As of end October, 178,000 Nigerian refugees fleeing the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria’s north-east were hosted in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Cameroon’s Far North Department continued to suffer regular incursions, and since June, the Diffa region in Niger remains the target of attacks and infiltrations. With the end of the rainy season in October, the region at large was reminded of the challenges that lie ahead. New attacks in Nigeria’s north-east have once again hindered humanitarian access to newly liberated areas and risk causing additional displacements within the sub-region. Despite Boko Haram’s dispersal, a new cycle of violence and societal degradation threatens to affect the Lake Chad Basin area and undo the progress achieved to date if governmental and humanitarian actors are not able to continue addressing the needs of the millions of people who lack food, clean water, medical supplies and appropriate shelter.

Some 159,236 Nigerian nationals, including refugees, had returned from Cameroon, Chad and Niger as of 31 October to Nigeria. However, a return intention survey carried out in Cameroon’s Minawao camp by UNHCR and its partners in September revealed a worrying trend, reflective of the unstable conditions in Nigeria. Not only were favourable intentions five per cent lower than in April when the first survey was conducted, but a higher number of respondents set military presence and patrols in their areas of origin as a condition for return. Furthermore, there was a 33 per cent increase in the number of refugees aged under 18 who were unfavourable to return, which could be explained by the perceived lack of opportunities back home. In Chad interventions in the livelihoods sector enabled an increasing number of households to supplement their basic needs and send their children to school. Despite the existing gaps, interventions such as these positively impact displaced and host populations and are crucial for building peaceful coexistence and contributing to the Lake Region’s economic rehabilitation. In Niger, where a great number of refugees, returnees and IDPs lack proper documentation, the Government successfully carried out the identification of beneficiaries living outside the camps. This will serve to improve the quality of the humanitarian response and constitutes a solid basis for the planned registration exercise, which is currently in its preparatory phase. Thanks to a nine per cent increase in the level of funding for the RRRP since the 2016 mid-year report, encouraging progress was made at the regional level against priority targets. Among these achievements were those made by humanitarian actors intervening in the protection and shelter & NFIs sector. As of 31 October, 100 per cent of SGBV reported survivors had received support, and assistance for unaccompanied minors had increased by 16 per cent. Furthermore, 100 per cent of households had been provided with adequate dwellings and targets for NFI provision had been surpassed by 79 per cent. Despite this progress, considerable gaps exist and the RRRP for Nigeria remained heavily underfunded at just 33 per cent as of 20 October.