

North-East Nigeria Operational Update

September 2021

UNHCR and partners reached nearly **42,000** IDPs, returnees, and locals with **895 awareness raising activities on safety and cholera** in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States.

UNHCR supported the issuing over **4,500 Indigene Certificates** to IDPs, returnees and host community members in Borno and Adamawa States, to facilitate freedom of movement and **reduce the risk of statelessness**.

Almost **8,000 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees** and **members of host communities** sought advice and shared complaints at UNHCR's **28 Protection Desks** in Borno State, as they appreciated them to be safe and fair.



Nine-year-old Modu Garba wants to become an aircraft engineer. He lives with his parents and seven siblings in a shelter at an IDP camp in Maiduguri, after being displaced from their home in 2019. © UNHCR/Francis Garriba.

Operational Highlights

- The **security situation** in the Lake Chad Basin remained **unpredictable**. More members of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) were reported to surrender to Cameroonian and Nigerian security forces while hostilities and killings by NSAGs in various places in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) States continued. The visit of **UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner - Operations Raouf Mazou** to the Lake Chad Basin countries, including Nigeria, helped to further strengthen the advocacy for principled and sustainable **durable solutions**. The insecurity, with increased risk of robbery and abductions in Borno, continued to **limit access to affected populations** by humanitarian actors. The situation in Adamawa State was also replete with criminal activities - armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom and killings - which affected civilians, internally displaced people (IDPs) and humanitarian staff. In Yobe State, the civilian population lives in constant fear of becoming victims of crossfire after fighter jets bombed Buhari village on 15 September. Tensions between farmers and herders in some areas posed a **food security challenge** because farmers could not access their farmlands.
- The government started administering the second batch of **COVID-19 vaccines** in all locations of the BAY States for free for all populations.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS

- Cameroonian authorities reopened the Ngala entry point on 9 September, after it had remained officially closed for a year, as part of **COVID-19** prevention. This led to increased cross border movements, mainly at the regular entry points between Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger Republic and Chad. The move may facilitate **durable solutions**, including **returns of refugees** to their country of origin. An estimated **990 individuals** moved **across the border** through the entry points in Banki, Damasak, Ngala and Pulka, Borno State. The movements were mostly triggered by the ongoing insurgency, seasonal movements, job hunt, and return from country of asylum. Other individuals moved to access services in camps or to visit families.
- More than **12,335 new internal displacements** were recorded in Borno and Adamawa States, of which 8,035 people located in Askira/Uba, Bama, Damboa, Dikwa, Gwoza, Hawul, Jere, Konduga, Mobbar, Monguno and Ngala LGA (Local Government Area) of Borno State. Displacement in Bama alone affected more than **6,020 people**, because of ongoing military activity in the Sambisa forest, the mass surrender of NSAG members and the closure of Farm Centre camp in Maiduguri. In Adamawa state, **4,300 displacements** were recorded in Demsa, Fufore, Girei, Gombi, Hong, Lamurde, Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North, Mubi South, Numan, Song, Yola North, and Yola South LGAs. Most were triggered by military activities, community conflicts, fear of attacks, poor living conditions and voluntary relocations.
- UNHCR and the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recorded more than **1,130 individual refugee returnees** who spontaneously arrived from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, including over 350 at the Geidam entry point in Yobe. Following a **memorandum of understanding** signed between UNHCR and NIS' Yobe State Command in September, NIS launched **refugee returnee registration** at the Gashua, Geidam, and Machina entry points of Yobe State, in addition to the four entry points of Banki, Pulka, Damasak and Ngala of Borno State.
- Under the **Borno State Government Return Plan (BSGRP)**, the Borno State Government **relocated over 23,780 IDPs** from Farm Centre camp of Jere LGA to various areas such as Bama and Marte. The State Government continued to unilaterally close camps without involving humanitarians. People have continued to be returned to locations where **minimum return conditions** have not been assessed and where humanitarian actors cannot access because of **insecurity**.

- There are concerns that IDPs are being **returned to unfavourable places** by the Borno State Government, thereby exposing them to further risks of attacks, crossfire and suffering. Some 20 farmers were recently killed by a bomb in the Dabar Masara farming community.
- Most **camps in Borno State** continued to be **overcrowded**, which has been exacerbated by the ongoing surrender of **former combatants**, thereby exerting pressure on the already overstretched humanitarian resources. Consequently, people could not easily access assistance, they were forced to engage in **harmful coping behaviours**, such as begging and sale and exchange of sex. In Adamawa State, refugee returnees from Cameroon continued to use irregular entry points, thereby not getting registered upon arrival by the Nigerian authorities and hence remaining without assistance.



PROTECTION

Protection Sector Coordination

Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) coordination meetings were held in various locations, including camps, LGAs and States. The Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) met in Gwoza, Monguno, Bama, Jere, MMC, Banki, Pulka, and Damboa, among other locations where UNHCR leads the coordination of protection activities. In Borno State, the sector and service providers held a total of six meetings in camps and out of camp settings. However, coordination meetings staggered in Adamawa because of conflicting pressing engagements by local authorities, which normally chair them as camp coordinators and managers.

Protection by Presence, Protection Monitoring

- Using its **protection monitoring tool**, UNHCR conducted close to **2,890 Key Informant Interviews (KII)**. Findings have been instrumental to key decision-making and guided strategic advocacy and real-time lifesaving response in the BAY States.
- UNHCR and partners reached **92,045 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees**, and community members through over **1,330 Protection monitoring** missions and site visits in the BAY States, 45 per cent in Borno, 39 per cent in Yobe and 16 per cent in Adamawa.
- One of the main tools UNHCR and partners use in targeting and prioritising assistance in the BAY States is **Registration** and **Vulnerability Screening** because it helps to determine the most **vulnerable families** and identify men, women and children at heightened risk. With this tool, UNHCR and partners screened over **10,760 people** in September. As a result, close to 2,270 individuals were identified as most vulnerable, including over **1,470 women with specific needs**, 240 children, and some **325 elderly people** in nine LGAs in Borno State, eight in Adamawa and two in Yobe. The findings showed that there is a need for continuous **lifesaving assistance** to the most **vulnerable people** identified.
- About **7,960 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees, and host community members** approached UNHCR's **28 Protection Desks** in ten LGAs of Borno State. Major complaints focussed on health/medical conditions, lack of access to services, specific needs, **Gender Based Violence (GBV)**, access to justice, denial of resources or opportunities, domestic violence, child labour/hawking/begging and violation of **human rights**. Most complaints received were referred to specialised service providers and partners for intervention and management, while disputes between neighbours were addressed through the **Community Mechanism for Dispute Resolution and Access to Justice** tools. According to 22 per cent of about 2,890 KIIs conducted in September, affected populations and partners still recognise the protection desks as some of the preferred places for complaints. UNHCR and partners also used the Protection Desks to distribute information, education and communication materials on protection services, including UNHCR's toll-free line, flood safety mechanisms and **COVID-19** programmes in

English, Hausa and Kanuri languages. Out of **736 cases** reported through **complaint feedback mechanism**, 382 were referred and 191 resolved.

- More than **100 protection incidents** affecting an estimated **88,245 individuals** were documented across different LGAs in the BAY States, using the **protection monitoring tool**. The incidents, which included **GBV**, NSAG attacks and physical assaults, reportedly involved terrorists, floods, families, humanitarian actors, the civilian population and **security forces**. Ten LGAs were most affected by these incidents in Borno State, three in Adamawa State, and one in Yobe State. As a way of mitigating risks and preventing further occurrences, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors continued to engage stakeholders to respond and support the survivors, while ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and partners reached more than **41,610 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees and host community people** with **895 awareness raising** activities in BAY States. The outreach covered topics such as peaceful co-existence, safety and **security**, referral pathway, **cholera** and GBV risk mitigation, and legal documentation. Through its CCCM partner INTERSOS, UNHCR conducted community awareness sessions on cholera prevention and risk mitigation, **COVID-19** preventive measures, physical assault prevention, importance of education and girl child education. Community awareness sessions on the prevention of child/early marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse, denial of resources, reporting GBV, domestic violence, emotional violence, and GBV services available to IDPs, returnees, and host communities were organized. Other sessions focussed on **hygiene promotion** and human trafficking.
- In response to the ongoing **camp closure** by the Borno State Government, UNHCR served as the technical lead in a joint CCCM training and **capacity building** workshop on camp closure for Borno State officials, police and the military in Abuja in September. The training integrated the out-of-camp area-based approach for camp closure, in the premise that returnees (whether forced, spontaneous or planned returns) would still find themselves in out-of-camp settings as they progressively settle down. The training also considered mainstreaming protection, GBV and Protection from **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** (PSEA) during camp closure.
- UNHCR trained eleven implementers of the **Access to Justice Project** from the Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), as well as NBA project coordinators, legal monitors, and reporting officers from the BAY States on thematic areas such as the legal framework, PSEA and report writing.
- UNHCR and partners conducted over **260 COVID-19 awareness sessions** in the BAY States, reaching some **32,495 IDPs, IDP returnees, and host community people**. The activities and border monitoring were carried out in compliance with **COVID-19** protocols.
- In Adamawa State, UNHCR also reached **120 community members** with consultations on **insecurity** faced by women and girls during their daily activities, as well as **domestic violence**, and how community members are coping with the impact of floods.
- In collaboration with local authorities, UNHCR and partners issued **4,530 indigene certificates** to **IDPs, returnees and locals** in Borno and Adamawa. Some **2,500 indigene certificates** were issued in Banki, while 2,030 were issued in Adamawa under the organisation's **Access to Justice and Legal Documentation** project. These certificates serve as important proof of belonging to an LGA. They also help to facilitate **freedom of movement**, reduce arbitrary detention and contribute to preventing **statelessness**. UNHCR's KIIs showed the high need for legal and civil documentation among affected populations in the BAY States.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS

- As co-chair with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, UNHCR facilitated meetings of the Adamawa State Protection Sector Working Group in Mubi and Yola, which

were attended by government officials, UN agencies, and NGOs. They focused on the **detention** of some people at the Mubi Correctional Centre for years without trial, harassment of female humanitarians along the Michika - Madagali road, and under-reporting of **GBV** and **child protection** cases. UNHCR took part in a 1-day workshop in Borno, organised by the CCCM Sector for partners on streamlining the Displacement Tracking Matrix, support activities, as well as collaborating and providing maximum support to all partners and participants.

- On 9 September, UNHCR attended the **Camp Decommissioning Committee** maiden meeting at the OCHA office in Maiduguri. The Committee was established following a request by the Borno Government during the Camp Closure Stakeholders' Consultative Workshop in August.



LIVELIHOOD AND PROTECTION SAFETY NETS

- In Adamawa State, UNHCR monitored the progress of livelihoods projects implemented in Yola North, Yola South, Mubi North, Mubi South and Michika LGAs. They engage 700 beneficiaries for agricultural inputs, 500 for small ruminant animals, and 300 for cash grants.
- UNHCR and INTERSOS distributed **flood mitigating tools** in Yola, Mubi, and Michika communities, including 52 wheelbarrows, 114 shovels, 42 pickaxes, 146 pairs of hand gloves, 58 pairs of rain boots, and facemasks. When properly used, the tools will help to mitigate floods caused by the two main rivers in Adamawa State, which often overflow their banks between October and December. The distribution of similar tools in Damasak has been **delayed because of insecurity** on the main supply route.

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CONTACT US

Mohammad Irfan Adil, Head of Sub-office, Maiduguri
adil@unhcr.org; Cell + 234 901 066 0541

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

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