

Briefing Note – 26 August 2015

# Nigeria

## Refugee returnees from Cameroon



	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
<b>Need for international assistance</b>		X			
<b>Expected impact</b>	Very low	X		Significant	Major

### Crisis Overview

Over July, Cameroon has repatriated an estimated 3,500 undocumented Nigerian asylum seekers towards Adamawa state. Another 12,000 are stranded at the Nigeria/Cameroon border in Adamawa state. They can be expected to be repatriated throughout August and are in urgent need of further assistance. Cameroon's decision follows a series of Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon; Cameroonian authorities claim the militants have entered the country disguised as refugees. Significant shelter and WASH needs have been reported for returnees in Adamawa and Borno states. The current level of response is reportedly not covering basic needs and should be scaled up ahead of the expected additional arrivals.

### Key Findings

#### Anticipated scope and scale

Up to 12,000 additional Nigerian refugees are expected to return to Nigeria from Cameroon in August. Relocation and registration processes from border points, in addition to national and international response, need to be scaled-up to prepare for these additional influxes. Further processes of repatriation of Nigerians from neighbouring countries, including in Chad, may put further pressure on host communities and increase the vulnerability of displaced populations. Displacement and food insecurity are prevalent in Adamawa and Borno states, and risk further deterioration in the coming weeks and months.

#### Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Shelter and NFIs:** Returnees hosted in makeshift camps in Adamawa state are in need of significant shelter support. Organised process for relocation is still lacking. Consistency in the distribution of NFIs is also required;
- **WASH:** Most returnees in Adamawa state lack access to potable water and personal hygiene materials.

#### Humanitarian constraints

- Most local government areas (LGAs) in Borno state continue to be inaccessible due to insecurity;
- Poor road conditions, damage to infrastructure and lack of communication further hamper humanitarian access.

#### Limitations

Detailed information of location, demographics and needs of Nigerian returnees is missing.

## Crisis Impact

Over July, Cameroon has repatriated an estimated 3,500 undocumented Nigerians, in a move denounced by some as violating international law. Another 12,000 stranded at the Nigeria/Cameroon border in Adamawa state and expected to be repatriated formally during August to Adamawa and, if possible, Borno. They are in urgent need of further assistance (UNHCR, 09/08/2015; OCHA, 13/08/2015). Reports indicate that 1,120 have been screened by Nigerian authorities and moved from the Sahuda crossing point in Mubi South LGA, Adamawa, in August (USAID, 21/08/2015). The current level of response is reportedly not covering basic needs and should be scaled up ahead of the expected additional arrivals.

The decision follows a series of Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon; Cameroonian authorities claim the militants have entered the country disguised as refugees (BBC, 05/08/2015). More than 70,000 Nigerians are estimated to have fled to Cameroon since 2013, including an estimated 12,000-17,000 unregistered (UN News Centre, 21/07/2015).

### Access to essential services

**Shelter and NFIs:** Nigerian returnees from Cameroon in July crossed the Sahuda border in Adamawa State, from where they were taken to a makeshift camp on the outskirts of Mubi town. The camp is predominantly designed as a triage, and does not have the capacity to provide the necessary support to the new arrivals as unfit for human habitation. Some people have been moved to better-equipped camps in Maiduguri in Borno state and others are planned to be moved to a camp in Fufore in Adamawa, though there is no organised process for relocation (OCHA, 31/07/2015). New arrivals reported in August either remain in Yola's Malkohi IDP camp in Adamawa or have been transported to Borno state (USAID, 21/08/2015). Lack of consistency in the distribution of NFIs in these locations was also reported (OCHA, 31/07/2015).

**WASH:** Most returnees in Adamawa state lack access to potable water or personal hygiene materials (USAID, 21/08/2015). In Mubi, water tanks are currently empty, and WASH facilities non-existent (OCHA, 31/07/2015).

**Food:** Insufficient food support has been reported (OCHA, 31/07/2015).

**Protection:** Refugee returnees in Nigeria risk falling back in the hands of Boko Haram and being persecuted (IRIN, 21/08/2015).

### Vulnerable Groups Affected

**Undocumented displaced:** Following the series of Boko Haram attacks in Cameroon, the government has clamped down, determined to prevent potential suicide bombers

from infiltrating deeper into the country. Measures include widespread restrictions on movement, military checkpoints on the roads, arbitrary searches of people, vehicles and goods, and on-the-spot ID checks. The need to have documentation has serious implications for migrants, refugees and IDPs (IRIN, 31/07/2015).

### Humanitarian Constraints

Due to insecurity, most local government areas (LGAs) in Borno state continue to be inaccessible. Remote areas that were previously under control by Boko Haram are still inaccessible and have not been reached by humanitarian assistance, due to high security risks (OCHA, 13/07/2015). Poor road conditions, damage to infrastructure and lack of communication further hampers humanitarian access (IDMC, 09/12/2014; IRIN, 05/06/2015).

## Aggravating Factors

**Boko Haram attacks:** Between January and July 2015, more than 200 Boko Haram-related incidents were reported in Borno state; with more than 6,000 fatalities (ACLED, 08/08/2015). Boko Haram has frequently targeted civilians in public spaces, including schools, markets and bus stops (Action on Armed Violence, 10/08/2015). While the regional force has made significant military gains, Boko Haram continues its insurgency through guerrilla tactics. Cameroon's decision to forcibly return the Nigerian refugees could damage already fragile ties between the two countries, including over priority differences in the fight against Boko Haram, which could, in turn, reinforce the group (IRIN, 21/08/2015).

**Further repatriation from host countries:** Further processes of repatriation of Nigerians from neighbouring countries, including in Chad, may put further pressure on host communities and increase the vulnerability of displaced populations.

**Additional displacement:** Further military intervention by national and regional forces in northeastern Nigeria may cause increased displacement in areas where clashes take place, compounding an already fragile humanitarian situation. A new offensive by a regional force comprising troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin is due to be deployed by the end of August (AFP, 11/08/2015).

**Tensions between host communities and IDPs:** Increased tensions between host communities and IDPs is a concern within Nigeria. Coping mechanisms in host communities have been stretched by the massive influx of IDPs, and the gaps in assistance to host communities remain critical.

**Political instability:** The March 2015 Presidential elections were predicted to lead to widespread violence and displacement, however the elections and inauguration of President Buhari passed without any major outbreaks of violence. Defeating Boko Haram, coupled with tackling corruption, were key platform points during Buhari's presidential campaign. Political pressure may increase if the Government is perceived to have limited success on these two fronts. During the 2011 Presidential elections, 800 people were killed and an estimated 65,000 people were temporarily displaced by violence (HRW, 16/05/2011).

**Food insecurity:** Food security has deteriorated over the past months in northeastern Nigeria, with 3.5 million people facing significant difficulty meeting their basic food needs. Households in areas worst affected by the conflict, including in eastern Borno and northern Adamawa states, are estimated to experience Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food security outcomes between July and September. Households in much of Borno state and parts of Adamawa will continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes from the main harvest in October, which is expected to be well below-average for a third consecutive year (FEWSNET, 07/08/2015; FEWSNET, 25/06/2015).

In Adamawa the worst levels of food security have been reported in the northeastern LGAs of Madagali and Michika (IPC 4) and in Mubi North and Mubi South (IPC 3) (FEWSNET, 07/08/2015; FEWSNET, 25/06/2015). The Nigerian asylum seekers are being repatriated into these LGAs through the Sahuda crossing point in Mubi South.

**Disease outbreaks:** In recent years, Nigeria has seen outbreaks of Lassa fever, cholera, and meningitis. In 2010, Borno was one of the most affected states by a cholera outbreak that killed more than 1,700 people nationwide. Already limited and overstretched health facilities in northeastern Nigeria, particularly Borno, may be significantly affected and unable to address a potential disease outbreak (WHO, 04/04/2012; 18/01/2012; 29/03/2009; 09/03/2009).

**Floods:** Concerns have been raised in a number of Nigerian states, due to the intended release of excess water from the Lagdo dam in Benue river from neighbouring Cameroon's North Region. An alert has been issued by national authorities since 6 August, advising precautionary relocation of people in low-lying areas (ECHO, 19/08/2015).

## Contextual Information

### Boko Haram in Cameroon

Between January–July 2015, Boko Haram launched at least 37 attacks in northern Cameroon (ACLEDA, 27/07/2015). There have been reports of Boko Haram launching cross-

border attacks on Cameroon from Nigeria since February 2012, raiding villages and conscripting young men (AFP 11/09/2014).

Cameroon launched its first airstrike against Boko Haram in late December 2014 after 1,000 Boko Haram militants captured a military base in Achigachia and five villages in the Far North (BBC 29/12/2014). This prompted Boko Haram attacks to intensify in early 2015 with Boko Haram militants entering the Far North region from Lake Chad (ECHO, 06/01/2015).

There was a decrease in the number of cross-border raids by Boko Haram after the MJTF began major operations in February–March (ICG, 30/04/2015). However, in July there was a spike in the number of suicide bombings carried out in Cameroon by Boko Haram. In July alone, 40 people were killed in suicide attacks in northern Cameroon (AFP, 08/08/2015). Allegedly in response to these attacks the government of Cameroon began forcibly repatriating Nigerian refugees who had not formally applied for asylum in Cameroon. The reason given was to remove those asylum seekers linked to Boko Haram (IRIN, 21/08/2015).

### The Boko Haram insurgency

Boko Haram's ("Western Education is Forbidden") violent insurgency began in 2009 and escalated into armed conflict in 2014, when it seized major towns in the northeast. A State of Emergency (SoE) was declared in the three northeastern states Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa in May 2013, following increased attacks by the armed group Boko Haram (ACLEDA, 01/2015).

Some 346 violent incidents were reported in Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, and Yobe states between January and July 2015: 307 with confirmed Boko Haram involvement, and 39 by unidentified armed groups, with suspected Boko Haram involvement. A total of 7,120 people were recorded killed in these incidents (ACLEDA, 08/08/2015). This is an escalation from the same period in 2014, which saw around 220 incidents, with almost 4,000 fatalities (ACLEDA, 11/07/2015).

More than 13,000 people in Nigeria have been reported killed since 2009 – the actual number is believed to be much higher (Amnesty International, 13/04/2015; AFP, 23/03/2015).

Since the end of 2014, the conflict with Boko Haram has taken on a more regional dimension. A regional force, known as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF), made up of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon launched a military offensive against Boko Haram in early 2015 and resulted in significant territorial losses for the insurgent group. By April, Boko Haram had lost all its held territories except its stronghold in the Sambisa forest in Borno state (Reuters, 05/05/2015). However, it has since

launched a counter offensive and as of late July 2015, Boko Haram is reported to be holding five LGAs in Borno and Yobe states (AFP, 23/07/2015).

### Past Displacement

Borno state is host to more than one million IDPs (72% of Nigeria's total IDP population of 1.38 million), mostly displaced by the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency since January 2014. The majority of IDPs in Borno are in Maiduguri LGA (654,874); 10% reside in camps, while a majority is hosted by local communities (IOM, 30/06/2015).

As of June, Adamawa was already host to 113,437 IDPs. 29,435 are in Mubi South, the LGA were repatriated Nigerians enter from Cameroon. In total 27,700 Nigerian refugees from Cameroon have already returned to Adamawa. Since 1 August, 1,143 of these returned have returned to their LGA of origin in Borno (OCHA, 19/08/2015).

### Relevant Stakeholders

#### Boko Haram

Founded in 2002, Boko Haram ostensibly aims to establish a Muslim caliphate in the northeast of Nigeria in opposition to the predominantly Christian south, although a range of demands have been issued by different spokesmen within the group (Al Jazeera, 01/2015). It began attacks on police stations in 2004, but began a major escalations of its operations in 2009. Precise Boko Haram troop numbers are not known, but estimated at around 15,000 (Amnesty International, 13/04/2015; AFP, 23/03/2015). In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (BBC, 12/03/2015). The group main base of operations is the Lake Chad region and the Sambisa forest in Borno state (AFP, 31/07/2015; The Guardian, 29/04/2014).

**Nigerian Government:** Following the SoE declaration in May 2013, military activity surged, leading to the deployment of a Joint Task Force in the SoE states. Local groups formed vigilante armed opposition groups to Boko Haram, reportedly with tacit government approval (AFP 13/09/2014). The SoE expired in November 2014 after the Nigerian Parliament denied the President's request for an extension (VOA, 21/11/2014). There are reports of low morale and defections among Nigerian forces. In the past, Nigerian soldiers have reportedly refused to deploy, or fled from operations (AFP, 22/08/2014; BBC, 25/08/2015). Failures to act on intelligence and abuse during the campaign against Boko Haram are also a problem, impacting relations with the civilian population (ACLEDA, 31/03/2015).

**Regional:** The MJFT was originally intended to improve border security between member countries in the 1990s. 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

Boko Haram 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, Boko Haram attacked the Diffa region of Niger and Chadian territory around Lake Chad (Aljazeera, 14/02/2015).

8,700 military and civilian personnel has been pledged by the member counties to the MJTF, including contingents from Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria (BBC, 03/03/2015). The troops have yet to be mobilised by are expected to be deployed in August. As of the date of publication, this has not occurred (AFP, 31/07/2015; 13/08/2015). 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 suggested coordination problems. The force is headed by a Nigerian commander (AFP, 11/06/2015; 25/04/2015; 20/03/2015).

## Response Capacity

### Local and National Response Capacity

- The Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is in charge of the coordination of government response in cooperation with the State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA). The SEMAs provide IDPs in camps with relief supplies, including food and NFIs, provided by NEMA or the state. The SEMAs also monitor and report on humanitarian access issues. The SEMAs are the primary responders on the ground in all states except Borno, where Borno SEMA and NEMA respond jointly. In June 2015, NEMA took over food delivery in Borno (FEWSNET, 07/08/2015; NEMA, 10/06/2015; 2015 HNO, 23/03/2015; IDMC, 09/12/2014).
- NEMA reportedly has very limited resources to handle the Boko Haram crisis and the massive influx of IDPs into host communities (IRIN, 28/11/2014). IDPs in host communities and informal settlements are not reached by Government response, as only those in camps are targeted (INGO Forum, 19/06/2015).
- In the context of Nigerian returnees from Cameroon, the emergency response is being led by Nigerian authorities, with the support of local civil society and international organisations (OCHA, 31/07/2015). NEMA is providing food assistance, relief commodities, and medical services to those awaiting screening at the Cameroon/Nigeria border in particular (USAID, 21/08/2015).

### International Response Capacity

- The humanitarian response plan (HRP) requests USD 100 million for the international response in Nigeria, of which 46% is funded as of 13 August (OCHA FTS, 13/08/2015).
- A limited number of international organisations are active in the northeast, mainly due to access constraints and insecurity. As of 26 June, 45 humanitarian organisations had operations in the six northeastern states, including 12 international NGOs, eight UN agencies, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement (OCHA, 26/06/2015; 01/12/2014). A number of international NGOs operating in the northeast are coordinated by the INGO Forum, based in Abuja (OCHA, 12/2014; INGO Forum, 19/06/2015).
- The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) commenced flights between Nigeria's capital city of Abuja and the northeastern state capitals of Bauchi, Gombe, Maiduguri, and Yola mid-August. UNHAS flights facilitate the transport of urgently needed humanitarian commodities and workers (USAID, 21/08/2015).
- In the context of Nigerian returnees from Cameroon, lack of organised processes for registration and relocation of new arrivals was reported. National response efforts are supported by the ICRC, Nigerian Red Cross, International Rescue Committee and WHO. A scale up in assistance is required to cover the basic needs of returnees and expected additional arrivals in the coming days and weeks (OCHA, 31/07/2015).
- **Protection:** Boko Haram deliberately targets the civilian population, and protection issues have spiked since the beginning of the insurgency. Women and children are particularly at risk. Landmines and ERWs also pose a threat for years following conflict.
- **Displacement and livelihoods:** Displaced populations in conflict are often among those facing the most difficult circumstances. Displacement can lead to a loss of livelihoods, and a struggle to find work. This generally results in lower productivity among displaced persons than those staying behind. They are also less likely to work in the period following the conflict (IDS, 2011). A loss of livelihoods and decreased household revenue has already affected IDPs in northeast Nigeria, particularly the loss of agriculture-related wage labour (FEWSNET, 07/08/2015; 25/06/2015).

## Information Gaps and Needs

- Needs and location of Nigerian returnees from Cameroon.
- Humanitarian needs in Borno state in general, as access constraints and insecurity prevail.

## Lessons Learned

- **Shelter:** Boko Haram's tactic of burning down villages means shelter is a critical need for returnees. Construction material is lacking, and in some areas houses have been without maintenance for years, due to displacement. Generally in conflict situations, new housing construction and maintenance of existing houses stops, and does not resume or return to pre-conflict levels for years (ACAPS, 11/2012). Housing, land, and property (HLP) rights challenges are also likely to appear as IDPs and refugees return to their areas of origin (UNHCR, 03/2005).



## Key Characteristics

	<b>Adamawa</b>	<b>Borno</b>
Population number (2006)	3,178,950	4,171,104
Population number (projected, 2015)	4,097,673	5,608,644
Number of LGAs	21	27
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	36,917	70,898
Population density (/km <sup>2</sup> )	110.9	79.1
Average household size (2010)	5.0	4.8
Unemployment rate % (2011)	33.8	29.1
Measles vaccination coverage for infants	68.4	23.5
Acute malnutrition prevalence % (wasting, 2011)	6.4	18.7
Literacy rate % (2010)	42	21
Main source of energy for cooking	Collected firewood (80%)	Collected firewood (85%)
Main source of water 2010)	River/spring (28%)	Unprotected well/spring (48%)
Main type of toilet facility (2010)	Covered pit latrine (52%)	Uncovered pit latrine (54%)
Births without skilled attendant % (2010)	6.3	6.7
Healthcare facilities per 100,000 (2011)	28	10

Sources: NEDS, 2010; NBS, 2012; MICS 2011

