

Rapid Assessment and Profiling

Lassa community, Askira/ Uba LGA, Borno State.

Date of entry	November 27, 2017	Type:	Rapid Assessment and Profiling
Date of report	November 28, 2017	Report by:	Mitch Mercer, DRC Emergency Manager
Location (LGA)	Askira/ Uba	Location name:	Lassa
Type (camp/town)	IDP and Return community	Sub-location name:	Vocational center (Camp), Girls Secondary School (Camp)
Coordinates: Vocational Training Center:	Lat: 10.69352	Long:13.27006	
Govt. Secondary School	Lat: 10. 783668	Long: 14: 256722	

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report follows an initial rapid assessment conducted in June 2017 and again in November 2017 where the need of IDPs and the host communities were verified considering the ever-changing community dynamics of the populations of concern. Information was received on December 25th 2017 that the population of IDPs located in the girls secondary school (135 HH) have been requested to vacate the premises by the local government by no later than January 6th 2018. This alert initiated a rapid assessment and profiling exercise, conducted on December 27th and 28th 2017.

The IDPs found in the vocational center and the girls secondary school are from a multitude of communities in the surrounding area, with the vast majority of the population coming from Dago community, which was attacked and pillaged by armed groups in November 2014. Due to the community's proximity to the Sambisa Forest they area has been subjected to repeated attacks by armed groups over the years and subsequent multiple displacements. IDPs frequently embark on risky trips to return to scavenge for food from their abandoned farms, despite recommendations from the military that the population should not travel outside of the immediate area due to insecurity. Recent displacements have occurred in small numbers due to sporadic attacks rumoured to have occurred in the surrounding area, namely Yazza and Kilikassa community areas.

Community entry was conducted via an initial meeting with the district head and his area chiefs to explain the mandate of DRC and our concerns surrounding the IDP populations between the camps. The district head expressed he and his community are feeling fatigued with INGO's lack of response in the area, despite repeat visits from various organizations. He further expressed that the host community of Lassa is housing vast numbers of IDPs (>2,000), are feeling overwhelmed by their presence and are becoming generally frustrated with the constraints the population is adding to their community. The host community feels obligated to support the IDP populations as they are all interconnected from different communities of the Margi ethnic group, however, their presence may no longer impede the operation of Lassa communities institutions, such as the girls secondary school. Thus, a general trend of eviction of these IDPs is ensuing and expected to increase over the coming months. The district head has identified the vocational center as the remaining local area that may be provided for the sole purpose of supporting the IDP population.

Lassa itself has limited access to basic commodities, including access to water, shelter, health care and education due to high damages of infrastructure during the November 2014 attacks by armed groups.

POPULATION INFORMATION

Vocational Center to date: 85 HH

Girls Secondary School: 135 HH

Host Community IDP Population: ~2,000 individuals

Host Community Population: ~150,000 individuals

Trends of Displacement:

- Pendular IDPs, residing in the host community and the vocational center
- Secondary, Multiple displaced IDPs between the vocational center, girls secondary school, and the host community
- Recently evicted IDPs from host community households and girls secondary school

Coping Mechanisms, IDP Population, Informal Camps:

- Women often leave the center in search of small contracts to work on host community members farms within the region
- Some men seek small labor contracts in the host community, while others are said to exhibit negative coping mechanisms of alcoholism and only return to the center in the evening hours to sleep
- Community members scavenge for food from abandoned farm areas in neighboring, insecure communities for days at a time, up to 20 km away. These movements are hidden from the military due to their advice to remain within Lassa borders. This relationship is resulting in a lack of incident reporting by community members to inform military personnel, such as a recent report shared by the community members 3 of their men recently encountered 2 armed AG operatives who intercepted them while they were scavenging for tangerines. Two of the men managed to return to the camp while one remains missing since December 21, 2017.

KEY ISSUES

The majority of the IDP population residing at the Girls Secondary School (135 HH) intend to migrate to the Vocational Center, exacerbating the existing issue of congestion and lack of dignified shelter. Generally, the women and children are living collectively in the center while men sleep outside. In the evening residents occupy approximately 2.5m² each.

There are no water points within the camp. Community members rely on a river for their water, approximately 2 km away. There is a general lack of NFI, with a particular lack of capacity for water storage. There are 2 latrines intended to serve the population which will soon grow to 270 households. These latrines are allegedly full and therefore no longer in use.

The vast majority of IDPs are facing protracted displacement, some as early as November 2014, with a general lack of support from the INGO community. A general lack of livelihoods has resulted in the IDP population being heavily dependent on the host community or endeavoring in risky scavenging excursions in search for foods in insecure areas.

There are existing and mounting tensions between the IDP populations and the host community as hosts become fatigued in supporting the displaced with their already constrained resources.

NEEDS BY SECTOR

SHELTER: IDPs are living in collective units or in open air. The collective centers are highly congested, resulting in a lack of dignified living situations and high susceptibility to the spread of contagious disease.

WASH: There is a total lack of water points available in the vocational center, IDPs rely on a river 2km away for water. There are 2 sanitary latrines but they are allegedly full and no longer in use. General hygiene is poor due to lack of water resources and congestion of the population.



Figure 1: Communal sleeping space, Vocational Center

NFI: The population is lacking of general NFI, particularly water storage capacity, sleeping mats, hygiene materials and cooking utensils. Blankets will also be needed as the temperature decreases with the rainy season.

FOOD: There is a general lack of food security among the IDP population in the informal camps. IDPs rely on scavenged food from local farms, requiring risky journeys to insecure areas. Small labor contracts may be obtained to produce income for the purchase of foods. This opportunity for income will reduce as the harvesting season comes to a close.

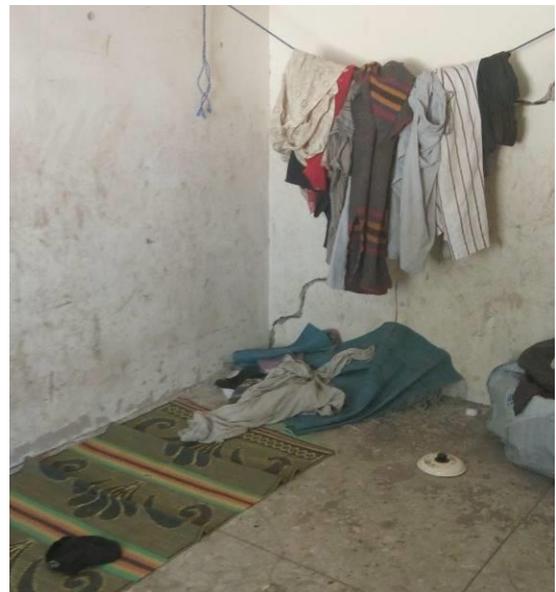


Figure 2: Residents of the vocational live in very congested condition, occupying approximately 2.5m² per individual



Figure 3: Stock piles of firewood to serve the population



Figure 4: Approximately 4 household share pots and pans per food preparation space

CONCLUSION

DRC will support the IDP population residing in the vocational centre with emergency shelter and hygiene kits, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable individuals and those households recently displaced due to the eviction notice delivered to residents of the girls secondary school.

On December 28th a total of 136 HH were profiled in need of emergency shelter kits. A demonstration distribution and construction of the emergency shelters will be held on January 2nd 2018. Additional profiling and distribution of ESK will continue through January week 2 for evicted IDPs from the GSS and host community households.

Extremely vulnerable households will be addressed through the deployment of Protection staff to gain an in depth picture of the evolving tensions between IDPs and the host community. Many IDPs are merely thriving with their hosts but are pleading that they prefer to live in an emergency tent due to the living conditions within the household.

There is a need for a sectoral response to the IDP community of Lassa, with a particular need for the installation of a water point and sanitary latrines to sustain the population. It is suspected that the IDP population will continue to remain in Lassa community throughout the next 6 months due to the upcoming rainy season and continued insecurity in the point of origin.