Overview

Nearly 10 million people, or half the population of the conflict-hit Lake Chad Basin region need humanitarian assistance as the decade-long conflict drags on. Some 2.5 million people are now displaced. Hunger and malnutrition remain high. Abduction, killings and rights violations are also widespread. Humanitarian response has been accelerated over the past three years, with many more affected people receiving assistance. This year, the humanitarian community is seeking US$1.3 billion to provide food, water, shelter, healthcare and safeguard the rights and dignity of the conflict-affected.

Protecting civilians amid persistent violence

The region is facing a severe protection crisis. The armed violence that has affected large parts of the Lake Chad Basin is stretching to its tenth year. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have lived in displacement sites and refugee camps for years, grappling with extreme hardship and deprivation. Many civilians have suffered abuse and rights violations and are deeply traumatised by the violence.

It is critical to strengthen the protection of civilians, especially women and girls, and work towards preventing sexual and gender-based violence as well as enhance support to survivors. Women and girls face high risks of sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse primarily by armed groups, but also by men in uniform. Thousands of civilians have also been killed or abducted and many families separated.

The recurrent attacks and insecurity as well as security measures have restricted free movement. Farming, trade, transhumance and other activities have been significantly affected, depriving millions of people of their means of survival and limiting access to basic services. Displaced people are also unable to move freely in and out of camps.

In January 2019, the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria reaffirmed their commitment to the Abuja Action Statement on civilian protection in the Lake Chad Basin region. The agreement comprises a range of actions to enhance protection and respond to the most urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and other affected populations.

Humanitarian needs still high

Humanitarian needs remain high. The persistent violence and its impact on the lives of millions of people across the Lake Chad Basin mean that many families and communities still require help to survive. Humanitarian assistance has been significantly stepped up over the past three years, with millions more people receiving aid. Relief assistance
needs to be sustained and international support increased to provide adequately to those in need. The prevalent insecurity and inadequate funding are some of the main hurdles to effective relief assistance.

To sustain relief operations, the protection of aid workers and humanitarian assets is paramount. While providing life-saving assistance, aid workers have unfortunately come under attack. In 2018, six aid workers were killed in Nigeria and one is still held captive. The prevailing insecurity has forced the suspension of operations and withdrawal of humanitarian workers in some locations, leaving affected communities without access to basic services and assistance.

The long-term

As insecurity and recurrent armed attacks prevent the return of millions of displaced people to their homes, efforts towards lasting solutions are necessary to increase access to basic services and livelihoods. The protracted crisis calls for an early shift towards self-sufficiency. The displaced need not wait for the conflict to be fully resolved to start rebuilding their lives.

In addition, steps towards increased collaboration between humanitarian and development strategies need to be sustained and strengthened. Greater economic and infrastructure investment are required to complement humanitarian action and decrease dependence on relief aid.

Latest updates

Surge in attacks increasing displacements

A recent upsurge in armed violence has uprooted tens of thousands of people across the Lake Chad Basin, driving forced displacement to the highest levels since the crisis erupted almost a decade ago. As of April 2019, more than 2.5 million were displaced in the region. A series of attacks on Rann town in north-east Nigeria near the border with Cameroon uprooted more than 40,000 people. The displaced fled to neighbouring Cameroon for safety. In February, around 30,000 of them had returned to Rann under military escort. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) expressed concern that the refugees may have been induced to return, a move at odds with the principle of voluntary return from refuge.

Several localities in Chad’s western Lac region and in Niger’s south-eastern Diffa region have suffered a spate of armed attacks in recent months. The raids have displaced more than 18,000 people from Gueskérou and Chétimari villages in Diffa. Humanitarian organizations are working to step up assistance to the newly displaced. As of May, there were around 249,000 displaced people in Diffa, according to the Directorate of Civil Registry, Refugees and Migration.
Thousands of civilians have been newly displaced in Lac region in Chad, including refugees from neighbouring north-east Nigeria and returnees from Niger. But villages have also come under armed attacks, heightening fear and desperation among local communities. As thousands fled into Chad at the start of 2019, aid agencies swiftly set up the camps and relief operations. Chad currently hosts nearly 16,000 Nigerian refugees.

**Food insecurity to rise over lean season**

The persistent attacks and insecurity, loss of livelihood and prolonged displacement have left millions of people across the affected Lake Chad Basin region struggling with high levels of food insecurity. Favourable rains in 2018 and continued humanitarian assistance helped ease the level of food insecurity between October and December. At the peak of the lean season this year, around 3.5 million people are projected to face food insecurity at “crisis” and “emergency” levels in the conflict-hit areas of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Malnutrition is also persistently high: 426,000 children are projected to suffer severe acute malnutrition this year, slightly lower than in 2018 when around 500,000 children were at risk of severe acute malnutrition.

**Funding**

Humanitarian response has been significantly stepped up since 2016. However, the protracted violence across the region means that needs remain high. This year, the Governments and the humanitarian community have requested for US$1.3 billion to assist 7.8 million people in the conflict-hit Lake Chad Basin regions. As of May 2019, 18 per cent had been provided. In 2018, donors provided around 54 per cent of the $1.58 billion requested. Nigeria’s $1.05 billion response budget received 67 per cent of the funds. Cameroon was the least funded at 23 per cent.
Food Security

316k food insecure people at crisis and emergency in Cameroon
145k food insecure people at crisis and emergency in Chad
121k food insecure people at crisis and emergency in Niger
2.9m food insecure people at crisis and emergency in Nigeria

Source: Cadre Harmonisé March 2019 (projected situation)

Nutrition

32k severely acute malnourished children in Cameroon
11k severely acute malnourished children in Chad
16k severely acute malnourished children in Niger
368k severely acute malnourished children in Nigeria

Sources: HNO/HRP 2019

Displacement*

351k
192k
249k
1.7m

Cameroon Chad Niger Nigeria

*IDPs, refugees and returnees

Sources: DTM (Cameroon, Nigeria), DREC (Niger), UNHCR Portal

Security incidents

January 2019
38 incidents
141 fatalities

February 2019
45 incidents
118 fatalities

March 2019
52 incidents
197 fatalities

April 2019
40 incidents
288 fatalities

Source: ACLED
Funding status

- **Funded**: $238.2M
- **Unmet**: 18% of $1.1B

Funding per country:

- Nigeria: $194.5M / $653.2M
- Niger: $17.5M / $218.3M
- Chad: $20.8M / $119.6M
- Cameroon: $5.6M / $115.9M

Source: Financial Tracking Service (FTS) as of 22 May 2019.

Funding figures refer to the HRP requirement and funding in Nigeria, and to the Lake Chad portion of the HRPs for Cameroon, Chad, and Niger.
Cameroon is the second most affected country by the Lake Chad crisis, with 1.9 million people in need in Far North region, representing 44 per cent of the country’s 2019 humanitarian caseload in Cameroon. The Humanitarian Response Plan is requesting $122 million for the Far North region to support 880,000 people, out of a total requirement of $299 million (41 per cent of the HRP).

More than 248,000 people are currently internally displaced in the Far North, where some 102,000 Nigerian refugees, including 44,600 living outside the main camp at Minawao, have sought safety. Many communities have been directly affected by unabated violence in villages bordering Nigeria in Mayo Sava and Mayo Tsanaga divisions. Thousands have had to flee their homes at night, returning days later to try and pick up their lives with difficulty.

The armed attacks in January drove some 40,000 Nigerians to seek refuge in Goura locality near the Cameroon-Nigeria border in Cameroon’s Far North region. Under pressure from both Nigerian and Cameroonian authorities, 30,000 have had to return to Rann where insecurity remains high and humanitarian operations hamstrung. Some 9,300 of the refugees remaining in Cameroon have spread across 50 communities in the Logone-et-Chari department. Despite the presence of humanitarian actors in the area, major humanitarian needs persist, notably shelter, basic household items, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as education. Humanitarian access to the refugees is limited due to restrictions by local authorities.

More people are likely to flee into Cameroon due to both the growing insecurity in north-east Nigeria and large-scale military operations launched in the Lake areas. Humanitarian response in Far North region is being consolidated to respond to emerging needs and efforts being made to find lasting solutions to the plight of displaced people and those who have returned to their villages.

In 2019, humanitarian organisations in Cameroon require $122 million to assist over 880,000 people affected by the Lake Chad crisis.
Chad

The latest upsurge in armed attacks and insecurity across the Lake Chad Basin has driven thousands of civilians to seek refuge in Chad’s western Lac province where renewed violence also took a heavy toll on local communities, particularly around Ngouboua sub-prefecture. Since the beginning of the year, around 40,000 people have reportedly been displaced in the province, including refugees from Nigeria, returnees from Niger and fresh displacement of communities already uprooted from their homes by insecurity.

Armed attacks have increased since the start of a joint military operation in Nigeria in 2018. In March and April, a series of raids led several aid organizations to suspend operations and movement around Kaiga Kindjiria, Diamerom and Boma localities. The temporary move affected programmes which target some 40,000 registered beneficiaries. Despite challenges in access in these areas, humanitarian actors continue to operate in the Lac province to the best of their ability, to ensure delivery of vital aid. The army has deployed to Lac province to step up security.

In March, around 700 people, most of them women and children, fled to Baga Sola locality from other displacement sites due to attacks. Another 300 people, reportedly from Niger, arrived in nearby Kegua area in the same month. In February, an armed attack on Bol islands on Lake Chad uprooted some 1,300 people. The previous month, 4,000 people, also saying to be from Niger, fled into the region. Separately, an attack in Nigeria’s Baga Kawa locality in early January drove more than 4,000 people to seek refuge in Chad.

Food insecurity and malnutrition are projected to increase during the June – August lean season. Across the country, around 641,000 will be food insecure at “crisis” and “emergency” levels. In the Lac region, over 133,000 people are internally displaced and nearly 16,000 refugees rely on humanitarian assistance to survive and risk worsening food insecurity. Closed borders with Nigeria and Niger as well as ongoing insecurity continue to limit access to food markets and trade for populations in the Lac province, despite the reduction of market food prices throughout the country.

For the Lac region, the humanitarian community this year requires $140 million to assist over 340,000 people, including internally displaced people, host communities, returnees and refugees.
The south-eastern Diffa region has witnessed a significant rise in attacks in recent weeks. Around 18,500 people have been uprooted after attacks on several villages in Diffa. In March, at least 21 attacks against civilians and military sites were recorded. Some 88 people were killed in the attacks and 12 abducted (as of March 2019), a record number for the region. In the whole of 2018, armed attacks claimed 107 lives.

Humanitarian actors have carried out rapid assessments to determine the urgent need of the displaced. Shelter, water, food, utensils and sanitation are the top needs. Aid organizations are already distributing food, water and utensils. Mobile clinics have also been set up.

The insecurity has also affected schools. Currently around 30 schools are closed. In some schools, children cannot attend classes regularly because of hunger.

In March, the authorities lifted a ban on fishing as well as pepper cultivation and trade. The ban was part of the state of emergency declared in February 2015 after the first armed attack by armed groups on Nigerien soil. It was meant to starve the armed groups of income as they controlled much of the fishing and pepper trade. The lifting of the ban is hoped to boost the local economy in Diffa which is well known for producing irrigated red peppers also known locally as “red gold” due to their high value in the market. Fishing along the banks of the Komadougou River and Lake Chad are also important livelihoods for many households.

A recent food security analysis in Diffa shows that 350 out of 606 agricultural villages have suffered production deficits affecting over 270,000 people. Fodder output from last year’s season has also seen deficits of almost 1.3 million tons, which will affect over 77,000 people.

This year, humanitarian organizations are requesting $235.8 million for Diffa: around 62 per cent of the country’s $383 million total requirement. The humanitarian community is targeting to assist over 346,000 people in Diffa, including almost 250,000 displaced people.
Some 1.7 million people are internally displaced in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. Since the beginning of the year, there have been significant new displacements/new arrivals from hard-to-reach areas, with over 60,000 reported so far. With the continuous influx of displaced people, especially in Borno – due to armed attacks and military operations – reception centres and IDP camps are overstretched.

In December, around 20,000 people arrived in Teachers Village, a camp in Maiduguri, raising its population to 30,000. The site has a maximum capacity of between 8,500 to 10,000 internally displaced people. The influx has overstretched resources, especially shelter. Thousands of people sleep in the open and survive in deplorable conditions.

To assist new arrivals who have recently fled the attacks, the HCT is implementing a 90-day plan (prioritization of the 2019 – 2021 Humanitarian Response Strategy) with a financial requirement of over $50 million out of the $848 million requested under the HRP.

In Adamawa, Borno and Yobe, 7.1 million people – 53 per cent of the population in the three states – are in need of humanitarian assistance. This represents an eight per cent drop compared to 2018 mainly due to bolstered and sustained aid that has helped stabilise many communities.

Armed attacks have persisted and escalated in recent months. In January, up to 100 civilians were reportedly killed in several attacks on Rann town near the border with Cameroon. In the attacks, the humanitarian hub was badly damaged. Premises of WFP, ICRC and NGO Médecins Sans Frontières were burned and looted. It was the first deliberate attack on humanitarian assets. National and International humanitarian partners have not been able to resume humanitarian operations in Rann, hosting approximately 42,000, since January due to insecurity. Reports indicate that people in Rann are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including shelter, food and safe water.