

# REGIONAL PROTECTION STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Responding to the protection  
crisis in the Lake Chad Basin



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## NOTES

This document sets forth a regional strategic framework to guide the humanitarian response on key protection issues relating to the populations affected by the conflict-induced crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, including refugees, IDPs and other affected persons. The Framework provides a comprehensive overview of key protection concerns and risks, with a focus on cross-border and common protection issues, and elaborates main objectives, priorities and the response strategy for each.

The Framework was developed by the [Regional Protection Working Group](#) (RPWG) in Dakar under the leadership of UNHCR's Regional Office in Dakar and in close consultation with UNHCR colleagues at country, regional and headquarter levels, as well as in coordination with key agencies and civil society organisations working on protection issues at national and regional levels.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Nigeria Regional Refugee Response Plan 2017 and the Lake Chad Basin Humanitarian Needs and Requirement Overview 2017 and respective country humanitarian response plans.

## CREDITS

Concept design: Anna Minuto Snr. Information Management Officer, UNHCR, Regional Representation for West Africa (RRWA), Dakar, Senegal.

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# Table of Contents

<b>&gt; OVERVIEW: RESPONDING TO THE PROTECTION CRISIS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>&gt; KEY PROTECTION CONCERNS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
- Forced displacement and access to asylum and protection	9
- Civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas	11
- Registration, documentation and addressing nationality issues in crises	13
- Upholding human rights in the context of security measures	16
- Alternatives to camps and relocation	18
- Persons with specific protection risks	20
- Child protection	22
- Sexual and gender-based violence	24
- Education	27
- Comprehensive durable solutions	29
- Assistance and protection to other affected populations	32
End notes	37
<b>&gt; ANNEX.....</b>	<b>41</b>
- Abuja Action Statement	42



# Overview

## Responding to the protection crisis in the Lake Chad Basin

Over 2.5 million people are forcibly displaced in the Lake Chad Basin region due to the Boko Haram insurgency, and new displacement continues. Resorting to terror, widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), forced recruitment and suicide bombings, Boko Haram attacks on civilians persist. The context of ongoing insecurity poses particular challenges to ensuring an appropriate protection environment. The situation is further compounded by the fragile socio-economic context of the Sahel, which includes chronic poverty, harsh climatic conditions, recurrent epidemics, poor infrastructure and limited access to basic services.

Ongoing threats from Boko Haram in all affected countries as well as the absence of basic services have created acute humanitarian and protection risks for those impacted by the crisis, including refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and local communities. Renewed efforts are needed to support Governments in ensuring the protection of the affected populations.

Throughout 2016, Boko Haram insurgents continued to commit grave human rights violations and carry out attacks against civilians. Despite considerable advances in counter-insurgency operations, continued insecurity led to new large-scale and secondary displacements towards Cameroon and inside Niger. The end of 2016 and first months of 2017 have also seen an increase in attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, while the security situation in Chad's Lake region, Cameroonian border areas and Niger's Diffa region remains volatile and unpredictable.

In 2016, a great number of civilians were released from Boko Haram captivity in north-eastern Nigeria with the liberation of Local Government Areas (LGAs) where some 800,000 persons had been trapped over past years. Assessments conducted in newly recovered areas reveal severe humanitarian and protection conditions<sup>1</sup> and a further scale up of the response will be necessary as new LGAs become more accessible to humanitarian actors. Still, many people remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to insecurity, particularly in Nigeria's Borno State and border areas of Cameroon and Niger.

Today, the humanitarian and protection situation in Nigeria as well as in the border areas of Cameroon, Chad and Niger is dire. The violence has uprooted around 2.3 million civilians within their own countries, including over 1.8 million IDPs in Nigeria alone.<sup>2</sup> In addition, some 200,000 Nigerian refugees have fled to neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

The protection issues are many and complex. The persistent threat of Boko Haram attacks on civilian sites – including the targeting of camps – remains a serious security and humanitarian protection risk. The security context and cross border expansion of Boko Haram has also led to restrictive measures by security actors around border areas and refugee and IDP locations, such as border closures and severe limitations on freedom of movement. Many persons have been displaced multiple times, which further erodes the self-protection capacities of individuals.

Access to rights are being limited, including the right to seek and enjoy asylum. Arrests and detention are also on

On 6 – 8 June 2016, the Governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger met in Abuja, Nigeria, to discuss key protection concerns arising in the Lake Chad basin and adopted the [Abuja Action Statement](#), elaborating key actions to enhance the protection and solutions environment for persons affected by the crisis.

This Framework aims to support the affected countries in the implementation of these actions by setting forth a regional protection strategic framework to guide the humanitarian response on key protection issues relating to refugees, IDPs and other affected persons. The Framework provides a comprehensive overview of key protection concerns and risks, with a focus on cross-border and shared protection issues, and elaborates main objectives, priorities and the response strategy for each.

the rise as civilians, including refugees and IDPs, are suspected of collaborating with Boko Haram insurgents. At the same time, in preparation for military interventions and due to insecurity, Governments have organized the relocation of civilians from border areas.

The crisis has adversely affected the most vulnerable civilian populations, particularly women and children, older persons and those with disabilities or serious medical conditions. Around 60 per cent of those displaced are children and the number of female and child-headed households is on the rise because male heads of households have either been disappeared, killed or fear to return to join their families.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is widespread, and many people have suffered the trauma of violent experiences. Women, girls and boys remain the most vulnerable to SGBV and the most targeted by insurgents, with abductions, forced marriage, sexual slavery, use as suicide bombers and forced conscription.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that more than one million children<sup>3</sup> have been forced out of school by Boko Haram-related violence in the region, which already suffered from high rates of children who have never participated in formal education before the crisis.

In addition, much of the population in the Lake Chad Basin lacks documentation, posing a risk of statelessness and impediments to accessing services and rights as well as complicating efforts to identify and register asylum-seekers and refugees.

Nor are the persons affected by the Boko Haram insurgency restricted to displaced persons. With the vast majority of displaced persons living in host communities, the impact on local populations is significant, as is the strain displacement has placed on limited resources and services throughout the region. Local economies and livelihoods have been disrupted by the conflict and security measures, which have included restrictions on movements and livelihoods activities.

Although conditions in much of north-eastern Nigeria are not yet conducive for return, IDPs and refugees have started to return, as observed in areas accessible for assessments. As of March 2017, close to 200,000 refugee returnees have been registered in Nigeria and a significant number of IDPs have returned, sometimes under conditions that have not been voluntary, safe and dignified. Many of these return movements have resulted in secondary displacements as areas of origin remain insecure and inaccessible.

The magnitude of the crisis occurring in a conflict characterized by systemic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law requires the response to be strategic, prioritised and focused. It demands a comprehensive response by protection and development actors to address not only immediate critical protection needs, but also the challenges at the core of the root causes fuelling the conflict and violence, such as issues of exclusion, marginalisation and abject poverty. In line with the commitments of the Abuja Action Statement, humanitarian and development actors must strengthen their efforts to support the Governments, through a comprehensive approach to establish and strengthen an appropriate protection and solutions environment for the affected populations.

## OVERARCHING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 1 All refugees, IDPs and returning nationals have enhanced access to protection.
- 2 Civil-military coordination is strengthened to maintain the civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas.
- 3 Persons with specific protection risks are safe and receive appropriate preventive, responsive and restorative services.
- 4 Refugees and IDPs are assisted through a comprehensive solutions approach.
- 5 Refugees and other persons of concern receive documents and rights to nationality are upheld.

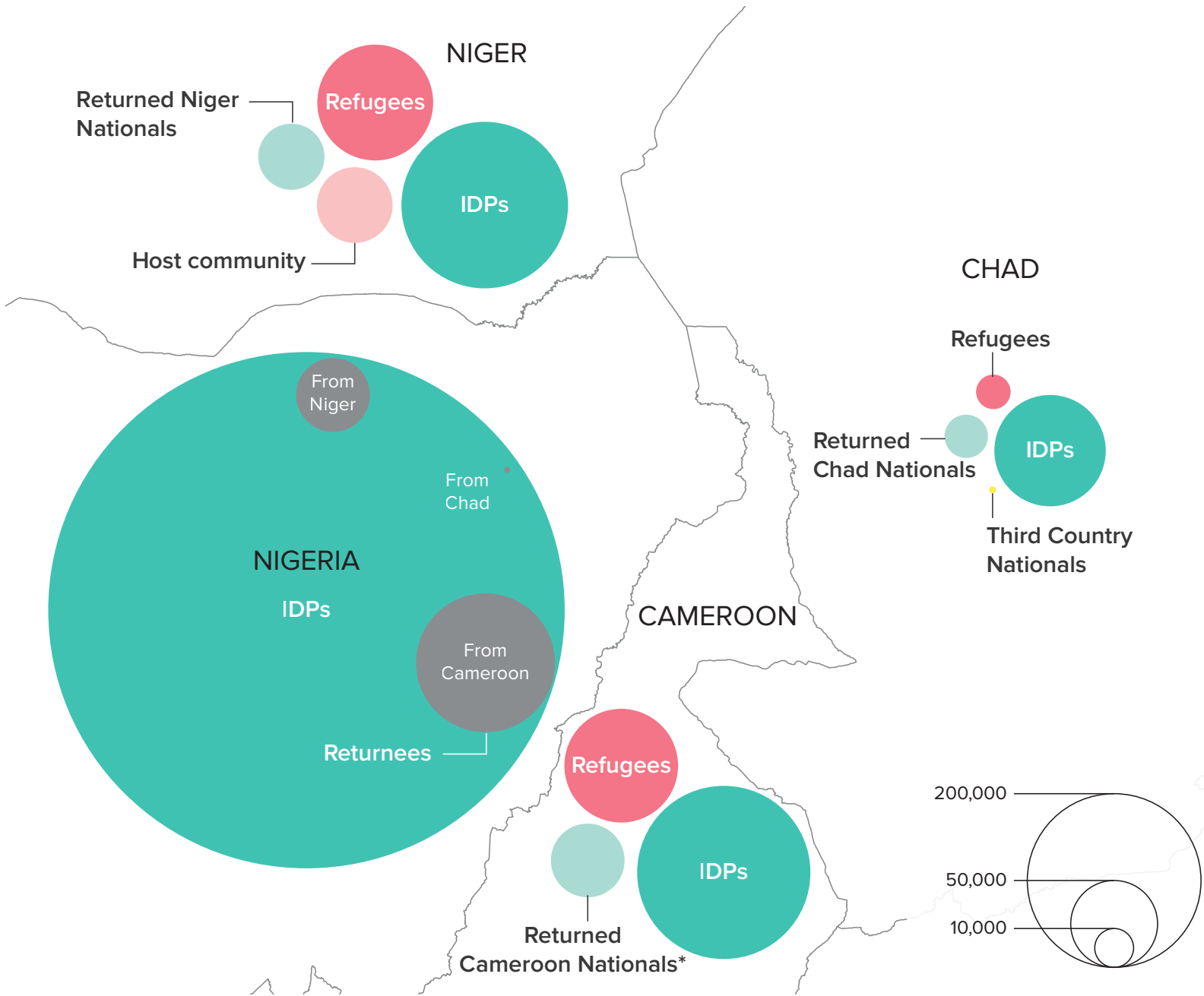


**“Protection must be at the core of the humanitarian response, particularly for women and children, who are at severe risk of exploitation and abuse.”**

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, 27 July 2016



**AFFECTED POPULATION**



Sources: UNHCR, IOM, Shelter/AME/CCCM Cluster and Governments  
 Note: \*Returned Cameroon Nationals (IDPs, Cameroon nationals returned from Nigeria and CAR)

# Key Protection Concerns



# Forced displacement and access to asylum and protection

## Problem statement

The crisis continues to cause new displacement of refugees and IDPs. Security considerations should be addressed in a manner that also ensures displaced persons are able to access protection.<sup>4</sup> In all affected countries, concerns have been raised since the start of the crisis with regard to incidents and risk of *refoulement*, whether in the form of border closures, forced returns or induced returns.<sup>5</sup>

Dealing with the security threat in the context of asylum and internal protection requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach with proper security and protection safeguards built in. International and regional refugee instruments such as the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (1951 Refugee Convention) and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969 OAU Convention) contain important limits and safeguards, which could be greater utilized to ensure both security and protection. Though the right to seek asylum does not provide for exceptions, and it is widely accepted that the prohibition on *refoulement* binds all States as a matter of customary international law, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention require States to identify persons engaged in terrorist activities possible and necessary, foresee their exclusion from status and do not shield them from prosecution. Moreover, the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) similarly requests States to ensure that internally displaced persons do not engage in subversive activities.

Security and protection are not mutually exclusive, and governments should be supported in ensuring that those forced to leave their homes due to persecution, conflict and insecurity have access to protection, while at the same time preserving the integrity of asylum and protection channels. Specifically, an integrated response is needed that enables States to identify those entering and/or on their territory in a manner that responds to protection as well as security concerns in line with

their obligations under international and regional legal instruments.

The Kampala Convention provides an important regional legal framework for the protection of IDPs. As of July 2016, Nigeria, Niger and Chad have ratified the Convention, Cameroon<sup>6</sup> has begun the accession process, and all have yet to domesticate and fully implement the Convention.

Particular attention should be paid to ensuring access to asylum by refugees living in highly insecure border areas where humanitarian and sometimes civilian government access is limited, and border and protection monitoring is a challenge. Humanitarian actors have observed that out of camp refugees are considered by some governments not to be asylum-seekers or refugees, and more generally that refugees and IDPs tend to be increasingly associated with security risks, which may lead governments to impose restrictive measures, such as incarceration or other deprivation of rights, or in some cases even *refoulement*.

Chad, Cameroon and Niger are also home to a number of Nigerian migrants, many of whom have been residing abroad for decades and may lack documentation. Due to the crisis, some may have become refugees *sur place* and must also be given the opportunity to seek and to enjoy asylum.

UNHCR continues to call on neighbouring countries to keep their borders open and to allow access to territory and asylum procedures by persons fleeing the crisis in search of safety as well as to suspend forcible returns of nationals or habitual residents to north-eastern Nigeria, including those who have had their asylum claim rejected, until the security and human rights situation has improved considerably.<sup>7</sup>



## OBJECTIVES

1. Refugees have effective access to asylum and protection from *refoulement*.
2. Governments are supported in ensuring an appropriate balance between security and border management and respect for the right to seek and enjoy asylum and access protection.
3. National legal and policy frameworks relating to the protection of refugees and IDPs are strengthened and brought in line with the relevant international and regional conventions, in particular the Kampala Convention.

## Protection priorities

1. Strengthen and promote appropriate mechanisms and preventive measures that enable States to identify those entering their territory in a manner that responds to protection as well as security concerns in line with their obligations under international law, such as protection-sensitive border management, strengthened screening and profiling processes for new arrivals and application of the exclusion clauses.
2. Advocate at national and regional levels to ensure Governments continue to uphold the principles of asylum and accept to receive on their territory those who seek and claim asylum.
3. Strengthen awareness among all relevant stakeholders- both humanitarian and government actors- on key international protection and human rights standards, in particular the right of asylum and the limits and safeguards of refugee and IDP protection.
4. Assist states in their efforts to domesticate and implement the Kampala Convention, including the development or revision of national legal and policy frameworks on internal displacement.

## Response strategy

Humanitarian actors will continue to [support governments in strengthening and establishing appropriate mechanisms and preventive measures](#) that enable States to identify persons entering their territory in a manner that responds to protection as well as security concerns, in line with their obligations under international law. This entails protection monitoring, including community based monitoring; joint screening of new arrivals with government actors; pre-registration, including in transit centres; and other measures, conducted in an age and-gender-sensitive manner.

[Border monitoring and protection monitoring](#) will continue and be enhanced to collect information on the routes refugees have taken to enter countries of asylum, obstacles faced both en route and in seeking access to territory as well as on the voluntariness of return movements.

Humanitarian actors will also [promote the increased presence in border areas, to the extent possible, of national bodies responsible for asylum and refugees, as well as other protection actors](#), so as to provide dignified treatment to persons in need of international protection with full respect for their human rights.

They will also ensure [advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity building](#) for relevant stakeholders, such as border officials, joint committees and other government representatives, on [key international protection and human rights standards](#) such as the principle of non-*refoulement*. Focus will also be placed on the limits and safeguards of refugee and IDP protection and governments supported in their effective implementation, including for example application of the exclusion clauses. Particular attention will be paid to clarify and promote use of appropriate terminology and enhanced understanding of key concepts.

Humanitarian actors will also [support Governments in their efforts to domesticate and implement the Kampala Convention](#). Advocacy will be conducted to promote, as applicable in each country context, the ratification, domestication and implementation of the Kampala convention. Advocacy strategies will be developed or strengthened. Humanitarian actors will assist states in the development or revision of national legal and policy frameworks on internal displacement.

# Civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas

## Problem statement

Widespread insecurity throughout the Lake Chad Basin and the threat of insurgent attacks pose security and protection risks for all civilians, including refugees, IDPs and host communities. These include both the threat of infiltration by armed elements in refugee and IDP hosting areas as well as physical attacks on civilians.

Boko Haram attacks on civilians continue in north-eastern Nigeria and areas affected by the conflict in Chad, Cameroon and Niger. Civilians are at risk of targeted and indiscriminate armed attacks, abductions and forced recruitment. In early June 2016, a wave of attacks by Boko Haram insurgents in Bosso in Niger's troubled Diffa region put at risk the lives of thousands of displaced persons living in camps and spontaneous sites, as well as local residents.

Under international law, authorities at all levels of government hold the primary obligation and responsibility to respect, protect, ensure the wellbeing and fulfil the rights of persons on their territory or under their jurisdiction. In doing so, it is recognized that specific challenges can arise in refugee and IDP hosting areas, where humanitarian actors themselves can face difficulties due to insecurity in accessing crisis-affected groups.

Maintaining the civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas is an important protection standard, with broad implications on other protection issues, such as physical protection from sexual and gender-based violence, protection from forced and child recruitment and access to assistance. A deteriorating security situation in areas where refugees and IDPs seek refuge can furthermore affect overall conditions for host communities. The response from the authorities may therefore be to restrict access to asylum, resort to arbitrary detention or even *refoulement*.

Preventive and security measures to ensure the civilian character of camps have included screening mechanisms and transit centres for new arrivals. For example in Cameroon, refugees are encouraged to move to a transit centre for improved security screening and registration before relocating to Minawao camp.

While the identification, disarmament and separation of armed elements is the responsibility of the State, humanitarian actors can, subject to capacity, mandates, and security considerations, support States through guidance, principled advocacy and inter-agency mobilization, as well as technical and, in certain circumstances, material assistance.

Risks are also posed by the presence of mines and unexploded improvised devices in all affected countries.

Rising insecurity and Boko Haram expansion have in turn resulted in the emergence of civilian militias, particularly in Nigeria and Cameroon.<sup>8</sup> In Nigeria, members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) sometimes exercise significant authority and provide a variety of functions in IDP camps.<sup>9</sup> However these self-defence and vigilante groups have also been accused of widespread abuses, including extrajudicial killings and recruitment of children.<sup>10</sup> The civilian nature of their administration is however blurred, and there are reports of their affiliation with military structures.<sup>11</sup>

Due to insecurity, humanitarian and sometimes civilian government actors have limited access to certain zones, particularly in border areas. Close and strengthened civil-military coordination is necessary to ensure provision of assistance and protection to these most vulnerable populations.





## OBJECTIVES

1. The civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas is maintained.
2. Close cooperation mechanisms are identified and established with relevant Government actors to ensure sensitization and response in case of the identification of (former) fighters/ combatants.
3. Civil-military coordination is strengthened to ensure an appropriate distinction between the roles of humanitarian actors and security forces as well as to enable humanitarian actors to reach people in need of assistance in difficult to reach areas.

## Protection priorities

1. Support governments in maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas, including through enhanced screening and other security measures.
2. Promote and advocate for the identification and separation of armed elements in accordance with international standards.
3. Sensitize the refugee and IDP populations on the importance of maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum and IDP settlements, and strengthen awareness of their obligations.
4. Strengthen coordination with military and other security actors and organize capacity building on key international standards to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP sites.

## Response strategy

Humanitarian actors will [support Governments in strengthening security measures](#) to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas. These may include early warning mechanisms, screening mechanisms, transit centres, monitoring of indicators of possible militarization, close liaison with national security forces, and advocacy for the deployment of camp-based security personnel, including female staff.

[Awareness-raising with refugee, IDP and host populations](#) will be conducted on their obligations and the importance of maintaining the civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas. Mine risk education will be promoted for affected populations.

[Coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors will be strengthened](#) on the civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas, for example by defining possible roles (within existing mandates), or the establishment of a task force or mechanism within the frame of existing protection coordination structures.

Humanitarian actors will also [promote and advocate for the identification and separation of armed elements in accordance with international standards](#). This includes advocacy with the Government for the adequate management of individuals posing a threat to the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum through the strengthening of such measures as (i) identification, separation and internment of fighters/combatants, and (ii) possible refugee status determination for those determined to have genuinely and permanently renounced military activities.

[Capacity building will be organized for security forces, including police and camp-based security personnel, the MNJTF and local authorities](#) on key international protection, refugee, humanitarian and human rights standards to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP sites. Humanitarian actors will also sensitize government and military actors on civil-military coordination to protect and promote humanitarian principles.

[Civil-military coordination mechanisms will be strengthened](#). For areas where humanitarian and civilian government actors have limited access due to insecurity, humanitarian actors may support Government and military actors - where appropriate - to develop guidance procedures aimed at promoting access by civilians to services and the engagement of humanitarian and protection actors.

Humanitarian actors will continue working with Governments through [enhanced civil-military coordination to enable humanitarian actors to reach people in need of assistance in isolated areas, and ensure an appropriate distinction between the roles of humanitarian actors and security forces](#) is drawn.

Humanitarian actors will support the MNJTF, in fulfilling the commitment made at the 14 May 2016 Security Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, to ensure that security operations are conducted in compliance with human rights and international law.

# Registration, documentation and addressing nationality issues in crises

## Problem statement

Lack of civil documentation and hence difficulties in proving nationality is widespread in areas of the Lake Chad Basin most affected by the current crisis. For example in Niger, a UNHCR study conducted in the Diffa region in 2015 revealed that 82 per cent of displaced persons interviewed were without documentation.<sup>12</sup>

This phenomenon is largely linked to the region's [low rate of civil registration, including birth registration](#). In Chad, only 12 per cent of births are registered, as compared to 30 per cent in Nigeria, 64 per cent in Niger and 66 per cent in Cameroon.<sup>13</sup> Onerous administrative requirements, cumbersome procedures and/or the absence of accessible civil registry offices are key obstacles. There is also limited public awareness, including among displaced populations, of the importance of civil registration and associated procedures.

Persons who lack civil documents are often more prone to protection risks, such as limitations on freedom of movement and access to basic rights and services like education and health care. Lack of birth registration also makes it difficult to determine the exact age of children for purposes of legal protection.

A mosaic of communities live in the Lake Chad Basin, many of which share cross-border ethno-linguistic and cultural ties, and the region has a long history of cross-border movements and migration. In the context of mixed

displacement, lack of civil documentation has sometimes made it difficult to determine whether people are refugees, nationals of the host country or third country nationals, and in the longer term, this may hamper the achievement of solutions for those who are displaced.

Lack of civil registration and documentation can also pose a [risk of statelessness](#), especially in the context of displacement. Gaps in existing nationality laws and policies, in particular the lack of safeguards to ensure that all children acquire a nationality at birth, further contribute to this risk. Significant progress has been made in recent years in the fight against statelessness, which is a pervasive issue throughout West and Central Africa region. In 2015, Niger and Nigeria signed the Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS Member States on Eradication of Statelessness<sup>14</sup>, and in 2016 both countries drafted national action plans to end statelessness. Yet important challenges remain.

Alongside efforts to strengthen civil registration for all affected populations, there is a need to ensure the [continuous registration of asylum-seekers and refugees and the issuance of appropriate documentation](#), which typically takes the form of a refugee identity card. High levels of insecurity have impeded the registration of refugees living outside camps in some zones, and continued efforts to reach these populations are needed.

Registration of asylum seekers, refugees (and, depending on the dynamics of a conflict, IDPs), is an essential protection tool. Not only can it enable access to related rights and local services, but it also helps mitigate the risk of statelessness and may be used to identify persons with specific needs for a more comprehensive and well-informed humanitarian response. In the current context where refugees risk being associated with Boko Haram, the issuance of refugee identity cards is also an important measure to help ensure their safety.

Biometrics is also becoming the norm in West and Central Africa, and Governments should be supported in launching or implementing biometric registration for refugees.

In view of the above, support to Governments in improving civil registration and access to documentation, including birth certificates, for their own nationals as well as for refugees and asylum seekers, is necessary. Continuous registration of refugees and asylum-seekers, in particular those living outside camps, issuance of appropriate documentation and close monitoring of population movements should continue.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Access to civil registration and documentation is enhanced, in particular to birth certificates.
2. The risk of statelessness is reduced among the conflict-affected populations.
3. Governments are supported in ensuring all refugees are individually registered (and depending on the circumstances also IDPs) and receive appropriate documentation, as quickly as possible, in order to prevent discrimination against asylum-seekers and refugees.

## Protection priorities

1. Support governments in improving and simplifying civil registration procedures, strengthen awareness among affected populations on the importance of civil registration, and promote the registration of all births on the territory.
2. Advocate with and support governments in ensuring national laws and policies comply with existing relevant international and regional standards, including the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
3. Ensure the registration of all refugees living outside camps, when the security situation permits, and strengthen mechanisms for the identification and registration of refugees and asylum-seekers in mixed flows.
4. Support governments in the implementation or launching of biometric registration of refugees in all affected countries.

## Response strategy

To increase access to civil registration and documentation, humanitarian actors will work with governments and local authorities to simplify civil registration procedures, address administrative hurdles and increase capacity, including by organizing and equipping mobile registration centres and creating more registration centres especially in remote areas, integrating birth registration into other sectors, such as education and health, and reducing the cost of birth registration and documentation. Advocacy will be conducted to ensure non-discriminatory access by refugee, migrant



and IDP populations. The inclusion of documentation and nationality issues in development planning will be promoted to help ensure access in the future to durable solutions.

They will also support governments in ensuring national laws and policies comply with existing relevant international and regional standards, for example as defined in the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and to support the adoption of a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness. Niger and Nigeria will be supported in fulfilling their commitments under the Abidjan Declaration on the Eradication of Statelessness of 2015.

Awareness-raising campaigns will be conducted among affected populations on the importance of civil registration and risks of statelessness, and traditional authorities involved in opposing ritual practices that might undermine the registration process. National and local authorities as well as humanitarian actors will also be sensitized on the risk of statelessness and the link with security. Exchange of good practices will be encouraged in addressing issues of nationality and statelessness in crisis situations.

Governments will be supported in ensuring the registration of all refugees and asylum-seekers and the issuance of appropriate documentation, with continued efforts to reach refugees living outside camps in insecure areas. This may include joint processing, capacity building and handover of processes and procedures, where appropriate. Particular attention will also be paid to strengthening mechanisms for the identification and registration of refugees and asylum-seekers in mixed flows. Where possible, registration will be used as a protection tool, for example for the early identification of persons with specific needs or persons at risk of statelessness.

As the registration and documentation standards tend towards the use of biometric systems, Governments will also continue to be supported in implementing or launching biometric registration and the issuance of biometric documentation for refugees will be promoted.



# Upholding human rights in the context of security measures

## Problem statement

States of emergency are ongoing in north-eastern Nigeria, Niger's Diffa region, Chad's Lake Region and in Cameroon<sup>15</sup>, and countries have adopted or amended counter-terrorism legislation. Military operations were scaled up in 2016 and continue in all affected countries. Security measures at local and provincial levels have included curfews, motorcycle bans, limitations on movement and various livelihood activities.

While recognizing the legitimate national security concerns of states affected by the Boko Haram crisis in the context of ongoing insecurity, and the need to implement security measures, some of which may affect refugees, asylum seekers and other persons of concern, such measures must be implemented in accordance with international standards and obligations.

Of particular concern are reports of excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests as well as deaths and inhumane treatment of civilian detainees, including children, suspected of collaborating with Boko Haram.<sup>16</sup> Fair trial and due process issues, including with use of military tribunals, are reported in all countries with respect to persons suspected of being associated with the Boko Haram insurgency.<sup>17</sup> Other measures have included restrictions on freedom of movement.<sup>18</sup>

Humanitarian actors have observed that refugees and IDPs tend to be increasingly associated with security risks, which may lead governments to impose restrictive measures.

States may, under certain circumstances, need to restrict the freedom of movement and other rights of their population for specific security reasons. However, declarations of a state of emergency and/or passage of specific emergency legislation and the exclusive use of military courts can perpetuate irregular and excessive action under the guise of legality.

States have the primary responsibility and duty to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons within their jurisdiction. This includes taking measures to prevent the commission of offences, investigating human rights abuses and prosecuting those found responsible, as well as providing adequate and effective remedies. Lack of accountability and recourse to justice may have broader implications on the achievement of durable security in the region.

At the Regional Protection Dialogue in June 2016, the Governments of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria committed to *"tak[ing] concrete steps, including continuous monitoring, to ensure that security measures such as restrictions on freedom of movement in the context of state of emergency and evacuations comply with international standards, and are temporary and exceptional in nature."*<sup>19</sup>

Humanitarian and human rights actors should work constructively with governments to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of the affected populations.



## OBJECTIVES

1. The fundamental rights of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees and other persons of concern are respected.
2. Counter-insurgency and other security measures comply with the relevant provisions of international law, notably international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law.
3. Survivors of rights violations have access to justice and an adequate and effective remedy under domestic law.

## Protection priorities

1. Support Governments in enhancing respect for the fundamental rights of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees and other persons of concern, in particular protection from arbitrary detention and undue restrictions on freedom of movement.
2. Work with governments and relevant judiciaries to ensure that those detained for alleged association with Boko Haram, with a particular focus on children involved in such procedures. This includes provision of legal aid, training and capacity building and targeted advocacy for children.
3. Strengthen awareness of security forces and other government actors on key international humanitarian standards and human rights through training and capacity building.

## Response strategy

Humanitarian and human rights actors will work with Governments to ensure [national laws and policies](#) comply with relevant international and regional standards, conduct [targeted advocacy](#), engage in [greater coordination](#) on issues of human rights violations in the context of security measures, and promote the stronger engagement and presence of key local and international actors.

There is need to [monitor the legality and reasonability of security and counter-insurgency measures](#) implemented by Governments and which affect refugees, asylum-seekers and other persons of concern. Without interfering in the due process of judicial proceedings, humanitarian and human rights actors have an important role in monitoring such proceedings, especially when there are risks that fundamental rights will not be respected. Where appropriate, an alert system may be established with possibly a hotline, in coordination with relevant agencies.

Humanitarian actors will strengthen [awareness-raising](#) among government and security forces on key international humanitarian standards and human rights. Capacity building will be conducted with relevant stakeholders, such as security forces and judges, on the rights of refugees, IDPs and related human rights.

Humanitarian actors will support Governments [in ensuring that any detention measures taken comply with international standards](#), in particular that the detention is necessary, proportionate to the threat, non-discriminatory, and subject to judicial oversight and due process safeguards. Responses will include detention monitoring, provision of legal assistance to detainees, capacity building of legal service providers and national and local authorities, including judges, support to screening and profiling measures, and support for the reintegration of detainees into their community after being released. The immediate release of children from detention and their placement in other forms of appropriate accommodation will be promoted.

Collaboration between humanitarian actors and Governments will be strengthened to [ensure prompt identification of asylum-seekers and refugees among persons held in detention](#), and their access to asylum procedures, legal assistance and protection from *refoulement*. If an asylum-seeker is wanted by national courts in the country of asylum, the examination of the claim could be deferred pending the completion of criminal procedures.<sup>20</sup> In cases involving an extradition request from the country of origin, asylum and extradition procedures may be conducted in parallel but the determination of the refugee claim needs to precede the decision on extradition.



# Alternatives to camps and relocation

## Problem statement

In the Lake Chad Basin, the majority of displaced persons live outside formal camps and in host communities. Overall, an estimated 62 per cent of refugees and 74 per cent of IDPs live outside formal camps.<sup>22</sup>

Enabling refugees and IDPs to live in host communities supports their ability to better exercise their rights and freedoms, make meaningful choices about their lives, contribute to their community and live with greater dignity and independence.<sup>23</sup>

Yet in the context of the Lake Chad Basin, the challenges are many to ensuring refugees and IDPs living outside camps<sup>24</sup> are protected and assisted effectively and enabled to achieve solutions. Security and access issues are key concerns in all countries, particularly in border communities.

In Niger’s Diffa region, displaced persons have settled in hundreds of spontaneous settlements, many scattered along *Route Nationale 1*. Displaced persons living in host communities are sometimes less visible or may be more difficult to reach. In Nigeria, the sheer number of IDPs living in host communities has also rendered the response difficult.

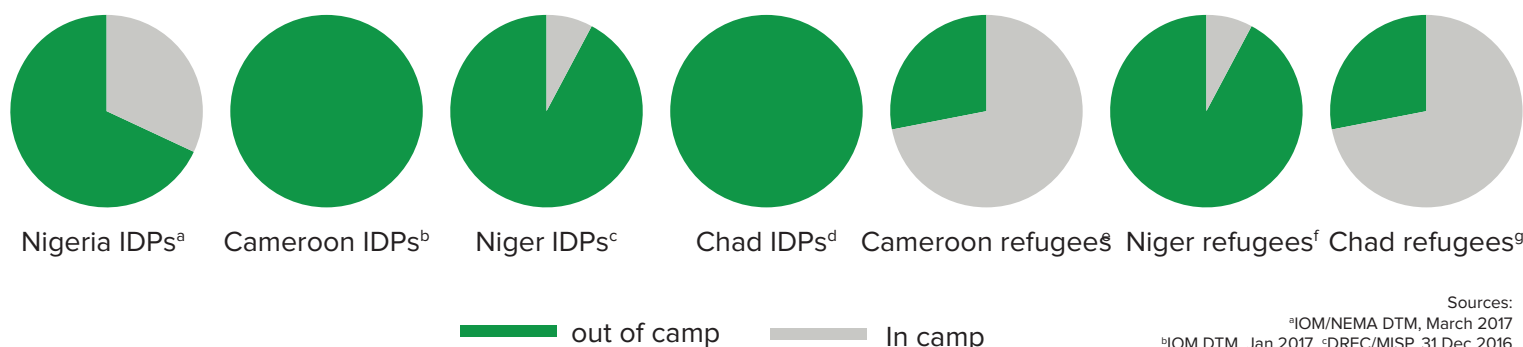
In the context of ongoing instability and presence of armed elements, camps have in some instances provided a better means of ensuring the physical security of refugees and IDPs and provision of assistance. Governments have also sometimes insisted upon the establishment of camps for reasons of public order or security.

For example, due to security measures imposed by the Government of Cameroon in the Far North in July 2015, Nigerian refugees living in border areas continue to seek accommodation in Minawao camp, as the camp is considered to be safer.

Nevertheless, important steps have been taken toward enabling refugees to live in host communities. In all affected countries, efforts are underway to develop and strengthen response such as site management approaches for displaced persons living outside camps. In 2016, the Chadian Government, in close collaboration with humanitarian actors, decided to drop its initial plan to relocate Dar Es Salam Refugee camp and allowed refugees to settle in host communities such as Ngouboua and Tchoukoutalia.

There may also be situations in which States need to relocate people in order to ensure their safety, including during military operations. In 2015, for example, thousands were moved from the Lake Chad islands for security reasons. With the upsurge in violence in the Diffa region in mid-2016, humanitarian actors supported the Niger Government to relocate thousands of persons from Route Nationale 1 to camps and villages where their security and assistance could be better ensured.<sup>25</sup>

Humanitarian actors have an important role to play in ensuring humanitarian evacuations and relocation is conducted in accordance with international standards.



Sources:  
<sup>a</sup>IOM/NEMA DTM, March 2017  
<sup>b</sup>IOM DTM, Jan 2017 <sup>c</sup>DREC/MISP, 31 Dec 2016  
<sup>d</sup>CCCM Cluster, 3 Jan 2017 <sup>e</sup>UNHCR, March 2017  
<sup>f</sup>DREC/MISP, 31 Dec 2016 <sup>g</sup>UNHCR, March 2017



## OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure refugees and IDPs living outside camps, in particular those who may be less visible and in hard to reach areas, receive appropriate protection and assistance.
2. Where needed for protection and security reasons, support the evacuation or relocation, on a voluntary basis, of refugees and IDPs away from highly insecure areas.
3. When conditions permit, phase out established camps and support the gradual integration of refugees and IDPs into host communities.

## Protection priorities

1. Strengthen identification, profiling and provision of protection and assistance to refugees and IDPs living outside camps, paying particular attention to those who may be less visible and in hard to reach areas.
2. Work with Governments to help ensure humanitarian evacuations or relocation measures organized by governments are implemented in accordance with international standards.
3. Promote the gradual integration of refugees and IDPs living in camps into host communities while maintaining assistance and protection in sites for those in need.

## Response strategy

Humanitarian actors will continue [seeking to enhance provision of protection and assistance to refugees and IDPs outside camps](#), including through the development and strengthening of response and site management approaches for out-of-camp populations. New approaches may be explored, such as remote and mobile management in situations limiting access or when sites are too numerous. In addition, responses will continue targeting host communities to strengthen their resilience and capacity to continue hosting refugees and IDPs as well as to maintain peaceful co-existence.

[Identification and profiling of IDPs and refugees living in host communities](#) will continue or be strengthened and advocacy will be conducted with Governments to strengthen the response for displaced persons living out of camps and ensure access to available local services. Particular attention will be paid to displaced persons who may be less 'visible' or in hard to reach areas. Regarding refugees and IDPs living in areas where access is limited, humanitarian actors will advocate for and promote strengthened protection support and assistance.

In the context of ongoing instability and presence of armed elements, [camps will continue to be used where they provide a better means of ensuring the physical security of refugees and IDPs and provision of assistance and accordance with Government policies](#). Where camps are used, humanitarian actors will pursue the progressive removal of restrictions on the ability of refugees and IDPs to exercise their rights and seek to build linkages between the camp and host communities and anchor the camp within the local economy, infrastructure and national social protection and service delivery systems.

Humanitarian actors will [promote - when conditions permit - the gradual phase-out of camps and integration of refugees and IDPs into host communities](#) and seek to ensure that camps are used exceptionally and as a temporary measure. The feasibility of camp phase-out and gradual integration of displaced persons into host communities will continue to be monitored and assessed. National and local authorities as well as humanitarian actors will be sensitized on alternatives to camps policy in order to enable well-informed and appropriate decision-making.

Participation of the affected populations in planning and decision-making will be ensured.

Humanitarian actors will [support Governments to ensure humanitarian evacuations and relocations are conducted in accordance with international standards](#), for example through support in the planning process, the development of targeting recommendations and sharing of guidance and expertise. As appropriate, humanitarian actors may participate in humanitarian evacuations and otherwise support persons in need of relocation or evacuation, including through provision of protection and other forms of assistance to those who may choose not to relocate.

# Persons with specific protection risks

## Problem statement

Conflict and displacement affect individuals differently, depending on their age, gender, diversity<sup>26</sup> and other factors. Some refugees and IDPs face heightened protection risks because they have specific needs, and these must be identified and addressed promptly, as well as integrated into all areas of response.

The crisis has seriously impacted the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs, particularly children at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children, women at risk<sup>27</sup>, older persons, and those with disabilities and serious health conditions. The number of child and women-headed households is also on the rise because male heads of households have either been disappeared, killed or fear to return to join their families. These phenomena underline the specific protection risks faced by men especially young adults and the burden and vulnerability experienced by women without them. Violence against women and children and SGBV<sup>28</sup> are widespread, and many persons have suffered the trauma of violent experiences.

Persons released from Boko Haram captivity have very particular psychosocial needs and may face difficulties in the longer-term with regard to reintegration into the community. These protection concerns are further compounded by the difficult living conditions and poor access to basic and essential services, resulting in some negative coping mechanisms.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Persons with specific protection risks are safe and receive appropriate preventive, responsive and restorative services.
2. Displaced persons enjoy their rights on an equal footing, taking into account age, gender and diversity.

## Protection priorities

1. Strengthen identification, tracking, referral and response mechanisms for persons with specific needs, and enhance coordination among humanitarian actors to minimize duplication of efforts.
2. Strengthen mechanisms for systematic and effective protection monitoring and profiling with a view to supporting robust and targeted responses.
3. Work with all actors to ensure that humanitarian services are provided in an age, gender and diversity sensitive manner.

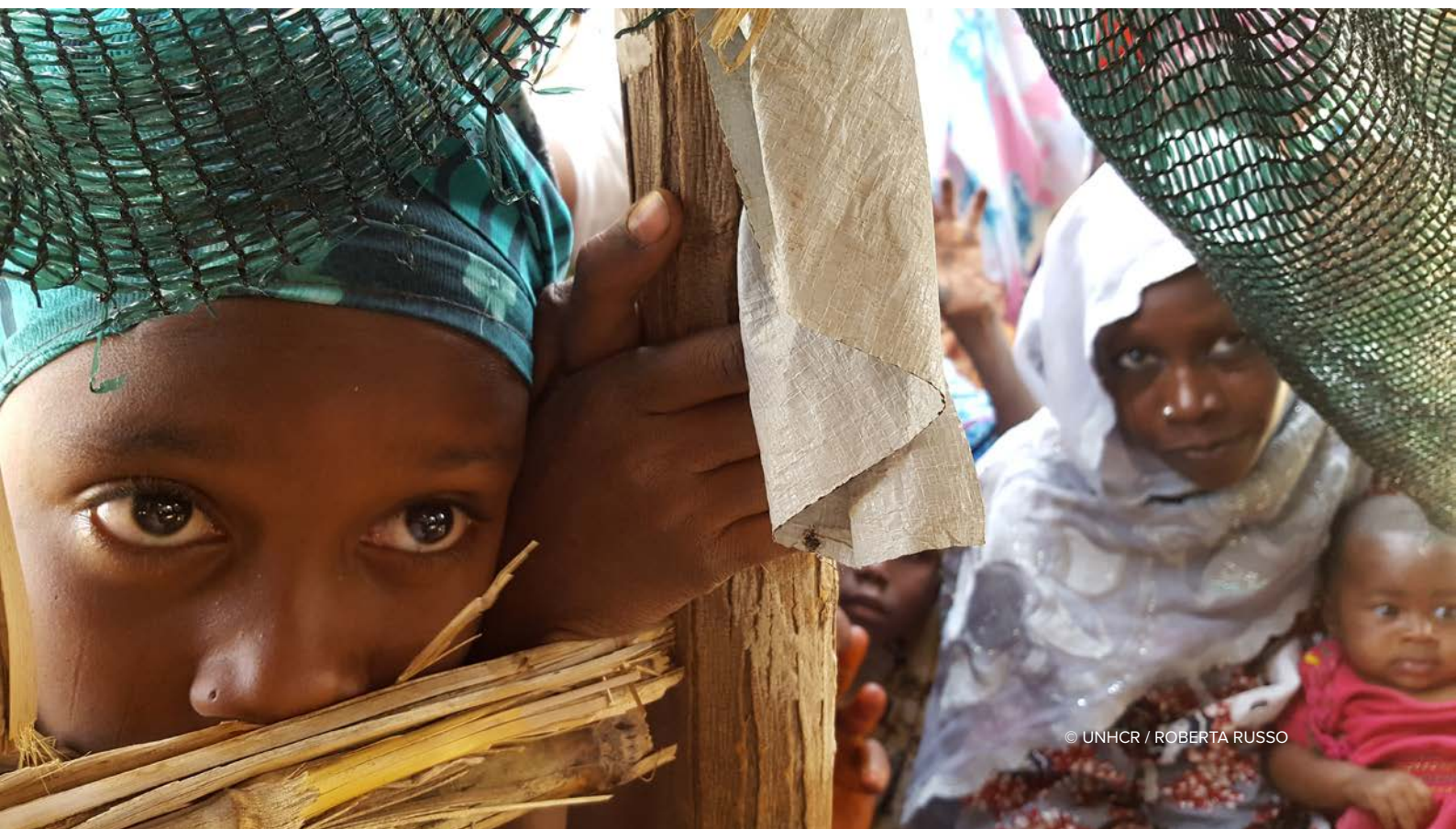
## Response strategy

[Identification, documentation and tracking](#) of persons with specific needs will be strengthened, for example through protection monitoring and vulnerability screening activities. Particular attention will be paid to refugees and IDPs living outside camps and in remote areas. Particular attention must be paid to survivors of trauma and persons released from Boko Haram captivity.

[Partnerships with agencies and organisations](#) with expertise, particularly in the provision of psychosocial support, will be enhanced, and humanitarian actors will work closely together to ensure a more coordinated response to persons with specific protection risks, including [strengthened referral mechanisms and provision of multisectoral assistance](#).

Humanitarian actors will also conduct [awareness-raising campaigns with key stakeholders](#) on persons with specific protection risks and advocate for improved access to government services, including welfare provisions.

Humanitarian actors will also work to ensure that displaced persons enjoy their rights on an equal footing, taking into account age, gender and diversity, and are able to [participate fully in the decisions that affect](#) their lives and the lives of their family members and communities.





# Child protection

## Problem statement

The crisis has severely affected the protection and well-being of children and adolescents, who constitute around 60 per cent of the conflict-affected population.<sup>29</sup>

Children in regions where Boko Haram is operating remain at risk of recruitment, violence and exploitation. In Niger's Diffa region, over a quarter of displaced sites assessed in an October 2016 study by DRC reported cases of child recruitment and children associated with armed elements.<sup>30</sup> In Nigeria, the Office of the National Security Advisor estimates 8,000 children may have been recruited and used by Boko Haram in combat and support roles.<sup>31</sup> The release and reintegration of children associated with armed elements must be ensured in accordance with international standards.

Boko Haram has directly targeted children as part of its insurgency strategy, including child recruitment and use in combat and support roles, destruction of schools, abduction of girls and boys and subjection of girls to forced marriage and rape.<sup>32</sup> Over the past two years, nearly 1 in 5 suicide bombers was a child, and three quarters of these children were girls.<sup>33</sup>

This in turn has created an environment of suspicion in some communities toward children, and children released from Boko Haram captivity face numerous difficulties in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. UNICEF describes how children born of sexual violence are perceived as having 'bad blood' and are at even greater risk of rejection, abandonment and violence.<sup>34</sup>

In some countries, children may be detained on suspicion of being associated with the Boko Haram insurgency, where they are sometimes held alongside adults and at risk of psychological, physical and sexual abuse and other harms to their development.

Many families have been separated during displacement, and there are a high number of unaccompanied or separated children, leaving them vulnerable to

exploitation. In north-eastern Nigeria, some 20,000<sup>35</sup> children are estimated to have been separated from their families. Family tracing and reunification has been a challenge in part because the low levels of documentation and birth registration make it difficult to establish family links.

Many refugee and IDP children have been exposed to traumatic events or high levels of daily stress, may be suffering from trauma and other mental health issues, and are in need of support. Yet child protection services in local communities are scarce and lack the capacity to address the needs.

Limited humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities have also contributed to an increased use of negative coping mechanisms involving children, such as the use of child labour and child begging<sup>36</sup> as well as sexual exploitation.<sup>37</sup>

Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria are all among the twenty countries with the highest rates of child marriage in the world,<sup>38</sup> and humanitarian actors have observed an increase in early marriage among refugees and IDPs.

Both the insurgents and the Civilian Joint Task Force in Nigeria have been included on the Secretary General's list of parties to conflict who commit grave violations against children.<sup>39</sup> Monitoring and reporting on incidents remains challenging due to the lack of access to affected areas in Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

Adolescents constitute  
**60%** of the total affected  
population

**20,000** children are estimated  
to have been separated  
from their families



## OBJECTIVES

1. Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play.
2. Girls and boys have child-friendly access to asylum, refugee and other legal procedures as well as to essential documents.
3. Girls and boys with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children, are identified quickly and efficiently, and receive targeted support.

## Protection priorities

1. Ensure children at risk including survivors of grave human rights violations are identified quickly and efficiently and receive appropriate preventive, responsive and restorative services.
2. Strengthen child protection systems and community-based child protection mechanisms for displaced and conflict-affected children.
3. Strengthen monitoring and reporting on grave violations of children's rights, including child recruitment, abduction, and attacks on schools.
4. Mainstream child protection in all areas of the humanitarian response to the crisis.

## Response strategy<sup>40</sup>

Humanitarian actors will continue to work to [prevent violence and abuse of children and to ensure that children have access to the protection services and support they need](#).

Mechanisms for the [identification and referral of children at risk as well as the response to the needs](#) of these children are in place, but need to be strengthened, in particular to ensure Best Interest Assessments and Determination and community-based child protection. With regard to unaccompanied and separated children, humanitarian actors will continue [family tracing and reunification](#) activities.

In response to the high numbers of children without documentation and at risk of statelessness, humanitarian actors will continue to support access to birth certificates and other documentation, and raise awareness among refugees and other key stakeholders about the importance of civil registration. Awareness-raising on child protection issues will continue with key stakeholders.

They will also work to [strengthen monitoring and reporting on child protection issues and violations of children's rights](#), including reporting on grave violations against children under the MRM.<sup>41</sup>

Other targeted child-protection activities will include the [construction and maintenance of child-friendly spaces](#), organization of age and gender appropriate activities and [improved access to psychosocial support and restorative services](#).

Humanitarian actors will also advocate for the [release and reintegration of children associated with armed elements](#) in accordance with international standards, in particular the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.<sup>42</sup>

Over the past two years, **1 in 5** suicide bombers was a child

**8,000** children are estimated to have been recruited by Boko Haram

# Sexual and gender-based violence

## Problem statement

SGBV is a core - though often hidden - dimension of the protection crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. The humanitarian response has lagged far behind the needs, and there is a need to increase preventive measures and ensure a holistic response to survivors.

Boko Haram tactics have included the abduction of women and girls primarily for sexual abuse, forced marriages and labour, and the kidnapping of boys to join as fighters.<sup>43</sup> In Cameroon, women and girls reportedly make up the majority of some 1,000 persons abducted by Boko Haram since March 2014.<sup>44</sup>

Those who are able to escape Boko Haram captivity often face stigma and discrimination by their communities, and other barriers to reintegration.<sup>45</sup> Women and girls who were compelled to become wives of insurgents, often referred to as “Boko Haram women” or “Sambisa women” face social marginalisation and are treated with suspicion that they may have been indoctrinated.<sup>46</sup>

Among displaced communities, the risk of SGBV has increased with the breakdown of family and community structures, changes in social and gender roles or responsibilities and increased socio-economic vulnerability.

Humanitarian protection actors have observed a rise in harmful traditional practices, in particular forced and early marriage among displaced populations. In the Diffa region of Niger, a DRC survey conducted in October 2016 found a prevalence of forced marriage in 26 of 42 sites assessed, and early marriage in 31.<sup>47</sup> Domestic violence is also on the rise.

While SGBV goes largely under-reported due to stigma and cultural taboos, there are reports of increased incidents among the displaced. In Nigeria, first assessments in the North East have identified over 7,000 survivors of SGBV<sup>48</sup> and a May 2016 PSWG Assessment revealed that over half of IDP sites around Maiduguri reported cases of sexual exploitation and survival sex, including in exchange for food assistance and to gain freedom of movement in/out of camps.<sup>49</sup> Many also reported cases of rape, sexual abuse and sexual harassment.<sup>50</sup>

A UNFPA report published in September 2016 found that about half of sexual violence cases identified in Northeast Nigeria were due to Boko Haram insurgents, 23.7% were unknown and 17.8% were members of the police and armed forces.<sup>51</sup>

Further challenges are the prevalence of impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence in all affected countries and the need to strengthen legal frameworks and ensure access to justice. In Chad, SGBV tends to be resolved by traditional leaders without consideration for national laws punishing SGBV, and impunity prevails in most cases.<sup>52</sup>

Survivors and people at risk face significant challenges in accessing services, such as legal aid and psychosocial support. The capacity of local communities remains weak to effectively prevent and respond to SGBV incidents. Communities play a key role in identifying and responding to reintegration needs of survivors. Organisations and institutions capable of providing adequate support to survivors are also lacking.



## OBJECTIVES

1. SGBV prevention is enhanced and the risks associated with SGBV are reduced.
2. SGBV survivors, including men and boys, can confidentially report incidents and have timely and non-discriminatory access to services and support, including medical, psychosocial, legal and material assistance, as well as safe spaces where needed.
3. Ensure that SGBV survivors can seek a judicial remedy.
4. Women, girls, men and boys benefit from quality national systems for prevention of and response to SGBV.

## Protection priorities

1. Strengthen SGBV prevention and response mechanisms, including identification, referrals and multisectoral assistance.
2. Enhance training and awareness-raising among key stakeholders.
3. Improve the protection environment for women and girls through community-based protection measures.
4. Strengthen SGBV mainstreaming and ensure it is integrated in all aspects of humanitarian response.

## Response strategy

SGBV [prevention and response mechanisms](#) will be strengthened, including through enhanced identification, tracking and provision of age and gender appropriate [multisectoral assistance](#) to SGBV survivors, such as medical assistance, psychosocial support and legal aid. Referral mechanisms will be strengthened. Safe spaces will be maintained or created both in camp and out of camp settings. Humanitarian actors will also ensure that SGBV survivors can confidentially report incidents.

Humanitarian actors will work closely together to ensure a [more coordinated response](#) to SGBV across the relevant sectors, including by strengthening and improving the capacity of SGBV coordination bodies both at national, regional and field levels.

[Community-based protection mechanisms](#) will also be promoted and strengthened.

Focus will continue to be placed on [awareness-raising and capacity building](#) of all relevant stakeholders, including national and local authorities, security forces, displaced and host communities. Where needed, relevant national and local authorities may be supported in developing codes of conduct.

Humanitarian actors will invest in [supporting national systems for SGBV prevention and response](#), based on country level analyses of the availability of these systems, access of women, girls, men and boys to these systems and their acceptability, affordability and quality. This includes support to bringing domestic laws and policies into compliance with international standards. In collaboration with government counterparts and other key stakeholders, technical and financial support will be provided to national and regional authorities to improve the quality of national SGBV prevention and response systems including through training and tools development. Advocacy will be conducted with authorities and key partners, to increase the non-discriminatory access of women, girls, men and boys to national SGBV prevention and response systems, through reforms in laws, policy, procedures and practices.

Humanitarian actors will seek to ensure that camp and camp-like settings are structured and managed to promote safety, including through provision of lighting, WASH facilities that are safe and accessible, secure shelters and an adequate security presence. In non-camp settings, efforts will be made to reduce the risk of SGBV.

SGBV prevention will also include [efforts to empower women](#), for example through enhanced self-reliance and livelihood opportunities.

Humanitarian actors will also seek to [improve access to justice](#) so SGBV survivors can seek a judicial remedy if they



wish. This may include provision of legal assistance and counselling. Advocacy will be conducted to develop or strengthen national legal and policy frameworks relating to SGBV and to bring them in accordance with international standards.

More generally, humanitarian actors will work to strengthen [SGBV mainstreaming](#) and ensure it is integrated in all aspects of the humanitarian response.



# Education

## Problem statement

UNICEF estimates that more than one million children have been forced out of school by Boko Haram-related violence across the Lake Chad Basin.<sup>53</sup> Schools, students and teachers have been deliberately targeted and attacked, leaving many families and communities afraid to send their children back to school. More than 1,800 schools have been attacked, damaged and closed due to the conflict, mostly in north-eastern Nigeria and Cameroun.<sup>54</sup>

Access to education is a basic human right, and also a fundamentally enabling right, providing essential knowledge and skills for protection, self-reliance and resilience, as well as for durable solutions.<sup>55</sup> As such during emergencies and displacement, education plays a critical role not only for the protection of children and young people, but as a measure of normalcy and stability as well as development for the community as a whole.

While children must get back to school, the safety of learning environments must be improved first as a priority. Advocacy for safe school environments at all levels is a prerogative, particularly in areas which remain insecure, including zones taken back from Boko Haram control and possible areas of return. Chad, Niger and Nigeria have endorsed the 2015 *Safe School Declaration*<sup>56</sup>, committing to take concrete action to protect students and their education in times of conflict, and endorsed the *Guidelines for protection of schools and universities from military use during armed conflict*.<sup>57</sup>

A high number of conflict-affected children have never participated in formal education or have experienced disruption in their education and are in need of remedial programmes. A 2015 study in Chad indicates that 81 per cent of children aged 6 to 11 years surveyed had never been enrolled in school or attended Koranic school.<sup>58</sup> Prior to the crisis, an estimated 11 million children of primary school age were out of school across the four countries.<sup>59</sup>

The pressure to absorb internally displaced and refugee populations has placed additional strain on the already limited capacity of national education systems to meet the education needs of their own populations, particularly in the regions affected by the violence and displacement. In all affected countries there is a shortage of infrastructure, qualified teachers and pedagogic materials, as well as remedial programs.

Further challenges include ensuring the relevance of curricula to the lived experiences of refugee, IDP and returnee children and youth, as well as language differences between refugee children and host communities. Secondary and multiple displacements have also complicated effective planning and response.

Disruption to learning must be minimized and affected children and youth engaged constructively to deal with the impact of conflict and displacement, including psychosocial distress.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen the equitable and inclusive access to quality age and cognitive-appropriate early childhood development programmes, primary and secondary education for children and youth (3-17 years of age) whose access to formal education has been interrupted, and for children and youth who have not had prior access to formal education, including those from the host community.
2. Enhance the protection, wellbeing and development of children and youth by ensuring that their learning environments are secure, safe and protected from attacks and provide for the psychosocial well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel.

## Protection priorities

1. Ensure access to basic education infrastructures and programmes to provide immediate protection through education routines for children aged 3 to 17 years affected by displacement during the emergency phase.
2. Ensure the education response is sensitive and adapted to the longer term education needs of children and youth in case of either extended displacement or return with the overall objective to minimize the interruption of their education and effectively manage the transition from emergency response to longer term solutions.
3. Promote the deployment of an adequate number of qualified teachers, including refugee teachers in refugee settings, in the schools and strengthen teacher and educational staff capacity with regard to psychosocial support, classroom management and peace education.
4. Advocate with local authorities and national Ministries of Education to ensure the smooth integration of refugee learners into accredited national systems and programs as soon as possible, including through provision of language support and accelerated learning opportunities, as needed.<sup>60</sup>

## Response strategy<sup>61</sup>

Humanitarian actors will continue to support and work with Ministries of Education, local authorities and communities to [help ensure access to ability, age and gender appropriate educational programs](#) of certified quality, delivered by trained teachers. This includes the rehabilitation and construction of classrooms as well as the distribution of school kits, learning and teaching material.

Advocacy will be conducted with local and national authorities to ensure the smooth [integration of refugee learners into national systems](#) as soon as possible, including through provision of language support, as needed. Accelerated education and remedial programmes will continue to be implemented to facilitate access to either formal education systems or professional/ vocational programmes.

[Sensitization on school enrolment among all conflict-affected communities](#) will continue, with particular attention to girls' education and gender issues, and protection from SGBV at school. School feeding programmes will remain an important intervention. Efforts will be made to ensure classroom interaction and educational content are conflict-sensitive and directly engage in issues related to peace building, social cohesion and integration as well as peaceful conflict resolution.

Humanitarian actors will advocate for and support the [recruitment, deployment and capacity building of teachers, including refugee teachers](#) in refugee settings. Capacity building should focus in particular on conflict-sensitive teaching, psychosocial support, classroom management, and child-centred and participatory teaching and conceptual problem solving learning methods. Codes of conduct will be promoted in schools as a tool to help ensure teachers understand their roles and responsibilities clearly.

Measures to help ensure [learning environments are safe and protective](#) will include ensuring school compounds are fenced, located in safe areas and provide access to clean drinking water and gender separated toilets. Standards and procedures must be in place to protect schools from attacks, particularly in insecure areas, and monitoring and reporting systems established. All affected countries should be supported in implementing the 2015 Safe Schools Declaration and using the *Guidelines for protection of schools and universities from military use during armed conflict*, and bring them into domestic policy and operational frameworks as far as is possible and appropriate.

Humanitarian actors will support [effective management of the humanitarian-development continuum](#). Collaboration will be strengthened with existing humanitarian and development coordination bodies to link the humanitarian response with longer term national development aspirations, including national education sector plans and the SDG4 process.<sup>63</sup> Joint assessments and data and information sharing among national, humanitarian and development actors will be prioritised and strengthened to facilitate planning, national capacity building and system strengthening, as well as risk informed education planning and programming.

# Comprehensive durable solutions

## Problem statement

While considerable military advances were made in 2016, conditions in most parts of north-eastern Nigeria are not yet conducive for return due to continuing insecurity and the absence of basic services, which pose acute humanitarian and protection risks for the affected populations.<sup>64</sup> A similar situation of insecurity prevails in the border regions of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, where Boko Haram attacks on civilians also continue.

While the conflict continues to cause new displacement, spontaneous returns of IDPs and refugees have been observed in north-eastern Nigeria, including in some newly recovered areas. As of 21 March 2017, a total of 195,544<sup>65</sup> Nigerian refugee returnees have been registered in Nigeria, and significant numbers of IDPs have also returned, sometimes under conditions which have not been voluntary, safe and dignified. In addition, some of these refugee and IDP return movements have involved serious risks resulting in some of the displaced population going into secondary displacement. In all four countries, housing, land and property issues are proving to be a significant protection issue where returns are happening.

Premature return, undertaken before conditions are in place and movements can be qualified as genuinely voluntary, gives rise to serious protection risks and can undermine longer term peace and recovery efforts by States. Particular attention must therefore be paid to ensuring the voluntariness of any return movements, including by taking steps to enable refugees and IDPs to access up-to-date and reliable information to take well-informed decisions. It is equally necessary to safeguard against push factors and unfavourable conditions in refugee and IDP hosting areas, which may induce returns when conditions are not yet conducive.

Alternative solutions should be present. In IDP and refugee hosting areas, there is a need to invest in peaceful coexistence initiatives that contribute to the resilience of all affected communities.<sup>66</sup> Such initiatives might be planned as part of rule of law and governance programming as well as in other sectors.

This is all the more important in view of the fragile

socio-economic conditions in much of the Sahel, where displacement is placing additional strain on scarce resources and services. Among the 17.2 million persons living in the areas most affected by Boko Haram related violence across the four countries, as of March 2017 10.8 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, and an estimated 7 million persons are severely food insecure.<sup>67</sup>

The crisis has disrupted economic and livelihood activities in host communities, including fishing, farming, cattle rearing, cross-border trade and markets. The supply and prices of food and other basic items have also been affected.<sup>68</sup> Livelihood opportunities have been also severely affected by the destruction and loss of property, productive assets, livestock and agricultural stocks. A UNDP assessment conducted in parts of north-eastern Nigeria in February 2016 found that a majority of households surveyed were unable to meet their basic needs, leading to high usage of negative livelihood coping strategies.<sup>69</sup>

There is a need to strengthen the self-reliance of refugees and IDPs as well as the resilience of all conflict-affected communities. Local infrastructure and services need strengthening alongside investment in public services such as health and education, which are crucial for achieving sustainable peace and development.

In achieving the above-mentioned as well as in anticipation of solutions, development actors need to be mobilized and engaged as soon as possible and planning broadened so as to include hosting and return areas, taking into account the specific needs and protection concerns of conflict-affected communities. Humanitarian actors, likewise, need to design programming so as to be consistent with national systems and to prepare to withdraw in favor of national and international development.

A comprehensive solutions approach is needed to support processes aimed at achieving all durable solutions. Governments have begun planning for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of some affected areas, and protection should remain central to such efforts, paying particular attention to persons with specific needs.





## OBJECTIVES

1. The self-reliance of IDPs and refugees is strengthened and the resilience of all affected communities enhanced.
2. Processes aimed at achieving all durable solutions for refugees and IDPs are strengthened [local integration, voluntary return, and relocation for IDPs and resettlement to a third country for refugees].
3. Governments are supported in establishing the nexus between humanitarian response and development to support durable solutions for displaced persons such as local integration and reintegration.

## Protection priorities

1. Improve sustainable livelihood opportunities for displaced and host communities and promote peaceful co-existence through a community-based approach and addressing the needs of host communities in assistance and response.
2. Ensure that any refugee and IDP returns are voluntary, in safety and dignity.
3. Support Governments in the development of comprehensive durable solutions plans for refugees and IDPs, taking into account all durable solutions, and ensure the involvement of the affected populations in planning.
4. Involve development actors in solutions planning and advocate for the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and returnees in national development planning and processes.

## Response strategy

In order to strengthen the [self-reliance of displaced persons and the resilience of all affected communities](#), humanitarian actors will enhance access to basic services; livelihood opportunities and financial services; access to education; and encourage the use of environmentally friendly measures. Peaceful coexistence of displaced and host communities will be promoted, including through increased targeting of host communities in responses.

Governments will be supported in [developing comprehensive durable solutions plans for refugees and IDPs](#), taking into account all durable solutions, and ensure the involvement of the affected populations in planning. Resettlement will be used as a protection tool for refugees in specific cases. For IDPs, in line with the Kampala Convention, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for IDPs, the needs, rights and legitimate interests of IDPs should be the primary consideration guiding all policies and decision on durable solutions.

Humanitarian actors will also support Governments in [ensuring that refugee and IDP returns are voluntary, safe, carried out in conditions of dignity, and based on well-informed decisions, once conditions are conducive](#), and that facilitated returns of refugees are within the framework of tripartite agreements and respect the principle of *non-refoulement*. To this end, humanitarian actors will continue to assess refugee and IDP return aspirations; monitor the voluntary nature of return movements; help ensure refugees and IDPs are able to make free and well-informed decisions about return; and monitor conditions in areas of origin.

Humanitarian actors will [support assessment and planning processes for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of conflict-affected areas](#) and seek to ensure key considerations for the durability of return and reintegration are addressed, including housing and property restitution; family reunification; the need for peace and reconciliation activities; support to victims of trauma, including in particular women and children survivors of Boko Haram violence and captivity; access to documentation and to basic services; and provision of legal aid.

[Collaboration and coordination between humanitarian and development actors will be strengthened](#) to help establish the humanitarian development nexus. Joint and coordinated planning is key to ensuring refugees, IDPs and returnees are included in national development planning and processes, such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Development plans should include also analysis of the root causes of displacement in the Lake Chad Basin and seek to address these.



# Assistance and protection to other affected populations

## Problem statement

Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria have all traditionally been home to significant migrant populations, some of whom have also been affected by the crisis and face particular protection risks. Such migrants in the countries in crisis (MICIC)<sup>70</sup> may also be in need of emergency assistance or have particular protection needs.

Some have found themselves stranded in the conflict, such as a group of 400 Cameroonian migrants who were caught in Chad's Lake area following the wave of attacks in early 2015.<sup>71</sup> As of October 2016, the Chad Shelter/AME/CCCM Cluster has identified 322 third country nationals displaced within the country due to the crisis.<sup>72</sup>

Many such migrants caught in the crisis have the same basic physical and psychosocial needs as refugees and IDPs, and their emergency needs should be addressed and, as appropriate, included in the broader humanitarian response. They may also need to be referred for consular protection and assistance.

In addition, some migrants living in north-eastern Nigeria at the onset of the crisis fled to neighbouring countries, including a significant number of long-term migrants who returned to their countries of origin or nationality. In the case of Niger, the over 120,000 persons who fled Nigeria to the Diffa region included thousands of returning nationals, many of whom lacked ties to Niger and became internally displaced upon arrival. As of November 2016, over 14,000 persons living in displacement in Diffa identify as returning Niger nationals, according to Government statistics.<sup>73</sup>

IOM has also identified over 12,400 Chadian nationals who returned to Chad from Niger and Nigeria, as well as

around 3,000 Cameroonian nationals who returned to Cameroon from Nigeria.<sup>74</sup>

The mixed character of displacement movements, coupled with low levels of documentation has made it difficult in some contexts to discern between refugees, IDPs, third country nationals, returning nationals and local residents. Lack of documentation and inaccurate profiling may limit access by third country nationals to consular protection and assistance, and place them at risk of deportation to countries to which they have no ties.

Some of the affected countries have put in place security measures that also affect and sometimes target non-nationals, such as increased document controls and the deportation of undocumented migrants.<sup>75</sup> There are reports of human rights concerns in this context<sup>76</sup>, including that lack of documentation has led in some cases to indefinite detention.

Particular attention should be paid to migrants and returning nationals who are at risk of statelessness or may be stateless, and their specific needs addressed. For example, among returning nationals, many have resided in Nigeria for many years and are without documentation, or have children whose birth in Nigeria was not registered or is not recognized by the country of origin, placing them at heightened risk of statelessness. Among Nigerian migrants who have been residing in Cameroon, Chad and Niger, many also lack documentation and may not be able to obtain proof of nationality due to gaps in laws and procedures, also upon return to Nigeria.

**Migrants caught in crisis situations (MICIC)** are non-citizens who are present in a country during a conflict or natural disaster regardless of: (a) the means of or reasons for entry; (b) immigration status; or (c) length of or reasons for stay. The term 'migrant' does not refer to refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons, for whom specific protection regimes exist under international law.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Third country nationals and returning nationals in mixed flows are promptly identified and referred to appropriate assistance and services.
2. Third country nationals and returning nationals fleeing the conflict and who are in need of immediate physical or psychosocial attention to meet their basic needs receive appropriate support.
3. The risk of statelessness among third country nationals and returning nationals is reduced.

## Protection priorities

1. Strengthen identification and profiling mechanisms in mixed flows and ensure referral of third country nationals to appropriate assistance and services, such as consular services.
2. Ensure the emergency basic needs of third country nationals and returning nationals fleeing the conflict are met and, as appropriate, include them in the broader humanitarian response.
3. Strengthen the identification of returning nationals and third country nationals at risk of statelessness and ensure their inclusion in statelessness prevention and response efforts.

## Response strategy

All civilians fleeing conflict, regardless of their nationality, status, or background, should be provided with assistance that gives them [immediate physical protection and access to essential services](#) (food, shelter, water & sanitation, health & nutrition, education). Humanitarian actors will work to ensure the [basic physical and psychosocial needs](#) of third country nationals and returning nationals who fled are addressed and include them, as appropriate, in the broader humanitarian response.

Humanitarian actors will support Governments to ensure migrants in crisis (MICIC) [are promptly identified and referred to appropriate assistance and services](#). In particular, humanitarian actors will support Governments to [strengthen identification and profiling mechanisms](#) in mixed flows and set up or strengthen referral systems to appropriate services and assistance, such as consular services.

Humanitarian actors will advocate for and promote the identification of third country nationals and returning nationals at risk of statelessness and appropriate response. To this end, humanitarian actors will ensure their [inclusion in statelessness prevention and response activities](#), including targeted advocacy on their particular situation and needs.





# SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES



## FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND ACCESS TO ASYLUM AND PROTECTION

1. Refugees have effective access to asylum and protection from refoulement.
2. Governments are supported in ensuring an appropriate balance between security and border management and respect for the right to seek and enjoy asylum and access protection.
3. National legal and policy frameworks relating to the protection of refugees and IDPs are strengthened and brought in line with the relevant international and regional conventions, in particular the Kampala Convention.



## CIVILIAN CHARACTER OF REFUGEE AND IDP HOSTING AREAS

1. The civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas is maintained.
2. Close cooperation mechanisms are identified and established with relevant Government actors to ensure sensitization and response in case of the identification of (former) fighters/combatants.
3. Civil-military coordination is strengthened to ensure an appropriate distinction between the roles of humanitarian actors and security forces as well as to enable humanitarian actors to reach people in need of assistance in difficult to reach areas.



## REGISTRATION, DOCUMENTATION AND ADDRESSING NATIONALITY ISSUES IN CRISES

1. Access to civil registration and documentation is enhanced, in particular to birth certificates.
2. The risk of statelessness is reduced among the conflict affected populations.
3. Governments are supported in ensuring all refugees are individually registered (and depending on the circumstances also IDPs) and receive appropriate documentation, as quickly as possible, in order to prevent discrimination against asylum-seekers and refugees.



## UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY MEASURES

1. The fundamental rights of refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, returnees and other persons of concern are respected.
2. Counter-insurgency and other security measures comply with the relevant provisions of international law, notably international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law.
3. Survivors of rights violations have access to justice and an adequate and effective remedy under domestic law.



## ALTERNATIVES TO CAMPS AND RELOCATION

1. Ensure refugees and IDPs living outside camps, in particular those who may be less visible and in hard to reach areas, receive appropriate protection and assistance.
2. Where needed for protection and security reasons, support the evacuation or relocation, on a voluntary basis, of refugees and IDPs away from highly insecure areas.
3. When conditions permit, phase out established camps and support the gradual integration of refugees and IDPs into host communities.



## PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC PROTECTION RISKS

1. Persons with specific protection risks are safe and receive appropriate preventive, responsive and restorative services.
2. Displaced persons enjoy their rights on an equal footing, taking into account age, gender and diversity.



## CHILD PROTECTION

1. Girls and boys are safe where they live, learn and play.
2. Girls and boys have child-friendly access to asylum, refugee and other legal procedures as well as to essential documents.
3. Girls and boys with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children, are identified quickly and efficiently, and receive targeted support.



## SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. SGBV prevention is enhanced and the risks associated with SGBV are reduced.
2. SGBV survivors, including men and boys, can confidentially report incidents and have timely and non-discriminatory access to services and support, including medical, psychosocial, legal and material assistance, as well as safe spaces where needed.
3. Ensure that SGBV survivors can seek a judicial remedy.
4. Women, girls, men and boys benefit from quality national systems for prevention of and response to SGBV.



## EDUCATION

1. Strengthen the equitable and inclusive access to quality age- and cognitive- appropriate early childhood development programmes, primary and secondary education for children and youth (3-17 years of age) whose access to formal education has been interrupted, and for children and youth who have not had prior access to formal education, including those from the host community.
2. Enhance the protection, wellbeing and development of children and youth by ensuring that their learning environments are secure, safe and protected from attacks and provide for the psychosocial well-being of learners, teachers and other education personnel.



## COMPREHENSIVE DURABLE SOLUTIONS

1. The self-reliance of IDPs and refugees is strengthened and the resilience of all affected communities enhanced.
2. Processes aimed at achieving all durable solutions for refugees and IDPs are strengthened [local integration, voluntary return, and relocation for IDPs and resettlement to a third country for refugees].
3. Governments are supported in establishing the nexus between humanitarian response and development to support durable solutions for displaced persons such as local integration and reintegration.



## ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION TO OTHER AFFECTED POPULATIONS

1. Third country nationals and returning nationals in mixed flows are promptly identified and referred to appropriate assistance and services.
2. Third country nationals and returning nationals fleeing the conflict and who are in need of immediate physical or psychosocial attention to meet their basic needs receive appropriate support.
3. The risk of statelessness among third country nationals and returning nationals is reduced.







## END NOTES

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4. For further guidance, see e.g. [UNHCR, Addressing Security Concerns Without Undermining Refugee Protection - UNHCR's Perspective](#), Rev.2, 17 December 2015, para. 14.
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16. See generally, e.g., UN Human Rights Council, [Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on violations and abuses committed by Boko Haram and the impact on human rights in the affected countries](#), 9 December 2015, A/HRC/30/67, paras. 53-77; Amnesty International, [Amnesty International Report 2015/16: The State of the World's Human Rights](#), 2016, pp.106-08 (Cameroon), pp. 113-15 (Chad), pp. 272-74 (Niger), pp. 274-78 (Nigeria); Human Rights Watch, [World Report 2016: Events of 2015](#), January 2016, pp. 422-27 (Nigeria); United States Department of State, 2015 [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Niger](#), 13 April



- 2016; Amnesty International, [Nigeria: 'If You See It, You Will Cry' Life and Death in Giwa Barracks](#), 11 May 2016; Amnesty International, [Nigeria: Still Waiting for Justice, Still Waiting for Change: Government Must Prioritise Accountability in the North-East](#), 14 March 2016.
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32. See e.g. UN Secretary-General (UNSG), [Children and armed conflict : report of the Secretary-General](#), 20 April 2016, A/70/836-S/2016/360.
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45. See e.g. [Report of the Special Rapporteurs on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences on their joint visit to Nigeria](#), UN Doc. No. A/HRC/32/32/Add.2, 16 June 2016, paras. 40-41; UNICEF, [Beyond Chibok](#), April 2016, p. 5. International Crisis Group, [Nigeria: Women and the Boko Haram Insurgency](#), Report No. 242/Africa, 5 Dec 2016; International Crisis Group, [Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram](#), Report No. 241/Africa, p. 20.
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## Regional Protection Dialogue on the Lake Chad Basin Abuja Action Statement

We, the Governments of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, with the support of technical and financial partners gathered in Abuja, Nigeria, on 6 to 8 June 2016 within the framework of the Regional Protection Dialogue on the Lake Chad Basin, hosted by the Federal Government of Nigeria, with the technical facilitation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to discuss the most urgent protection risks in the Lake Chad Basin resulting from the conflict-induced crisis;

**Agree** on comprehensive actions to enhance protection and respond to the most urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other affected populations;

**Note** that the Boko Haram insurgency and its spill over into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger have caused the displacement of over 2.7 million people in the region, of whom 2.1 million are internally displaced in Nigeria, while some 155,000 Nigerian refugees have sought asylum in Cameroon, Chad and Niger. The refugee-hosting countries also have sizeable IDP populations (Cameroon: 200,000; Chad: 110,000; and Niger: 127,208);

**Reaffirm** the validity of the principles and standards of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol as well as the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa ("OAU Refugee Convention"), in particular the principle of non-refoulement; the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa ("Kampala Convention"), especially the prohibition of forced displacement and the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness ("1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness");

**Recognize** that while military operations have led to significant advances in the fight against Boko Haram and have brought back a number of areas in north-eastern Nigeria under Government control, conditions in much of the north-east are not yet conducive for the return of Nigerian refugees and IDPs, due to continuing insecurity and the absence of basic services which pose acute humanitarian and protection risks for the affected populations, particularly in Borno state;

**Further note** that alongside persistent threats from Boko Haram, the presence of mines and unexploded improvised devices, climatic change as well as the drying up of Lake Chad, which exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities, further poses protection risks for the affected populations in the border regions of Cameroon, Chad and Niger, where Boko Haram attacks on civilians also continue or have intensified in some instances;

**Recognize** the legitimate national security concerns of the States and the need to ensure an appropriate balance between security and human rights, the obligation to protect IDPs and refugees, and the right to seek and enjoy asylum;

**Stress** the importance of maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP-hosting areas as an important protection standard with broad implications on other protection issues such as physical security, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), prevention of child recruitment as well as access to assistance;

**Note** that the crisis has seriously impacted the most vulnerable civilians, including refugees, IDPs and host communities, particularly women and children at risk, older persons and persons with disabilities or serious medical conditions; that violence against women and children, including SGBV, is widespread, that many persons have suffered the trauma of violent experiences and that there is a significant rise in the number of child and female-headed households;

**Welcome** the progress made in the region in identifying, preventing and reducing statelessness, including the signing of the 2015 Abidjan Declaration of Ministers of ECOWAS Member States on Eradication of Statelessness by

Nigeria and Niger, while recognizing that there are still important challenges, in particular the high number of persons in the region who lack documentation and have difficulties proving their nationality and therefore remain at risk of statelessness.

**In view of the foregoing:**

**In the area of forced displacement and freedom of movement in conflict, we agree to:**

1. Take concrete steps, including continuous monitoring, to ensure that security measures such as restrictions on freedom of movement in the context of state of emergency and evacuations comply with international standards, and are temporary and exceptional in nature.
2. Strengthen collaboration between government actors, humanitarian organisations, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the voluntariness of return and the freedom of movement of displaced persons as well as their physical security.
3. Develop and implement practical measures to ensure an appropriate balance between security and respect for the right to seek and enjoy asylum, including respect for the principle of non-refoulement, protection of IDPs and related human rights.
4. Promote knowledge and training among all stakeholders, including government actors, such as security forces, international organizations and civil society, of the limits and safeguards of refugee and IDP protection, as outlined in international and regional legal instruments such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1969 OAU Convention, and the Kampala Convention.
5. Enhance regional coordination and exchange of best practices through greater engagement by States and humanitarian actors with regional institutions such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).
6. Commit to prioritize the ratification, domestication and implementation of international conventions, including the Kampala Convention.

**In the area of civil-military coordination and the civilian character of refugee and IDP hosting areas, we agree to:**

7. Develop a capacity building program (training) for security forces and the MNJTF on key international humanitarian standards, international protection and human rights, civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP sites, and sensitize humanitarian and military actors on civil-military coordination to protect and promote humanitarian principles.
8. Enhance civil-military coordination to ensure an appropriate distinction between the roles of humanitarian actors and security forces as well as to enable humanitarian actors to reach people in need of assistance in difficult to reach areas.
9. Enhance screening and other security measures to maintain the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee and IDP sites, ensuring that these are conducted in a dignified manner and are gender and age-sensitive. Encourage at the same time greater information-sharing, while ensuring the protection of informants, IDPs, refugees, humanitarian actors, etc.
10. Strengthen access to justice, support the development of legal frameworks, provide legal assistance and encourage communities to use traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, where applicable and provided these are not in violation of national law.

**In the area of persons with specific protection risks, we agree to:**

11. Strengthen the identification of persons with specific needs, such as women and children at risk, through multisectoral needs assessments, improved registration and profiling, while ensuring data protection.
12. Improve multisectoral referral and response mechanisms in order to ensure better access to basic services.

13. Pay particular attention to the needs of children at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children and children at risk of exposure to SGBV, child recruitment, forced marriage, exploitation and abuse; and ensure referral to appropriate services, such as psychosocial support and post-traumatic services.
14. Ensure an increased involvement of local communities and community-based organizations in the provision of support and services to most vulnerable groups, including older persons, the chronically ill, persons with disabilities and youth, through improved protection coordination and a greater involvement of the affected populations.
15. Commit to promulgate national legislation aimed at protecting and increasing the involvement and engagement of affected populations through advocacy and awareness campaigns.

**In the area of comprehensive solutions approach, we agree to:**

16. Support the processes aimed at achieving all durable solutions [local integration, voluntary return, and relocation for IDPs and resettlement to a third country for refugees], including by enhancing access to basic services, livelihood opportunities, and financial services; promoting peaceful co-existence among refugee, IDP and host communities; and encouraging environmentally friendly measures.
17. Ensure that refugee and IDP returns are voluntary, in safety and dignity, and based on well-informed decisions, once conditions are conducive, and that facilitated returns of refugees are within the framework of a tripartite agreement, and respect the principle of non-refoulement.
18. Establish the nexus between humanitarian response and development to support durable solutions such as local integration and reintegration, through joint and coordinated planning between humanitarian and development actors to ensure the inclusion of refugees, IDPs and returnees in development planning.
19. Guarantee the centrality of protection by ensuring the participation of affected persons in the planning and implementation of solutions, taking into account age, gender and diversity, and paying particular attention to persons with specific needs.

**In the area of right to nationality and documentation, we agree to:**

20. Conduct awareness campaigns on the importance of civil registration and relevant procedures, through the use of local media and the involvement of traditional and religious leaders.
21. Simplify birth registration and civil documentation procedures; organize and equip mobile registration centres and create more registration centres especially in remote areas; integrate birth registration in other sectors, such as education and health; and reduce the cost of birth registration and documentation.
22. Ensure national laws and policies comply with existing relevant international and regional standards, for example as defined in the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and to support the adoption of a Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the right to nationality and eradication of statelessness.
23. Create a forum for consultation and sharing of best practices between States on issues of civil documentation and the risk of statelessness in the Lake Chad Basin.

**Follow-up mechanism**

To ensure follow-up of the above outlined actions, we further agree to:

24. Establish a plan of action at national level within 6 months of the adoption of the Action Statement, and review progress in implementation at national level at regular periods of no more than 6 months, and at regional level after 12 months.

Done in Abuja, Nigeria, on 8 June 2016