

POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION SUMMARY

Nigerians in the North-East will on Saturday, 9 March join their compatriots around the country for the Governorship and State Assembly elections. The days leading up to the elections have generally been peaceful so far. The February 23 Presidential and National Assembly elections were conducted in the three main affected states (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe), with some level of disruption of the polls. Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) with permanent voter cards were allowed to exercise their civil rights in polling units established by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the three states.

Isolated security incidents were reported in Borno and Yobe states in the early morning hours of 23 February. In Maiduguri, more than a dozen loud explosions were heard when non-state armed groups (NSAGs) fired artillery pieces into the town reportedly killing a soldier and injuring several others. One of the rocket bombs landed but did not explode in the vicinity of the Teachers Village Camp of internally displaced persons (IDPs) – less than a kilometre from the UN House (Red Roof) in Maiduguri. No casualties were reported. In Gwoza Local Government Area (LGA), two separate incidents were reported when a rocket landed in one community – injuring three civilians and another one partially destroying a mosque. In Yobe State, security forces also clashed with NSAGs in Geidem and Gujba LGAs, disrupting polls in the two areas. The polls were later conducted when the situation was brought under control and relative calm restored later in the day.

On 25 February, there were reports of skirmishes between supporters of the two main political parties – the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) and People’s Democratic Party (PDP) as the election results were being announced. The situation was brought under control by State security operatives and calm was quickly restored in the area.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Between 27 and 28 February some **30,000** Nigerian refugees seeking asylum in the Cameroonian town of Goura returned to Rann in what is considered as induced return following a visit by Borno State officials who reassured them that the situation in Rann had normalized and with promises to provide assistance to returnees. The Nigerian border town of Rann, Kala/Balge LGA in eastern Borno State was attacked by NSAGs on two separate occasions in December 2018 and January 2019 forcing more than **40,000** people to cross into neighbouring Cameroon for refuge.

UNHCR Cameroon observed that the returning refugees were provided escorts back to Nigeria by Cameroonian troops to secure their safe return. Access to Rann town by humanitarian agencies including UNHCR is not possible – making it difficult to assess the conditions of the returnees, majority of whom are vulnerable women and children.

While UNHCR does not consider the returns as expulsion by Cameroon, it is concerned that inducement may have been used by certain individuals to entice the refugees to return to Rann which is not in line with the principle of voluntariness of returns as well as violates the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement signed in March 2017 between UNHCR and the two governments and the Borno State Returns strategy. UNHCR will continue its advocacy with Nigeria to continue its compliance with national and international legislation.

IDP Relocation Exercise

In the Borno State capital Maiduguri, **4,963** IDPs in **1,101** families were relocated from the Teachers Village Camp (TVC) to the New Stadium Camp for new arrivals in five movements by the government and humanitarian actors to decongest the TVC. UNHCR Protection staff and other partners including the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) collaborated in the planning and implementation of four of the five relocation movements. On 22 February, the state government alone relocated **1,130** individuals in **266** families to the New Stadium.

Humanitarian agencies including UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Nigeria National Red Cross are providing shelter, food, water and sanitation to the new arrivals under the inter-agency approach.

UNHCR has provided **510** individual shelters and **5** communal shelters with the combined accommodation capacity of approximately **3,000** IDPs in **610** families to support the exercise which will continue until the TVC is decongested. The assistance is part of the **90-Day Humanitarian Response Plan** in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States to support individuals affected by the recent renewed hostilities by NSAGs in the North-East.

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