

PROTECTION MONITORING REPORT

UNHCR MAIDUGURI SUB-OFFICE



Protection Monitors conducting a focused group discussion with youth in Bama. Credit UNHCR/Daniel BISU.

January - February 2023

I. OPERATIONAL CONTEXT




IDPs	Refugee Returnees	Asylum Seekers
		
2,197,894 Individuals	3,858 Individuals	17,495 Individuals
(869,916 in Camps)¹	(825 Households)²	(2,304 Households)³

Table 1: Displacement-affected populations in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states as of 28th February 2023.

79,463
Reached through protection by presence

Despite the significant military gains by reclaiming territories held by members of the non-state armed groups (NSAG), insecurity persists in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States in January and February 2023. Notably, members of the NSAG launched predatory attacks on communities in the BAY States. In addition, fighting between ISWAP (ISIS West Africa Province) and the Bakura faction of Boko Haram continued in the Lake Chad area, the Sambisa Forest, and the Timbuktu Triangle⁴. The ongoing military operation tagged “Operation Desert Sanity II”, and the surrender of ex-fighters has also been recorded in various locations of Borno State. With a combination of infighting between the members of the NSAG and the ongoing military onslaught, some villagers held captive in NSAG-controlled areas were rescued by the military and brought to the camps as IDPs.

3,997
Key Informant Interviews (KII) conducted

In January and February 2023, 150 safety and security incidents affecting civilians and members of the forcibly displaced population were recorded in the BAY States. They comprised armed attacks (42), IED (7), abductions (22), illegal vehicle checkpoints (17), crime (18), NSAG presence (14), civil unrest (6) hazards (18 including fire outbreaks, road transport accidents, and drowning). Some 1,222 civilians including members of the affected population were affected in the incidents. A considerable number of those affected include 1,056 IDPs in camps whose shelters burned down in Mungono.

116
Protection & Safety Incidents reported in 24 LGAs

Presidential and National Assembly elections were held on 25th February 2023 across the country. While IDPs and refugee returnees were able to vote in the camps and other locations designated for ballots, some factors such as the closure of camps, scarcity of the Naira and insecurity, affected the meaningful participation of the affected population in the electoral process. For example, IDPs from the closed camps whose polling units are in Maiduguri could not travel to vote due to naira scarcity. In addition, NSAG attacks targeted voters, most of whom were IDPs and returnees in Gwoza on election day with the aim to cause fear and maximum losses. Consequently, a fatality was reported, as also some injuries.

19%
Of 13,313 screened population are vulnerable

As a fallout of the general election in February, the Adamawa State Government **banned the activities of all NGOs and INGOs** (by extension, all UN agencies who are usually grouped as “INGO”) in the state until the 15th of March 2023. The Government alleged that the NGOs would interfere in the presidential election held on 25th February 2023.

II. POPULATION MOVEMENT

The following three categories of movements confirm the internal and cross-border nature of displacements and mixed movements in the BAY states, including the Borno State Government-led returns:

Internal Displacements: Available record shows that some 12,239⁵ individuals were displaced in In January and February 2023. This trend signifies that displacement persists. In **Borno** State, the movements were recorded in Bama, Damboa, Askira/Uba, Dikwa, Gwoza, Kala Balge, Monguno and Gamboru Ngala Local Government Areas (LGAs). In **Adamawa** State, the displacements were recorded in, Fufore, Girei, Gombi, Hong, Lamurde, Maiha, Michika,

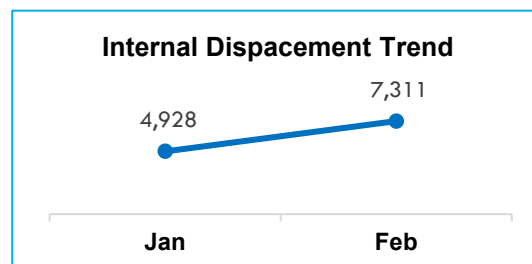


Figure 1. Internal Displacement Trend.

¹ DTM round 41.

² UNHCR spontaneous refugee returnees recorded (Jan-Feb 2023).

³ Refugee L1 registration in Adamawa State.

⁴ Timbuktu Triangle remains a strongholds of Boko Haram, inclusive of the Sambisa Forest, Mandara Mountain, and Lake Chad Tumbus. The triangle stretches over four local government areas of Borno State—Damboa, Jere, Kaga, Konduga—and one, Gujba, in Yobe.

⁵ IOM ETT Nos. 309 and 311-315 (January -February 2023).

Mubi North, and Song LGAs. Movement triggers include improved security, military operations, poor living conditions, family reunification, seasonal farming, and access to humanitarian assistance as well as fear of attack and communal clashes. As reported in previous months, the newly displaced persons in Borno state ended up in camps and camp-like settlements as their places of origin remained unsafe for returns due to NSAG's presence.

Refugee returnees: In January and February, a total of 825 spontaneous refugee returnee households comprising 3,858 individuals (male and female) were recorded by UNHCR's partner - Nigerian Immigration Services (NIS)⁶. Approximately 80% (3,078) of spontaneous refugee returnees returned from the Niger Republic. Approximately 81% of the returnees reported that they were not registered as refugees in countries of asylum. In addition, no incident of denial of access to territory was reported. The main reason for the return was the relative improvement of security in the LGA headquarters in Nigeria. Villages of origin in the LGAs remain inaccessible due to the presence of NSAGs and the absence of Government Forces.

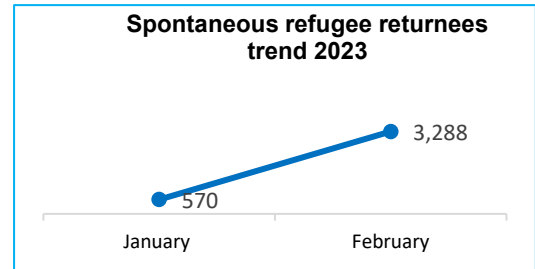


Figure 2: Spontaneous Refugee Returns

Borno State Government Return Plan: On 11th February 2023, 83 households consisting of 408 individuals from the Maiduguri Hajj Camp rehabilitation centre arrived at the Gwoza transit centre. Their return was facilitated by the Borno state Government. The humanitarian community was not informed before the return to prepare to receive the new arrivals and assist them. Notwithstanding, upon their arrival, the households were profiled by the military before moving them to the reception/transit camp where the IOM-Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT) team further profiled the women and children.

Adamawa Refugee influx: NSAG Attacks in some of the villages in neighbouring Cameroon continue to forcibly uproot people and displace them across the border in Madagali, Michika and Mubi in Adamawa State. As of 5th February 2023, UNHCR, ADSEMA and the National Commission for Refugees, IDPs and Migrants (NCFRMI) have conducted level 1 (L1) registration for 2,304 households of 17,495 refugee new arrivals in Adamawa State. Although UNHCR has distributed NFIs targeting 2,046 households of 16,601 individuals, the assistance remains inadequate as gaps remain across all sectors. Other protection and humanitarian actors have reported the limited human and financial resources as the constraints that have prevented them from responding to the needs of the refugees.

Repatriation of Nigerian refugees from Cameroon: Some 1,319 Nigerian refugees representing 349 households comprising men: 193, women: 339, boys: 407 and girls 380 were voluntarily repatriated from Minawao Refugee Camp, Cameroon to Banki under the existing Tripartite Agreement with the Government of Nigeria, the Government of Cameroon, and UNHCR.

Consequences of population movement: Despite the volatile nature of the conflict-affected locations of the BAY States, population movements continue to be recorded. While free movement of the affected population is encouraged and is in line with the HCT centrality of Protection Strategy, the nature of movements observed in January and February calls for increased efforts to address the gaps associated with these kinds of movements. Consequently, the over 400 individuals from the Hajj Camp in Maiduguri that the Borno State Government returned to Gwoza ended up in the already overcrowded camp, under poor reception facilities, and exposed to associated protection risks. In addition, the continuous influx of Cameroonian refugees⁷ to the conflict affected LGAs of Michika, Madagali and Mubi north and south has rendered the hosting communities and the new arrivals most vulnerable due to limited response targeting the affected community. This situation in Adamawa was further compounded by the two-week suspension of all NGO activities in Adamawa State by the Governor of Adamawa State, where apart from insecurity, humanitarian actors now cannot access the affected populations and provide meaningful responses.

III. PROTECTION BY PRESENCE, PROTECTION MONITORING

Presence: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and its partners (GISCOR, NHRC, BOWDI, NBA, Caritas, AUN and INTERSOS) continued to deliver **life-saving humanitarian assistance** and **protection services** in the BAY states targeting the affected population. Under protection by presence, some 79,463 members of the affected population were reached.

⁶ UNHCR in partnership with the Nigerian Immigration Services recorded spontaneous Refugee Returnees in 10 entry points in Borno (Banki, Ngala, Pulka and Damasak), Adamawa (Mubi, Sahuda and Fufore) and Yobe (Machina, Geidam and Gashua)

⁷ Discussions are on-going with UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria regarding prima-facie refugee status for the Cameroonians in Adamawa State.

IV. INCIDENTS REPORTING

Protection monitors conducted a total of 3,997 Key Informants Interviews (KII) at the field level using the protection monitoring tool, which was analysed and triangulated alongside the vulnerability screening, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and on-the-spot observations to inform the direct strategic approach for advocacy and real-time response on protection issues in the BAY states. Likewise, 116 protection incidents were reported and analyzed by types of incidents, presumed perpetrators, and incidents per LGA as shown below in figures 3, 4, and 5, affecting 1,009 civilians including IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees, and community members.

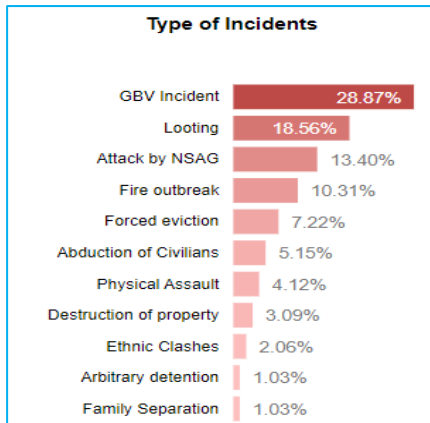


Figure 3 Type of Incidents

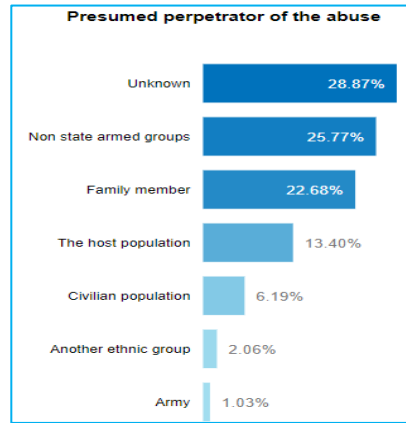


Figure 4: Presumed perpetrator of abuse

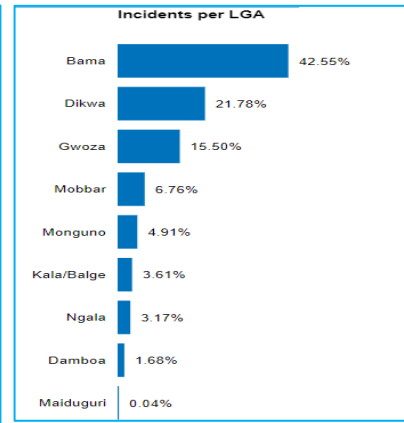


Figure 5: Incidents per LGA

Impact of incidents on the civilian population: NSAG attacks on the communities and near the IDP camps in Monguno, Gwoza, Pulka, Damboa and Soye were reported. These attacks instil fears in the minds of the affected population and deprive them of their rights to move freely and to engage in meaningful activities to improve their livelihoods. For example, the abduction of civilians oftentimes, results in the abductees being killed, or their families being extorted to pay the ransom. Due to insufficient humanitarian assistance, some of the affected populations have adopted negative coping behaviours including collaboration with the members of the NSAG by supplying them with basic domestic items like food condiments and detergents.

Women and girls of reproductive age persistently face gender-based violence such as sexual assault and rape as entrenched cultural norms continue to deprive women of the opportunity to seek assistance including medical and legal services. The involvement of men and boys in GBV programming activities potentially has benefits that the entire community can reap in the long run. The continued violence and displacement of the affected population portend more atrocities which most often happen with impunity. The solution to incidents lies in the improvement of the overall security situation in the BAY states and the government taking additional steps to secure justice for the victims of human rights violations.

V. PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION

About 74% of the 3,997 key informants interviewed described the relationship between the IDPs and host community members as positive. Similarly, 73% of the key informants described the relationship between the IDPs in the camps as positive. Furthermore, 21% and 24% of the KIIs described the relationship between the IDPs and the host community and IDPs in the camp as excellent. This finding is consistent with the demonstrated peaceful coexistence prevalent in the various camps and sites. However, the views of 2% of the key informants described the relationship between IDPs and host community members as bad due to the presence of ex-fighters in the camps and sites in Borno State which has been raised by some of the IDPs as a threat to peaceful coexistence. The ex-fighters are allegedly using an excessive show of power and physical violence in the camps in Bama and Mungono. In addition, some key sources of conflict have been identified which include water points (38%), community conflict (36%) and leadership and service delivery. The need to increase the use of area-based, community-based, and age, gender and diversity approaches in the camps, sites and host communities remains key to promoting community participation and communication thereby minimising chances for conflicts in the communities. Insufficient basic services concerns need to be addressed with the view to limiting the struggle for service which oftentimes result in conflicts.

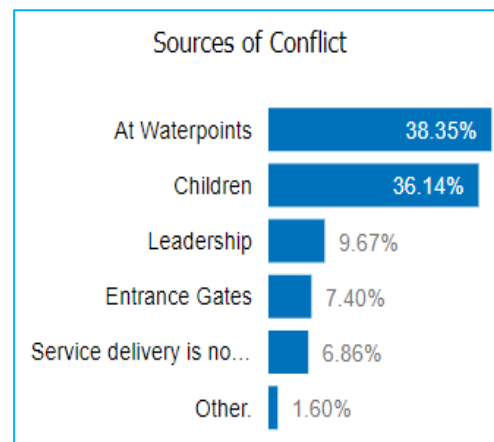


Figure 6: Sources of conflict

VI. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Free movement within the camps appeared normal so also did the movement to nearby or outside the sites/camps. However, movement to another LGA is significantly limited due to insecurity such as attacks at the farm, ambushes and illegal vehicle checkpoints.

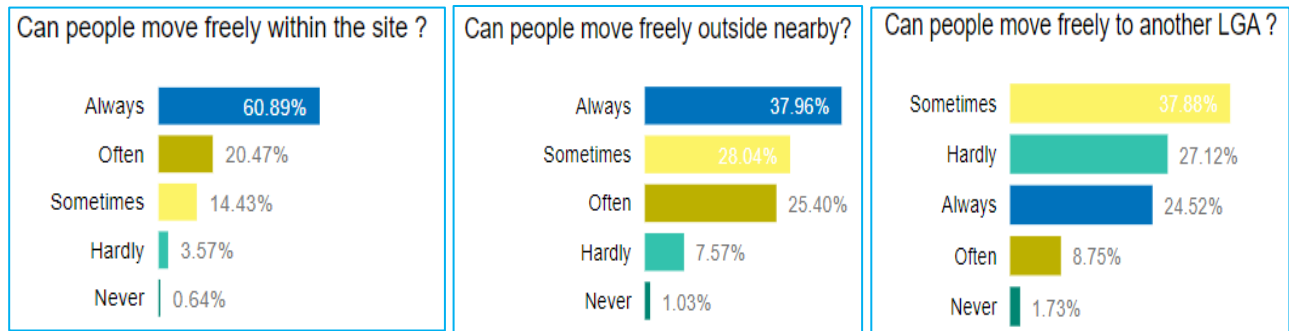


Figure 7. The situation of freedom of movement.

VII. LEGAL AND CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

Since the displacement of the affected population and the civilian authorities in 2014, and the subsequent returns to the liberated locations, access to legal documents remains a significant challenge for the affected population. The most common barriers to accessing legal documents include distance to the registrar’s office, insecurity, and lack of information about how to access the documents. Humanitarian actors including UNHCR and its partners continue to collaborate and coordinate with relevant state agencies to provide legal documentation to the affected population in the BAY states. Despite this assistance, the needs for legal and civil documents remain high among affected populations thus the need for continued advocacy and sensitization of stakeholders on the importance of Identity documents and the processes of obtaining these vital documents.

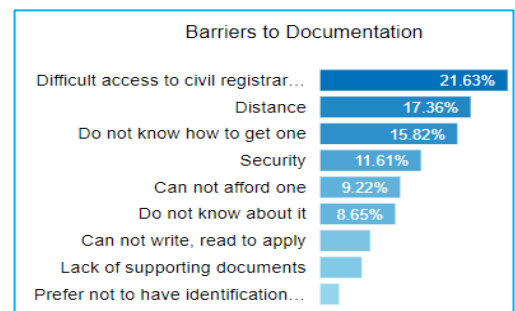


Figure 8: Barriers to Documentation

VIII. COMPLAINT AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

Second, to the community structures (27%) is the protection desks (21%) as the most preferred places the affected population go to report protection concerns according to 3, 997 key informants interviewed in January and February 2023. This finding is consistent with the available records of protection desk users where in January and February, 6,581 IDPs, IDP and refugee returnees and members of the host community representing some 1,519 households accessed the 30 protection desks in 10 locations in the BAY States. Major complaints received at the protection desks included requests for basic services, requests for medical assistance, and legal issues/access to justice. While some of these complaints were responded to at the protection desks, others were referred to service providers and partners for their response. In addition to the above-mentioned complaint and feedback mechanisms, the availability of the **Toll-free line** enabled some **98** individual males and females to freely call and report their complaints directly to dedicated UNHCR staff. Complaint and feedback mechanisms complement protection monitoring and increase accountability to the affected population through their increased access to the protection actors.

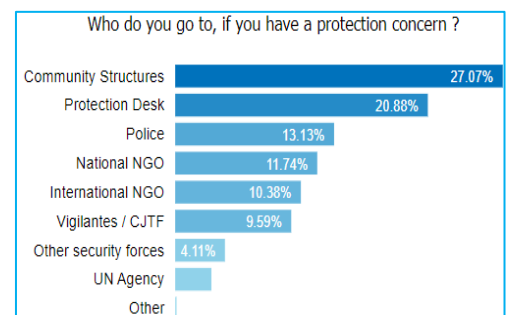


Figure 9: Who do you go to, if you have a protection concern

CHILD PROTECTION

Children with specific needs: Children accounted for 2.5% (64) of the vulnerable individuals screened in January and February 2023. Child marriage (25%), especially recorded amongst the IDP new arrivals from the hard-to-reach areas were identified. Equally amongst the new arrivals were identified adolescent parents. Children have suffered the worst forms of rights violations from the NSAG members including their forceful recruitment for sexual exploitation and abuse. Additionally, NSAG atrocities rendered children unaccompanied, including orphaned, (49%), separated (10%) or heads of their households (14%) based on the findings of the vulnerability screening. The findings of this period may not have presented the overall picture of the situation of the children given that culture of silence, especially amongst the new arrivals persists. Limited funding has seen some of the Child Protection actors close their projects despite the continued need for the protection of children.

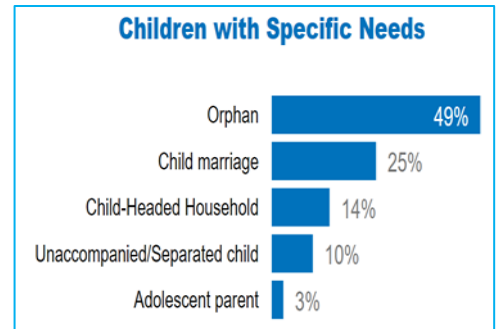


Figure 10: Children with specific needs

IX. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



Denial of Resources and Forced/Early Marriage were the most prevalent GBV types



100% of reported incidents were perpetrated against **Females**



35% of reported incidents were perpetrated against **Children**

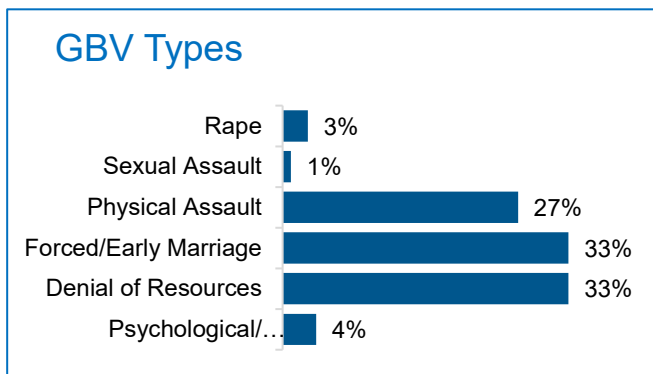


Figure 11. GBV Types

Gender-based violence remains a highly prevalent human rights violation across the Northeast, disproportionately impacting women and girls. In January and February, through capacitated protection monitors, protection action groups and community-based structures/volunteers, GBV survivors were referred to BOWDI for a range of services offered primarily through Women and Girls Safe Spaces, including case management and psychosocial counselling. Among the reported incidents were the following types of GBV: at 33% each, forced/early marriage and denial of resources, opportunities, and services, followed by physical assault at 27%, psychological and emotional abuse at 4%, and rape at 3%, and sexual assault 1%. Some 63% of the noted types of GBV (i.e., forced/early marriage, denial of resources, physical assault, etc.) occurred in the context of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), primarily, the battery of

women by their husbands but also other acts of grave violence such as marital rape. Among UNHCR's GBV project locations, Bama recorded the highest number of incidents at 34%, followed by Pulka at 32%, Ngala at 17% and Mubi North at 11%, respectively.

An important activity to mitigate the risk of GBV is the distribution of dignity kits, comprised of both sanitary and hygiene items, to women and girls of reproductive age. In January and February, in adherence to UNHCR's accountability to affected populations, Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was conducted in nine LGAs/sites in Borno (Bama, Banki, Monguno, Dikwa, Gwoza, Pulka and Ngala) and Adamawa states (Yola North, Yola South, Mubi North, Mubi South and Fufore). The PDM aimed at assessing the impact and effectiveness of a recent distribution of dignity kits in the noted locations, undertaken as a means of promoting protection, physical and psychosocial wellbeing, mobility and hygiene for women and girls at risk of GBV. According to feedback received, some 98% of recipients were "very satisfied" (68%) or "satisfied" (30%) with the items they received. Respondents additionally called for other non-food items (such as blankets and jerry cans) to meet their basic needs.

UNHCR's core GBV programming includes interventions designed to prevent, mitigate and respond to GBV. Through feedback, assessments and dialogues, UNHCR's GBV programming is adaptive to feedback received directly from affected communities.

X. PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS

Some 2,273 IDPs, IDP returnees and refugee returnees households representing 13,313 individuals underwent vulnerability screening to identify persons with specific needs in January and February 2023. The **vulnerability**

screening of persons with specific needs (PSNs) was conducted in 16 LGA⁸ across the BAY states identifying 2,523 vulnerable individuals and outlined in the figures below.

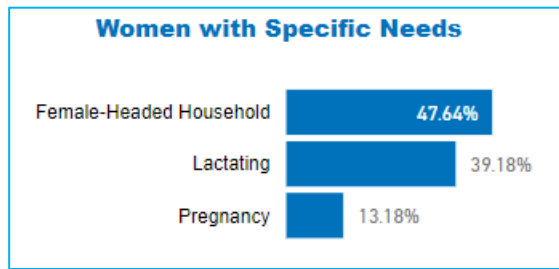


Figure 12: Women with specific needs

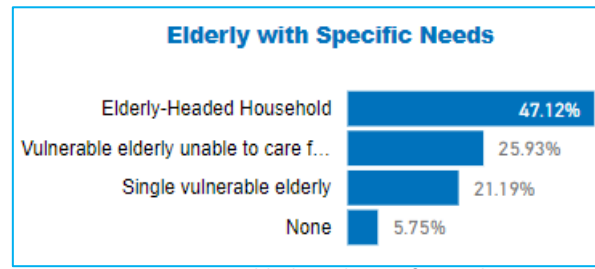


Figure 13: Elderly with specific needs

XI. HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP), CAMP CONGESTION AND ASSOCIATED PROTECTION RISKS

In January and February 2023, key informants reported that destruction of crops (18%), housing (18%), theft and fraud (14%) are the most prevalent HLP issues in the BAY States. This assertion is consistent with the reported clashes between herders and farmers in Gujba, Damasak and parts of Adamawa State. Moreover, lack of documentation (12%), insecurity (11%) and land-related conflicts (7%) are some of the other HLP issues most prevalent in Banki, Dikwa and Damasak in Borno State. The returns of the IDPs and the spontaneous refugees to locations with limited shelters such as Banki and Dikwa among other locations in Borno State significantly increased Housing, Land and Property (HLP) issues such as forced evictions, secondary occupation and acquisition of land. Significant humanitarian efforts have been made to mitigate HLP gaps, but the efforts have not yet yielded the desired results, creating the need for continued advocacy to stakeholders (including within the humanitarian community) for shelter support kit assistance to returnees in return areas and for the government to reconstruct destroyed houses.

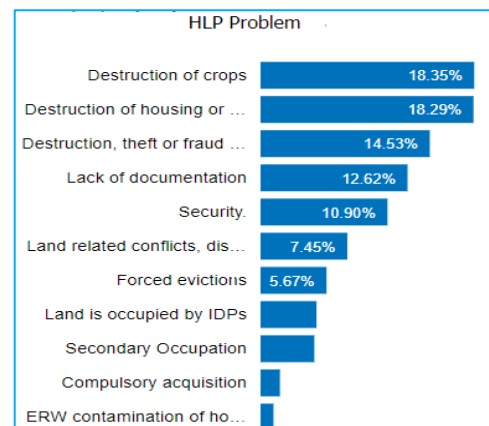


Figure 14: HLP Issues

The issue of shelter represents a paramount concern in the BAY state due to various factors, including the influx of new arrivals from villages that were previously inaccessible, frequent fire incidents, and evictions. As a result, the necessity for urgent intervention regarding shelter cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, the current situation has resulted in IDPs being forced to sleep in open areas, which exposes them to an array of protection risks.

XII. PERSISTENT GAPS AND PRIORITY NEEDS

As the ongoing conflict persists and displacements are continuously recorded, the affected population have reported their inability to access humanitarian response with food being the most reported persistent need which has not been fully addressed. Consequently, despite continuous efforts by humanitarian actors, stakeholders and the Government to ameliorate challenges faced by the affected population, limited access to food, livelihood and NFI remain the most prevalent gaps in January and February 2023, as shown in figure 15. The provision of food and nutritional supplements to IDPs, particularly to vulnerable sub-groups such as children, lactating and pregnant mothers, remains a significant challenge. As a result, women in these categories have been forced to resort to harmful coping mechanisms. The inadequacy of essential nutrition to sustain the health of the IDPs increases their vulnerability to a range of protection concerns. The situation underscores the urgent need for immediate and effective measures to address the food and nutritional deficiencies of the affected IDPs and mitigate the associated protection risks. Insecurity outside the government-protected areas in the peripheral bushes continues to expose farmers to the risk of attacks, abduction and killing when accessing their farms. Farming is the traditional occupation of returnees and host community members in return areas underscoring the need to continue to strengthen security in the BAY states so that the affected population will pick up their livelihood activities and depend less on humanitarian aid.

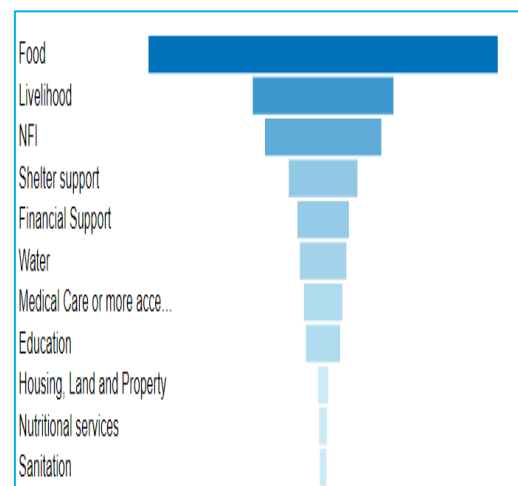


Figure 15: Priority needs

⁸ Ibid.

XIII. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Challenges	Recommendations	Affected areas	Responsible stakeholders	Urgency
1	Insufficient WASH services and lack of sufficient desludging of latrines.	Increase WASH services and desludging of latrines	Ngala, Dikwa, Banki, Damasak	WASH Sector	Critical
2	Meeting the needs of newly displaced refugees to Adamawa State	Multisectoral response to the refugees in Adamawa State.	Madagali, Michika, Mubi north and south	ISCG, PSNE and Adamawa State government	Critical
3	Social cohesion given the reintegration of ex-fighters	Increase community participation and introduce transitional justice mechanisms to support the reintegration of ex-fighters in the various LGAs	Bama, Monguno, Dikwa, Damboa, Gwoza, Pulka and Ngala.	Borno State Government, DDR Consortium	Critical
4	Persistent Fire outbreaks and overcrowded camps and settlements	Allocation of additional land to decongest the overly populated camps	Mungono, Dikwa, Banki, Bama, Gwoza and Pulka.	Shelter/NFI & CCCM Sector, Borno State Government	High
5	Insufficient food	Address the insufficient nutritional needs targeting the most vulnerable groups	All locations	FSL Sector	High

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