

NIGER

Displacement in Diffa region

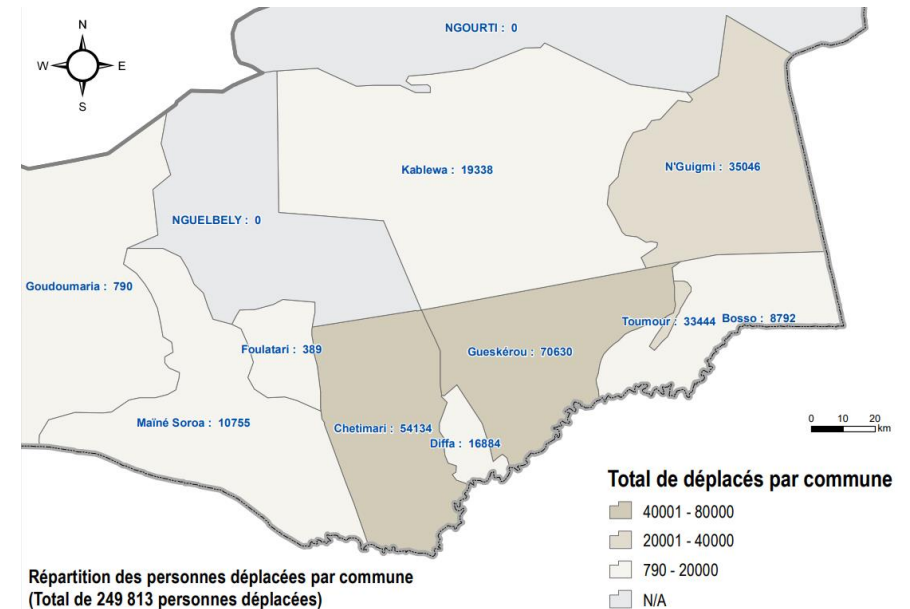
Over 18,800 people have been displaced in March 2019 in Diffa region as a result of Boko Haram activities and attacks against civilians, adding to the 249,000 people previously displaced by the conflict, including 104,300 IDPs, 25,700 returnees and 118,900 refugees from Nigeria (UNHCR 26/03/2019, OCHA 04/04/2019).

In most cases, IDPs have fled without taking their belongings and are in urgent need of shelter, food and NFI support. Assessments conducted in the IDP sites have also shown a need for improved WASH infrastructure. Protection remain a high concerns as attacks against civilians have continued throughout the month of March and the risk of gender based violence is high (IRC 31/03/2019, IRC 30/03/2019, IRC 29/03/2019, IRC 26/03/2019).

NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE



IMPACT



Source: REACH / Government of Niger 31/01/2019

Anticipated scope and scale

Diffa region in eastern Niger, located along the border with Nigeria, has been affected by Boko Haram activities since **2015**. While the number of attacks decreased in 2017 and early 2018, the end of the year and the beginning of 2019 have seen a **sharp increase in violence**. Violence is likely to persist as military operations are conducted in Niger, but also in neighbouring Chad and Nigeria, as Boko Haram is looking to **maintain its presence** in the region. The situation will continue to impact **food security**, as access to the fields will remain constrained. Access to **education** will be affected as schools and teachers have been targeted.

Key priorities



+18,800
people displaced in March 2019



+90
civilians killed in March 2019



severe shortage of latrines
in IDP camps

Humanitarian constraints



Insecurity, the presence of armed groups and the ongoing military operations are constraining access. Access is also limited due the government ban on truck and motorcycles implemented as part of the State of Emergency since 2015.

Limitations

Limited information on accessibility of the roads (with or without armed escorts). Existing data does not allow to clearly distinguish and analyse needs of recent and protracted situations of displacement.

Crisis impact

After causing waves of displacements from Nigeria since 2013, Boko Haram started leading violent operations in Niger in 2015, mainly in the border region of Diffa. While the situation normalised between 2017 and 2018, a new upsurge of violence has been observed since the end of 2018. According to UNHCR, at least 52 violent events can be directly attributed to Boko Haram in recent months (15 in November, 17 in December and 20 in January) (UNHCR12/02/2019, UNHCR 11/01/2019, UNHCR 11/12/2018). In March, another 21 attacks were registered, leading to the death of at least 88 civilians, an significant increase compared to the 107 deaths recorded in 2018. Some 18,840 people were newly displaced in March, adding to the 104,000 IDPs already present in Diffa region (OCHA 01/04/2019, OCHA 04/04/2019). Displacement is likely to increase as attacks targeting the local population, as well as refugees and IDP sites, continue (RFI 18/02/2019, RFI 27/03/2019, VOA 25/03/2019).

Food: In Diffa region, around 55,000 people were facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC-3 and IPC-4) between September and December 2018. This number is expected to rise to 142,000 during the lean season between June and August (Cadre Harmonisé 02/2019). Food insecurity in the region is mainly driven by the conflict which is leading to population displacement, placing added pressure on host populations, and hampering access to the fields while livestock is often stolen by armed groups and militias. The population is highly dependant on humanitarian assistance to fulfil their needs and the situation would likely deteriorate without it (Fews Net 03/2019). Recent assessments have shown that the food consumption score of the communities displaced in March 2019 is concerning, with 60 to 85% of the households facing poor food consumption (IRC 31/03/2019, IRC 30/03/2019, IRC 29/03/2019, IRC 26/03/2019).

Shelter and NFIs: The newly displaced population fled toward 18 different hosting sites, but are mainly concentrated in Awaridi, Kindjandi, Gorodi, Boudouri, Sabon Carre, Blabrine, N'Guel (OCHA 04/04/2019). There is very limited up-to-date information regarding the shelter and NFIs needs of the population affected by Boko Haram violence in Diffa region. However, several cases where shelters have been burnt down during attacks have been reported since the beginning of 2019 (ECHO 26/03/2019, VOA 25/03/2019). According to recent assessments, most of the shelters housing IDP households are overcrowded and in bad conditions. Cases where IDPs had not access to shelter and were sleeping in to open have also been reported (IRC 31/03/2019, IRC 30/03/2019, IRC 29/03/2019, IRC 26/03/2019).

Most of the newly displaced people have left their place of origin without any of their belongings while the people in a situation of protracted displacement also have limited possessions and resources. The recent wave of displacement will place added pressure

on host-communities. Recent assessments have shown that most IDPs were in need of buckets, cooking tools, mosquito nets, sheets and clothing (IRC 31/03/2019, IRC 30/03/2019, IRC 29/03/2019, IRC 26/03/2019).

Protection: The population is facing protection concerns as attacks against civilians and human rights violations are recorded with increased frequency since the end of 2018. More than 21 attacks were recorded in March 2019 alone, leading to the death of at least 88 civilians (OCHA 01/04/2019, OCHA 04/04/2019). ACLED reported at least 67 instances of violence targeting civilians in Diffa region between October 2018 and March 2019 (ACLED 03/04/2019). Half of those cases can be directly attributed to Boko Haram. However, killings, lootings and kidnappings by local gangs and criminals are also becoming more frequent, creating fears among the local community. Delinquency and violence among the youth is often quoted as a main source of tensions and conflict (UNHCR 12/03/2019, UNHCR 07/2018).

According to an assessment conducted in November 2018, security incidents were reported in 27% of the IDP sites in Diffa region (REACH 11/2018). However, since then, the security situation has deteriorated and it is likely that protection concerns have increased. The specific situation of women and girls, especially displaced women and women head of households, places them at higher risk of gender-based violence. Armed groups in the area have been known to kidnap women and girls (VOA 25/03/2019, Jeune Afrique 25/11/2018). Forced and early marriages have also been identified as one of the most common form of violence in IDP and refugee sites (Protection Cluster 24/01/2019).

Education: Insecurity, targeted killings, threats against teachers and population displacement have severely impacted access to education in Diffa region. At least 30 schools were closed throughout 2018 and 44 faced temporary suspensions during the school-year. As a result, some 114,300 children, including 43,000 IDP children and 50,000 refugee children, do not have access to education (OCHA 30/11/2018). Another 150 schools have been "displaced" and are now operating outside of normal infrastructure, disrupting the quality and stability of the education services (RFI 23/12/2018). There is limited information regarding the evolution of the situation since the end of 2018. However, the deterioration of the security situations and the new waves of displacement are likely to put further pressure on the limited capacity on the ground.

With a conflict now ongoing for more than four years, the security situation is aggravating the risk of a 'lost-generation' in a region that was already affected by high levels of interrupted schooling due to poverty or access constraints. In Diffa region, almost 149,000 children are considered to be in need of education assistance (OCHA 11/01/2019).

Health: Insecurity has constrained access to health facilities, because travelling long distances has become dangerous, especially for women and children who are at an

increased risk of attacks along the way. The situation is worsened by the ban on truck and motorcycles implemented as part of the State of Emergency in Diffa region since 2015. Motorcycles were used by armed groups to conduct attacks, but they were also by the medical services to provide medicine and support to the local population (RFI 13/07/2015, Institute for Security Studies 21/02/2019).

Trauma and psychosocial impact, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, are prevalent due to conflict, especially among children and populations that have been displaced repeatedly. There is a lack of data regarding mental health and the response is limited (MSF 04/04/2019, MSF 14/12/2018, Protection Cluster 24/01/2019).

WASH: As the crisis in Diffa region is protracted and response has been ongoing for several years, WASH infrastructures has been improved and, as of 2018, at least 87% of the displaced households have access to an improved water sources. However, only a minority of households have access to a water point located less than 500 meters away (REACH 02/04/2019, IRC 31/03/2019, IRC 30/03/2019, IRC 29/03/2019, IRC 26/03/2019). Long distance to water points exposes IDPs, and especially women and children, to increased risks of attacks and kidnappings along the way. Furthermore, recent assessments have also shown that access to drinkable water was a main concern for the displaced population (Protection Cluster 24/01/2019).

On-site evaluations in Diffa have also shown that around 33% of the population, mainly IDPs, did not have access to latrines and practiced open-air defecation, increasing the risks of contamination of water points and transmission of diseases (REACH 02/04/2019). In some IDP settlements, this proportion is as high as 100%, with no latrines available at all (IRC 29/03/2019). The situation is likely to deteriorate further mass displacements will put a strain on the available infrastructure. Furthermore, overcrowding in camps and host communities will increase the risk of illnesses spreading.

Vulnerable groups affected

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to security risks around temporary shelters, especially when displaced by conflict. There is an increased risk of exposure to incidents of rape, sexual assault, and gender-based violence, and such incidents go largely underreported. Precise needs and vulnerabilities faced by women and girls are hard to assess due to the lack of updated age and gender-disaggregated data regarding the IDP population. Women and girls, from both the IDP and host communities, have also often been subject to kidnapping by armed groups.

Armed groups in the area, and in particular Boko Haram, have targeted schools in the past. Disruption to education services exacerbates the vulnerability of children who are at risk of exploitation and abuse, especially when separated from their families. School

also plays an important role to ensure social cohesion and in preventing radicalisation. Out-of-school children are at risk of being recruited into armed groups, and girls especially are more at risk of suffering abuses and forced into early marriage. In Diffa region, 89% of the girls are married before turning 18 (Government of Niger 05/09/2018) and forced marriage has been identified as one of the most common form of violence in IDP and refugee sites (REACH 26/12/2019, Protection Cluster 24/01/2019). The situation is unlikely to have improved since the beginning of 2019 and will deteriorate as the security situation worsens and impacts the livelihood of the host and IDP communities.

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Violence at the border with Nigeria has been increasing since the end of 2019 due to cross-border movement of armed groups affiliated to Boko Haram and to the high availability of firearms which remains an issue in the region. In total, 156 security incidents were registered in Diffa region in 2018, including 137 attacks by armed groups (OCHA 07/02/2019). Another 38 attacks were registered between February and March 2019 (OCHA 04/03/2019, OCHA 04/04/2019). Large-scale military operations are ongoing in the region and are also hampering humanitarian access (Protection Cluster 02/2019). Access to some areas, considered as “red-spots”, requires military escorts while access to other sites is forbidden, leading to important delays in the delivery of aid (OCHA 04/04/2019, OCHA 25/03/2019). The ban on truck and motorcycles implemented as part of the State of Emergency since 2015 further restricts movement in Diffa (Al Jazeera 17/04/2017, ISS 21/02/2019).

Aggravating factors

Dry season

The increased violence observed since the beginning of 2019 can be partly explained by the low levels of the Komadougou Yobé river, which separates Diffa region in Niger, from Nigeria. The river can now be crossed on foot, which facilitates cross-border movement from armed groups operating in the Lake Chad basin region (VOA 25/03/2019, RFI 17/02/2019). The islands of the Lake Chad are used by Boko Haram as a rear base (RFI 02/02/2019).

Conflict in the western regions of Tahoua and Tillabéri

Ongoing instability in the Malian regions of Gao and Menaka has spread into Niger, particularly affecting the border areas of Tahoua and Tillabéri regions, where the frequency of inter-communal clashes and attacks led by armed groups has been increasing since the end of 2018 (Protection Cluster 31/12/2018). Cases of attacks, especially against schools, and kidnappings have also been reported in the areas that border

Burkina Faso as Islamist armed groups are taking advantage of the porous border to lead actions across the region and escape national armed forces (Protection Cluster 31/10/2018, World Economic Forum 23/01/2019).

Though the crisis remains for now limited in the areas closest to the border with Mali and Burkina Faso, it has led to the destabilisation of the region by causing large-scale population movement. More than 62,000 people are currently displaced in Tahoua and Tillaberi (Protection Cluster 05/03/2019) which also host some 51,700 Malian refugees who fled the violence in Gao and Menaka regions (UNHCR 07/03/2019).

Important financial and human means are needed to respond to the needs in the west, and the deterioration of both contexts is likely to strain the government and humanitarian actors' resources.

Contextual information

History of conflict

After causing waves of displacements from Nigeria since 2013, Boko Haram started leading violent operations in Niger in 2015, mainly in the border region of Diffa. According to the UNHCR and the regional authorities, around 249,000 people have been displaced by the conflict, including 104,288 IDPs, 25,731 returnees and 118,868 refugees from Nigeria (UNHCR 26/03/2019). So far, 2019 is proving to be particularly violent in terms of the number and intensity of Boko Haram attacks in the area and could exceed the violence observed in previous years should this trend be confirmed.

Number of violent events directly linked to Boko Haram registered in Diffa region:

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
45	49	12	36	32

Source: ACLED 03/04/2019 - The figure for 2019 only reflects the situation between January and March

Regional impact

All countries in the region have seen an increase in Boko Haram activities since the beginning of 2019, with attacks against both civilians and security forces reported not only in Niger, but also in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad (Jeune Afrique 31/03/2019, Al Jazeera 22/03/2019, Jeune Afrique 10/03/2019). Between January and March 2019, ACLED registered 32 violent events related to Boko Haram in Niger, 7 in Chad and 65 in Cameroon. Nigeria was the most severely impacted with 112 violent events registered (ACLED 04/04/2019). The situation could be a sign of the armed group trying to reassert its presence in the area. The attacks carried out against military bases in Nigeria have also allowed the

group to capture weapons and supplies which will have increased their fire power and is likely to have allowed this new spark of violence (Pulse 26/11/2018).

Niger, together with Benin, Chad, Cameroon and Nigeria, is part of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), created in 2015 to harmonise the regional efforts to combat Boko Haram. On 21 February, the MNJTF launched a military operation to clear Boko Haram settlements in Lake Chad region (Nigerian Army 15/03/2019). Significant casualties have been reported among the armed group (Jeune Afrique 10/03/2019, Jeune Afrique 13/03/2019). Military operation in the Lake Chad region in neighbouring Chad and Nigeria are likely to push Boko Haram fighters closer to the border area with Niger.

Key characteristics

- **Demographic profile:** According to the latest estimates, some 715,000 people are living in Diffa region (OCHA 26/04/2018). There are also around 119,000 refugees from Nigeria (UNHCR 26/03/2019).
- **Food security figures:** Around 55,000 people are facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC-3 and IPC-4) in Diffa region between September and December 2018. This number is expected to rise to 142,000 during the lean season between June and August (Cadre Harmonisé 02/2019).
- **Nutrition levels:** More than 42% of children aged 0 to 5 years suffer from chronic malnutrition in Diffa region. In Sayam Forage refugee camp, this proportion is above 50%. Global acute malnutrition affects almost 14% of the children between age 0 and 5 in the region. The situation is particularly worrying in Maine Soroa department with a GAM rate above 20% (UNICEF 12/2018).
- **Health statistics:** According to the latest data published by the Government of Niger, as of 2017, there was one regional hospital and two district hospitals in Diffa region. There were also 54 health centres. The rate of health coverage stood at 45.5% at region level but could be as low as 34% in N'gourti health district or 38% in Diffa health district. Only 11 doctors, 83 nurses and 14 midwives were working in the region (Government of Niger 2018). This is well below the 1/10,000 ratio recommended by the WHO.
- **WASH statistics:** In 2015, 44% of the urban population and 6% of the rural population was using at least basic sanitation services (WHO 2015). As of 2017, there were 2,575 modern water point registered in Diffa region, which represents an approximate ratio of 36 water points per 10,000 people (Government of Niger 2018).

- **Literacy levels:** In 2012, the adult literacy rate stood at 30.6% and the youth literacy rate (15– 24) at 39.8% (UNESCO 2012). The primary education gross enrolment ratio was 75.1% in 2017 and the net enrolment rate was 65.5% (UNESCO 2017).

Response capacity

National response capacity

There is limited information regarding the national response capacity despite the existence of a Multisectoral Recovery Plan for Diffa (OCHA 24/01/2019).

International response capacity

As of February 2019, 38 partners were implementing projects in Diffa region, focussing mainly on health (182 ongoing projects in 2019), WASH (203 projects), food security (154 projects) and nutrition (156 projects) (OCHA 02/2019). Most of the partners have been operating in Diffa since the beginning of the crisis in 2015 and have good knowledge of the context and operational constraints.

In response to the ongoing situation in Diffa region, five multisectoral assessments (MSA) have been carried out by the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) to identify the most urgent needs of the displaced populations. A comprehensive overview should be published by OCHA. Distribution of food, shelter and NFI kits, and water is ongoing since 27 March (OCHA 04/04/2019).

Population coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms are stretched among the displaced population, many of whom have faced multiple displacement in the past four years due to Boko Haram attacks and military operations. The host community has been struggling to cope with the heavy influx and long-term presence of displaced populations.

Information gaps and needs

Reports are mentioning houses being burnt down during attacks led by armed groups. The extent of the damages is not clearly assessed. The current shelter situation (in camps, staying with relatives, in host-communities, etc.) of the newly displaced populations is unclear.

There is limited information regarding access constraints, and especially concerning potential travel and access restriction, or the necessity of armed escorts.

There is limited information of the specific needs of the recently displaced population. There is no data available to detail to what extent education has been disrupted by the recent spike in violence.

Most of the assessments do not distinguish between the needs of the IDPs and of the host populations or do not consider the host populations.

There is limited information on the national response capacity and on government led initiatives in the area.

Lessons learned

Food and water resources in the host areas are often strained by the arrival of displaced populations. Activities supporting the livelihood of both IDPs and host community members are necessary to prevent tensions and ensure sustainable reconstruction of the affected areas. Supporting host communities is crucial as most IDPs depend greatly on community support systems.

In previous and current displacements in Niger, on-site evaluations have shown that IDPs used non-protected water sources such as open wells, rivers, and lakes as their main sources of water. Assessments have also highlighted the lack of access to latrines and the high frequency of open-air defecation. Measures should be taken to ensure adequate access of both IDP and host populations to safe drinking water and latrines and to prevent the transmission of waterborne diseases.

Housing, land, and property rights challenges are also likely to appear as IDPs and refugees return to their areas of origin.

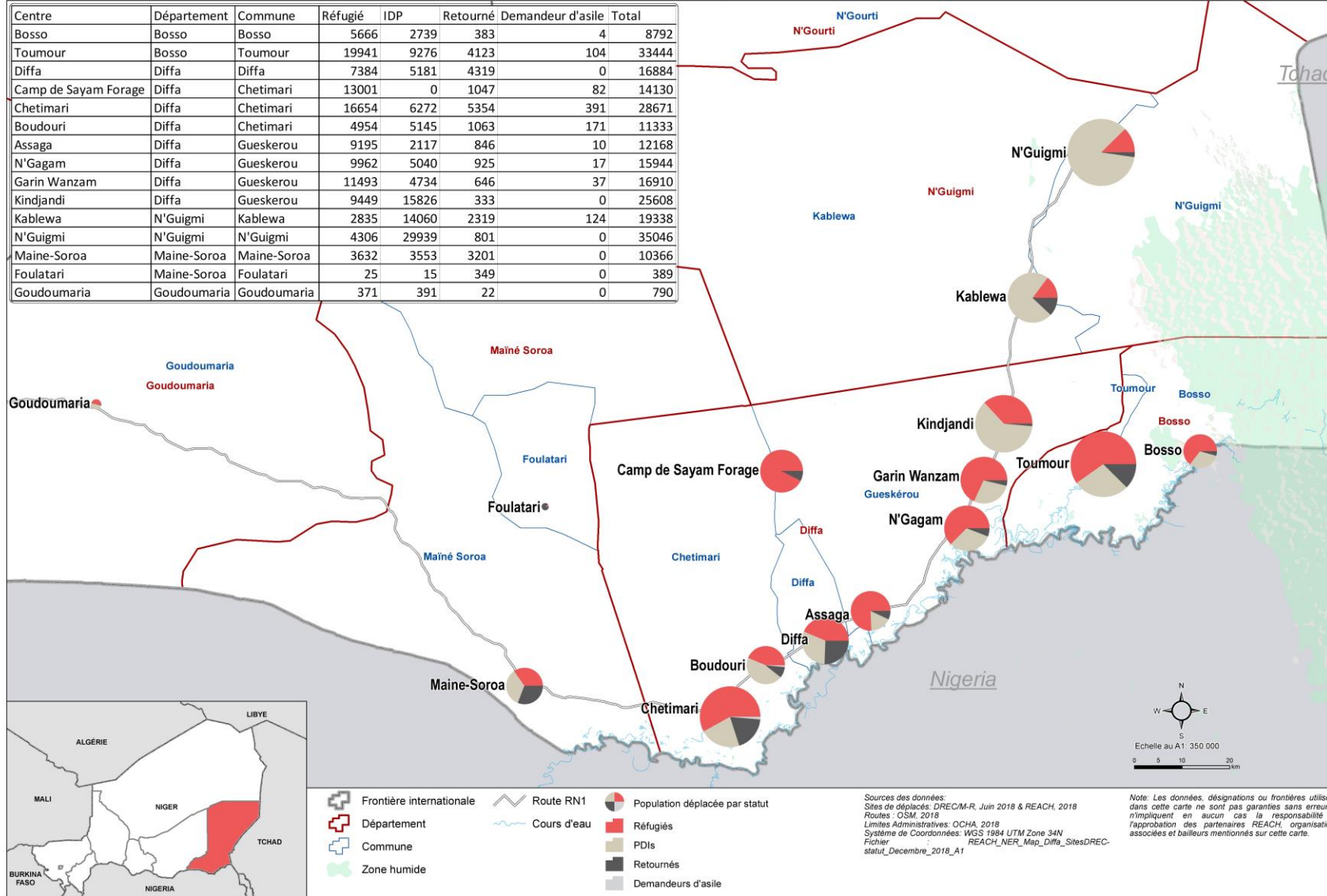
Map: Localisation of displaced population in Diffa region (June 2018)



Niger - Région de Diffa Centres d'enregistrement de la population déplacée définis par la DREC/M-R (juin 2018)

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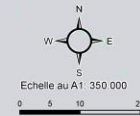
Centre	Département	Commune	Réfugié	IDP	Retourné	Demandeur d'asile	Total
Bosso	Bosso	Bosso	5666	2739	383	4	8792
Toumour	Bosso	Toumour	19941	9276	4123	104	33444
Diffa	Diffa	Diffa	7384	5181	4319	0	16884
Camp de Sayam Forage	Diffa	Chetimari	13001	0	1047	82	14130
Chetimari	Diffa	Chetimari	16654	6272	5354	391	28671
Boudouri	Diffa	Chetimari	4954	5145	1063	171	11333
Assaga	Diffa	Gueskerou	9195	2117	846	10	12168
N'Gagam	Diffa	Gueskerou	9962	5040	925	17	15944
Garin Wanzam	Diffa	Gueskerou	11493	4734	646	37	16910
Kindjandi	Diffa	Gueskerou	9449	15826	333	0	25608
Kablewa	N'Guigmi	Kablewa	2835	14060	2319	124	19338
N'Guigmi	N'Guigmi	N'Guigmi	4306	29939	801	0	35046
Maine-Soroa	Maine-Soroa	Maine-Soroa	3632	3553	3201	0	10366
Foulatari	Maine-Soroa	Foulatari	25	15	349	0	389
Goudoumaria	Goudoumaria	Goudoumaria	371	391	22	0	790



- Frontière internationale
- Département
- Commune
- Zone humide
- Route RN1
- Cours d'eau
- Population déplacée par statut
- Réfugiés
- PDIs
- Retournés
- Demandeurs d'asile

Sources des données:
 Sites de déplacés: DREC/M-R, Juin 2018 & REACH, 2018
 Routes: OSM, 2018
 Limites Administratives: OCHA, 2018
 Système de Coordonnées: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 34N
 Fichier: REACH_NER_Map_Diffa_SitesDREC-
 statut_Decembre_2018_A1

Note: Les données, désignations ou frontières utilisées dans cette carte ne sont pas garanties sans erreur et n'impliquent en aucun cas la responsabilité ni l'approbation des partenaires REACH, organisations associées et bailleurs mentionnés sur cette carte.

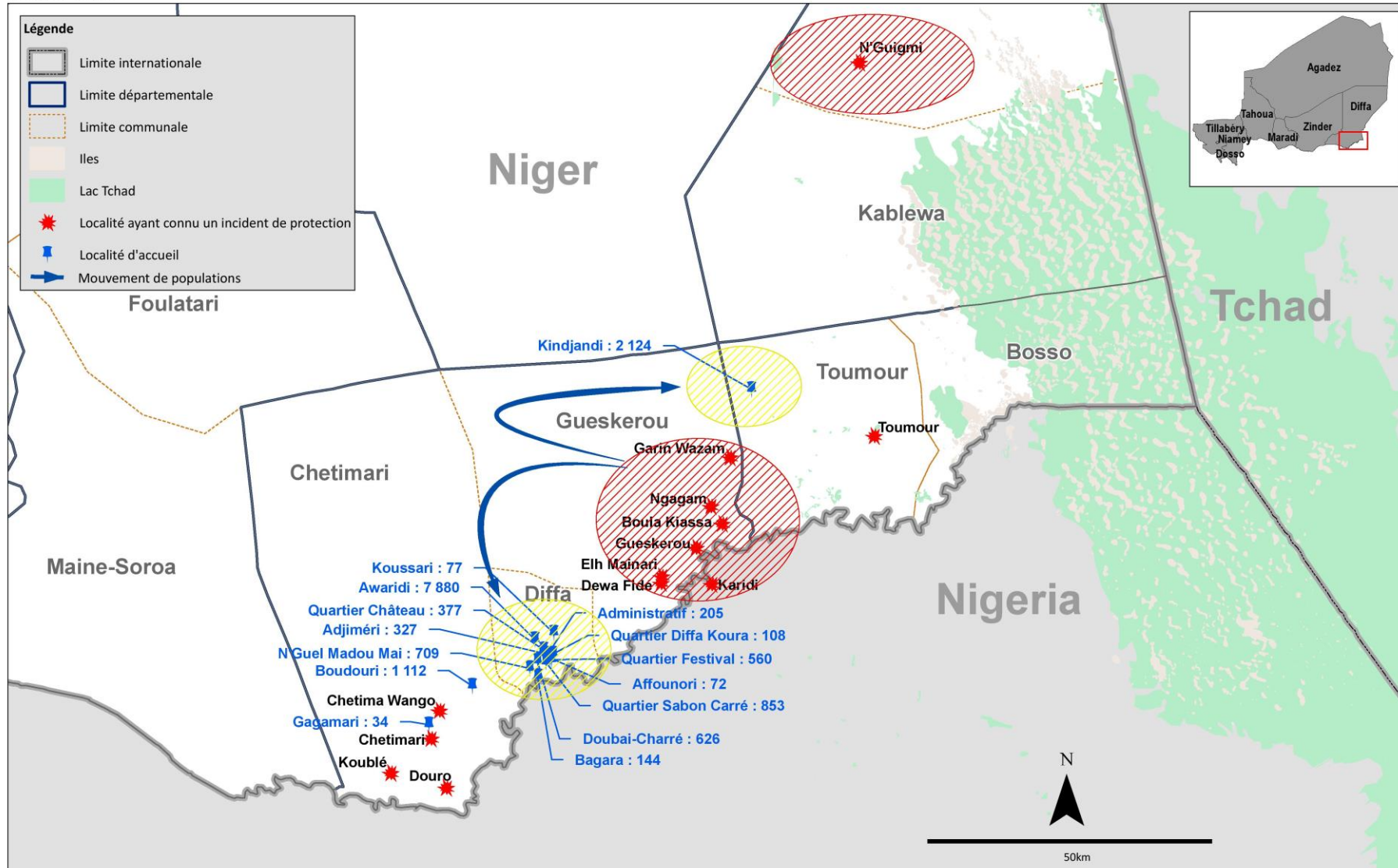


REACH

Map: New displacement following the recent wave of violence (March 2019)

SITUATION ACTUELLE (REGION DE DIFFA)

Mars 2019



Les noms et les limites utilisés sur cette carte n'impliquent aucune acceptation ou reconnaissance officielle du Cluster Protection.
 Date de création: 01/04/2019 Source: Monitoring de protection Auteurs: Feedback: Bacharou Salissou, bacharou@unhcr.org Nom du fichier: NER_DIFFA_MOUVEMENTs_Populations_MARS_2019
 Pour plus d'information visitez: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/niger/protection>