

Stock Taking on the Returns/Relocations and Camp Closure in Borno State Nigeria

Discussion Paper / July 2021

Background

The Borno State Government resumed the closure of several IDP camps and facilitated relocations and returns of IDPs during May to July 2021 despite the previous calls by the Protection Sector to suspend returns/relocation and camp closures.¹ The Protection Sector is concerned about the needs and protection risks of the relocated/returned IDPs. This note/discussion paper seeks to provide an opportunity for Protection sector, humanitarian, and development partners to take stock of the current state of the returns/relocations and camp closure in Borno State. Given the current prevailing situation, **there is need to Engage, Influence and Change the status quo of the collective advocacy strategy on the issue by humanitarian and development partners.**

The Solution Doctrine

The Protection Sector recognizes the 3 equally valid “durable solutions options”: Voluntary Returns, Relocation and Local Integration.² As these options are NOT solutions by themselves³, the goal for all displacement-affected communities (DACs), is sustainable (re)integration⁴. The Protection Sector calls upon the Humanitarian Community (CSOs, L/NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies) and Development actors to support this initiative and align our interventions to provide much needed humanitarian assistance, mitigate arising protection needs of the affected IDPs and advance durable solutions prospects for them and the host communities in the targeted locations. The Sector proposes the following actions/recommendations to progress sustainable (re)integration:

1. The need for continuous protection assistance by all actors including the Borno State Government, the Humanitarian, and the Development actors, to displacement-affected communities (IDPs and host community) with specific focus on their needs and displacement-related vulnerabilities in both the areas of relocation/returns and during the return process.
2. A road map to facilitate safe, dignified, and sustainable returns/relocations to be developed by the Humanitarian Community with leadership by the HCT/OHCT to support the Borno State Government in strengthening the structures (response may include response action, remedial and environment building) and re-establishing administrative and security structures in the areas of return.
3. Strengthening of the Post-return Monitoring, Protection Mainstreaming & Training within the Return program by the Protection Sector, and protection concerns regularly documented and referred to the relevant partner agencies.

¹ Protection Concerns Arising from the recent Camp Closures, “Head Counts” and Government induced Camp closures and movement of IDPs. Protection Analysis April 2021

² https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-kampala_convention.pdf

³ <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/57441d774.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2.-IDMC-DS-Module-Basic-concepts-process-and-principles-Handout.pdf>

4. Increase in investment of self-reliance programmes through a multi-stakeholder's (Humanitarian and Development) engagement to promote self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods for the DACs in the return areas, by implementing an accessible poverty-reduction program that will enable IDPs to understand market opportunities, accumulate savings and build viable micro businesses. Achieving self-reliance will need to be measured over a realistic period.
5. Humanitarian actors to offer support towards resilience-building activities for the returned IDPs through investing in innovative accessible approaches to agriculture, income generating activities and socio-cohesion focused initiatives.
6. A detailed information and analysis on profiles, vulnerabilities, and livelihood capacities of IDPs and the proposed steps towards implementing durable solutions should be established through a multi-stakeholder engagement platform.
7. The Protection Sector proposes the establishment of **Returns Help Desks** through UNHCR support and guidance, to provide information on return to IDPs as well as gather the most relevant information on IDPs return intentions, aspiration and needs.
8. The HCT/OHCT to encourage and support the Borno State Government to set up multi-stakeholder coordination and engagement (Humanitarians, BSG, Development Partners) on the return/relocation process, importantly at the local – displacement and return location, in order to ensure a whole of society approach and progress towards sustainable (re)integration for the displacement-affected communities in Borno State.

The Protection Sector Approach to Solutions

The Protection Sector recognizes the likelihood of continued returns, relocations, and camp closures by the Borno State Authority. In response, the HCT/OHCT will:

1. Communicate with the Borno State Government for
 - a) alternative solutions to returns/relocation for the most vulnerable IDPs that is sustainable and/or lead to self-reliance.
 - b) the upholding of principles and standards of voluntariness, safety, dignity, and sustainability, as well as concerns raised by the international community.
2. Support efforts towards multi-sectoral joint Data collection and Analysis among humanitarian and development actors detached from any political discourse that reflects the realities and operational situation on ground.
3. Work with humanitarian and development partners to ensure the alignment of humanitarian and development support and assistance to the Borno State Government 25-year Development Plan⁵ that seeks to improve on accountable governance, purposeful infrastructures, peace and security and reconstruction, rehabilitation and resettlement as enabling pillars to development. This in turn will lead to:
 - a) The drafting of a comprehensive return, reconstruction and (re)integration policy and involvement of development actors in long term planning.
 - b) Development of multi-sectoral programs that support a sustainable return and (re)integration/durable solutions lens in in their implementation and strategic planning.
 - c) Government efforts in strengthening the rule of law, administration of justice, good governance by investing in sustainable (re)integration of the returned IDPs. Needs of the returnees (Refugees and IDPs) should be prioritized.

The End.

⁵ <https://acsdhr.bo.gov.ng/BSDP/overview.pdf>