

Briefing Note – 01 June 2015

# Cameroon

## Displacement in the Far North



Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Urgent
			X		
Expected impact	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Major
		X			

### Crisis Overview

Since 2013, the conflict between Boko Haram (BH) and the Nigerian Government has spilled over into neighbouring countries, including Cameroon.

BH attacks in Cameroon intensified in December 2014, and in February 2015 the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) launched an offensive, led to another influx of displaced people to Cameroon.

As of end April, there were 400 new arrivals every day at the only refugee camp, Minawao, which hosts 37,000 refugees.

In total, there are 81,700 IDPs, 36,000 returnees and 74,000 Nigerian refugees in Far North

region. Access to water and sanitation is lacking. In addition, 200,000 people in the Far North live in acute food insecurity and about 35% of children in border areas are estimated to be malnourished.

#### Affected groups in Far North region

Affected groups in Far North region	Key figures
Resident population	3,945,168
Total displaced population	191,700
Percentage of population affected	4.85%
IDPs	81,700
Nigerian refugees	74,000
Returnees (from IDPs)	36,000
Refuges who are women and children	75%
IDPs who are women and children	84%

### Key Findings

#### Anticipated scope and scale

- Increased displacement is expected as the security situation is worsening. A second refugee camp for Nigerians is being identified in the Far North region.
- Food insecurity is expected to be more acute during the lean season (June–August).

#### Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- Water scarcity in the region is hampering the provision of adequate levels of safe water for the refugee population. Only 10L per person per day is provided in Minawao.
- Sanitation is needed to prevent a waterborne disease outbreak.
- Food assistance to over 200,000 people in the Far North region.

#### Humanitarian constraints

- Access is severely limited, particularly along the border. Security in the Far North is extremely volatile due to BH attacks on civilians and confrontations between the army and insurgents.
- UXO are present.

#### Limitations

Most information focuses on Minawao camp. Lack of data on other refugee locations (Mokolo, Mora, Magdeme, Limami, Waza) and outside camps is hampering assessment of the situation.

## Crisis Impact

As of 28 May, the Far North of Cameroon (Logone-et-Chari; Mayo Sava, Dimare, Mayo-Sanaga) now host 74,000 Nigerian refugees. This represents an increase of around 26,000 refugees from 30 December 2014 when there were 48,000 Nigerian refugees. In December, 34,500 Nigerian refugees were reported by UNHCR to be from a previous influx which began in May 2013 following the rise of BH related activities in Nigeria (UNHCR, 30/12/2015). In addition to the Nigerian refugees, there are 81,700 IDPs and 36,000 returnees (OCHA, 28/05/2015).

As of 23 May, the population in Minawao camp, the largest housing Nigerian refugees, about 130km east of the Nigerian border, stands at 37,171 (UNHCR, 23/05/2015). 12,487 Nigerian refugees have also been reported outside the camp (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). The first week of May saw a peak of 2,582 new arrivals at Minawao camp. There are reports that the average new arrival rate has been increasing since the last week of April. The influx of new refugees has reportedly reached an average of 400 a day (Inter-agency, 17/05/2015). BH attacks or fear of BH's attacks are the main reasons for displacement among the IDPs: more than half of them (57%) fled during an attack of Boko Haram (BH) and 39% fled fearing an attack of BH (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015).

### Access to Essential Services

According to an assessment conducted among 477 key informants (KI) in the Far North region, the priority needs are food security (for 31% of KI), water (20%), health (18%), livelihoods (12%) and shelter (7%) (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). Health infrastructure around Minawao camp has very low capacity and does not meet the needs of the population (Inter-agency, 17/05/2015).

**Food:** About 200,000 people in northern Cameroon face acute food insecurity after cross-border raids by BH have forced people to flee their homes and fields (Reuters, 29/05/2015). More than 70% of farmers in the Far North have deserted their fields since 2014, according to Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The most affected departments are Mayo-Sava, Mayo-Tsanaga, and Logone-et-Chari (IRIN, 19/05/2015).

According to an assessment in the Far North, priority needs are: food basket, wheat flour and agricultural support (seeds/tools). Displaced people living with host families are most in need of assistance (23%), followed by displaced in rented accommodation (22%) (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). Women and children, who represent 84% of IDPs and 75% of refugees in the Far North, are more at risk of food insecurity according to WFP,

as many women have lost their husbands and have been forced to take over as head of household (IRIN, 19/05/2015).

**Health:** According to an IOM and UNHCR assessment in the Far North, priority needs for displaced populations are medication, health staff, and medical equipment. People displaced in host families (23%) and people displaced in damaged/unfinished buildings are most in need of healthcare (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). Among the approximately 30,000 refugees and 40,000 IDPs scattered around Kousseri, the capital of Logone-et-Chari department, malaria has been identified as the main health issue (MSF, 29/05/2015).

**Nutrition:** Since January 2015, 6,316 SAM cases among under-fives have been reported in 13 districts hosting IDPs. SAM caseload in the Far North in 2015 is estimated to be around 39,000 (UNICEF, 18/05/2015). About 35% of children in border areas are estimated to be malnourished. At least 19% of children in Minawao refugee camp are suffering from malnutrition (IRIN, 19/05/2015). Nutritional screenings of IDPs conducted by International Emergency and Development Aid in the Fotokol area, in Logone-et-Chari department, indicate up to 36% GAM among young children (WFP, 29/05/2015).

**WASH:** According to an assessment conducted by IOM and UNHCR in the Far North, water priority needs for displaced populations are: pumps, wells and water treatment. Sanitation and waste management priorities are separated latrines for men and women, insecticide due to an increase of flies and mosquitos, and garbage collection. The construction of new latrines is lagging behind the influx of people (UNHCR, 23/05/2015). People in greatest need of WASH are displaced populations in rented accommodation (23%) and displaced in self-settled sites (15%) (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). In Minawao camp, access to water is the priority issue: only 10L per person per day is being provided. 48% of water is provided by boreholes and 52% by water trucking (UNHCR, 23/05/2015).

**Shelter and NFIs:** In the Far North, 36% of IDPs are staying with host families, 28% are in rented accommodation, 24% in self-settled sites, 7% in damaged/unfinished buildings and 5% in collective centres (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015). 87% of refugees in Minawao camp have access to adequate shelter (UNHCR, 23/05/2015). According to an assessment conducted in the Far North, shelter priorities for displaced populations are: temporary shelter/tents, shelter reconstruction/rehabilitation and cash assistance for shelter. People most in need of shelter are displaced people with host families (23%) and displaced population in rented accommodation (21%). NFI priorities for displaced

populations are bedding, mosquito nets, and cooking material. People most in need of NFIs are displaced population in rented accommodation (32%), in self-settled site (21%) and residents not displaced (20%) (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015).

Discussions to set up a second refugee camp, further from the insecure border, is underway. Given the scarcity of water in the area around Minawao, the second camp location will need to be carefully chosen (Inter-agency, 17/05/2015).

**Protection:** 27 cases of sexual violence have been reported in Minawao camp (UNHCR, 15/04/2015). According to UNHCR estimates, 59% of displaced Cameroonians have lost essential documents. Around 38% of displaced children have been separated from their families and are living with relatives (IRIN, 12/05/2015). 48.5% of children were reported to be involved in an economic activity as of 2007 (GoC, 2007).

**Education:** In the three most-affected localities of Logone-et-Chari, Mayo-Sava, and Mayo-Tsanaga, 60% of schools have been abandoned, 30% are occupied by displaced people, and 10% have been either destroyed or looted during attacks, according to UNHCR. Since September 2014, more than 120 schools have been forced to close (Education Sector, 02/2015).

Almost 30,000 IDP children have been deprived of education (Education Sector, 02/2015). Children among the 74,000 Nigerians who have fled to Cameroon since March are also out of school. In Minawao camp, there are only three primary schools with 21 classrooms to accommodate more than 6,600 primary school-aged children (IRIN, 12/05/2015).

### Vulnerable Groups Affected

The three groups in greatest need of assistance are children under five, young children between 5 and 12, and older people. Displaced people outside camps are also more vulnerable (IOM and UNHCR, 19/05/2015).

### Humanitarian Constraints

Security in the Far North is extremely volatile due to BH attacks on civilians, confrontations between the army and insurgents, as well as the presence of UXO. Humanitarian access to certain border areas is severely restricted. Since the intervention of the Chadian army in February 2015, BH militia raids in Cameroon have fallen, but security remains fragile (OCHA, 17/04/2015).

## Potential Aggravating Factors

### Rainy Season

The rainy season in northern Cameroon runs from April through September (HEWS 2014, Cameroon 2014). This could lead to spread of disease and have an impact on relief operations.

### Previous Cholera Outbreaks in Cameroon

In July 2014, more than 1,200 cholera cases were reported from northern Cameroon, including more than 200 deaths. According to the Minister of Public Health, Logone-et-Chari and Mayo Sava were the hardest hit areas (Cameroonweb 26/07/2014).

From 2009–2011, Cameroon reported its worst outbreak ever. The outbreak started at the beginning of September 2009, in the Far North region. Nigeria was also facing an outbreak in the bordering states of Adamawa, Borno, and Taraba. During 2011, nine out of ten regions in Cameroon reported a total of 22,762 cases, including 786 deaths (WHO 17/01/2012). The worst affected regions were Far North and North, where less than 25% of the population has access to potable water and less than 5% of the population uses latrines.

Cameroon first reported cholera cases in 1971, when the current pandemic hit the African continent. More than 2,000 cases were reported, with a CFR of 15% (WHO 17/01/2012). In 2004, 8,000 cases were reported in Littoral and West regions. By June of that year, there were 700 cases per week. In 2005, Cameroon reported 2,847 cases including 110 deaths (CFR 3.86%); 70% of cases were in Littoral region.

## Contextual Information

### Boko Haram in Cameroon

There have been reports of BH launching cross-border attacks on Cameroon from Nigeria since February 2012, raiding villages and conscripting young men (AFP 11/09/2014).

The attacks intensified in Cameroon since end December (ECHO, 06/01/2015) with BH militants entering the Far North region from Lake Chad. They have targeted settlements and military vehicles, and kidnapped individuals. They have also attempted to take over army bases (AFP, 18/12/2014; 29/01/2015; Reuters, 28/12/2014; VOA, 21/03/2015). In late December

2014, Cameroon launched its first airstrike against BH, after 1,000 BH captured a military base in Achigachia and five villages in the Far North (BBC 29/12/2014).

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF), originally intended to improve border security between in the 1990s, declared its intentions to support the Nigerian army against BH in January 2015, led by Chad and including forces from Niger and Cameroon. In February, the MJTF launched its offensive. Throughout February-March, the MJTF claimed to have recaptured around 36 towns in Nigeria (Wall Street Journal, 11/03/2015; US Institute of Peace, 09/01/2015).

BH's cross-border raids have fallen since the MJTF began major operations. It has reverted to guerrilla tactics and is focused more on obtaining supplies like food and livestock (ICG, 30/04/2015). Attacks are still concentrated in the Far North, but have spread southward (AFP, 06/04/2015). There have been at least 18 BH attacks in northern Cameroon since January 2015 (AFP, 20/05/2015).

The Chadian Government has announced it will extend its military operations in Nigeria and Cameroon indefinitely (AFP, 20/05/2015). At the end of May, Nigerian and MJTF operations in Sambisa Forest, thought to be BH's last stronghold, were ongoing (AFP, 23/05/2015, Reuters, 22/04/2015).

### Boko Haram Insurgency

Founded in 2002, BH aims to establish a caliphate in the northeast of Nigeria. In May 2013, a State of Emergency was declared in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states of northeastern Nigeria, where BH was most active. Local groups have formed vigilante armed opposition groups to BH, reportedly with tacit government approval. It was followed by a surge in military activity (AFP 13/09/2014; Al Jazeera, 17/11/2014). Nigeria witnessed a 40% increase in conflict events in 2014 over 2013, as BH attempted to consolidate its rule over captured areas. Reported fatalities increased by almost 150% (ACLED, 01/2015). The State of Emergency expired in November 2014 after the Nigerian Parliament denied the President's request for an extension (VOA, 21/11/2014). In March 2015, BH pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (BBC, 12/03/2015).

**Regional:** In April 2012, the MJTF base in Baga, with forces from Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to interdict criminal activity in the Lake Chad Basin, expanded its mandate to include the fight against terrorism (Sahara Reporters 07/05/2013). Following intensified BH attacks Nigeria and the Far North of Cameroon, the MJTF announced it would support Nigerian forces in January 2015 (Reuters 13/01/2015; Daily Mail 14/01/2014; Al Jazeera 20/01/2015). In February, BH attacked the Diffa region of Niger and Chadian territory around Lake Chad (Aljazeera, 14/02/2015).

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) comprises around 10,000 military and civilian personnel from Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, in addition to Nigeria and Benin (UNHCR, 26/03/2015). About 2,500 Chadian troops withdrew from Nigeria mid-March, with indications they would be redeployed for fresh offensives elsewhere (Daily Mail, 19/03/2015). The scope and remit of the regional force is unclear; failure to maintain control over liberated towns, such as Gamboru and Marte in Borno state in March and April, have also suggested co-ordination problems (AFP, 25/04/2015; 20/03/2015).

**The United States** is supplying equipment and logistics training to the Cameroonian military to aid its efforts to counter BH (VOA, 20/02/2015).

### Past Displacement

As of May 2015, there were over 410,000 displaced people in Cameroon, including over 320,000 refugees from CAR and Nigeria and other countries (OCHA, 21/03/2015; UNICEF, 23/04/2015). The largest refugee population originates from CAR, and is mainly located in East and Adamawa regions: as of 15 May, 247,250 CAR refugees are in Cameroon, and 140,820 have arrived since December 2013 (OCHA 27/06/2014; HRW 24/06/2014; UNHCR, 15/05/2015). Many refugees are not registered. A reduced flow of refugees has been reported in recent months due to improved conditions in CAR. (VOA, 16/03/2015).

In January, there were several thousand refugees and asylum seekers originating from other countries throughout Cameroon, mainly Chad, Guinea (UNHCR, 01/2015).

## Key Characteristics of Host Population and Area

Mayo-Sava and Mayo-Tsanaga departments of the Far North region are most affected. Most indicators are not available per department and reported is therefore for the region. The region is composed of six departments and had a population of 3,945,168 in 2015.

**Demographic profile:** As of November 2005, Mayo-Sava represented 348,890 people (11.2% of the region); 51% female. Mayo-Tsanaga had a population of 699,971 (22.5% of the region); 51.2% of female.

**Rural population:** 77.2% of the population lives in rural areas

**Literacy:** 31% among 15–49 years (2011).

**Poverty:** 67% of working people live under the poverty line (2007).

**Livelihoods:** Unemployment rate is 1.7% (2007).

**Nutrition:** 11.3% of the under-five population is severely underweight (as of 2011).

**Health:** Infant mortality rate: 85 per 1,000 live births; under-five mortality rate: 90 per 1,000; 52.4% of 12–23 months old are immunised against measles; HIV prevalence is 1.2% among 15–49 years (2011).

**WASH:** 32.0% have access to drinkable water; 15.2% live in housing with improved sanitation (2005).

**Lighting and cooking:** 97.5% use solid fuel (2010).

**Shelter:** 23.3% of households live in overcrowded shelters (2011).

Sources: Data Portal for Cameroon

## Response Capacity

### Local and National Response Capacity

The Government has asked people throughout the rest of the country to donate food and money to people in need of food in the Far North. Since February 2014, they have received more than USD 1.3 million and several metric tons of rice, maize, vegetable oil, and sardines (IRIN, 19/05/2015).

### International Response Capacity

WFP has struggled to secure funds for its operations in Cameroon and in the past six months was only able to provide food assistance to 68,000 displaced people in April and May, and only for two weeks. Unless funding is secured, WFP will only be able to provide life-saving assistance to 20% of the 225,000 people it aims to support (IRIN, 19/05/2015).

Consultations were held with UNHCR, and a UNHCR-IOM joint IDP profiling data collection exercise was launched to streamline efforts to gather comprehensive information on displacement in the Far North (IOM, 06/05/2015)

Most humanitarian organisations in Cameroon are based in the Far North, around 35 are implementing humanitarian programmes. Most operations focus on the WASH, nutrition and health sectors (Inter-agency, 17/05/2015).

## Information Gaps and Needs

- Most available information focuses on Minawao camp. Lack of data on other refugee locations (Mokolo, Mora, Magdeme, Limami, Waza) is hampering assessment of the situation. Limited information is available on the situation of refugees outside camps.

- Most available information is on food security, WASH, and education. Limited information is available on protection and health needs. No information is available on cholera cases in the Far North region.

## Lessons Learned

- Ensure aid is directed to the most vulnerable, whether they are members of the refugee or host community (OCHA 20/06/2014).
- Although there has been a general preparedness with established mechanisms to respond to displacement crises, unexpected influxes have proven difficult to handle.
- Quick relocation of refugees from vulnerable host communities, entry points and temporary shelters, combined with expanded camp capacity were identified as key factors to a better response from previous crises (ACAPS 03/2014).
- The provision of educational services is critical. Children and young people who have been deprived of education are more vulnerable to BH recruitment, in Nigeria and across borders, which could in turn contribute to further regional destabilisation and an even greater use of child fighters by BH. The interruption of educational services also increases the risk of sexual violence and forced marriage for girls (Save the Children, 2013).

# Map of Affected Area

## Cameroon: Far North - Displaced Population (as of 1 June 2015)

**Resident Population: 3,945,168**

**Affected Population**

Affected Population

**Border Crossings**

Border Crossings

**Sites**

Refugee Camp  
 Refugee Site  
 Transit Site

**Settlements**

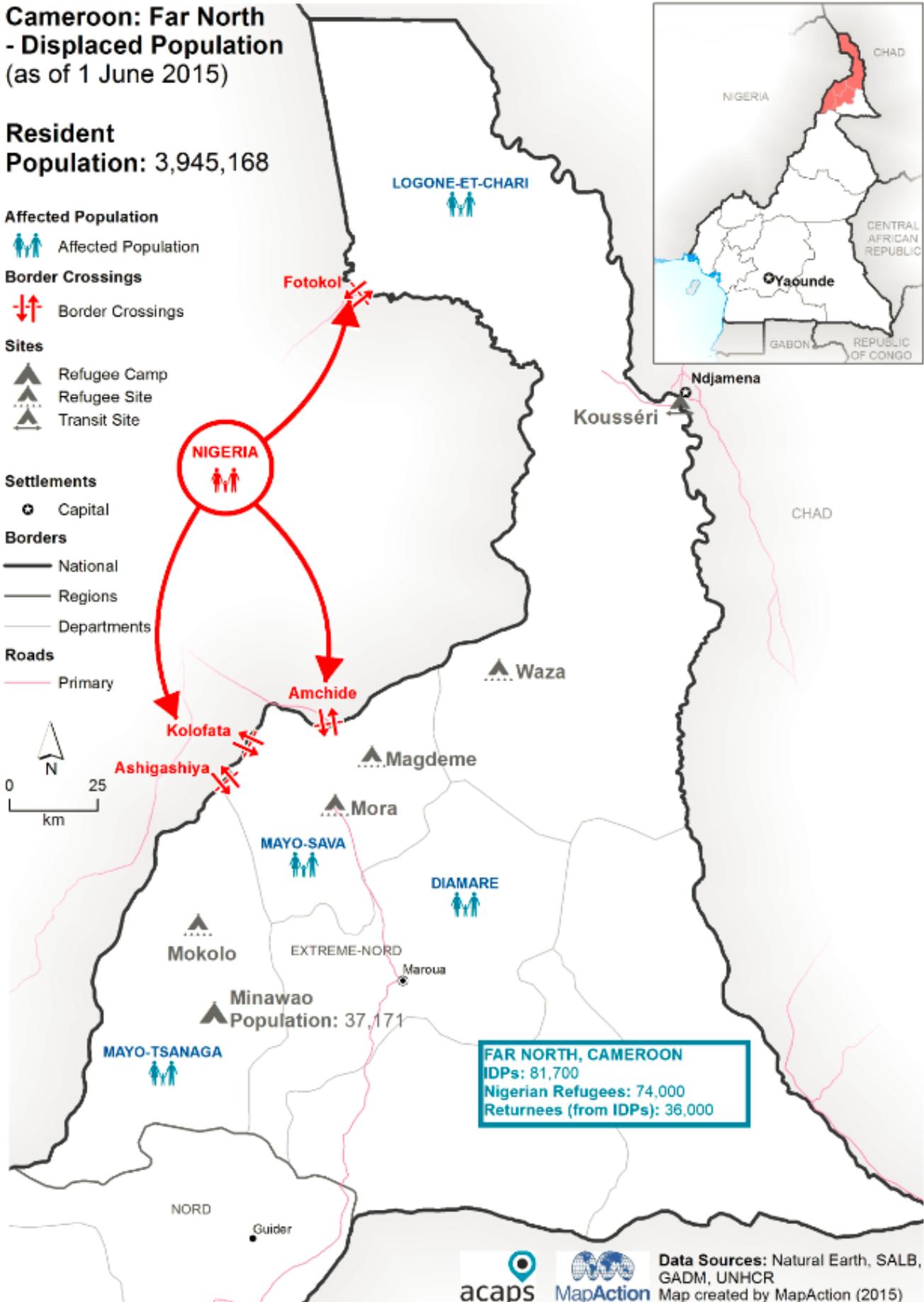
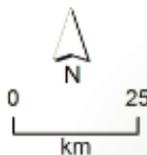
Capital

**Borders**

National  
 Regions  
 Departments

**Roads**

Primary



**FAR NORTH, CAMEROON**  
 IDPs: 81,700  
 Nigerian Refugees: 74,000  
 Returnees (from IDPs): 36,000