In response to the unfolding humanitarian crisis in the Far North region of Cameroon, the IRC decided to undertake a multi-sector assessment in accessible départements of the region to better understand the humanitarian needs of the displaced, returning and host population. An assessment mission, led by the IRC’s Emergency Response Team was deployed to Cameroon on January 20th, 2015.

The assessment used a household, vendor survey and key informant interviews to collect information on the needs, experiences and protection risks facing the displaced, returnee and host populations in five arrondissements within the Far North Region: Maoura III, Petté, Mokolo, Tokombéré and Mora. Over the course of seven days of data collection, the assessment team spoke with 664 households, 145 vendors and 62 key informants across 57 locations. Of the households surveyed, 80% of the respondents self-identified as internally displaced, 11% as returnees and 9% as members of the host communities. The majority of displaced and returnee households have been in their present location for more than six months and have the intention to stay for the foreseeable future.

Findings suggest that the conflict-affected population within the assessed areas are facing severe resource limitations, reduced access to basic services and potentially high levels of stress and trauma.

- A majority of households reported not having adequate resources to feed their families. Equally, households expressed difficulty in meeting water needs and accessing healthcare and education. The largest barrier to accessing services is cost or lack of financial resources.
- A large proportion of displaced and returnee households are paying rent, despite having limited access to livelihoods, regular work or other sources of income.
- Households have dispersed and been separated throughout the displacement process. More female-headed households were recorded within the sample than would be expected, and these women living on their own are reporting more acute economic needs than those households that are still headed by men.
- Key informants reported concerning protection risks within their communities, including unaccompanied and separated children, recruitment or use of children by armed groups and sexual violence, though little evidence of response services were found. Additionally, displaced and returnee communities are known to be facing discrimination and additional access barriers if they lack civil documentation.
- Markets are functioning and vendors are able to keep their shops open and stocked.

**RECOMMENDED RESPONSE AREAS FOR THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY**

1. Market-based interventions to address basic needs and access to services should be prioritized over the distribution of food or non-food items
2. Safe water supply, improved latrine architecture and basic hygiene promotion should be increased
3. Case management, psychosocial services and monitoring systems should be established to protect vulnerable populations, including women and children
4. Emergency interventions within the health and education systems should focus on increasing capacity and appropriate service delivery to support the displaced and returnee populations alongside the host communities

**Multi-Sectoral:** Access to basic services and protection concerns  
**Data Collection:** 4 – 10 February, 2016

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petra.hoskovec@rescue.org  +237 662 514 975

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1 The 2011 DHS reports that 25% of households in Cameroon are headed by women, with little variation between urban and rural populations
The Far North of Cameroon is situated at a crossroads of terror, instability and humanitarian need. Sharing borders with the crisis-ridden countries of Nigeria and Chad, Cameroon's poorest and most populated region has become the victim of increasing number of Boko Haram terror attacks over the course of the past two years.

The Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram was founded in 2002 and has been engaged in an ongoing insurgency in Northern Nigeria and surrounding areas since 2009. Having killed an estimated 20,000 people in the past five years, their campaign of violence has driven over 2.3 million people from their homes. In May of 2015, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari came to power stating that his aim was to destroy Boko Haram. This assertion coincided with a regional counter-terrorism effort aimed to push the terrorist group out of the territory it occupies in northeastern Nigeria, specifically in Borno State. Over recent months, Boko Haram has either retreated or been forced to move from the parts of Nigeria it previously occupied, while at the same time stepping up attacks within the Adamawa and Far North regions of Cameroon. By early 2016, Boko Haram was perpetrating near daily assaults in Cameroon, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, ambushing, assassinations of local leaders and thefts of goods and livestock. The Cameroonian government has responded to this by increasing the number of military troops in northern Cameroon and conducting military operations against Boko Haram.

The repeated incidents of terrorism and violence have resulted in massive internal displacement within the Far North region. The International Organization of Migration's November 2015 Displacement Tracking estimates that there are over 120,000 people displaced due to conflict in the Far North. The Adamaoua, East and Far North regions of Cameroon have also played host to thousands of refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria since 2014. This refugee presence has led to a sizable humanitarian response within Cameroon, but as of January 2016, these actors have, understandably, not been able to quickly expand their programming to fully address the needs of the increasingly large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) within the Far North.

In response to this unfolding humanitarian crisis, which was analyzed and summarized in a Preliminary Scenario Definition document prepared by the IRC in early December, 2015 (see Annex 1), the IRC decided to undertake a multi-sector assessment in several départements of the Far North region to better understand the humanitarian needs of the displaced. An assessment mission, led by the IRC’s Emergency Response Team was deployed to Cameroon on January 20th, 2015.

The informal shelter of a female headed household in Mora, urban.
Objectives

- To improve the IRC’s understanding of the needs and concerns of the affected population by collecting primary, household-level data
- To collect enough information directly from the populations we aim to serve to enable the rapid start-up of emergency programming to address priority needs and concerns without causing harm
- To capture a preliminary understanding of how the market for staple foods has been impacted by the crisis

Core Questions

1. What are the living conditions and household compositions of the affected population?
2. Does the affected population have access to needed goods and services (water, sanitation, healthcare, education and markets)?
3. What are the protection risks and concerns facing the affected population?
4. What is the intent to return or migrate onward of the affected population and has any family been left behind?
**METHODOLOGY**

**Data Collection**

In order to respond to the core questions stated above and achieve the assessment objectives by collecting information directly from the affected population, while allowing for triangulation among different sources, the IRC deployed four data collection methods in the field: brief household surveys, vendor surveys, key informant interviews and an assessment site observation tool. (See Annex 2) These tools were created in French.

**Household Survey:**
A household was defined as a group of people sharing meals from the same bowl. Adult representatives present in a selected compound were targeted for an interview, with an aim of selecting the person who could most accurately speak to the needs of the entire household. If no adults existed within the household (i.e. a child-headed household of unaccompanied minors), the interview moved forward with the oldest member of the household, once that determination was made. If many households were living under one roof, an attempt was made to interview each household individually. The quantitative survey tool consisted of 53 closed-format questions addressing household composition and living situation, water and sanitation, health, education, economic situation, perceived risks facing the community, prioritized need and short-term migration intentions.

**Key Informant Interview Questionnaire:**
Key informants were defined as members of the displaced or host community with the ability to speak generally about the experiences of their community as a whole; specifically, female and male teachers, female and male community members, female members of local associations, and female and male youth, aged 14 to 24. The questionnaire addressed the protection risks to and relevant supportive structures for both women and children in the community through a series of closed questions. These questions were meant to complement the household-level data collected, as it is assumed that respondents will be reluctant to reveal sensitive information relating to risks and experiences of violence during a brief encounter that focuses on their individual household. Rather, the key informant interview is both a longer and more personal process, whereby the enumerator is trained to create a safe and supportive environment with the respondent, while never asking any direct questions about their individual experiences, focusing only on their opinion and impression of the situation within their community as a whole. Displaced and host community members were selected as respondents, irrespective of their status, as the questioning did not relate specifically to the experiences of the community before or during displacement, but rather the current, present situation within the assessment location. Lastly, average community members rather than specific leaders were targeted, as experience from a similar assessment in and around Yola, Nigeria, showed that leaders tend to underreport protection-related concerns, whereas average community members are more open to revealing any knowledge they might have about the issues.

**Vendor Survey:**
Proprietors of small neighborhood shops selling basic food and non-food items within the communities hosting IDPs were targeted with a short, quantitative survey tool, consisting of 12 closed-format questions addressing pricing and stock availability since the July 2015 Boko Haram attack on Maroua.

**Observation Tool:**
For each assessment location visited, community-level data on the number of military check-points crossed, functionality of schools and health facilities, and market access were assessed by enumerator team leaders by speaking with local authorities while seeking permission to assess in that location and through visual observation.

Household and vendor data were collected on mobile phones using KoBoCollect. Key Informant interview and direct observation data were recorded on paper forms and transferred to Yaoundé for entry. All data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

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3 The questionnaire was adapted from the Global Protection Cluster’s Child Protection Working Group’s Child Protection Rapid Assessment tool.
4 Selected as a known conflict-related event that impacted the entire region
5 KoBoCollect 1.4.3 (1039), Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, 2015
6 Microsoft Excel 15.0.4615.1000, Microsoft Corporation, 2013
The IRC purposefully selected assessment locations based on the security situation, physical access, the estimated size of the IDP population and perceived gaps in service provision. Based on the International Organization of Migration’s November 2015 Displacement Tracking Matrix\(^7\), the IRC focused its attention on the three départements within the Far North Region reported to be hosting the highest number of people displaced by conflict: Logone-Èt-Charî, Mayo-Sava and May-Tsanaga.

Household respondents and key informants were selected via snowball sampling, using locally appointed guides to introduce enumerators to IDP and host community households and key informants. Both IDPs and host community households were targeted at a ratio of four to one, given that displaced households would be the primary target for assistance, but with acknowledgment that the entire population can be considered conflict-affected and a need to gather information from hosting communities as well. Lastly, spontaneous IDP settlements or collective shelters were prioritized for data collection in any assessment locations where they were present. A drive to collect data, analyze findings and disseminate results to inform programming limited data collection to seven days, with an aim of collecting data from 50 to 100 households and four to six key informants each day, leading to a sample of between 350 and 700 households and between 28 and 42 key informants.

Vendors were not sampled, rather an attempt was made to conduct a census of all small-scale shops serving each village or quartier where household surveys and key informant interviews were conducted. Large daily or weekly marketplaces were excluded due to security concerns, as they have been the repeated target of Boko Haram suicide bombings throughout the region.

A team of 15 enumerators and five team leaders were hired in Maroua and provided with two days of training on the assessment objectives, data collection tools and technology and basic principles of protection, child protection risks and concepts and issues relating to gender based and sexual violence. The team were mostly university students with previous survey and assessment experience. Ten enumerators (5 male, 5 female) were tasked with household level data collection and led by two team leaders, three enumerators (2 male, 1 female) were responsible for vendor data collection and three enumerators were responsible for key informant interviews (all female), each of these groups were supervised by an additional team leader.

Limitations

The information presented below should not be interpreted to be representative of the experiences or needs of the population of the Far North region, nor the assessed areas specifically. The sampling strategy employed throughout the assessment does not allow any findings to be generalizable beyond the sample itself. Furthermore, the use of snowball sampling induces an inherent bias toward known displaced and host community members, likely excluding the most vulnerable households within each assessment area. Equally, the precarious security situation in certain arrondissements prevented the assessment team from collecting data in the areas with the highest estimated numbers of IDPs and what is assumed to be the greatest amount of need.

Findings are intended to signal general trends in need and vulnerability and are based on frequencies generated from a non-representative sample. These should be interpreted as a likely underestimation of the actual situation for much of the conflict-affected population of both the assessed areas and the region in general.

Due to security restrictions, data were collected outside the direct supervision of IRC emergency response team staff. While team leaders were tasked with ensuring data quality and reducing bias in respondent selection wherever possible, it is difficult to fully capture how various biases may have influenced the data collected, analyzed and reported on below.

While an earnest attempt was made to capture information on sensitive child and women’s protection concerns, it is generally assumed that social norms within the Far North region of Cameroon, stigmatization and lack of awareness due to lack of protective services in place, make this type of data difficult to gather through a rapid assessment with newly trained enumerators in areas where the IRC is not a known service provider. Protection-related data should be interpreted as an underestimation of extent of any reported risk.

Equally, security restrictions limited the size of the IRC staff deployed to lead the assessment, preventing a protection coordinator from being on the ground to recruit and train enumerators to collect data via focus group discussions, which is best practice for attempting to collect sensitive protection-related. This further limited the assessment's ability to capture the dynamics of the effects of the crisis on vulnerable groups. The protection data presented below should be interpreted with this in mind.

Data collection tools were drafted in French and Fulfulde translations of each question and technical terminology were agreed upon with enumerators during training. The vast majority of interviews were conducted in Fulfulde, though additional languages were used if necessary, depending on the assessment site. At times, enumerators relied on additional family members to interpret from Fulfulde. The lack of a rigorous translate-back translate process from French to Fulfulde and the use of untrained, household-level interpreters is likely to have introduced a degree of bias that is difficult to quantify.

**Ethical Considerations**

All respondents were briefed on the IRC’s intentions, informed of their right to refuse participation and right to refuse answering specific questions. Interviewers emphasized that no benefit would be granted to respondents for participating and no negative consequences would result from refusing. Informed consent to participate in interviews was verbally granted prior to any questions being asked.
The results presented below are based on data collected from 57 locations (65% rural, 35% urban) within three separate départements within the Far North region of Cameroon. While the assessment team originally intended to reach Mayo-Tsanaga, Mayo-Sava and Logone-Et-Chari départements, security concerns made Logone-Et-Chari and the arrondissements bordering Nigeria within Mayo-Tsanaga and Mayo-Sava inaccessible. As a result, these locations were replaced with two arrondissements in Diamaré.

During analysis, data were disaggregated by arrondissement, respondent status, urban or rural and female-headed or male-headed households. Where substantive differences were seen, these differences are highlighted below.

### Key Informant Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>Adolescent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women’s Group/Association Member</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The enumeration team registered seven refusals during data collection (2 HH members, 1 KI and 4 vendors), leading to an overall response rate of 99%.
Household Composition & Living Situation

A total of 664 respondents completed the household survey, 332 men and 332 women. The average age of the respondents was 39. The respondents represented a total of 6048 people, or an average household size of nine.

Of the 664 households interviewed, 65% are headed by a male household member, meaning that just over one-third of surveyed households are headed by women. Of the households interviewed in Tokombéré (124), nearly half (46%) were recorded as female-headed. Only one child-headed household was identified, two young boys from Mora, reporting that their parents had been killed.

Eighty percent of surveyed respondents self-identified as internally displaced, with 11% indicating that they were returnees and 9% as native or host population. When asked about their arrondissement of origin, 37% of IDP and returnee respondents referenced Mora, 25% Kolofata and 9% listed locations in Nigeria.

Data indicate that the majority of households (68%) displaced together, intact. However, 26% of respondents indicated that people had been left behind or did not arrive with them at their current location, while only 17 respondents (3%) reporting that additional people have joined their household since displacing. Of the 160 households reporting fewer household members since displacement, 81% reported men and/or adolescent boys being among those left behind. As the table below indicates, many more adult and adolescent men did not displace with the rest of their families, while the numbers of young children left behind do not vary substantially by gender.

### Household Composition Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition of those left behind/not arriving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults ≥ 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents 13 – 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Children ≤ 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A variety of reasons were provided for why household members were left behind or did not arrive at the site of displacement, often times with multiple reasons provided for one person (e.g. left behind to watch livestock, killed) or many people are cited as members of the household prior to displacement and multiple reasons are listed as to why. The most frequently cited explanations include: remained to watch over a house, field or livestock (34), killed (30), remained to work (22), and died (22). Recruitment (5) and abduction (2) were mentioned the least number of times. The vast majority of male-headed households displaced intact, while nearly half (45%) of displaced or returnee female-headed households reported having fewer household members now than they did prior to displacement.

In terms of duration of displacement, 86% of the displaced and returnees interviewed had been in their current location for more than 6 months, with less than 1% (5 HHs) reporting to be recently displaced within the past month. This high frequency of long-term displacement did not vary substantially by arrondissement of origin or assessment location. Roughly half (53%) of the displaced or returning respondents had only displaced one single time, but second to that were 38% of respondents reporting that they had displaced three or more times. The majority (57%) of respondents originating from sites in Nigeria had been displaced three or more times, along with many households (49%) currently residing in Tokombéré, who also report being displaced three or more times.

Nearly half (48%) of displaced or returnee households were living alone in their own hut or building. Other living situations mentioned by these respondents included living with one or many host community households (27%) and living with one or many other displaced households (19%). The survey team interviewed 34 households that living in spontaneous settlements of displaced populations, either in tented camps or abandoned and half-finished buildings. These settlements were found in all survey arrondissements, except for Maoura III.

Sixty percent of displaced and returnee households interviewed were paying rent in their current location. While the number of female-headed households paying rent was on par with that of male-headed households, there is evidence of variation in the number of displaced or returnee households paying rent across arrondissements. While 89% of those in Maroua III were paying rent, only 42% and 32% of those in Mokolo and Petté, respectively, reported paying rent. Equally, there is a stark distinction between urban and rural IDP populations paying rent, whereby 52% of IDPs in rural areas report paying rent, while 72% of IDPs in urban areas report paying rent. Overall, the median monthly rent cited by respondents was 5000cfa, however the range of responses was rather large, with a minimum rent of 500cfa charged to a number of displaced families at a site in Tokombéré to 60,000cfa cited by two male-headed households in Maroua III. As expected, the median rent varied by arrondissement.
### Monthly Rent by Arrondissement, in CFA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrondissement</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mokolo</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mora</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokombéré</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>500(^9)</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maoura III</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pétté</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, team leader daily reports and household survey respondents themselves, when given the opportunity to express final thoughts at the close of the interview, frequently cited issues and tensions between landlords and displaced or returnee tenants. There was a sense of mounting pressure and the stress of potential eviction for not being able to pay rent.

When asked about their future plans, an overwhelming majority (87%) of displaced and returnee household respondents affirmed their intention to stay in their current location for the next three to six months. Of those reporting that they intended to move (54), 93% stated that they would return to their home. This intention to remain in their current location of displacement did not vary widely by length of time spent at the current location, as even those that had arrived less than one month prior to the assessment date reported an intention to stay for three to six months.

### Environmental Health

Few respondent households (53) report having water available within their compound, meaning that the vast majority (90%) of interviewed households must source water outside their home. Nearly half (48%) of all interviewed households listed borehole wells/hand pumps as a water source\(^8\). While a variety of other sources were also mentioned, none were cited as frequently as borehole wells/hand pumps. And this pattern was similar in both rural and urban areas. Overall, 8% of respondents mentioned purchasing water\(^9\), but they were concentrated in Mora (26), Mokolo (20) and Maroua III (5).

Data indicate a somewhat even split between respondents stating that they spend 30 or more minutes collecting water (49%) and those reporting less than 30 minutes (41%). However, this division is not consistent across arrondissements, with 64% and 58% of Tokombéré and Pétté respondents, respectively, reporting 30 or more minutes to collect water, while only 38% of Mokolo respondents and 41% of Maroua III respondents reported spending this much time\(^10\).

Additionally, only a small number of respondents (55) reported any danger associated with collecting water outside the home. Though the majority of those that did reside in assessment locations within Mokolo. When asked if they could meet their household water needs, respondents answered relatively equally, with 51% saying no and 49% saying yes. When disaggregated to the arrondissement level, respondents from Mokolo and Mora reflect the overall trend, with 51% and 49% reporting, respectively, that they are able to satisfy their household’s water needs. However, only 33% of respondents from Tokombere affirm that they can meet their water needs.

When asked about sanitation options for their households, 72% of respondents reported having latrines within their compounds\(^13\). Of the 34 respondents living in spontaneous settlements, 53% admitted to open defecation. Nineteen percent of respondents overall (44% from spontaneous settlements) reported using public or communal latrines. The largest number of respondents citing usage of communal or public latrines were found in Mora (57) and Tokombéré (45). The majority of the households using shared or public latrines (74%) stated that fewer than 20 people were using each public latrine, though hardly any of them (2%) reported that latrines were separated by gender.

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\(^{8}\)As reported by respondents. This does not reflect a standard or regulated rent amount.

\(^{9}\)Amount set by traditional chief in one specific assessment location, prohibiting local, host population landlords from taking advantage of IDPs. This does not reflect a true market rent.

\(^{10}\)Respondents were allowed to list multiple sources, if necessary.

\(^{11}\)The cities of Mora and Mokolo charge residents’ 50cfa/20L jerry can of water filled at public faucets, but this could also mean purchasing bottled water. Unfortunately the data does not make this distinction.

\(^{12}\)The interviewers did not ensure that respondents calculated both the time spent in transit to the water point and wait time in doing this calculation. Therefore, some reports of less than 30 minutes collecting water could be underestimated because they do not include time spent waiting at the source.

\(^{13}\)This result should be interpreted with caution, as cultural taboos make posing and responding to direct questions about latrine use difficult, while at the same time, Cameroonian hygiene law stipulates that each household must have a latrine on site, which may lead noncompliant households to fabricate their responses, for fear of legal repercussions.
Health

In order to gain a rapid understanding of the burden of illness facing assessed households, respondents were asked to report on the incidence of common illness (diarrhea, fever and cough) within their households in the two weeks preceding the date of interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Children &lt;5</th>
<th>Children 5-17</th>
<th>Adults ≥18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diarrhea</td>
<td>200 30%</td>
<td>181 27%</td>
<td>245 37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>142 21%</td>
<td>200 30%</td>
<td>170 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>86 13%</td>
<td>172 26%</td>
<td>172 26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if their households currently had regular access to healthcare, only 28% of displaced and returnee respondents answered affirmatively, which is a decrease of 53% over the percentage of households that were able to regularly access care prior to displacement (60%). This response did not vary when disaggregated by male and female-headed households. When asked about barriers to accessing care, 94% of those displaced and returnee households without regular access listed cost as an impediment to care. The only other notable barrier reported was distance, which was cited by 19% of respondents overall, the majority of whom (45) lived in Mora.

Observational data indicate that health facilities in assessed areas were open and functioning, with only one assessment site in Pétté reporting that the nearest facility was more than 5km away. Equally, referral hospitals in some assessed locations were receiving international support from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières. Anecdotal evidence suggests that staffing facilities in the Far North region has become difficult, so that while facilities may be open, they often lack trained and qualified staff to deliver effective care.

Education

Of the 2,758 school-age children reported to be living within assessed households, 1,822 or 66% are currently in school. Of those households reporting children out of school, 20% affirmed that some or all of these children were in school prior to displacement. The number of households reporting previously enrolled, now out of school children, was highest in the assessed areas of Mora (69).

The ratio of school-age boys to girls within assessed households is reported to be 1.3 to 1, yet the ratio of in-school boys to girls is reported as 1.4 to 1. However, a count of children reported to be currently out of school, but previously in-school, produced a lower ratio of 1.1 to 1.

When asked why these children are not currently enrolled in school, despite having attended school prior to displacement, 79% of respondents cited cost as the main barrier. Additionally, 38% of households mentioned a lack of uniforms or school supplies as a barrier to current enrollment as well. Distance, the need for children to work or lack of security for children traveling to and from school were also mentioned, but in small numbers (6%, 4%, and 2% respectively). The frequency of reasons cited by respondents did not vary substantially by arrondissement.

Observational data indicate that schools are open and functioning in the majority of assessment locations. However, one location in Tokombere reported that the closest primary school was 10km away, one location in Pétté reported that only a Koranic school was available for students and residents of a spontaneous settlement in Mora noted that the closest school (in Mehe) had been closed for two years. Equally, survey team leaders noted that, while schools were open and unoccupied by military or displaced populations, they were often in a state of disrepair, overcrowded and/or lacking in essential equipment like desks and chairs.

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14Respondents reporting 1 or more occurrences of each illness within each age group
Economic Wellbeing

When asked if respondents had the resources (food stock, crops or money) to feed the members of their households, 80% said no. Responses to this question did not vary between urban and rural locations, but there was a noted differences between male and female-headed households, with 86% of female-headed households confirming that they did not have the resources needed to feed their families.

Of the respondents 144 that answered affirmatively, indicating that they did have the resources available to feed their households, only 13% of them were members of the host population. The median number of weeks that these resources were estimated by respondents to last was two, a figure that did not vary between host and displaced or returnee populations. However, the median number of resource availability reported by female-headed households was only one.

Respondents were asked about the number of meals consumed by adults and children within their households, both currently and prior to the current crisis. For the entire sample the average number of meals consumed by both adults and children decreased from three meals per day prior to the crisis to two meals per day at the time of the assessment. This average does not vary substantially when disaggregated by female and male-headed households. However, when disaggregated by status (host vs. displaced vs. returned), the average number of meals consumed by children at the time of assessment increases to 2.5 for host population households. Overall, 56% of households are reporting that adults are eating fewer meals, a number that increases to 61% when you look only at female-headed households. This percentage decreases for children, down to only 48% of households reporting that children are eating fewer meals. However, again, the percentage of female-headed households reporting that children are eating fewer meals is higher, at 55%.

In responding to a question about how they were able to meet the needs for food and basic items of their households, nearly half (48%) of respondents replied that they simply made do with less. Other sources of income or support frequently cited include: donations (31%), daily labor (20%), selling of assets (18%), and cultivating fields or raising livestock. Only a small percentage of respondents referenced more formal mechanisms of wage earning, with 5% citing a small business selling items or services and 2% mentioning "regular work."

This distribution of methods to meet household needs did not vary substantially between male and female-headed households, other than 41% of female-headed households reporting that they received donations. The percentage households relying on donated goods was high for those assessed with in Tokombere as well (44%), while responses from other assessment locations echoed the sample as a whole. Though, a larger percentage of host population respondents (30%) reported fields and livestock as a source of income.

Data on market access were collected from both households and small vendors operating in assessment locations. Only 31% of respondents report being able to meet their needs at the market, a response which is fairly consistent across assessment locations and respondent status, though drops to 23% for female-headed households. When asked why their needs could not be met via the market, an overwhelming majority of these respondents (94%) stated a lack of money. Increased prices were also cited by 11% of respondents16.

Barriers to accessing markets did not vary by assessment location and only nine respondents overall noted that going to the market was too dangerous.

Overall, 62% of vendors interviewed replied that prices in their shop had not increased since the July 2015 Boko Haram bombings in Maroua. When disaggregated by assessment location, the majority of vendors echo this sentiment in all locations except for Mokolo, where 60% of vendors interviewed do report an increase in prices since the bombings. Nevertheless, across all locations, nearly all vendors (96%) confirming an increase in prices attribute it to Boko Haram attacks. The majority of vendors (65%) cited the Maroua market as the location of their preferred wholesale market. When disaggregated by assessment location, Maroua still remained the preferred source for the majority of vendors, except for those from Mora, who were split 43% and 46% between Maroua and Mora markets. Wholesale market prices for some basic food and non-food items were assessed, with little price variation between wholesale markets found.

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15Respondents could offer multiple responses; percentages will not add up to 100
16Idem
Vendor respondents from Tokombere (61%) and Mokolo (62%) assessment locations reported a general difficulty in maintaining their stock since the July 2015 Boko Haram attacks in Maroua. In other assessment locations however, fewer than half of the assessed vendors reported difficulty in maintaining stock following the attacks.

Nevertheless, 68% of all surveyed vendors affirmed their ability to restock their shops within seven days, if needed. Though, of the remaining 43 vendors that report not being able to restock within seven days, 84% would still be unable to re-stock even if they received financial support.

Enumerators were asked to photograph the shops prior to leaving and the large majority (94%) of the photographs displayed full shelves stocked with a variety of food and non-food items. Though seven photographs indicated low stocks and a lack of variety of goods, these were spread out across assessment locations with the exception of three shops from assessed locations in the Meme area of Mora.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average price across wholesale market sources, in cfa</th>
<th>Range of Prices across wholesale market sources, in cfa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1L oil</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>1000 – 1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sac of sugar</td>
<td>26,700</td>
<td>23,670 – 28,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sac of salt</td>
<td>3180</td>
<td>3000 – 3700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sac of rice</td>
<td>17,700</td>
<td>12,500 – 18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250g of soap</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>280 – 270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quantity of “sac” was recognized as a standard unit of measure within the market for specific items in the Far North.
Protection

The assessment team collected data through the household survey and via key informants on protection concerns, risks and community-driven responses within displaced communities as a whole and for women and girls in particular. When asked about threats to their community, the majority of household survey respondents (67%) did not cite any particular risks, rather stating “I don’t know,” or “there are not threats.” However, for those respondents that did mention external issues facing the community, armed violence was mentioned most frequently (179), followed by tensions between the host community and the displaced population (146), and abduction (106). There was no significant difference in the frequency or types of risk mentioned by male vs. female respondents. When asked who is considered most vulnerable to different types of risks, respondents listed all segments of the population, with no particular group cited with an overwhelming frequency.

Anecdotal evidence collected by team leaders at assessment locations indicates that the displaced population in a number of locations are facing discrimination and barriers to accessing services (e.g. education) because they lack national identification and birth registration documentation.

Child Protection

Both household survey respondents and key informants were asked about unaccompanied and separated children. Only a small number (17) of displaced or returning household survey respondents mentioned that people had joined their household since leaving or returning to their home. Of these 17, three mentioned separated children (a 17 year old boy, a six year old boy, and one or several children, gender and age not specified). Two of these three households also noted unaccompanied minors currently within their households, one four year old girl and another child, age and gender not specified. Additionally, two more households noted unaccompanied minors as well, one nine year old boy and one household with a girl and three boys, of unspecified age.

Nineteen key informants, including three teachers, noted that children were known to be separated from their families, with some of the reasons for separation including children being killed (91), being left behind to protect a house, fields or livestock (6), death (6) or getting lost during displacement (6). Recruitment by armed forces or armed groups was not mentioned as a reason for separation, neither was abduction. Children being left behind to work (2) or get married (3) were also mentioned as reasons for separation. Key informants tended to report that more girls were reported as separated from their families than boys (13) and that separated children were mainly between five and 14 years old. Ten key informants reported incidents of young children or infants being separated from their parents or caregivers.

Fewer key informants (14) affirmed knowledge of unaccompanied minors within their communities, though those that did noted that there were more unaccompanied boys than girls, and that they are mainly 14 years old or older. Only two key informants (one from Mora, one from Tokombere) knew of anyone maintaining a list of separated children, each instance the respondent mentioned the village chief. No respondent knew of a list of parents missing children. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents emphasized that unaccompanied children were not present in their community, nearly all respondents were able to respond to questions about where unaccompanied children were living, frequently mentioning host or foster families (44), in rental accommodation (13), or in groups (7). The majority of key informants, when asked what they would do if they found an unaccompanied child, mentioned that they would either care for the child temporarily until a permanent solution was found (47) or take the child into their own care (30). Equally, 42 respondents also said that they would report the unaccompanied to child to a local chief, religious leader or the police. Only six key informants knew of institutions caring for unaccompanied children, specifying religious institutions of community associations supported by international agencies and providing nutritional support19.

Nearly every single key informant (62) reported a noticeable change in children’s behavior since Boko Haram began terrorizing their communities. The emotions or characteristics frequently cited by these respondents, along with hypothesized causes of stress in children, are outlined in the table below, accompanied by the number of key informants referencing each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions &amp; behaviors more frequently seen since the onset of the crisis</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mistrust</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trauma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation &amp; Withdrawal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More agressive behavior</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of stress in children, since the onset of the crisis</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of food</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of shelter</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightmares</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not able to attend school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from family</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation from friends</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military attacks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indicates number of key informants that cited this cause not a specific number of incidents.
These are likely inpatient feeding centers for malnourished children and not orphanages.
Similarly, the support available within the community for both boys and girls is similar, according to key informants. Support mechanisms available for boys that were mentioned include: parents (32), peer groups/friends (28), siblings (22), community leaders (19) and religious leaders (15). The same options were referenced for girls needing support, but with a slight variant in frequency: parents (34), peer groups (37), siblings (19), community leaders (18), religious leaders (13) and health workers (13).

While nearly all key informants mentioned changes in children’s behavior, fewer (39) noted a change in parent’s behavior toward their children. However, the majority of the changes noted were positive.

As with children, key informants also made inferences into the primary causes of stress for parents and their caregivers, which are believed to include the lack of food (43), lack of shelter (37), concern for their children’s safety (19), and the loss of livelihoods (16).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noted changes in parent's behavior towards their children</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Showing more affection to their children</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying more attention to children's needs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring access to education above all else</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcing children to stay inside the compound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending less time with their children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying less attention to their children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging their children to marry at a young age</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about education and the status of school-age children within their families, household survey respondents also spoke to what their school-age children do during the day and/or when not in school. The largest number of respondents (41%) noted that their school-age children engage in housework and domestic tasks, while a similarly equal number of households (33% and 31%) noted that children were either playing outside in the neighborhood or staying indoors. A larger percentage (48%) of children were said to be remaining inside in Mokolo assessment locations. Mentions of children engaging in work outside the home were less frequent, with 9% of households stating the children were working in the market and 7% of households stating that children were working in the fields or caring for livestock (though this number was much higher (44%) in Pétté). Some of these household reports were echoed by key informants, 34 of whom mentioned that children in their communities were involved in harsh or dangerous labor practices. Twenty key informants mentioned children engaging in domestic labor and 28 mentioned farm work or working with livestock. Other dangerous or harsh child labor practices mentioned by key informants included transporting goods or people (10), digging wells, trenches or quarrying and breaking rocks (12), and transactional or commercial sex work (8). Key informants were more or less divided on the question of whether or not harsh child labor practices have increased in their community since conflict began to escalate in the Far North region, with 19 believing that they have and 15 stating that they have not. Moreover, even fewer key informants (13) felt that new types of harsh labor have emerged since the conflict intensity increased. But, those that did listed digging well, trenches, or quarrying and breaking rocks (11), transporting goods or people (3), selling drugs (1), commercial sex work (1) and road banditry (1) as new types of child labor emerging with the conflict. Thirty-one key informants believe that children work willingly to support themselves and or their caregivers, while 20 stated that children are sent to work by their caregivers.

Only three key informants, all of whom were from one assessment location in Mora arrondissement, mentioned children being used by armed forces or groups. There was little agreement between these three key informants, with two indicating that there was no gender difference in children recruited and one stating that more boys had been recruited than girls. Also, one key informant felt that recruitment has increased over the course of the past month, while the other two did not. These three respondents stated that children were most at risk for recruitment in their community of origin rather than their community of resettlement.
Women's Protection

A number of safety and security concerns for women within assessment communities were highlighted by key informants, including the risk of attack when traveling outside of the community (34), the risk of attack when going to the market, to latrines, to collect water (28), the absence of a safe space for women within the community (21), not being able to access services or resources (19), domestic violence (18), forced or early marriage (18), and trafficking (5) and sexual violence (5). Equally, observational data indicate multiple military checkpoints along major road axes. Despite the acknowledgement of risks to women outside of their communities, 15 key informants did mention that women still travel alone, and 52 key informants reported that women need to travel outside of the community to earn an income needs. Key informants mentioned predominantly three types of labor or work that women engage in: collecting firewood or straw (42), domestic work (34), or small business (36).

Only 10 key informants indicated that there had been an increase in incidents of sexual violence since the escalation of the conflict with Boko Haram, though 20 chose to say that they did not know instead of an express no, which was offered by 31 respondents. Of those respondents that did note an increase in sexual violence, the majority mentioned the following as situations where sexual violence was likely to occur: while collecting firewood (11), while working in the fields (9), while collecting water (6), and while at home (5). Twenty-two key informants feel that girls more so than boys are the targets of sexual violence and 11 felt that women more so than children are targeted, while 8 felt that mostly children over the age of 14 were targeted. Many key informants mentioned various types of safety measures that have been put in place to protect women and girls, such as community safety patrols (56), police and military patrols in the community (33) or increasing the number of police (20).

In terms of services available for women and girls who have experienced violence, 33 key informants state that these services do no exist in their communities, while 13 did not know. Though, 15 key informants, from 11 different assessment locations, did note that services were available. The services cited include: drop-in centers for women and girls (15), peer support groups (12), case management and individual counseling (4), education and skills building (8), and income-generating activities (4). Furthermore, 43 key informants emphasized the existence of community networks and groups for women. However, fewer respondents (9) were able to reference psychosocial support services for female survivors of sexual violence specifically and only 19 key informants were aware of places where female survivors could get help. When asked what they would do if they encountered a women who had experienced sexual violence, 53 key informants would take the woman to a health facility, 46 would report the incident to the police, 20 would take the woman to a community leader and 11 would confront the perpetrator. The answers were similar when the same question was asked about an adolescent girl, though only 45 respondents mentioned taking the child to a health facility.

Key informants did provide information on locally available coping mechanisms for women and girls that experience sexual violence. For women, key informants mentioned the following sources of caring and support within a woman’s community: friends (27), family (18), and health workers (22). For girls, key informants mentioned their mother (28), friends (16), health workers (11) and their fathers (12), while for boys key informants mentioned their fathers (21), their friends (18), their mother (14) and the police (11).

Need

When asked to prioritize their needs, the majority (68%) of household survey respondents emphasized food as their primary need. Other needs mentioned as respondents’ first priority were water (16%), shelter (8%) and work or income (5%). This pattern in the frequency of primary need was similar across assessment locations, with the exception of Mokolo, where only 50% of the respondents mentioned food and 27% indicated water to be their number one need. No difference in prioritized, primary need was found between male and female-headed households, but when the results were disaggregated by status, returnee respondents were more evenly divided between citing food (39%) and water (33%) as their primary need.

Responses to questions on second and third priority needs were a bit more diverse, though food was still the most frequently mentioned secondary need (28%). However, shelter was mentioned as the second most needed form of assistance by 16% of survey respondents and health (9%), education (8%) came in line with water (8%). Work or sources of income was most frequently listed as a tertiary need (19%), along with shelter (16%), health (16%) and education (14%).
CONCLUSIONS

Despite the acknowledged limitations of this rapid assessment, findings suggest that the conflict-affected population within the assessed areas are facing severe resource limitations, reduced access to basic services and potentially high levels of stress and trauma.

Living Conditions and Household Composition

Displaced and returnee populations are living within host community towns and villages, though there are spontaneous settlements on the outskirts of some areas. Many households are living in their own housing, though findings also suggest that displaced and returnee households are living within the compounds of other host community families or with other displaced families. A large proportion of displaced and returnee households are paying rent, despite having limited access to livelihoods, regular work or other sources of income. Living in rental accommodation is not a common practice within the society and culture of this area of Cameroon. Because the demand for accommodation has surged in the past year, opportunistic land and property owners may be taking advantage of a new market before prices stabilize, putting displaced and returnee households at risk of exploitation.

Households have dispersed and been separated throughout the displacement process, with many displaced and returnee households reporting fewer current members living with them at the time of data collection. More female-headed households were recorded within the sample than would be expected, and these women living on their own are reporting more acute economic needs than those households that are still headed by men.

Access to Needed Goods and Services

Results from the household-level survey and observational data indicate that water access is consistently difficult across assessed areas, particularly when considering the seasonal variation in the water table and the increased demand for water due to the large livestock population. While respondent reported sanitation coverage seems high, the data may not be reliable. The high numbers of households reporting recent incidence of diarrhea, across all age groups, points to larger water, sanitation and hygiene concerns.

Health and education systems are functioning within the assessed communities, with the biggest barrier to access being the cost of these services. Equally, market access is limited not by security concerns or distance, but by resources available at the household level. Families are making due with less, relying on donations and selling assets. When this is combined with the known food security crisis, high respondent-reported need for food and high numbers of households consuming fewer meals, it presents a dire economic situation at the household level, creating risks of malnutrition, amplified health needs and a high potential for continued or increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms.

Initial findings suggest that the population’s needs could be met through available commodities and services within their communities. The economy is monetized, but lack of money is reported to be largest barrier to market access. Lastly, markets are physically accessible in the assessed areas and traders are able and willing to adapt to an increased demand in the market. These realities point toward the feasibility of a cash intervention to meet emergency need. However, additional variables, such as government authorization and support, potential protection risks, and transfer mechanisms need to be researched.

20The 2011 DHS reports that 25% of households in Cameroon are headed by women, with little variation between urban and rural populations
**Protection Risks and Concerns**

Findings suggest a wide variety of reasons for family separation, including reports of severe and traumatic events (killings, death). This, coupled with the extent of military operations conducted throughout the places of origin of many displaced households, points toward a population with a high level of exposure to violence and trauma.

Evidence of unaccompanied minors, children separated from their families and children being recruited by armed groups was found. The two assessment locations where village chiefs were maintaining lists of separated children provide some indication of a widespread issue, though the actual scale of the problem is difficult to discern. Equally, the sensitive nature of these issues make gathering reliable and valid data during a rapid assessment a difficult task. Nevertheless, the documented lack of resources at the household level, large average household size, extent of displacement and number of households reporting that members were left behind or did not arrive at the place of displacement all create risks for children at the household level. Mechanisms for the delivery of care and an appropriate rapid response to unaccompanied and separated children were not evident in assessed locations, increasing concerns about the extent of unmet need for appropriate care arrangements and family reunification.

Women, and notably female-headed households, face risks of sexual violence, particularly when carrying out tasks outside the home such as firewood and water collection. Specialized services and safe spaces for women, girls and survivors of gender-based violence are limited, though community networks and groups do exist and may offer entry points for increasing support to women and girls.

Host communities’ reported insistence on demonstration of Cameroonian identity and birth registration could create increased tensions, additional barriers to accessing services and threats to the safety of the displaced and returnee populations. National identification and birth registration requires payment and use of these administrative documents has been historically limited in the Far North region, therefore, displaced populations are unlikely to have acquired these documents in the past. This demand for identity is likely to become a means of discrimination (as well as restricting freedom of movement), as host community members are unlikely to face the same requirements, as they are known and familiar to authorities within their communities.

**Intent to Return**

The displaced and returnee population within the assessed areas have been living in their current locations for long periods of time and they have little intention of continuing to migrate within the next 6 months. Through anecdotal evidence gathered during the assessment planning phases, it is believed that the displaced population in more insecure arrondissements (e.g. Kolafata) may be more recently displaced and in transition, planning to move onward to safer locations. The population within assessed areas is likely more stable.
Based on the results of this assessment, the following interventions are recommended for prioritization by the humanitarian community:

**Basic Needs**

- Unconditional cash transfer and voucher programs for food, non-food items and services should be established in order to assist displaced and returnee families while they establish a home for themselves. Equally, vulnerable host community households should be targeted as well, as needs are pervasive and not limited to those who have been displaced or are returning.

**Services**

- Safe water supply, improved latrine architecture and basic hygiene promotion should be increased throughout communities hosting displaced and returnee populations.
- Health systems support through drug supply and provider incentives should be coupled with the targeted abolition of user fees for displaced, returnee, and vulnerable (pregnant women, children under five) host community members.
- Support for the education system in the form of classroom rehabilitation and equipment to accommodate increased class sizes, along with teacher training on classroom management for increased class sizes and the healing classrooms approach.

**Protection**

- Conduct advocacy and awareness raising with local authorities around rights and protections for displaced and returning populations, as well as address issues related to access to civil documentation.
- Conduct protection monitoring and trends analysis reporting as well as protection mainstreaming for humanitarian actors.
- Conduct service mapping and information gathering on protective services within affected communities; establish referral mechanisms and disseminate information through community networks.
- Establish child protection case management system to ensure appropriate care and a rapid response for vulnerable children.
- Further investigate and/or monitor the numbers of unaccompanied and separated children and establish immediate and rapid family tracing and reunification as necessary.
- Establish women’s centers for the provision of case management and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual violence and abuse.

**ANNEXES**

1. Preliminary Scenario Definition
2. Data Collection Tools
3. Household, vendor and Key Informant Data sets
4. Acknowledgments