

Humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad basin region

January 2018

Facts and figures

Background information

(figures represent Boko Haram related insurgency)

10.8 mio in need of humanitarian assistance

Nigeria: 1.7 mio IDPs

Cameroon: 88'816 refugees and 241'987 IDPs

Niger: 108'470 refugees and 129'015 IDPs

Chad: 152'905 refugees and 9'311 IDPs

UN Appeals for 2017:

Nigeria: 1.05 billion USD

Cameroon: 191 mio USD

Niger: 142 mio USD

Chad: 121 mio USD

SDC allocations 2017:

Org	Country	mio. CHF
ICRC	All	8.0
WFP	Regional	3.0
FAO	Nigeria	2.0
UNICEF	Nigeria, Niger	1.2
Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF)	Nigeria	1.7
UNDP	Nigeria	0.5
IOM	Nigeria	0.4
UNHAS	Nigeria	0.3
NGOs: ACF, COOPI, HI, INSO, IRC, NRC etc	All	4.24
Total 2017 (new)		21.34



Agricultural livelihood project in Maiduguri (Nigeria) – Christophe Grosperre

Switzerland's humanitarian assistance and situation update

- Boko Haram violence and counter-insurgency operations in the Lake Chad Basin have resulted in one of the biggest humanitarian crises worldwide with 10.8 mio. of the affected people who require humanitarian lifesaving support.
- Whilst hundreds of thousands of persons are still inaccessible in areas controlled by Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria, in territories retaken by the Nigerian and multilateral armed forces, aid workers are reaching millions of beneficiaries monthly, responding to extensive multisector needs. It is projected that 4.1 mio. people will be food insecure at crisis and emergency levels during the June-August 2018 lean season, 3.7 mio. of them in northeast Nigeria alone.
- Switzerland is contributing to the humanitarian response by financing activities in the sectors of food security, nutrition, livelihoods, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene.
- With 54.3 million CHF allocated since 2014, Switzerland ranks among the 10 biggest humanitarian donors. Its multilateral contributions have strengthened the capacity of the ICRC, major UN agencies and NGOs in bringing assistance to vulnerable populations (refugees, displaced and hosting communities).
- Besides financial contributions, UN agencies also received the support of three experts seconded by SDC Humanitarian Aid in 2017.
- Four SDC humanitarian affairs advisers based in Nigeria, Mali and Chad are closely monitoring the developments in northern Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin region.
- Since January 2017, Switzerland is chairing the humanitarian donors' coordination in Nigeria and is a permanent member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

Background information

Boko Haram is an armed insurgency group that emerged in 2002 and intends to install extreme religious rule upon northern Nigeria by means of violence. Part of the group also goes by the name of ISWAP (Islamic State's West Africa Province) since it claimed allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in February 2015. The various factions are mainly operating in north-eastern Nigeria but also its neighbouring countries (Niger, Chad and Cameroon).

Attacks and reprisals, most of them excessive and targeting civilians indiscriminately, have caused massive displacement and the death of more than 20,000 persons since 2009.

Despite military advances by both the Multinational Joint Task Force (involving the armies of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Chad and Benin) and the Nigerian Armed Forces, the security situation remains volatile in the region. Boko Haram continues to carry out regular attacks and suicide bombings against armed forces and communities in north-eastern Nigeria and across borders. The group is seemingly on a back foot, but dispersed segments continue to spread over a vast area. Displacements, protection risks and abuses of civilians persist.

Current needs

Most of the displaced families are sheltered by communities that count among the world's poorest and most vulnerable, putting additional strain on infrastructure and resources.

With the push back of Boko Haram, access to affected communities in Nigeria has considerably improved. It is with the opening of the humanitarian space, that the extent of the crisis has become visible. What was primarily a protection crisis now has also become a food security and nutrition crisis, requiring a significant scale-up of life-saving assistance. The situation is particularly dramatic in north-eastern Nigeria where 2.56 million people are severely food insecure (projected 3.7 during the lean season from June to August 2018).

It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people are still trapped in the hands of Boko Haram. Without any doubt, these communities require humanitarian assistance. At the same time, more than 1.3 million displaced individuals moved back closer to their place of origin. Basic facilities and services were already severely lacking in the affected regions before the crisis; their (re-)installation to support larger scale and sustainable return of affected communities is expected to be a long and slow process.

Switzerland's humanitarian response

SDC Humanitarian Aid primarily focuses on food security, nutrition and protection. It is providing financial contributions to partner organizations who are working in these sectors in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Its partners include the Red Cross movement, UN agencies and NGOs. In 2017, three experts in food security, protection, water and sanitation were seconded by SDC Humanitarian Aid to support UN agencies.

Switzerland is following closely the developments in this crisis, through its Embassies in Abuja and Yaoundé, as well as its Cooperation Offices in Niger and Chad. Embassies and Cooperation Offices enjoy privileged relations with the national and international institutions involved in the response to the crisis. The permanent presence of four humanitarian affairs advisers based in West Africa (in Abuja, Bamako and N'Djamena), who regularly travel to the affected areas, makes it possible to track

the progress and quality of the humanitarian response in the whole region.

Providing life-saving food assistance

Conflict, high food prices, inflation, and major disruptions to livelihoods and farming due to fighting have left northeast Nigeria and the region crippled by food insecurity. To address severe food insecurity, WFP is implementing one of its biggest operations in the region. Since mid-2017, humanitarian agencies reached more than 2.4 million people in the northeast monthly through cash-based transfers, in-kind food assistance and specialized nutritious food distribution. A food security coordinator seconded by SDC to the WFP in Niger also contributed to an effective food security response in the country. SDC also supports ICRC and NGOs – such as ACF and NRC – working in the food security and nutrition sectors.

Improving the welfare of civilians and detainees

Violence against medical personnel and facilities has caused hundreds of hospitals to close and staff to flee in the region. Only 30% of health structures are functioning and they need extensive support to take care of the patients, in the form of funding, medical supplies and deployment of medical teams. With contributions to ICRC in the Lake Chad basin, large populations regain access to life-saving medical care.

The ICRC documents allegations of abuse and shares these reports with parties concerned, urging them to take preventive measures to better protect civilians. ICRC also monitors detention facilities to ensure, that inmates are treated according to recognized standards and applicable law.

Psychosocial support and access to education for children

The conflict in the Lake Chad region has not only affected people's physical well-being, but also their mental health. SDC finances projects of the NGOs COOPI in Niger, DRC, NRC and IRC in Nigeria, which provide psychosocial support to displaced children and youth. Those NGOs have created child and youth centres in refugee camps and IDP sites, where they can meet and play. These recreational activities are an effective form of post-traumatic early treatment. Children with special needs are identified in the centres and referred to appropriate services.

In Chad, a similar project providing psychosocial support and access to education has started in 2016. The aim is to promote the schooling of vulnerable children through the establishment of inclusive formal and non-formal education services. Children also learn how to manage the risk of explosive remnants of war.

SDC also supports UNICEF in Nigeria and Niger to provide re-integration services to children formerly associated with Boko Haram, including psychological support and family reunification services.

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