

North-East Nigeria Operational Update

November 2021

UNHCR **reached more than 6,075 IDPs**, returnees, and locals with sensitisation on **COVID-19** preventive measures in Adamawa State.

UNHCR and NBA **issued more than 4,560 indigene certificates** to IDPs and refugee returnees in Borno State, and **almost 10,025 birth certificates** to IDP and returnees' children in Adamawa State.

UNHCR and partners **visited and monitored almost 1,420 protection sites**, reaching over **82,140 IDPs, returnees, and locals** in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States



A Displaced woman and her son become beneficiaries of a child protection project sponsored by the Muslim World League in Borno State of North-East Nigeria. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Operational Highlights

- The **security situation** in the Lake Chad Basin remained volatile, with Non-State Armed Group (NSAG) continuously attacking, ambushing, and mounting illegal checkpoints on main supply routes in the region. Through such criminal activities, NSAG members killed, kidnapped, and abducted displaced people. Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) remained active across operational locations, mainly in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States. Their activities targeted security forces, civilian populations, and humanitarian actors. Attacks also occurred in some areas where internally displaced people (IDPs) were returned after the closure of camps by the Borno State Government and it was reported that abductions, killings, and imposition of taxes continued unabated in those return locations, thereby inflicting further economic hardship on the local communities. This situation was further compounded by fire and cholera outbreaks in some camps and host communities, as well as a persistent fear of the Delta and Omicron variants of COVID-19.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- UNHCR recorded close to 1,000 individuals of 315 families, mainly of Nigerian nationalities, at both the regular and irregular borders between Nigeria and Cameroon, Niger and Chad. About 75 per cent of this **cross-border movements** were captured at the Banki entry points, 16 per cent in Damasak, and 9 per cent in Pulka, Gwoza local government areas (LGAs). Major reasons for the movements included returns from asylum country, seasonal movements, job search, forced movements by the insurgency or conflict, and move to access services in camps in Nigeria. Others were economic migration, movements due to the COVID-19 pandemic and family visits.
- Influenced by factors such as attacks by NSAGs, family re-unification, and socio-economic difficulties, there were continued **internal movements** in the BAY States. In Borno State, repentant NSAG members, who surrendered to the security forces, moved from inaccessible areas in villages and communities where they were held captives to escape into LGAs like Bama, Gwoza, Dikwa, and Gamboru Ngala. In Adamawa State, internal displacements were caused by clashes between herdsmen and farmers, thereby putting pressure on the already limited resources and forcing displaced people into crowded shelters and reception centres, while exposing them to associated protection risks.
- UNHCR and the Nigeria Immigration Services (NIS), recorded over 900 refugee returnees of 501 families who spontaneously arrived from neighbouring countries, including more than 755 individuals from Niger, 125 from Cameroon, and about 20 from Chad. It was found that 93 per cent of these **spontaneous refugee returnees** were unregistered in the countries of asylum. Most of the spontaneous returns were through Damasak and Gamboru/Ngala in Borno State, and Geidam and Gashua in Yobe State. They moved mainly because of the relatively improved security in the return areas.
- Under the Borno State Government Return Plan, over 42,000 IDPs of 7,000 families were **returned to their LGAs of origin** from Bakasi camp alone. Though they were mainly from Marte, Gwoza, Monguno, and Guzamala LGAs, most of them returned to host the community and camps in these locations after the government gave them food and NGN 100,000 (USD 200) cash per family to enable them to leave the camp. A majority of these IDPs were displaced to Bakasi camp in 2014 and were now returning under a challenging security situation in Borno State, including absence of conducive conditions in the return areas. UNHCR assessment showed that due to inaccessibility of return areas like Guzamala LGA, the affected IDPs moved to yet unaffected camps in Maiduguri, Monguno and Gwoza.
- **Population movements** had their implications because access to farms and firewood in the return areas continued to expose people to frequent attacks, abductions and killings, especially in

Bama, Banki, Pulka, Gwoza, and Monguno, among other locations in the BAY States. Children, particularly separated and unaccompanied, were susceptible to recruitment by NSAGs. UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations continued to advocate to the Borno State Government to ensure that camp closure took into consideration issues affecting children, minority populations and other vulnerable members of the community, while stressing that the availability of basic services, re-integration programmes and improved security in return LGAs were paramount. There remains an urgent need for the humanitarian community, early recovery/stabilization and development actors, civil society organizations, and other lobbying groups to advocate at higher levels for a more structured engagement on camp closure and sustainable durable solutions with the humanitarian community.

- Many children have died during the month, while shelters and properties got destroyed because of **frequent fire outbreaks** in camps across the LGAs of Borno State. This exacerbated the gaps in shelter and is gradually depleting existing resources. There is urgent need for the camp management & camp coordination (CCCM) sector to work with local government authorities and community leadership to minimize such fire cases, by decongesting camps and sensitizing the populations in camps and host communities on fire prevention and response. As a mitigation measure, UNHCR begun the implementation of out-of-camp strategy, which will link all the affected populations in each area.
- Amid the Omicron variant of COVID-19, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors continued to engage stakeholders, IDPs, and returnees on **risk communication and community engagement** in the BAY States. The objective was to continue influencing behavioural change by the people the organisation serves and other community members on COVID-19. In this regard, more than 6,075 IDPs, returnees, and host community members were reached with sensitisation on compliance with government and WHO's preventive measures. In Adamawa State, UNHCR distributed 30,000 rapid diagnosis test kits provided by the National Centre for Diseases Control.



PROTECTION

Protection Sector Coordination

Protection and CCCM coordination meetings continued to hold at camp, LGA, and State levels. The Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) meetings were held in camps in the Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC), Damboa, Gwoza, Monguno, Bama, Pulka, Damasak, Jere, and Banki, among other locations where UNHCR leads the coordination of protection activities. Camp-based coordination meetings were also held in Monguno, Ngala, Damasak and Banki of Borno State, while a stakeholders CCCM/Shelter/NFIs Sub-Sector coordination meeting was held in Adamawa State. These meetings were aimed at strengthening communication, coordination, and collaboration among actors on protection and assistance-related issues at the field level. Participants also discussed gaps and recommended solution-oriented actions for implementation. At the State level, PSNE and PSWG meetings were held virtually in Mubi and Yola, Adamawa State, because of COVID-19.

PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

- Alongside its vulnerability screening, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observations, UNHCR conducted and analysed more than 1,090 Key Informants Interviews (KIIs), through the protection monitoring tool, with the aim of providing direct strategic approach for **advocacy** and **real-time response** on protection issues in the BAY States. Also, UNHCR and partners visited and monitored close to 1,420 protection sites, reaching over 82,140 IDPs, returnees, and locals in the BAY States. Further, over 11,210 displaced people of more than 2,265 families were reached

through vulnerability screening in ten LGAs in Borno State, four in Adamawa State and two in Yobe State.

Protection Response

- Under the strict guidelines of COVID-19 protocol, UNHCR and human rights monitors visited and monitored more than 75 corrective and detention facilities in the BAY States. Some cases of misdemeanour and arbitrary arrests were referred to the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) for follow-up. Human rights' monitors also continued to put an eye on corrective and detention facilities in the State and LGA divisional police structures, as mitigation measure against **rights violation and abuse** by these structures, while advocating for the courts to return to hard-to-reach LGAs in Borno State.
- UNHCR and partners conducted more than 1,860 awareness sessions in the BAY States, for 46,375 IDPs, returnees, and host community members, covering topics such as child protection, gender-based violence (GBV), referral pathways and access to justice, human rights, peaceful coexistence, fire response and prevention mechanisms, and harmful cultural practices, among others. The organisation and other humanitarian actors also conducted joint sensitization sessions for gatekeepers, stakeholders, and displaced people on the 16 Days of Activism against GBV across the BAY States, with the theme, "Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!" Through these activities, beneficiaries got to learn about the implications and consequences of **gender-based violence** in households, schools, communities, and the general society, as well as how to make rights-based decisions in their displacement situations and return areas.
- With support from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the Child Protection Sub-Sector, UNHCR trained more than 40 Caritas-Nigeria staff, teachers, school authorities and government officials, within the framework of the Muslim World League-sponsored project on **Child Protection**. The trainings were aimed at building the capacity of Caritas Nigeria's child protection staff for effective implementation of the project through the provision of child protection services in schools and communities in Bama, Banki, Monguno and the MMC.
- UNHCR and Caritas-Nigeria trained 1,300 displaced people on vocational skills and issued them certificates and start-up kits in tailoring, beads & bag making, shoe making, carpentry, and soap making in Yola North, Yola South, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, and Madagali LGAs, Adamawa State. The American University of Nigeria also graduated and empowered 80 displaced people and issued them business starter packs in Bama, Ngala, and Damaturu, providing cash grants of NGN 5,000 (USD 10) each to 400 displaced people to enable the vulnerable families prepare for their crop harvest in Damaturu and Gujba, Yobe State, thereby making them **self-reliant**, instead of depending on humanitarian aid.
- A total of 2,300 standard non-food items (NFI) Kits were distributed to the most vulnerable returnees in Muna El-Badawi camp in Jere, Bama, and Gwoza of Borno State, to mitigate risks they faced because of limited access to NFIs in these locations. However, the gap remains enormous for the large needy populations in these locations. Also, UNHCR commenced the construction of 20 **communal partitioned reception hangers** for approximately 500 families in Bama and more than 510 families in Monguno, to ameliorate the sufferings of displaced people who are without shelters.
- Under the access to justice and civil documentation project, UNHCR and NBA issued almost 4,565 **certificates of indigene** to returnees in Bama and Dikwa LGAs of Borno State, and over 10,020 birth certificates to returnee and IDP children in Fufore, Dasin and Gurin of Fufore LGAs of Adamawa State. In Nigeria, indigene certificates serve as documentary proofs of belonging to a local government area, help to facilitate freedom of movement, reduce cases of arbitrary detention due to the absence of this vital document, and further prevent statelessness.

- During the month, some 9,555 individuals from more than 1,515 families accessed close to 30 **protection desks** in Gwoza, MMC, Jere, Damboa, Bama, Gamboru-Ngala, Dikwa, Monguno, Konduga, and Mobbar LGAs. Their major complaints included health/medical conditions, vulnerability screening services, mediation need, lack of access to basic services, specific needs, and forced marriages. Others were legal issues/access to justice, denial of resources or opportunities, child labour, hawking, and begging, domestic violence, GBV, forced eviction, physical assault, psychosocial and emotional abuse, and arbitrary and unlawful detention. Affected populations and relevant stakeholders recognized and appreciated the significant roles of the protection desks in providing information, education, and communication materials such as flood messages, safety messages and COVID-19 leaflets in English, Hausa, and Kanuri languages and other protection services, which the displaced people and stakeholders consult regularly.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS

- Through a joint advocacy effort, UNHCR and INTERSOS secured an approval for a land for the establishment of information, coordination and communication (ICC) centres in Yola North, Mubi North, and Michika, Adamawa State, as well as in Ngala, Borno State. Through such efforts, both organisations constructed and managed five ICC centres for **information management** across intervention areas in Borno and Adamawa States, including two in Ngala and others in Yola, Mubi and Michika.



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- As part of its strategy to increase collaboration with specialist entities in support of increased response to the **livelihoods needs** of affected populations, and in the spirit of the **global compact on refugees** and the new way of working, UNHCR collaborated with FAO to support 1,200 displaced people with agricultural tools and training on peri-urban and homestead gardening, while earmarking an additional 1,000 beneficiaries to be trained on dry-season farming, as part of UNHCR-FAO collaboration in support of returnees and affected populations in Bama and Banki.
- UNHCR and partners provided vocational skills training to 1,575 displaced people across various trades, including carpentry, shoe making, beads making, and soap making. All beneficiaries were provided with **start-up kits** for their businesses. Meanwhile, some 675 displaced people received financial literacy and business development training, 330 others provided with cash grants for business start-up, and 50 youths trained and certified on basic ICT (information and communication and technology) skills. All beneficiaries were trained in entrepreneurship to enhance their **capacities and skills** for effective management of their businesses.
- UNHCR trained and supported 1,300 displaced people with agricultural tools and inputs for rainy season farming. The trainings included best Agronomic practices which sought to provide skills that would **improve crop yields and sustainable farming practices**. Total of 600 other displaced people were trained on livestock management and provided with small ruminants for livestock breeding, while another 100 people were trained and empowered to start fish farms. The latter were provided inputs and tools to set up ten fish farms in cooperative groups.

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