Since October 2016, Cameroon’s deep-rooted grievances along the anglophone-francophone divide have morphed into political demands, leading to protests and strikes. This in turn further evolved into an armed conflict resulting in the destruction of schools and markets and retaliation against villages (e.g. burning of houses, harassment, and violence). As of 30 March 2018, the UN estimated 160,000 people are reportedly displaced and over 20,000 Cameroonian refugees are registered in Nigeria. In the Northwest (NW), the majority of the displaced are living in nearby towns and in the farms/bushes around their communities.

This assessment aimed to provide actors and stakeholders with accurate, reliable data on the impact of the crisis and the armed conflict on food security, livelihood, and hygiene knowledge and practices in the NW, thereby facilitating a more informed, coordinated sectoral response. During the survey, 276 households were interviewed and focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted in August 2018 in Bamenda and Santa.

Key Findings:

• **Displacement:** Overall, the majority of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) assessed (80.4%) have been displaced for six months or fewer. Santa reported the largest percentage of people displaced in the previous three months, whereas Bamenda hosts a greater percentage of IDPs displaced over six months. Overall, 41% of IDPs live independently, whereas 59% are hosted by households in the local community. Overall, 53.2% of IDP households interviewed are female-headed households.

• **Shelter:** In Bamenda and Santa, 93% of IDP households live in a house, and an additional 2% live in a collective center, with less than 5% living without shelter. Focus group participants reported that IDPs who currently earn a salary are able to pay for their shelter; however, the majority of the unemployed IDPs live with hosts. This study found that the average household size has risen to 6.5 people, up from 4.2 people in 2014, with a current maximum household size of 26 people, indicating that overcrowding is a significant issue for the health and well-being of IDP and hosting households.

• **Livelihoods:** 56% of IDP and host men and women practiced agriculture before the crisis. Trading (45%; 41%) and crafts (19%; 17%) were also prominent livelihoods. These livelihoods have seen a significant decrease since the onset of the crisis. The majority of IDPs assessed (88%) do not currently have access to land for agriculture. As a result, 93% of IDP households report having less access to financial resources at the time of assessment than they had before the start of the crisis. More than 89% of IDP households said that their financial resources were not sufficient to satisfy their families’ basic needs at time of survey.

• **Food Security:** 34% of the surveyed IDPs have poor or borderline Food Consumption Scores, indicating moderate to severe food insecurity. When comparing living situation, more independent IDP households face food insecurity (50.9%) compared to IDP households hosted by others (21.6%), indicating that food needs are higher among independently living families.
• **Hygiene:** While people state that they are washing hands regularly, only 80% of households are washing with soap and water. Less than 1% uses water and ash, and 19% use water only. The majority of IDP households (55.1%) never treat water before consumption. The survey results reveal that independent IDP households face greater WASH risks, as they are less likely to have clean water containers with lids and narrow necks and are less likely to use water treatment practices than their hosted IDP counterparts.

• **Non-food Items:** Only 33% of IDP households have access to bedding materials. Between 63% and 67% have access to basic household items including kitchen utensils and cooking fuel. Focus group participants expressly listed cooking utensils and stoves, bedding, and soap among immediate NFI needs.

• **Gender:** Men, women, boys and girls generally perform traditional gender roles in the NW, as men are viewed as the providers for their households while women are the caretakers. Since the start of the crisis, men are more likely to remain in the forests to continue working the agricultural fields and are less likely to displace to urban areas, whereas women have fled to safety with their children. Some displaced women reported being forced to take traditionally male jobs, such as working as security guards, and other women have had to engage in transactional sex as a coping mechanism for support household financial needs. These findings suggest that sexual abuse and gender-based violence cases exist but are not regularly reported because of the survivors’ fear or shame. Informants report that the rate of teenage pregnancy is rising in the area.

• **Ongoing Responses:** At the time of data collection, religious institutions including Catholic, Baptist and Presbyterian groups were providing limited and food non-food support to a limited number of IDP households. Cultural groups in Bamenda were providing food to IDPs who came from their village of origin. INGO presence remains limited in the NW due to insecurity.

**Conclusions:**

The results of this multisectoral assessment reveal the most urgent needs in the NW to be food, non-food items, and protection. Considering that food insecurity may be more severe in inaccessible areas not surveyed, an effective emergency food security operation is paramount. Emergency NFI distribution to IDP households is greatly needed since many households, particularly independently living households, lack basic items like bedding and cooking utensils. Because the majority of households surveyed live in houses and few households are homeless in Bamenda and Santa, emergency shelter is not an urgent need at this time in these areas. As the security situation stabilizes in the future, there will likely be great need for livelihood recovery activities.