

North-East Situation Update

May 2021

UNHCR distributed **4500 NFI kits** to displaced households in **Borno and Yobe States** to ameliorate their suffering and provide some relief in response to the attacks on Damasak, Damboa and Geidam.

UNHCR's **Protection, Human Rights and Border Monitoring** site visits reached **about 67,000** IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states.

UNHCR provided **farm inputs and livestock** to 495 IDP and returnee **households** in return communities to promote **self-reliance and sustainability of returns**.



UNHCR and protection actors prepare for a protection assessment in GSSSS camp of Bama in Borno State ©UNHCR/Daniel Bisu

Operational Highlights

- **North-East Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin** witnessed many events in May that impacted on security, politics, and humanitarian response. Non-state armed groups (NSAG) continued their terror campaign, launching audacious attacks on military formations, targeting humanitarian infrastructure and personnel, killing civilians, and causing widespread damage to property and critical national infrastructure such as the national power grid and telecom installations.
- The economic impact of **COVID-19** continues to affect the displaced population, most of whom are very vulnerable. Price increases due to inflation, further pauperises the affected population, and increased dependency on humanitarian assistance. The government commenced the first phase of COVID-19 vaccination, targeting frontline workers in the region, which is a way forward in reducing the spread of the disease.
- In **Borno State**, NSAG attacked Rann, Marte, Dikwa and Bama towns, causing widespread destructions and generalized violence, which led to the displacement of civilians to various towns in the State and neighbouring countries. More than **60** security incidents were reported. As a result, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) temporarily suspended humanitarian activities in Gujba and Yusufari in Yobe State, in addition to Dikwa and Damasak in Borno, pending an improvement in the security situation. The main supply routes of Maiduguri-Damaturu, Maiduguri-Mungono and Maiduguri Gajiram remained extremely volatile due to illegal vehicle checkpoints, adversely impacting delivery of humanitarian assistance to the affected communities.
- In **Adamawa State**, the security situation was characterized by NSAG attacks recorded in various communities such as Hong, Michika and Michika. Kidnapping and other criminal activities were also reported across different parts of the State.
- In **Yobe State**, NSAG continued to target the triad LGAs of Geidam, Gujba and Yusufari, attacking both military formations and civilians, including government facilities such as clinics and schools.
- **Cross Border Movements:** More than **515** families of about **1,650** individuals cross border movements were recorded through the four official entry points of Banki, Damasak, Ngala and Pulka in Borno State, despite the ongoing international effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic such as closure of official entry points by the various governments. Banki recorded higher in movements, followed by Damasak, Pulka and Ngala. The high movements recorded in Banki can be alluded to the recently concluded first phase of the government led repatriation to Bama and Banki, which would have triggered spontaneous movement via this route. In Damasak, the series of NSAG attacks caused pendular movements between Damask and neighbouring villages in Niger Republic. Nigerians constituted the majority of the movements, followed by Cameroonians. The movement triggers include family visits, forced movements due to insecurity, return to country of origin, and seasonal job opportunities. Some of the families reported that they do not have any form of legal documentation. No significant protection concerns were reported during the movement and refolement 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 (WHO) 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 BAY States. Available displacement tracking data indicates close to **3,530** arrivals to the camps and host communities in the BAY States during May.

The movement triggers, according to the individuals, include attack, feeling of improved security, poor living conditions and voluntary relocation, as well as fear of attacks, military operations, involuntary relocation, and conflict.

- **Refugee returnees:** Spontaneous refugee returnees continue to be observed, with more than **820** families of **2,690** individuals returning through the official and unofficial entry points captured by the Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS) and UNHCR. Majority of the returnees were from Cameroon and others from Niger and Chad. Movement triggers include the news of improved security in the country of origin. In most cases, the returnees end up in the IDP camps and collection centres because their houses remain destroyed and the security conditions outside the garrisoned towns remain volatile with villages being deserted.
- **The Borno State Government Return Plan, BSGRP:** The Borno State government closed the NYSC Camp and MOGCOLIS camps on 31 May, with a combined population of **2,060** families, to re-open the school (MOGOLIS) and for NYSC orientation to resume. Government gave an option to provide unspecified amount of cash for rent and start-up money for livelihoods for IDPs willing to stay in any of the host communities in Maiduguri. Those willing to return to their villages were also given some unspecified amount of money for livelihood, food and non-food items (NFIs). Those who chose to stay in other camps in Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), will have the government facilitate their absorption in the available camps. The NYSC camp was predominantly occupied by IDPs from Konduga, Bama, Gwoza and Damboa. Those in MOGCOLIS camp are from Mobbar and Abadam LGAs. The conditions in all the mentioned LGAs remain largely un conducive for sustainable returns.
- **Consequences of population movement:** The ongoing IDP returns organized by the Borno State government continues, with some of the returnees either returning to unfavourable conditions in the communities or to displacements into the camp, thus overstressing the existing humanitarian resources and initially calls to question the sustainability of the ongoing government-led returns. As noted with previous government led returns in MMC, humanitarian actors have not been involved in the return process and information is only provided after the returns have taken place. General protection actors continue to monitor and provide assistance to the returned IDPs. 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 axis has caused massive populations to face risks of further attacks and continued displacement. Other impacts of population movements include the risk of killing and abductions by NSAG, who continue to launch ambushes and establish illegal vehicle checkpoints on the main supply routes. The presence of landmines on the main supply routes, on the other hand, underpins the risk civilians continue to face when traveling on the affected roads. Protection actors will continue with advocacy for a principled return in safety and dignity, in line with the Borno State Return Strategy and other international best practices. The ongoing risk reduction activities at the field level will continue to orient the affected population.



PROTECTION

Protection Sector Coordination:

Protection sector meetings took place at the LGAs and State levels. At the LGA level, Protection Sector Working Group 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 which 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. Similarly, the Borno State Anti-Trafficking in Persons Taskforce (ATiPF) monthly meeting was held to address identified potential human trafficking drivers in the context of internal displacement.

Protection Monitoring

- **Presence:** UNHCR's protection partners continued to maintain presence in the BAY States amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and insecurity, providing life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services to mitigate risks and address needs of the IDPs.
- More than **2,750 key informants' interviews** were held and analysed using the site level protection monitoring tool for prioritization of intervention and referrals 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, which helped to provide direct strategic approach, advocacy and real-time response to protection issues in the BAY States.
- Over **955 protection monitoring**, and sites visits were conducted in the BAY States, reaching close to **67,100** IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees and locals.
- More than **2,485** families of **15,400** IDPs presented themselves for **vulnerability screening** in the BAY States, where **2,820** people were screened as the most vulnerable. Their vulnerabilities include 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 NSAG. Almost **260** of the **295** vulnerable children screened were orphans due to the conflict, children heads of households and unaccompanied and separated children.
- The **pre-existing vulnerabilities of children** continue to be exacerbated by the ongoing conflict and impact of COVID-19. The absence of government institutions with child protection mandates in the deep field locations due to displacement and weak protection environment continue to worsen vulnerabilities for children. Insufficient number of child protection actors in many field locations have also been reported. Out of the more than **1,360** women with specific needs screened during the vulnerability screening, almost **690** were identified as female heads-of-households and the rest are lactating and pregnant women. While the pregnant and lactating mothers continue to freely access services such as antenatal care provided by the Borno State Primary Healthcare Development Agency and other NGOs, 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 insufficient response humanitarian organisations providing such opportunity in the deep field. Most of the people with specific needs remain vulnerable and cannot take care of themselves. The persisting gap for the elderly remain the absence of specialised geriatric institutions in the deep field locations. In the absence of the government institutions, protection actors continue to rely on pre-existing family and community safety nets and the community-based protection structures to deliver various responses to the needs of the elderly such as home visits and referrals for services.
- **Complaint and feedback mechanisms:** More than **1,260** families of **5,925** IDPs, returnees and host community members accessed the **25** protection desks in Bama, Banki, Gwoza, Ngala, Mungono, MMC, Damasak, Pulka, Damboa and Dikwa, Borno State. The major complaints reported include health, lack of basic services, mediation needs and vulnerability screening. The response services provided include referrals to other service providers, vulnerability screening for targeted assistance and awareness on safety and security and the toll-free hotline. Information, Education and Communication materials on protection services available including preventive information on COVID-19 and flood risk mitigation were developed in English, Hausa, and Kanuri.
- **Human rights and detention facility monitoring:** Close to **60** detention facility monitoring were held in the BAY States. In Borno State, people in conflict with the law, including minors and women, were found in detention in some locations. In Gwoza, **2** IDP returnees aged **17**

and **22** were detained for stealing a phone and solar batteries respectively. In Gamboru Police Station of Ngala, a female IDP was detained over the money she owed. In all these cases, the individuals were detained beyond the time stipulated by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, citing the absence of the courts to charge the suspects for trials. The timely intervention of the human rights monitors secured their release on bail. In Adamawa State, **20** detention centres were visited by human rights monitors. Two cases relating to freedom of movement were identified and resolved.

- **Impact of protection incidents on civilian populations:** NSAG attacks have continued, targeting civilians during their daily activities, causing trepidation and presenting a challenge to durable solutions. The mounting of illegal vehicle checkpoints on the main supply routes, especially Maiduguri-Damaturu, continues to cause delays in the movement of humanitarian aids such as food and NFIs. The destruction of humanitarian cargo such as the one on the Mungono-Ngala MSR denies the affected population from accessing humanitarian aid in time, thereby increasing human suffering. Fire outbreak recorded in various camps in Mungono continues to defy all the measures put in place by the humanitarian actors, with each occurrence causing loss of food, NFIs and livestock.
- **The occurrence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** incidents such as domestic violence, sexual assault, denial of resources and emotional abuse repeatedly affects the quality of life, especially women and girls. While general protection actors continue to organize risk reduction activities such as sensitization on safety and security, peaceful coexistence and GBV risk mitigations, the absence of civilian authorities who are yet to fully resume in the deep field locations continues to militate against the efforts. The full restoration of security in the general area by the government will greatly facilitate durable solutions.
- In continuation with the **COVID-19** risk mitigation measures and responses, protection partners have enhanced risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) for the IDPs, 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 of its existence by IDPs, returnees and host community members. UNHCR, partners and other humanitarian actors continued to engage stakeholders on COVID-19 RCCEs, including border monitoring, temperature screening and other preventive measures.

Protection Response

- **Awareness-raising sessions and sensitization:** As part of risk mitigation activities, promotion of peaceful coexistence and capacity building, more than **540** awareness and sensitization sessions reaching about **23,125** IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees and locals were organized in the BAY States. Thematic areas covered include fundamental human rights, importance of civil documentation, safety, security, reporting of protection incidents using the referral pathways, GBV risk reduction, child protection and COVID-19 risk mitigation.
- **Training and capacity building:** Field level capacity building activities were organised for the protection action group members and protection monitors to enhance effective service delivery in line with the protection and humanitarian principles. Refresher trainings in community-based protection, protection monitoring and protection incident reporting using the various complaint and feedback mechanisms were organised by general protection actors in Gwoza, Damasak, Bama, Pulka, Damboa, Dikwa, Mungono and MMC, Borno State.
- In **Adamawa and Yobe** States, field level capacity building activities were organised in Mubi, Madagali, Yola and Gujba LGAs respectively. In reparation for the roll out of the harmonised Protection Monitoring Tool to ProGres V4, a Training of Trainers was launched for information management and protection staff in Ogoja. In other collaboration activity, UN Women and NHRC monitors organised training and support for **40** GBV survivors in Damaturu and Potiskum, targeting girls of reproductive age.

- **Advocacy interventions:** Almost **40** advocacy sessions were organized by general protection actors at the field level, reaching more than **485** government officials, response organizations and community leaders comprising of the traditional, religious, women and youth leaders, to address protection concerns identified during field visits in the BAY States. For instance, in Borno State, to address overcrowded classrooms and insufficient teachers in the camp school in Bama, protection actors conducted an advocacy visit to the LGA Education Authority to address the gap. In Gwoza, protection actors met with community leaders to advocate to change the position of the present military trenches which is located close to civilian population thus exposing them to the risk of being shot. In Yobe State, advocacy visit to the community leaders to address child marriage was held in Gujba.
- **Access to Justice:** The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) continues to support court sittings in the two mobile courts in MMC, where almost **50** cases involving people of concern to UNHCR in the mobile courts in Borno State, including two at the Borno Amicable Settlement Corridor are being heard since January 2021. Th cases range from domestic violence, marital disputes, land matters and breach of trust. Almost **165** appearances have been recorded by NBA, providing legal representation to people in various courts in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States. The cases which have either been referred by humanitarian actors or self-referred by the people of concern to UNHCR, involves domestic violence, criminal breach of trust, inheritance, matrimonial disputes, and other civil matters.
- **Referrals:** Close to **2,500** individuals in need of assistance were referred to access specialized services such as medical care, psychosocial support, food and GBV case management. Majority of the referred individuals were people with medical conditions who accessed medical assistance. Others were referred for food, shelter support, legal services, GBV and child protection.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR and partners continued to provide Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) to eight camps.
- **Shelter and Non-Food Items:** UNHCR distributed NFI kits such as blankets, mattresses, jerry cans and kitchen utensils to **4,500** families in Borno and Yobe States. In Borno State, the distribution targeted IDPs and returnees who were affected by the April NSAG attack in Damasak and the identified gaps in Damboa. Most beneficiaries were vulnerable individuals such as pregnant and lactating mothers and elderly and female heads of families. In Yobe State, **2,500** people displaced due to the series of NSAG attacks in Geidam, Yunusari and Gujba were targeted with the most vulnerable individuals prioritised.



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- In **Borno State**, 90 IDP and returnee beneficiaries were trained in various skills including ICT, tailoring, carpentry and cap making. Fifty of the beneficiaries received business start-up kits and grants to commence their businesses.
- In **Adamawa State**, UNHCR provided agricultural inputs for **360** beneficiaries to commence the farming season. They consisted of **250** female heads of families and **110** males. In addition, **135** very vulnerable families were provided with small ruminant animals for livestock production. The empowerment is expected to improve income for the families and promote their self-reliance.

External/Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the following support:

Direct contributions to UNHCR in Nigeria

Canada | CERF | Country-Based Pooled Funds | France | Holy See | Japan | Nigeria | Other private donors | Spain | The Fountain of Life Church | Unilever (UK) | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security | United States of America

Unearmarked contributions

Denmark 34.6 million | France 14 million | Germany 25.9 million | Italy 10.6 million | Japan 23.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Norway 41.4 million | Private donors Italy 17.6 million | Private donors Japan 27.8 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 37.5 million | Private donors Spain 73.5 million | Private donors Sweden 12.8 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million | Sweden 88.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | United Kingdom 45.7 million

Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | South Africa | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Other private donors

Softly earmarked contributions

Canada 10.2 million | Denmark 14.6 million | France 4 million | Germany 70.9 million | Ireland 3.3 million | Private donors Australia 11.4 million | Private donors Germany 5.1 million | Private donors Japan 4.5 million | Private donors Lebanon 2.1 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.5 million | Private donors United Kingdom 2.6 million | Private donors USA 8.7 million | Spain 3.4 million | Sweden 3 million | United Kingdom 24.8 million | United States of America 46.8 million

Czechia | Holy See | Iceland | Japan | Jersey | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Morocco | Norway | Private donor

Contacts

Mohammad Ifran Adil, Head of Sub-Office, Maiduguri
Email: adil@unhcr.org; Mobile: +234 901 066 0541

Roland Schönbauer, Senior External Relations Officer, Abuja
Email: schoenb@unhcr.org; Mobile: +234 901 066 0695

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)