

## Population Movements from Cameroon to Banki

Between April and June, the number of Nigerian refugees returning from Cameroon to Banki in Borno State, North-Eastern Nigeria reached **15,036** individuals. The main areas of departure during the period remained Minawao and Kolofata refugee settlements in Cameroon. In addition, the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) also registered **5,224** who had earlier returned to Banki between January and March, 2017 before the influx in April and May. In total, **20,604** individuals have so far been registered by the NIS between January and June 2017. Banki, which is approximately 100 kilometres southeast of Maiduguri has an estimated population of over **43,000** people, even though the Borno State government has relocated more than **4,500** of the returnees to Pulka and Bama.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the northeast including States such as Yobe, Adamawa and other parts of Borno, the NIS with support from UNHCR has also registered nearly **180,000** people who returned to Nigeria from neighbouring Chad, Cameroon and Niger between 01 January and 28 June 2017. It is important to note that majority of those registered said they fled Nigeria during the insurgency but resided in villages outside refugee camps in the countries of asylum. Between 2015 and June 2017, the number of Nigerian returnees therefore registered by the NIS reached more than **360,000** individuals.

## Situation Analysis

The conditions under which Nigerians are returning to areas not ready to receive have remained the preoccupation of UNHCR. Further to the 3 July visit to Nigeria of the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Mr. Volker Turk, the Regional Representative for West Africa based in Dakar, Senegal, Ms. Liz Ahua, is in the country to continue bilateral discussions with officials on the return process. Following her discussions in Abuja, Ms. Ahua is also visiting Borno State to see first-hand the situation and the difficult realities to which new arrivals have been subjected. It will further enable her to understand the complexity and volatile nature of the humanitarian environment in North-Eastern Nigeria including conditions under which UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies work.

Meanwhile, as UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies struggle to provide shelter for new returnees, delays in creating the necessary security parameters for shelter construction is impacting the capacity to effectively respond to the shelter gap. Majority of those returning have also found themselves in the situation of secondary displacement either because their areas of origin are not accessible due to insecurity or their houses have been occupied by IDPs. In addition to that, ongoing counter-insurgency operations and incidents of targeted attacks on military and civilian infrastructure remain sources of continued population movements. All of these multiple movements bring with them associated protection risks, which have consequences on women, girls, men and boys residing in areas where civil administrations are either limited or non-existent.

## Gaps and Response Efforts

Inadequate shelter, constant food shortages, limited health, water and sanitation facilities remain critical unmet needs in areas of return and other displacement communities in the North-East. Even though UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies are working to respond to the challenges, the dynamics and the magnitude of the situation overwhelm their capacities to effectively respond. To properly manage the returnee situation including processing of individuals in a more organized manner, UNHCR has completed the construction of 10 reception facilities with the daily processing capacity of 1,000 returnees and will start, in close cooperation with MRRR, the construction of 1,000 emergency shelter units to address shelter deficit in Banki. In addition to staff already deployed in Banki, UNHCR is taking further measures to expedite the recruitment of the required human resources to management the reception centers in Banki and other return areas.

A taskforce comprising the government, UNHCR, WFP, OCHA, UNICEF, IOM, MSF, DRC, DFID and OXFAM have been holding high level discussions as part of a consolidated humanitarian action to scale up their response to the returnee situation in Banki, Pulka and Gwoza. The taskforce framework is part of a broader appeal by UNHCR to other agencies to support returnees in areas where they have the expertise and resources particularly in shelter, food, water and sanitation, health and education.

## Key Operational Challenges

In addition to the lack of resources to adequately respond to the returnee and displacement situations, targeted attacks on military and civilian infrastructures by insurgents in Borno and Yobe States continue to undermine humanitarian space. The military is stepping up surveillance and patrol in Maiduguri after reports emerged that elements of Boko Haram were sighted near the town. The restriction on road movements for UNHCR and other humanitarian staff to liberated areas remains in force until the situation changes. The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) helicopter remains the only reliable option for staff movement to the field.