

OVERVIEW

On 9 September 2024, heavy rain and structural damage caused the Alau Dam in Konduga local government area (LGA), Borno state, to collapse. The dam collapse caused flash flooding in neighbouring Maiduguri and Jere LGAs. By 10 September, the floods had affected an estimated 240,000 people across both LGAs (OCHA 10/09/2024; IMC 18/09/2024). Though, the number of affected people varies according to different sources, with OCHA also reporting more than 122,750 people affected as of 18 September (OCHA 18/09/2024). The figures may vary because of differences in methodologies, geographic scope of assessments, access constraints, and humanitarian response.

Reports often conflate the needs and number of affected people in the two areas, as some towns and villages border both LGAs, including Muna and Jere IDP camps (iMMAP 22/11/2023; IMC 18/09/2024). As a result, it is difficult to distinguish the particular impacts of flooding between the two LGAs.

By 18 September, the floods had killed at least 37 people, injured 58, and displaced at least 414,000 in Borno state (IMC 18/09/2024).

The effects of the floods are worst in Maiduguri town. Maiduguri LGA is the state capital of Borno and the largest city in northeastern Nigeria. By 10 September, floodwater covered over 40% of Maiduguri Municipal Council, which had an estimated population of more than 870,000 people, including at least 230,000 IDPs (IMC 18/09/2024). The most affected areas were Bama Road, Budum, Customs/Gamboru areas, Gwange, and Lagos Street (OCHA 10/09/2024).

The floods trapped an unspecified number of people in their homes, on trees, and in other unsafe and inaccessible locations. The number of casualties is expected to rise as responders gain access to more affected locations (AJ 12/09/2024; France 24 11/09/2024; CARE 12/09/2024).

Prior to the dam collapse, floods and storms since August 2024 had affected over 123,000 people across Borno state (out of 800,000 affected countrywide) (OCHA 10/09/2024). This had likely decreased community coping capacities, while nationwide flooding may have strained government resources.

The previous flooding also occurred during the peak of a food and nutrition crisis coinciding with the country's lean season (May–September) (OCHA 26/03/2024; City Population accessed 13/09/2024).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

The rainy season in northern Nigeria runs from June–September, indicating the possible continuation of heavy rainfall and flooding in the next two weeks (WB accessed 13/09/2024).

On 11 September, Nigeria's National Emergency Management Authority reported expecting the number of people experiencing flood-induced displacement to reach one million (France 24 11/09/2024).

Flooding has also affected over 12,500 and 46,600 people in neighbouring Adamawa and Yobe states, respectively. There is a risk of more severe flooding in Adamawa if Cameroonian authorities release excess water from the Lagdo Dam (OCHA 10/09/2024). This would further strain the response capacity and could cause increased displacement into Borno state.

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

On 10 September, communications and electricity outages were reported in unspecified locations (OCHA 10/09/2024). Prior to the September flooding, Maiduguri experienced regular communications and power disruptions because of fibre cuts and attacks on critical infrastructure by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) (ETS 02/09/2024; UNHCR 22/08/2024).

Lagos Street Bridge and Gwange Bridge, two prominent bridges in Maiduguri, had partially collapsed by 15 September (OCHA 15/09/2024). Poor road conditions and infrastructure damage will likely hinder the provision of assistance in remote areas.

Boko Haram splinter groups – such as Jama'tu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West African Province – are at the centre of an insurgency concentrated in Borno state, creating significant security risks for humanitarian responders (WFP accessed 13/09/2024; AJ 12/09/2024; ICG 28/03/2024). The most recent protection monitoring report for Borno state, covering May–June 2024, identified an increased presence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unauthorised checkpoints along several key supply routes via roads leading to and from Maiduguri, including the Maiduguri–Damboa, Maiduguri–Dikwa–Ngala, and Maiduguri–Gubio–Damasak routes (UNHCR 22/08/2024). Because of these risks, prior to the flooding, humanitarian responders frequently relied on UNHAS, significantly increasing the cost of activities (OCHA 26/03/2024). By 20 September, it was unclear whether the floods had affected Maiduguri International Airport.

NSAG and bandit violence often targets humanitarian workers. Between January–August 2024, roughly 15 aid workers were killed, kidnapped, or injured in Borno state (AWSD accessed 17/09/2024).

Considering that Maiduguri is a pre-existing humanitarian hub, the floods may affect the capacity of humanitarian responders to continue meeting non-flood-related needs within northeastern Nigeria.

CRISIS IMPACTS

Shelter

By 14 September, more than 300,000 people had been registered across 26 relocation sites in Borno state; by 15 September, around 30 sites were established, and registrations had begun (OCHA 15/09/2024). Around 50,000 people were evacuated to the formerly closed Bakasi IDP camp, which was at full capacity by 10 September, along with the formerly closed Dalori IDP camp and Asheik Jarma school in Maiduguri. Other people were evacuated to additional schools, churches, and mosques. Some fled to Muna IDP camp, which was already hosting 50,000 IDPs prior to the floods (OCHA 10/09/2024 and 15/09/2024; AJ 12/09/2024). New arrivals of displaced people were recorded in Askira/Uba, Bama, Damboa, Gwoza, and Monguno LGAs in Borno state, between 9 and 15 September (DTM 19/09/2024). Although the reasons identified for displacement were a combination of flood, search of seasonal farming and other income opportunities, fear of attacks, and access to services and humanitarian assistance.

By 13 September, people not in formal shelters or camps were sleeping in makeshift tents, on roads, or under bridges, with minimal protection from rainfall (BBC 13/09/2024). Many displaced people had already experienced previous displacement because of conflict and climate hazards in the area (UNHCR 17/09/2024).

Shelter conditions were already poor for many people, particularly IDPs, in Maiduguri, where the Government began closing IDP camps in 2021 as part of a plan to close all camps in Borno state by 2027. While the Government returned some IDPs to their LGAs of origin, others moved in with overcrowded host communities or found informal shelter in Maiduguri (OCHA 26/03/2024). IDPs across Borno generally lived in open spaces, overcrowded camps, or abandoned buildings (OCHA 22/07/2024).

WASH

By 10 September, the floods had contaminated an unspecified number of water sources in Borno state, where WASH access was already poor (OCHA 10/09/2024). According to the most recent large-scale WASH survey in 2021, which covered nearly 22,400 households in all of Nigeria's 36 states, only 7% of respondents in Borno had access to basic sanitation services, while 75% had access to improved water sources (FMWR et al. 21/06/2022).

Health

WASH facility damage, graveyard flooding, and overcrowding in sites hosting flood-displaced people have increased the risk of waterborne and vector-borne disease transmission (OCHA 10/09/2024; AJ 12/09/2024). This includes cholera, which has spiked in Nigeria since June, with nearly 500 suspected cases in Borno state by 17 August, along with diphtheria and measles, which had reached over 900 and 4,900 cases, respectively, in the same period (Health Cluster 01/09/2024). By mid-July, there were insufficient cholera treatment units available for the isolation of patients in Maiduguri (OCHA 22/07/2024).

The floods have affected the city zoo, releasing crocodiles, snakes, and other dangerous animals into affected communities and exposing the affected population to further risk of injuries and fatalities (OCHA 10/09/2024).

Damage to healthcare facilities is limiting healthcare access for everyone in the affected areas. By 10 September, the State Specialist Hospital and the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital were inundated. The teaching hospital still conducted operations on its top floors but had no electricity and had suspended admissions. This will have potential regional healthcare implications, as the teaching hospital is the largest in northeastern Nigeria (AJ 12/09/2024; OCHA 10/09/2024 and 15/09/2024). The Mashamari and General Hospital stabilisation centres, which provided clinical care for children diagnosed with malnutrition, had completely suspended operations. Patients from the General Hospital stabilisation centre were evacuated to other facilities, but patients and staff from Mashamari Hospital's stabilisation centre were still awaiting evacuation as recently as 10 September (OCHA 10/09/2024).

Food insecurity and livelihoods

By 12 September, local authorities had distributed NGN 10,000 (USD 6) per person to an unspecified number of flood-affected people to buy food. Floods had forced most markets to suspend operations, however, leaving people with few places to obtain food (AJ 12/09/2024;

BBC 13/09/2024). This will aggravate an already severe food security situation in Borno state after the May–September lean season, which was the worst in eight years.

The floods have disrupted farming and livestock activities, submerging and destroying croplands. By 18 September, there were information gaps on the extent of the damage to the agriculture sector (AJ 12/09/2024; WFP 17/09/2024; NAI LinkedIn 13/09/2024). Agricultural areas in the southeast of Maiduguri, near Kalari Abdu and Ngawo Fato Bulamari villages, were observed to be inundated as of 11 September (UNOSAT 19/09/2024). Widespread flooding across Nigeria’s northern states – separate from the collapse of the Alau Dam – has destroyed nearly 16,500 hectares of farmland in 27 states. According to the Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, 51% of farming areas in Nigeria are at risk of flooding in 2024 (NAI LinkedIn 13/09/2024).

Education

By 10 September, the Government had closed schools in Maiduguri town for two weeks. At least one school was being used as a shelter for flood-displaced people (OCHA 10/09/2024). As at 19 September, all three million children in Borno state were reported to be out of school because of the flooding (Save the Children 19/09/2024). Long-term lack of education are likely to leave children at risk of protection issues such as early marriage and child labour, as households try to cope with the loss of income and assets.

Education rates were already low in the Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe (BAY) states. Mainly because of attacks on schools, economic pressure, and cultural norms, 46% of school-age children were not attending school by 2024 (OCHA 26/03/2024).

Protection

Many children have been reported to be separated from their families and seeking shelter in overcrowded displacement camps, which exposes them to risk of exploitation, abuse and other protection concerns (Save the Children 19/09/2024).

Borno state has a high presence of IEDs, which floodwaters may have moved or exposed, increasing the risk that civilians will come into contact with IEDs in new or unfamiliar locations (UNHCR 22/08/2024).

Borno state also experiences high rates of gender-based violence, which was the most frequently reported protection incident (27%) in the most recent protection monitoring report (May–June 2024). The denial of services was the most common incident reported, with perpetrators including family members, host community members, and leaders in

IDP sites (UNHCR 22/08/2024). Flood-induced displacement will likely expose women and girls to increased gender-based violence in unfamiliar, overcrowded, and under-resourced displacement sites.

COMPOUNDING FACTORS

Conflict and displacement

Conflict between the Government and NSAGs has been affecting northeastern Nigeria since 2009. An insurgency by the NSAG Boko Haram – including splinters such as Jama’u Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West African Province – is concentrated in Borno state (WFP accessed 13/09/2024; AJ 12/09/2024).

Conflict – including armed attacks, abductions, and the use of IEDs – poses significant protection risks to civilians. The most recent protection monitoring report, from May–June 2024, identified 165 security incidents affecting over 500 civilians in the BAY states, 80% of which occurred in Borno state (UNHCR 22/08/2024).

The floods have affected several displacement camps, including El Miskin camp, which housed approximately 7,000 conflict-displaced people, including over 3,500 children. Maiduguri town is also home to the Muna and Jere IDP camps. It is unclear whether flooding has directly affected these camps (OCHA 10/09/2024 and 15/09/2024). The floods have, however, forced some affected people to relocate to Muna IDP camp, which was already housing 50,000 IDPs (PTN 11/09/2024).

Economic stagnation and poverty

The insecurity in Borno state has resulted in an economic downturn in Maiduguri LGA. The burden of hosting conflict-displaced people has worsened pre-existing levels of youth unemployment and aggravated the weaknesses of local government and service provision (UNHCR 17/09/2024; Mercy Corps 16/01/2019). This leaves communities in Maiduguri with little money to cope with the impacts of further economic shocks, such as flooding, displacements, and unexpected healthcare needs. It would also mean that affected populations likely do not have enough recovery time between different crises.

The rapid population growth in Maiduguri LGA has resulted in resource competition and increased rent across the city, which, combined with economic decline, has forced lower-income households to seek housing in flood-prone areas (IRC 23/06/2022).

Drought and desertification

Nigeria yearly loses around 350,000 hectares of land because of desertification, which predominantly impacts the northern regions of the country, including Borno state (Punch 23/09/2024). Drought and desertification in Borno state, because of climate change, have damaged and/or destroyed farmland over the years, impacting people's abilities to grow food (Save the Children 19/09/2024). Similarly, drought and desertification have resulted in lack of access to water and poor water quality for people in the affected areas, including Maiduguri (ACRC accessed 13/09/2024).

The desertification of land raises the risk of flooding in the affected areas during heavy rainfall. Because the extended duration of drought impacts the nature of the soil, reducing its capacity to absorb water, which heightens the risk of floods (Wired 19/08/2022). The sediment loading from surface erosion raises the density of flowing water and intensifies the effects of flash floods (UNDRR 11/09/2024).

Livelihoods and food insecurity

Agriculture provides livelihoods for up to 80% of the population in the BAY states (OCHA 26/03/2024). Agricultural systems have the most significant impact on people living in Maiduguri LGA, as they support food production and supply as well as informal livelihoods, which employ the majority of the population.

Over the years, insecurity has affected farms in rural areas, hindering crop production and supply and raising food prices across Maiduguri markets (ACRC 05/2024). The prices of most goods, including sorghum, millet, and maize, which are staples in northern Nigeria, have been steadily increasing throughout 2024, reaching their highest point in 28 years in July (FEWS NET 03/09/2024; OCHA 05/07/2024). This has significantly affected lower-income households with reduced purchasing power, subsequently damaging the food security, health, and nutritional statuses of affected people.

Nearly 257,000 people in Maiduguri (25% of its population) were projected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels from June–August 2024, with another 360,000 (35% of the population) facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels (CH accessed 13/09/2024).

Malnutrition

Acute malnutrition rates in the BAY states are seasonal, with the highest rates typically during the lean season (Nutrition Cluster 09/06/2023). High food insecurity has contributed to the worst nutrition crisis in these states in 15 years (OCHA 05/07/2024). By July 2024, nearly 2.5 million children and 1.28 million pregnant and nursing women were already in need of nutrition assistance in the BAY states (Nutrition Cluster 29/07/2024). Nutrition surveillance data collected among people displaced from inaccessible areas across the three states in July 2024 showed a critical nutrition situation, with proxy global acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition rates of 19.3% and 8.4%, respectively (Nutrition Cluster 28/08/2024). Despite the high nutrition needs across the BAY states, there is a lack of granular nutrition information for Borno state in particular.

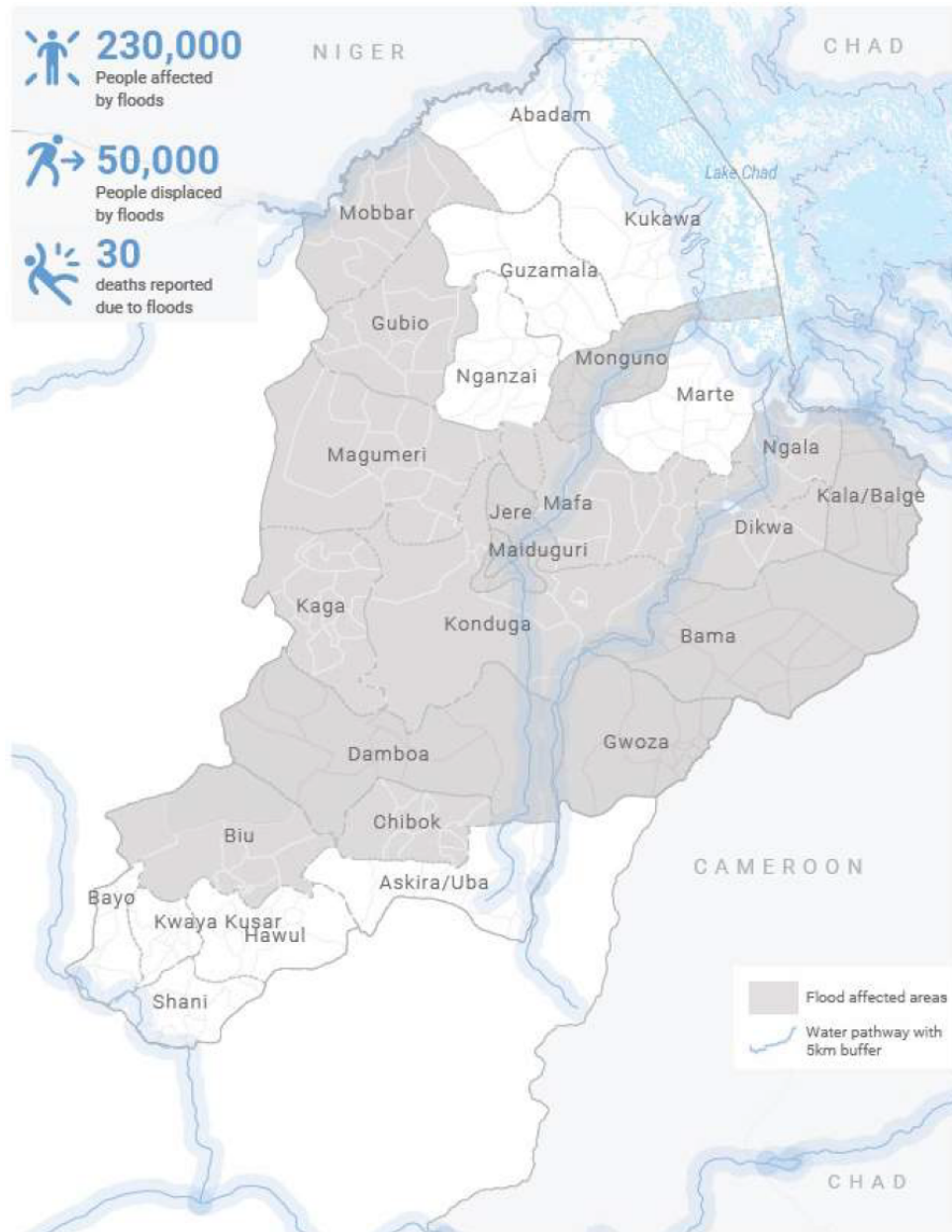
RESPONSE CAPACITY

The National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA) is coordinating the response. However, by 20 September, the Borno State government had announced planned closures and merging of most displacement sites, with only three sites planned to remain open for an additional week to accommodate people without other shelter (MSF 20/09/2024).

By 11 September, NEMA had dispatched an unspecified number of mobile clinics to IDP camps to offer medical care and an unspecified number of water trucks to provide clean drinking water (France 24 11/09/2024). By 11 September, NEMA had provided boats to assist with rescue efforts (France 24 11/09/2024). By 12 September, volunteers with little to no equipment were helping rescue people who remained trapped in their homes and were at risk of drowning (AJ 12/09/2024).

Maiduguri is a hub for humanitarian operations, with UN agencies such as WHO, UNFPA, and UNHCR and INGOs including International Medical Corps, Action Against Hunger, and Action Aid already present (AJ 12/09/2024; Health Cluster 01/09/2024). Humanitarian operations were ongoing as of 20 September, with many UN agencies and INGOs mobilizing a response to the flooding (CARE 12/09/2024; MSF 20/09/2024). By 16 September, UNHAS had established an air bridge to the remote area of Muna, which hosted an IDP camp, to provide food assistance to affected people (UNHAS X 16/09/2024). By 17 September, UNHCR had been providing shelter and NFIs, along with cash, to support affected households. The demand has been rapidly exhausting supplies, however, with only 10% of urgent needs being met (UNHCR 17/09/2024). In the week prior to 19 September, MSF had conducted assessments and provided water trucking and tanks, installation and reparation of latrines, and distribution of NFIs such as mosquito nets across Galtimari, Yerwa, Ali Sheriff, Vocational Enterprise Institute, and Teachers Village displacement sites (MSF 20/09/2024).

Figure 1. Flood impacts by 10 September



Source: OCHA (10/09/2024)

