

# Northeast Nigeria Operational Update

April 2022

UNHCR commenced the construction of over 400 housing units for IDPs, returnees, and host community members in Adamawa State, supported by UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Nigeria Humanitarian Fund.

UNHCR and its partners reached more than 50,000 IDPs, returnees, and host community members through protection, human rights, and border monitoring missions, and Key Informants Interviews in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States.

UNHCR sensitised over 29,000 IDPs, returnees, and host community members on risk reduction through promotion of peaceful coexistence, human rights, referral pathways, GBV risk mitigation, child protection, prevention of child abuse, child safety, and security.



*This happy woman and her son recently received standard NFI kits, which UNHCR Field Office Yola distributed to 800 IDPs and returnees in Girei and Fufore LGAs, Adamawa State. @UNHCR/Francis Garriba.*

# Operational Highlights

- Activities by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) continued in the Lake Chad Region unabated with a total of 94 safety and security incidents recorded in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States. Such incidents affected **53 civilians, including IDPs, IDP returnees, and refugee returnees**.
- In April, NSAG members mounted an illegal vehicle checkpoint in a village in Damasak Local Government Area (LGA) bordering Niger, following reported intervention by a military action dubbed “Operation Desert and Lake Sanity”, launched by Nigerian government forces with the support of Multi-National Joint Task Forces to curtail NSAG’s activities in the region.
- On 6 April 2022, in Borno State, NSAG members attacked a newly rehabilitated clinic and a girls technical college in Damboa, followed by another attack on the security forces along the Maiduguri-Damboa highway and Banki on 18 and 20 April 2022, respectively. **Meanwhile, the Humanitarian Hub in Monguno was attacked on 25 April. Although no casualties were recorded, the attack created fear among staff and slowed response by the humanitarian community.** As a result of conflict between factional NSAGs, ex-combatants continued to surrender to government forces. The security situation in Borno was compounded by fire outbreaks. For example, within less than three weeks, eight fire outbreaks were reported in the IDP camps in Monguno, destroying food and non-food items (NFIs), civil documents, and livestock.
- In Adamawa State, dangerous street crimes like **kidnappings, burglary, and snatching of phones, bags, money, and other valuables from civilians were rampant**. For example, attacks, which were reported on some communities in Madagali and Mubi LGAs on 12 and 19 April, resulted in human casualties.
- Meanwhile, in Yobe State, IED blasts and heightened NSAG attacks were reported in the Southern and Northern peripheries, especially in Geidam LGA on 18, 20, and 24 April 2022, **causing severe damages to telecommunication towers**. To address the problem of violence against people, as well as the protection of children, Yobe State Governor signed three bills for the speedy administration of justice.
- In April, the United Nations announced **a grant of USD 15 million from the Central Emergency Fund (CERF) to fight food shortages and malnutrition in North-East Nigeria** where over 600,000 displaced people continue to experience severe food insecurity.

## POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- In April, the BAY States continued to witness internal and cross-border movements, owing to the government’s relocation of internally displaced people (IDPs), and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the Nigerian Government closing four official entry points in Borno State due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis and COVID-19, 880 individuals (185 households) still entered from Cameroon, Chad, and Niger through the Banki, Damasak, Pulka, and Ngala border towns where UNHCR has eight border monitors and nurses. Most of those who entered through Damasak were refugee returnees from Niger, comprising of children, elderly people, and women at risk. Before entering Nigeria, UNHCR border monitors conducted a screening and provided them health services and hygiene materials. The monitors held meetings with WHO, IOM and government disease surveillance officers at the entry points. **As per the returnees, the cause of their return was due to persistent insurgency or accessing services in IDP camps in Nigeria.**
- In Borno State, UNHCR constructed 200 transitional shelters and 40 shelter units at the Soye village in Bama LGA where the IDPs were relocated. This followed government’s relocation of 383 households from the Government Senior Science Secondary School Bama IDP camp

- in March 2022 and the request to UNHCR to assist the IDPs with accommodation. Also, in Adamawa State, **UNHCR and its partner Caritas Nigeria continued with the organisation's local integration project for IDPs, returnees, and host community members in Labondo, Girei LGA.**
- UNHCR and its partners **reached 3,832 people through more than 150 sessions of COVID-19 vaccine, spread, prevention, hygiene practice, and physical distancing** at the Banki, Damasak, Ngala, and Pulka official entry points in the BAY States for IDPs, returnees, and host community members.
  - In April, nearly 8,900 individuals were displaced across the BAY States, including 7,466 new arrivals recorded in Borno and Adamawa States. Though some movements were voluntary, most of them were caused by government's relocation activities, frequent NSAG attacks, and counterattacks by the military, creating inconducive living conditions for IDPs. Either voluntarily or through government intervention, over 1,000 individuals moved to Adamawa State, of which **most of them ending up in secondary displacement situations owing to scarce resources.**
  - In Borno and Yobe States, UNHCR partner - the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) – registered over 2,000 individuals (about 600 households), **including people with specific needs, such as breast feeding and lactating women, unaccompanied and separated children, people with serious medical conditions, and people living with disabilities**, who entered through Damasak, Machina, Banki, Pulka, Gashua, Geidam, and Ngala. As per the returnees, 85 per cent of them were not registered in their country of asylum and they returned as they received news that peace had returned. However, upon arrival, they had faced serious food challenges. According to them, they did not face any denial of access at entry.
  - On 7 and 8 April 2022, the Borno State Government (BSG) facilitated the relocation of 680 households from Gwoza and Pulka IDP camps to Warabe community where it has constructed 340 houses. **The government also returned around 1,300 individuals (about 425 households) from the Hajj IDP camp/rehabilitation centre in Maiduguri to the overcrowded GSSSS Bama camp.**
  - In camps where repentant NSAG members had returned, it was reported that they were causing nuisance and disrupting peaceful coexistence. Meanwhile, IDPs who were relocated by the BSG to newly rebuilt communities were exposed to robbery and attacks by NSAG members whereas a recently relocated individuals in Soye community were also came under attack. Refugees who returned from Niger to Malam Fatorit are now living in an inaccessible area. **The returns of Nigerians from Niger to Malam Fatorit took place in the absence of a tripartite framework that would allow UNHCR to play its role in establishing voluntariness of return and ensure procedures to guarantee minimum condition for return in safety and dignity of the concerned individuals and ensure the continuous monitoring.**



## PROTECTION

### PROTECTION SECTOR COORDINATION

The Protection Sector produced the first quarter Protection Analysis Update (PAU) focusing on Borno State, as it hosts most conflict-affected and displaced people across the BAY states. The PAU highlights three developments and their protection implications concerning the civilian population in Borno. These include camp closures in Maiduguri Metropolitan Centre (MMC) and Jere LGA with enforced relocations and returns to various areas across Borno; food insecurity and restrictions related to humanitarian food distributions; and the curtailment

of the freedom of movement, thereby providing key recommendations for stakeholders like government, the humanitarian community, and external actors.

The Protection Sector also produced an advocacy note in response to the return of refugees from Niger to Mallam Fatori. The advocacy note included key messages to ensure voluntary, safe, dignified, and sustainable returns. It also focused on enabling people return to the place of their choice, while further recommending the finalization of the tripartite agreements to ensure that IDP and refugee returns are guided by the Kampala Convention, the Borno State Return Strategy, and the 2021 National IDP Policy.

UNHCR, took active part in Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) meetings held in locations where it leads the coordination of protection activities. The organisation also held several consultations with service providers during camp-based coordination meetings in Borno and Adamawa States under the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) component. At the State level, UNHCR and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development co-chaired the Mubi PSWG meeting in Adamawa State, attended by government representatives, UN agencies, INGOs.

## PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

- Despite the volatile security situation in the North-East, UNHCR, and its partners continued **to deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection services** in the field to IDPs, returnees, and host community members, while playing the lead role in coordinating the protection and CCCM / shelter / NFI Sectors in the BAY States.
- In April, UNHCR and its partners **reached over 53,000 IDPs, refugee returnees, and host community members in the BAY States** through 1,271 protection, human rights, and boarder monitoring missions, as well as through 1,089 Key Informants Interviews.
- UNHCR also screened more than 13,000 IDPs and returnees (over 2,000 households) in the BAY States, including 9,700 women, **to identify the most vulnerable households and people at heightened risks to be prioritised for assistance**. The findings showed there was a need for continuous lifesaving assistance to vulnerable people.
- In April, 2,755 IDPs, IDP returnees, refugee returnees, and host community members **accessed UNHCR's 30 protection desks spread across 10 locations in Borno State** for various services such as medical, legal, access to justice, and complaints about denial of resources, child labour, and other general human rights violation. UNHCR distributed information, education, and communication materials in local languages. A total of 152 complaints and feedbacks were received at the CCCM community help desks in Borno and Adamawa States, mainly on shelter and WASH facilities.
- UNHCR and its partner, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), visited 98 detention facilities in the Bay States where 55 IDPs and returnees were being held for alleged minor crimes. In Borno State, six girls were detained in Banki for fighting, while four women were awaiting trial in Maiduguri for allegedly selling alcohol without licenses in Bama. Meanwhile, UNHCR and NHRC visited 27 detention facilities in Adamawa State where 18 individuals were detained. **The situation of displaced people continues to be further compounded by the absence of courts in the liberated LGAs**, as it continued to impede speedy trial of alleged offenders.

## PROTECTION RESPONSE

- In April, over **1,000 civilians were affected by 80 protection incidents, including gender-based violence (GBV)**, across 10 LGAs in Borno State. More than 90 per cent of the

incidents included NSAG attacks, fire outbreaks, abductions, road accidents, disputes in camps, theft, and windstorm, which destroyed property. UNHCR and other humanitarian actors provided response on the ground to ensure that perpetrators were brought to justice through the Access to Justice programme. Meanwhile, minor disputes within the communities were resolved through an existing community-based dispute resolution mechanism.

- **UNHCR sensitised nearly 30,000 IDPs, returnees, and host community members on risk reduction in the BAY States** in collaboration with partners implementing general protection, CCCM, Access to Justice, Child Protection, and GBV, as well as community-based structures covering key themes such as peaceful coexistence, human rights, GBV risk mitigation, child protection, prevention of child abuse, child safety, human trafficking, incident reporting, girl child education, and security.
- UNHCR **distributed more than 2,000 NFI kits to vulnerable IDPs, returnees, and host community members** in Borno and Adamawa State.
- Under its Access to Justice and legal representation programme, UNHCR and its partner Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), **assisted some 100 IDPs and returnees in courts in BAY States in cases of civil matters, dissolution of marriages, and misdemeanours**. A total of **seven favourable court decisions** were made in Borno and Adamawa States on five matrimonial cases and two cases of child custody instituted by the IDPs themselves. Another case was amicably resolved by the parties involved. NBA organised 28 sittings at the Bakassi and Gubio Road mobile court in MMC to entertain cases filed by IDPs and returnees.
- Regarding its civil documentation drive, NBA obtained 77 letters of administration (without will) for IDPs and returnees from the respective State High Courts in the BAY States. **NBA also printed 25,000 indigene certificates, including 20,000 for community members, IDPs, and returnees in Bama LGA and 5,000 for others in Kala-Balge LGA**. These activities constituted the first phase of UNHCR's support to the issuance of 200,000 birth and indigene certificates in the BAY States.
- UNHCR and its partners provided group and individual **counselling to about 1,700 individuals in Bama, Banki, Monguno, and MMC** and relayed information on available options for child protection services and reported on the psychological needs of the children. They registered 49 boys and 49 girls at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children, children associated with armed fighters and armed group, children with disability, survivors of sexual abuse, orphans, and other vulnerable kids.
- More than **2,000 individuals accessed the three Child-Friendly Safe Spaces supported by Muslim World League in Bama, Banki, and Monguno**, equipped with various culturally and age-appropriate recreational and educational tools for kids. Meanwhile, children in three schools in MMC continued to benefit from the established Safe-School Initiative by participating in kids club activities.



#### **CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS**

- On 7 April 2022, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors brainstormed on ways of addressing the issue of rampant fire outbreaks in camps across Borno State and how to **sensitize the affected populations and communities through information, education, and communication materials and radio jingles**. Participants emphasized the urgent need for Sector and the National Emergency Management Agency to train stakeholders on issues relating to camp closure, camp phase out, and approach to displacement in the North-West, particularly Zamfara State, which included guidance and advice to agencies implementing or planning to implement activities in that region.
- UNHCR and CCCM continued to **sensitize affected populations in Borno State on fire prevention** through jingles through local languages on the popular electronic media stations in Maiduguri.



## LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- Under the Protection Safety Nets and Livelihood project in Borno and Yobe States, UNHCR and its partner American University of Nigeria (AUN) trained IDPs, returnees, and community men and women in vocational skills, micro business skills, and animal husbandry in Bama, Ngala, MMC and Damaturu. Whereas AUN also selected rainy season farmers in Borno and Yobe States, Caritas Nigeria conducted livelihood training for savings, investments, and loan agents from six LGAs in Adamawa State. Meanwhile, **more than 200 individuals were trained in best agronomic practices to promote the use of locally available plants and animal wastes.** The trainings were a prerequisite for a cash disbursement that would help beneficiaries to make proper cash investment. The initiative is climate-smart and is expected to reduce carbon footprints in many ways.

## External/Donors Relations

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