian refugees hosted in Dar Es Salaam camp reportedly started to leave the camp before the evacuation exercise started. On 5 May, 5,468 refugees from Niger and Nigeria were registered in Dar Es Salaam suggesting the arrival of more refugees from the Lake islands to come.



Thousands arrived exhausted in N’Guigmi town, after having been evacuated from Lake Chad Islands in Niger.

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Nigeria Emergency: Lake Chad

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- UNHCR Field Unit
- IDP Location
- ▲ Refugee Camp
- 🏠 Refugee Center
- 📍 Refugee Location
- Settlements
- International Boundary
- ☀ Principals attacks
- Islands

