

North-East Situation Update

April 2021

UNHCR and **partners** conducted more than **1,685 Key Informant Interviews (KII)** to inform April protection analysis for the North-East.

UNHCR's **Protection, Human Rights & Border Monitoring** teams reached **over 26,675 IDPs**, refugee returnees with awareness raising and sensitization sessions in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States.

UNHCR provided skills training and **business start-up kits** and agricultural inputs to about **690** returnees and IDPs in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States, to support their livelihoods.



UNHCR partner, GISCOR on a Focus Group Discussion with women in Bama. ©UNHCR/Daniel Bisu

Operational Highlights

- The **security situation** in the North-East, remained precarious of a grave concern for the protection of the affected population. Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) continued attacking military locations, civilian population, humanitarian infrastructure, personnel, and assets. These resulted in killings of civilians and caused widespread damage to property and critical national infrastructure such as the national power grid and telecom installations. The sudden demise of the Chadian President, on 13 April, is described as an event that will potentially affect the ongoing counter terrorism operations in the Lake Chad Basin.
- In **Borno State**, NSAG attacks in Damasak damaged the humanitarian hubs and other humanitarian assets. To overrun towns and villages, NSAG attacked Dikwa, Banki, Gwoza, and Damasak towns, causing widespread destructions and generalized violence, which led to the displacement of civilians to various towns in the State and in neighbouring countries. More than 60 security incidents such as attacks on government forces and civilians were reported. As a result, the Humanitarian Country Team suspended humanitarian activities in Dikwa and Damasak, pending an improvement in the security situation in the affected areas. The main supply routes of Maiduguri-Damaturu, Maiduguri-Mungono and Maiduguri Gajiram remained extremely volatile to use, due to incidents of illegal vehicle check points, causing significant delays in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- In **Adamawa State**, the security remained fluid and unpredictable in some parts of the State. Notably, NSAG attacked four communities in the Northern parts of the State, killing **13** individuals, including four children, while injuring **20** people. An estimated **50** other people remained unaccounted for in Kwapare village. Many properties were destroyed, causing widespread fears in the affected communities. Kidnapping and other criminal activities were also reported across the entire State.
- In **Yobe State**, NSAG continued to target the local government areas (LGAs) of Geidam and Gujba, affecting both military formations and civilians, including government facilities such as clinics and schools. Communal clash between two ethnic groups were also reported in Fika LGA.
- **Cross-border movements**: Despite the ongoing international effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which include the closure of official entry points by the various governments, movements involving more than **475** families of almost **1,375** people were recorded in the four entry points of Banki, Damasak, Ngala and Pulka in Borno State. Banki recorded the highest number of people moving, followed by Damasak, Ngala and Pulka. The high movements recorded in Banki may not be unconnected with the recently concluded government led voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon to Bama and Banki, which would have increased more needs for movement via this route. In Damasak, the series of NSAG attacks caused pendular movements between Damasak and neighbouring villages in Niger Republic. Nigerians constituted the majority of those moving, followed by Cameroonians. The triggers for movement include family visits, forced movements due to insecurity and seasonal job opportunities. Thirty percent of the families reported that they do not have any form of legal documentation. No significant protection concerns were reported during the movement. No refolement was recorded. All the individuals accessed COVID-19 services such as awareness, hygiene facilities and temperature screening at the entry points. Border monitors and nurses coordinated with government health workers and other UN agencies such as the World Health Organization and International Organization for Migration to address identified gaps in response.

- **Internal displacement:** As the ongoing conflict persists, internal displacements continue to be recorded in the Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY States). Available displacement tracking data indicates that a total of **10,950** people comprising of arrivals and departures to the camps and various host communities were recorded in Borno and Adamawa States. In Borno State, more than **4,000** arrivals and about **345** departures were recorded. More than **205** people ended up as IDPs in the camps while about **3,665** settled in various host communities. In Adamawa State, more than **6,940** movements were recorded, about with **3,315** being new arrivals and **3,635** departures. Out of the movements recorded in the State, only about **60** people ended up in the camps. The affected LGAs in Borno State were Gwoza, Mungono, Marte, Dikwa, and Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC). In Adamawa State, the affected LGAs include Mubi North/South, Girei, Demsa and Hong. Movement triggers in both States were attacks, poor living conditions, fear of attacks, voluntary relocation and feeling of improved security.
- **Consequences of population movement:** Movements triggered by family reunification, prolonged displacement, insecurity and the feeling of return of peace continue to take place despite the risks involved. In Borno State, the resurgence of attacks by NSAG in the Northern region caused massive populations that continue to face risks of further attacks and continued multiple displacements. Most returnees have either returned to unfavourable conditions in the communities or to displacements into the camp, overstressing the existing humanitarian resources and calls to question the sustainability of the ongoing government-led returns in Borno State. Other impacts of population movements include the risk of killing and abductions by NSAG that continue to launch ambushes and illegal vehicle checkpoints on the main supply routes. The presence of landmines on the main supply routes further underpins the risk the affected population continue to face.
- **The Borno State Government Return Plan (BSGRP):** In April, the 6th convoy of 190 families of 790 refugees to Banki and Bama culminated the first phase of the Borno State government led repatriation. So far, 1,035 families of 3,880 people have been assisted to return since the 1st convoy in March 2021.



PROTECTION

Protection Sector Coordination:

In the month under review, protection sector meetings took place at the LGA and State levels. At the LGA level, Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) meetings were held in Damasak, Bama, Banki, Gwoza, Pulka, Ngala, Monguno and MMC. All meetings were chaired by UNHCR and/or its protection partners on ground. During the meetings, protection issues were discussed, solution-oriented actions recommended for implementation and minutes shared with the Protection Sector North East (PSNE). At State level, PSNE meetings were held virtually due to COVID 19.

Protection Monitoring

- **Presence:** UNHCR worked with ten national and international partners to provide protection and multisectoral assistance through legal assistance and court representation, advocacy, capacity building, awareness and sensitization, gender-based violence (GBV) related services, psychosocial counselling, material assistance and protection safety nets. Furthermore, UNHCR also continued to play its lead role in coordinating the protection and camp coordination & camp management (CCCM), Shelter and non-food items (NFI) sectors in the BAY States.
- Almost **1,690 Key Informants Interviews**, (KII) were held and analysed using the site level protection monitoring tool for prioritization of intervention and referral for specialized services. Protection monitors also carried out focus group discussions and observations employed for in-depth analysis of protection, human rights violations and associated risks. This helped to provide direct strategic approach, advocacy and real-time response to protection issues in the BAY States.

- About **1,010 protection monitoring and sites visits** were conducted in the BAY States, reaching more than **58,300** internally displaced people (IDPs), IDP returnees, refugee returnees and local Nigerians.
- A total of more than **1,877** families of about **120,334** people presented themselves for **vulnerability screening** in the BAY States, of whom **2,096** individuals were screened as the most vulnerable including vulnerabilities of children, women and the elderly with specific needs. Other protection concerns that heightened vulnerabilities include release from NSAG abduction, arbitrary arrest and forced recruitment to NSAGs.
- Another concern under the emergency response is the limited presence of **child protection** actors in the operation. The vulnerable children screened include orphans, children spouses, children heads of households and unaccompanied or separated children. The pre-existing children vulnerabilities continue to be exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and the impact of COVID-19. The absence of government institutions that protect children in the deep field, due to displacement and a weak protection environment, continue to increase vulnerabilities for children.
- Out of more than **1,065 women with specific needs** screened during the vulnerability screening, **47%** were female heads of households, **40%** lactating and **13%** pregnant. While the pregnant and lactating mothers continue to freely access services such as antenatal care, blanket and targeted supplementary feeding from many agencies, female heads of households remain without any dedicated programmes to increase their protection and livelihood. Access to livelihood remains limited due to limited response organisations providing the opportunity. Of the more than **480** elderly with specific needs screened, **49%** were elderly heads of households, **30%** vulnerable elderly who cannot take care of themselves and **19%** single vulnerable elderly.
- **Complaint and feedback mechanisms:** More than **400** families of **1,615** IDPs, returnees and host community members accessed the **25** protection desks in Bama, Banki, Gwoza, Ngala, Mungono, MMC, Damasak, Pulka, Damboa and Dikwa of Borno State. The major complaints reported at the protection desks include lack of basic services, health, sensitisation, and GBV cases such as forced marriage. The response services provided include referrals to other service providers, vulnerability screening for targeted assistance, awareness on safety, security and the toll-free hotline. Information, education and communication materials on the protection services including preventive information on COVID-19 and flood risk mitigation were made available in English, Hausa, and Kanuri languages.
- **Human rights and detention facility monitoring:** About **65** detention facility monitoring were held in the BAY States. In Borno State, the absence of conventional police in Pulka has left a gap which is being filled by the Civilian Joint Task Force. In Dalori camp, monitors paid an advocacy visit to the Nigeria Police Outpost to develop synergy and good working relationship between the monitors and Police in the camp. In Yobe State, monitors met the officer in charge of the Kukareta outpost on the need to maintain human rights best practice in policing the camp. In Adamawa State, human rights issues such as cruel and inhumane treatment and child detention were identified at the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps detention facility of Karewa Yola and Garden City Police Station, Mubi North, respectively.
- **Impact of protection incidents on civilian population:** Pre-existing harmful practices against women, which have been exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and the impact of COVID-19 continue to put them at heightened risks of increased domestic violence such as denial of resources and physical assault. The push by parents to adopt negative coping behaviours continue to encourage child and forced marriages in violation of the rights of the children. Persistent attacks by NSAG in the BAY States continue to cause displacements, loss of lives, damages to property and a general feeling of trepidation amongst the affected population.

- The suspension of **humanitarian response activities** by the HCT in Dikwa, Damasak and some parts of Yobe State after humanitarian actors and facilities were targeted by NSAG continue to limit access to humanitarian assistance by the affected people who have endured waves of attacks. At the peak of the rainy season, fire outbreaks became rampant in Mungono, causing widespread losses to food, NFIs and livestock belonging to the people in the camps. While Adamawa State has enjoyed relative peace in the period under review, tensions amongst various ethnic groups and host communities posed challenges to peaceful coexistence and durable solutions.

Protection Response

- **Awareness-raising sessions and sensitization:** A total of **26,675** people were reached through more than **720** awareness-raising sessions organised by UNHCR and partners in the BAY States. Thematic areas covered include the promotion of peaceful coexistence, human rights, the referral pathway, GBV risk mitigation, COVID-19 risk communication and community engagement. All awareness activities were conducted strictly in compliance with the COVID-19 preventive measures set in place by the government.
- **Training and capacity building:** UNHCR in collaboration with the World Food Programme trained over **50** UNHCR protection staff and partners on safe referrals of protection cases to WFP for food assistance. In order to enhance service delivery by the protection monitors and protection action group members, refresher trainings were organised at the field level on community-based protection and vulnerability screening in Gwoza, Bama, Pulka and MMC. UNHCR protection staff and multi-functional teams were trained on CCCM, out-of-camp CCCM and area-based approaches.
- **Advocacy interventions:** A total of **40** advocacy and community engagement sessions were organised in the BAY States, reaching close to **460** government officials, humanitarian actors and response organisations, community leaders and people of concern to UNHCR. In Borno State, advocacy meetings were held with government officials to address concerns identified during protection monitoring. For instance, protection actors met with the Director of Borno State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to address GBV concerns in the camps. In Dalori camp, monitors advocated for shelter for **40** newly displaced families from Auno town. In Yobe State, meetings were held with the community leaders and government officers to address issues of peaceful coexistence and prevention of crime in Damaturu and Gujba LGAs. Also, GBV and child exploitation were some of the issues discussed in some LGAs of the State.
- **Access to justice:** the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) conducted five individual legal counselling sessions in Hausa language on themes such as the significance of ADR, consequences of divorce, fundamental rights of IDPs, awareness on GBV and the importance of legal documentation. As of 30 April, under probate matters, NBA facilitated and obtained almost 60 letters of administration on behalf of people whom their parents/relatives died intestate without wills, to enable them benefit from what their deceased left behind such as money in banks, entitlements, benefits and houses left behind by the deceased in Adamawa and Borno States. Close to **13,900** people have been issued indigene certificates since January, in LGAs such as Kala-Balge, Gwoza and Marte of Borno State. The NBA continued legal representation of IDPs in the two mobile courts in Borno State and in Adamawa States. As of 30 April, the NBA represented more than **130** cases, in various courts.
- **Referrals:** In April, more than **2,380** individuals in need of assistance were referred to access specialized services such as medical care, PSS, food and GBV case management. About **59%** of the referred individuals were people with medical conditions who accessed medical assistance. About **11%** were referred for shelter support and **7%** for food. Others were referred for legal services and child protection services.

- **Durable solutions:** In Borno State, UNHCR mobilised multisectoral support for the **1,035** refugee returnee families of **3,880** individuals that voluntarily returned from Minawao camp in Cameroon to Bama and Banki. UNHCR worked with partners and the government to provide broad range of multi-sectoral services for the returnees.
- **COVID-19 prevention and response:** In continuation with the COVID-19 risk mitigation measures and responses, protection partners enhanced risk communication and community engagement for the people of concern to UNHCR while ensuring compliance with preventive measures advanced by the government and WHO. The implementation of preventive measures continued by humanitarian actors to curb the spread of COVID-19 amidst scepticism by IDPs, returnees and host community members of its existence.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR and partners continued to provide CCCM to eight camps.
- Shelter and Non-Food Items: In Borno State, UNHCR and partners distributed **2,877** NFIs such as blankets and jerry cans to new arrivals in Bama, Damasak, Bakasi, Mongonu, Banki and Ngala camps, to mitigate protection risks due to lack of assistance upon arrival in these locations.
- UNHCR through the Ministry for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement built and/or rehabilitated 1, 045 emergency shelters in Dikwa, to help victims of attacks carried out by NSAG.



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- UNHCR supported the **training of trainers** of **250** beneficiaries in various skills across three camps in MMC, Borno state. The beneficiaries were trained in cap making, livestock production and micro-businesses. The beneficiaries were formed into cooperatives and provided start-up kits to commence their businesses.
- Similarly, **90** beneficiaries were provided **vocational skills training** in MMC, Bama and Ngala in Borno State during the first batch of vocational skills training by UNHCR's livelihoods partner, American University of Nigeria. Beneficiaries were trained in carpentry, tailoring, ICT and shoe making.
- In Adamawa State, UNHCR distributed **agricultural inputs** to more than **345** people, to facilitate early commencement of farming activities. The beneficiaries were spread across the three LGAs of Yola North, Mubi North and Michika.

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