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Baga-Sola (Lake Chad) Few fishermen dare venture on the waters of the Lake since the beginning of the Nigerian crisis. Crédit: UN CHAD

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Since 2009, when the erstwhile leader of Boko Haram Mohammed Yusuf died in police custody, the level of killings and destruction, enslavement of girls and women, and the loss of livelihoods inflicted by the group has caught the world's attention. In response, the United Nations has adopted an approach that attempts to bring together the organization's vast experience...[Read more P.3](#)



UNOWAS delegation meeting with the Nigerian Air Force HQ in Abuja

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Editorial

“Not to take our eyes off the ball”

By Mohamed Ibn Chambas

It is well known that the overall security situation in the Lake Chad Basin area remains precarious and volatile. The efforts exerted by the international community to confront and curb the horrendous violence perpetrated by Boko Haram are commendable, yet the group is still able to continue its campaign of terror. While it is avoiding direct combat, it relies on ambushes, use of Improvised Explosive Devices and suicide bombers targeting vulnerable groups.

As a result, the humanitarian situation has worsened, with an increasing number of people suffering from food insecurity and malnutrition. According to OCHA, of the 21 million people living in affected areas in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon and Niger, about 2.4 million have been displaced by the insurgency. Additionally, over 9 million people are in need of

humanitarian assistance across the region, including 7 million that are severely food insecure, and about 480,000 children facing acute malnutrition. And malnutrition rates are expected to increase in the coming months.

I repeat these statistics to remind all of us of the appalling conditions of daily life suffered by the affected communities, not to take our eyes off the ball, to keep in mind that women, children and elders remain most vulnerable. That is what I had in mind when I visited Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State. Maiduguri is a symbol of the suffering caused by the Boko Haram-instigated violence, with the hundreds of thousands of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) it is hosting, yet at the same time a demonstration of the courage, resilience and hospitality of its people.

The United Nations' support to tackle insecurity in Lake Chad Basin

Since 2009, when the erstwhile leader of Boko Haram Mohammed Yusuf died in police custody, the level of killings and destruction, enslavement of girls and women, and the loss of livelihoods inflicted by the group has caught the world's attention. In response, the United Nations has adopted an approach that attempts to bring together the organization's vast experience, organizational capacity, and political leverage to address the multi- faceted challenges in a remote terrain stretching across national boundaries and touching upon sensitive interests. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon himself has twice visited the region, to drum up and coordinate support for the affected populations in Nigeria and neighboring countries.



UNOWAS delegation meeting with the Nigerian Air Force HQ in Abuja

UN response

The UN's response is clustered around political engagement, humanitarian assistance, human rights, recovery and development, law enforcement and justice, and support to regional military efforts.

On the military front, the UN has worked very closely with the African Union to set up and support the Multi-national Joint Task Force headquartered in N'Djamena. Mechanisms established with the Lake Chad Basin Committee have greatly helped to push countries to work together, overcome distrust, and share intelligence.

In the humanitarian field, advocacy tours by numerous UN entities helped raising the profile of the crisis and gather support for a regional response plan targeting 5.2 million people. Unfortunately, only 25 percent of funds needed have yet been received.

On the critical issue of human rights, Special Rapporteurs dispat-

ched by the Secretary-General have highlighted abuses not only by terrorist groups, but also by the security forces that are meant to protect civilians, urging governments to take corrective action.

A holistic manner

While massive displacement is still prevalent, the UN is already assisting government to put in place plans for recovery and the return of refugees and displaced persons. A regional project on Preventing Violent Extremism has also already started in the Lake Chad Basin countries. The UN's Counter-Terrorism Committee is working closely with countries in the region to strengthen regional cooperation in the areas of legislation, financing of terrorism, law enforcement, border control and related areas. Moreover, the UN is making available expertise to Nigeria to strengthen criminal justice mechanisms to help bring alleged perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice.

On the ground, UNOWAS is at the forefront of translating policies into advocacy and action. Together with the United Nations Office to the African Union and the United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), UNOWAS provided advice to develop the Concept of Operations of the Multi National Joint Task Force, and continues lobbying to mobilize support for the Force. In bilateral visits, SRSG Ibn Chambas engaged participating countries to put aside rivalries and pool resources. SRSG Mohamed Ibn Chambas negotiated access for dedicated humanitarian flights, and after an attack on aid convoys facilitated the resumption of assistance. In addition, as requested by the UN Security Council, UNOWAS is also coordinating with other anti-terrorism organizations, and is supporting the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative initiated by the G5-Sahel regional body. Together with the SRSG Abdoulaye Bathily of UNOCA, SRSG Ibn Chambas continues to encourage regional leaders to address the Boko Haram crisis in a holistic manner, taking into account economic, social, political, and religious grievances of the affected populations. Since 2015, the two SRSGs conducted three joint visits to Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, to come to a shared assessment with national authorities and to identify areas for support. In that vein, the two SRSGs are also pushing for a regional summit by ECOWAS and ECCAS to energize the region's own resources.

UNOWAS, MISAHEL, Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) discuss the security situation of the region

As part of his joint visit in Chad with President Buyoya, Head of the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), on 5 August, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Mohamed Ibn Chambas, met with the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Head of mission of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), Mr. Sanusi Abdullahi, and the Force Commander of the MNJTF, General Lamidi Adeosun.



This visit followed the SRSG's trip to Maiduguri, in north eastern Nigeria, a few days earlier, to assess the efforts of national authorities, United Nations (UN) agencies, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address the humanitarian crisis. The discussions with the LCBC and MNJTF focused on the MNJTF operations "Gama Aiki" in Borno State, in north eastern Nigeria, the assessment of the threat posed by Boko Haram against the civilian population, security forces, UN agencies. They also discussed the attack against the humanitarian convoy on 28 July 2016 on the road between Maiduguri and Bama; and the difficulties encountered by humanitarian actors to access the affected population, including in newly liberated areas

Urgency of reopening access and trade routes

In this regard, the officials exchanged views on the critical factors necessary for the return of the displaced population who has sought refuge in Maiduguri since 2012, where the number of residents is estimated to have almost tripled, from one million to more than 2.5 million. Borno State authorities in Nigeria are urging these new residents to return to their places of origin but obstacles remain: absence of administration, destruction of livelihoods, villages, infrastructure in many liberated areas have turned many areas as "ghost towns".

Mr. Ibn Chambas emphasized the urgency of reopening access and trade routes between the four

affected countries, as Chadian officials in particular estimate an annual loss of 30 per cent in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to the fall in border/market activities and trade exchanges. In addition to the reopening of trade routes, the SRSG urged his interlocutors to find innovative ways to jump-start the resumption of vital economic activities between Chad and Nigeria, in particular commercial exchanges of meat and agricultural products; the role of the military will remain essential in order to secure the Diffa/Maiduguri and Maiduguri/N'Djamena axis, increase mine detection and clearance and ensure proper coordination and regular sharing of information with the humanitarian community.

LCBC and MNJTF officials raised the problem posed by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) as well as more sophisticated Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs) spread on the roads in Borno State; and expressed the need for the international community to increase its support to reinforce the existing demining activities

On the military operations' front, the international community has provided additional means to the MNJTF, in particular air surveillance and support. Regular exchange of information and coordination between the Nigerian military and humanitarian actors which is critical to enable access the affected population.

West Africa and the Sahel, key topics of the 71st United Nations General Assembly Session

West Africa and the Sahel regions figured prominently in the discussions during the 71st session of the General Assembly, which opened on 19 September 2016 at the United Nations headquarters.



Nigerian refugees arrive on Lake Chad islands in Niger after fleeing attacks in Doron Bagga in Borno state, Nigeria (IRC (UNHCR partner in south Niger) / September 2014

A New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was adopted, representing a major development for mapping a route towards a collective, rights-based response to record displacement numbers around the world. In addition, issues related to combatting terrorism, sustainable development, climate change and addressing the security and humanitarian crises in the Lake Chad basin and in Mali were recurrent topics addressed by West African leaders. The implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, the pursuit of post-Ebola recovery, as well as efforts against corruption and to promote economic deve-

lopment were also highlighted in the discussions among West African leaders during the General Assembly.

Terrorism was the singular most emphasized challenge by all West African leaders. They expressed serious concern about the terrorist attacks carried out in West African capitals, the increasingly volatile and dangerous security developments in northern Mali, the continuous violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. They deplored the grave human rights violations committed in connection with such terrorist activities. They expressed commitment to consider enacting and expanding their counterterrorism laws in response, while at the same time prioritizing violence prevention.

Other elements emphasized in many of these discussions concerned the importance of regional approaches for the stabilization of the Sahel and a continued commitment to support the efforts of the countries of the region to combat instability and its root causes, including through the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

Regional approaches

Of particular significance was the remark made by President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria welcoming intermediaries such as the UN to support the Government's mediation efforts to secure the release of the Chibok schoolgirls held hostage by the extremist group Boko Haram since 2014. There was also a strong call for progress on the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, signed in 2015, made by the international community at a ministerial meeting held at UN headquarters on 23 September. During the meeting, the UN Secretary-General welcomed the efforts undertaken to implement the peace agreement and called for clear timelines and benchmarks for its implementation.

The ongoing political crisis in Guinea-Bissau was also addressed with strong support voiced on the progress made by political leaders in Guinea-Bissau with the recent signing of an agreement on a six-point roadmap to end the political crisis, facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Respect of Human Rights principles, a fundamental element in the fight against terrorism

The fight against terrorism is necessary, but the respect of human rights principles must be a permanent exigency for States as they are also guarantors of their citizens' freedoms.



A female student stands in a burnt classroom attacked by Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria on May 12, 2012. © Getty Images

The Lake Chad Basin region has become one of the most alarming humanitarian and security concern in Africa, in particular due to massive population displacements and an influx of refugees fleeing areas controlled by Boko Haram, the violent terrorist and extremist group. Boko Haram is the perpetrator of repetitive murderous acts that have killed thousands of people, caused loss of property, and instilled terror in populations in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Diffa region, for example, has three categories of displaced people: more than 82,524 are Nigerian refugees, 31,524 returning Niger nationals

who lived in Nigeria and 127,208 internally displaced.

In this part of Niger, it is estimated that 1 of 3 persons is displaced. Reception areas are often characterized by poor living conditions that affect both host communities and displaced persons and refugees, and accentuate the causes of a deep humanitarian crisis in the region, thus placing people in the Diffa region in a situation of chronic humanitarian dependence.

According to a UNHCR report issued in May 2016, the situation directly affects civilian populations, including vulnerable groups like women. Children have limited access to education because of already crowded schools in neighboring villages and the

closure of many learning facilities in insecure areas near the border.

Legislative and administrative measures

To deal with terrorist groups, the countries of the Lake Chad Basin have all adopted legislative and administrative measures to fight terrorism. The National Assembly of Chad, for example, has on 30 July 2016, adopted an anti-terror law that provides for the death penalty for terrorism offences. The law also extended the time period a person can be held in police custody before being brought before a judge. It went from 48 hours to 30 days renewable twice by the public prosecutor. Moreover, the law gives a very broad definition of terrorism that includes disorderly conduct.



A man stands outside his destroyed home in Baga, Borno State, Nigeria, following heavy fighting between military forces from Nigeria, Niger and Chad, and Boko Haram. Photo: IRIN/Aminu Abubakar

United Nations requests that restrictions imposed in the context of the fight against terrorism be necessary, justified by law and abide by the principle of proportionality

States have a responsibility to protect people from all kinds of threats, including terrorism, and within this framework they regularly take measures to fight terrorist groups or prevent terrorist acts. They also have an obligation «to ensure that all measures taken to combat terrorism comply with their international obligations, particularly laws concerning human rights, refugees and humanitarian actions. Because some State measures, taken individually or collectively to combat terrorism may, if not circumscribed within the limits imposed by international human rights laws, constitute obstacles to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The various experiences of combating terrorism in the countries of the Lake Chad Basin and beyond demonstrate that a balance between the need to fight terrorism and the necessity to uphold human rights is not always easy to strike. It is difficult to effectively combat terrorism without limiting the enjoyment of a number of rights. It is for this reason that the United Nations requests that restrictions imposed

in the context of the fight against terrorism be necessary, justified by law and abide by the principle of proportionality. In all cases they do not apply to universal human rights such as the right to life, non-discrimination, the right to a fair trial, physical integrity and the right not to be subjected to torture. All these elements constitute peremptory or jus cogens norms.

Terrorism is defined as any act «committed with intent to cause death or serious injury to civilians or non-combatants, the object of which, by its nature or its context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to perform or refrain from performing an act».

This definition perfectly illustrates the negative implications of terrorism on human rights. Terrorist actions primarily violate the right to life, the

right to physical integrity, freedom of movement and the right to peace and security. Many other rights, including social and economic rights, may also be affected.

National and international partners met in Chad claim that the victims of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin face significant practical obstacles in accessing justice and exercise their right to seek redress when their rights have been violated following the actions of a terrorist group.

UNHCR provides a safety net for Nigerians at lakeside camp in Chad

Refugees and host community struggle to cope after thousands cross the border in the wake of attacks by Boko Haram militants in north-eastern Nigeria.



Hawali Oumar with his fishing net following a long night of work. © UNHCR/Oualid Kheififi

Nigerian refugee Hawali Oumar woke up to the sound of gunfire and the sight of his neighbourhood in flames when Boko Haram attacked his home town of Baga in north-eastern Nigeria.

The 43-year-old fisherman desperately looked for members of his family and discovered his father had been shot dead. Despite being unable to round up all his offspring, Oumar fled across the border to safety in Chad.

"It was heartbreakingly when Boko Haram attacked our homes," he said. "We scattered with nothing but the clothes we had on. I learnt later that more than 10 people in my extended family were killed. Some of the survivors amongst us ended up in Cameroon, others in Chad, but it took over a year to re-establish contact with everybody."

More than 5,000 Nigerians have found refuge in Dar es Salam camp on the Chadian side of Lake Chad after fleeing horrific violence in December 2014. A total of 2.4 million people in north-eastern Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger have been displaced as a result of the Boko Haram insurgency..

"It was heartbreakingly when Boko Haram attacked our homes."

Thousands of families are separated and unaware of the whereabouts of loved ones. Oumar was relieved to be reunited two months ago with his 18-year-old daughter Miriam. "I never thought I was going to see her again, but here we are all together," he said. "She is back at school and we are all hoping to gradually restore an ordinary life."

While the Chadian army and a joint regional task force continue to combat Boko Haram in provinces around the lake, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is focusing on protection, shelter and education. This involves extending livelihood programmes and enlarging the pool of refugees who have benefited from assistance to resume economic activity and achieve self-reliance.

The livelihood programmes consist of providing the means for lake fishermen to resume work. Beneficiaries have so far received canoes, nets and basic fishing equipment.

The influx of refugees has stabilized since last year, but the economy in the lake area has been dramatically affected. The closure of the lake borders with the other three countries of the basin – Nigeria, Cameroon and Niger – has depressed fishing, herding and farming, and brought regional trade almost to a standstill. These are vital sectors in and around Bagasola, the Chadian town that hosts Dar es Salam camp and most of the refugees who have fled into Chad to escape the Boko Haram threat in Nigeria..

"I lost my father and many others in the attacks. I think about it all the time."



Nigerian refugees continue as fishermen, often in partnership with their Chadian counterparts from the host community. © UNHCR/Oualid Khelifi

More funding is needed so that more fishermen, farmers, herders and traders from the refugee and local communities can be included.

Oumar is one of the beneficiaries. "I am grateful to be given the tools to resume my work," he said. "I am a fisherman, so if I could survive fishing in Nigeria, I can do it here in Chad. But if we had more manpower in this programme, bigger nets and better equipment, we would quickly grow independent of aid, and lift the entire town, refugees and locals together, from economic depression."

For UNHCR and its partners, providing livelihood support so that the limited resources around Bagasola are shared out is essential to achieving sustainability and cohesion between refugees and the host community. A survey has

been conducted to log skill sets and the previous professions of refugees.

According to Docteur Koussoumbi, livelihood associate officer at the UNHCR office in Bagasola, the self-reliance programme has been successful for the 150 households that have benefited so far. They now have expertise in all aspects of fishing, from operating the equipment to selling and distributing the produce.

"I am grateful to be given the tools to resume my work."

"The challenge now is twofold," he said. "First, to enroll more households into the programme and provide them with basic canoes and tools to jump-start their activities. Second, to meet the demands

of existing beneficiaries whose operations have been going very well, hence the need for bigger boats and nets to increase their output and strive towards full self-reliance. We are looking at these options, but we are facing significant funding constraints."

Climate change is also having a profound effect on communities around Lake Chad, including refugees. Because of the vulnerability of the lake's environment and fluctuation in rainfall, livelihood programmes are a priority for the humanitarian community in both policy and funding.

The surface area of the lake has shrunk to less than one twentieth of its size in the 1960s and invasive plant species cover about 50 percent of what is left. The vegetation takes root on the lake floor during dry seasons and when the water level rises after rainfall, it blocks off the shore, preventing communities from sailing their boats.

"This is a new worrying phenomenon," said Koussoumbi. "It is becoming more difficult for fishermen to go out in the lake. The plants also break the nets and disrupt fishing activities.»

By UNHCR



A local Chadian villager finishes washing her last big catch of the day. © UNHCR/Oualid Khelifi

From Nigeria to Cameroon: a journey through hunger

When death is chasing you and your family, you got to run to stay alive. Dzam-Dzam escaped Boko Haram but new dangers were waiting around the corner.



Dzam-Dzam and his son. Photo: UNICEF / Simon Minville

The attack from Boko Haram was brutal and unexpected. "I saw shadows in my backyard. And then everything collapsed."

In the village of Boza, in the Northern part of Nigeria where Dzam-Dzam, her husband and their four young boys were living since they migrated from neighbouring Cameroon a few years before, seeking a better life in a region with more work opportunities. "Life was good there", she recalls. "Until that day when war found us."

It was in the hours between light turn into darkness. Dzam-Dzam's husband was taking a shower behind the house. She was in her kitchen, with two of her boys, while her other children were staying at a relative's home, outside the village.

Suddenly, she heard gunshots. She looked through the window, and saw her husband shot dead. For minutes which felt like hours, she hid with her two children under a table. The insurgents left the com-

pound and like a miracle they did not storm the house.

"We immediately escaped", said Dzam-Dzam. 'We started running, running, without turning back."

It was only a week later that Dzam-Dzam learnt from other displaced people she met on the road that her two children who stayed back had been killed. But there was no time for mourning: her three- year- old was losing weight rapidly and her seven-year- old, was showing alarming signs of sickness.

"He died before we reached the border," said Dzam-Dzam, her eyes filled with deep sadness. 'But I just had to keep walking. On the road, everyone was starving, and I couldn't find food for my young boy, nor myself.'

After seven days of walking, determined to save her last living son, Dzam-Dzam reached the village of Zamaï, a safe haven where hundreds of Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

were taken in by the communities.

There, she immediately took her young boy to the community health centre, where UNICEF and its partners are running programmes to combat a severe nutrition crisis. 2.2% of all children in the Far North Region of Cameroon are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The caseload is beyond the emergency threshold.

This part of Cameroon is dry, blazingly hot and clean water is scarce- even before the Boko Haram conflict started. The massive influx of IDPs fleeing violence – more than 190,000 according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees - has placed additional pressure on limited resources. It is estimated that more than 65,000 children are at risk of dying from hunger.

After a few visits to the health centre, Dzam-Dzam's son started gaining weight. He is now out of danger. "I would like to tell other mothers who are suffering in Nigeria or on the move to come here", said Dzam-Dzam. "Here, people really take care of children. Look at my son, he is in good health now."

Recent security improvements now allow UNICEF's teams to reach vulnerable people in previously cut off areas. In September, a large nutrition survey (SMART survey) was launched. The survey will cover, for the first time since the beginning of the Boko Haram crisis in Cameroon, the totality of the Far North Region of the country.

"Every day, new needs are brought to light", said Dr Goman. 'We are scaling up our response as much as our budgets allows us, to do whatever we can to ensure not a single child is left behind.'

By UNICEF

Toby Lanzer: “The Lake Chad Basin today witnesses the greatest tragedy of its history”

On the margins of the 71st UN General Assembly, held in New York, a mini-summit was devoted to the humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin. Toby Lanzer, the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel talks about the efforts of States in the region, as well as of the international community, to help the populations cope with this alarming situation.



Toby Lanzer, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel

What are the major features of this crisis?

As the President of the Republic of Chad, Idriss Déby, said when he was in New York for the 71st UN General Assembly, «the Lake Chad basin today witnesses the greatest tragedy of its history». In recent months, Boko Haram attacks have certainly been fewer, but they now cover a larger territory, targeting the entire subregion.

Moreover, if there has been notable military advances, at the humanitarian level, on the other hand, the situation is getting worse. In a region covering 4 different countries with 21 million inhabitants, almost 1 of 3 individuals faces food insecurity. This is almost the population of the Republic of Congo. And more seriously,

65,000 people in northeastern Nigeria face a situation comparable to a state of hunger (Phase 5 of the Harmonized Framework). The number of displaced persons has reached 2.6 million and more than half a million children are malnourished. Many are in camps for displaced people or in informal settlements where people live in horrific conditions. They are in a humanitarian emergency among the worst I have seen in my entire career.

«Our response, all of us, UN agencies, local or international NGOs, local authorities, governments and donors, has so far been inadequate»

Are you satisfied with the quality of reactions from States in the region and the international community to resolve this crisis?

States affected by the crisis are committed at presidential and ministerial levels. They are fully aware of the magnitude of this crisis and the international community must now follow suit. Four donors: the United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium and Italy have committed additional funds, while Germany has also shown support, including at the financial level. Our response, all of us, UN agencies, local or international NGOs, local authorities, governments and donors, has so far been inadequate. After the call for funds that goes with the humanitarian response plan we have developed for the region, we now need, for three months only, more funds than estimated in January for the whole of 2016. We need to quickly increase our response level. The longer we wait, the greater the needs will be.

What do you do to ensure that the region you cover has the attention, and subsequently the assistance, of donors?

Yes indeed, one of the observations that led to the organization of the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul last May is that humanitarian crises seem to multiply and last longer. Responses to call for funds launched by the United Nations on average cover only 45 per cent of the needs. Some recei-



Bada, Kako, 3 years old, and other IDP children in the village of Tagal, Lake Chad region, Chad. Photo: UNICEF

ve less than 5 per cent in funding. It is therefore easy to conclude that there are not enough resources to finance all the response plans and meet the needs of all the crises. But, in my opinion, this would be a wrong conclusion.

«It is possible to resolve many crises today if we do not wait for them to become acute or strike at our doorstep to react»

The crisis in the Lake Chad Basin is undoubtedly one of the best examples. Since I was appointed Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, I have constantly toured capitals and multiplied trips to the most inaccessible affected areas to draw attention to this prominent bruise on the African continent. The wound is now gaping and cannot be treated with a plaster. My colleagues and I are multiplying efforts to avoid total anesthesia, if you allow me the metaphor.

But we must always remember that humanitarian aid is only temporary support for populations facing a crisis. Without real political will in the affected countries but also from the international community to support these coun-

tries, no humanitarian crisis can be resolved.

We will 'put an end to the needs' only if the root causes of the crisis are addressed. And we must recognize today that no country in the region can cope alone with current but also future challenges. Nigeria, for example, would need to attain an 11 per cent growth rate in order to meet the needs of a population that is expected to double in the next 30 years. This is impossible for any country, and it means that we are likely to witness considerable impoverishment of populations in the region and a significant risk of increasing social, economic and political tensions.

«Without real political will in the affected countries but also from the international community to support these countries, no humanitarian crisis can be resolved»

Beyond long-term assistance, what are the concrete measures put in place by the United Nations to help affected populations face this crisis situation?

The response plan has been

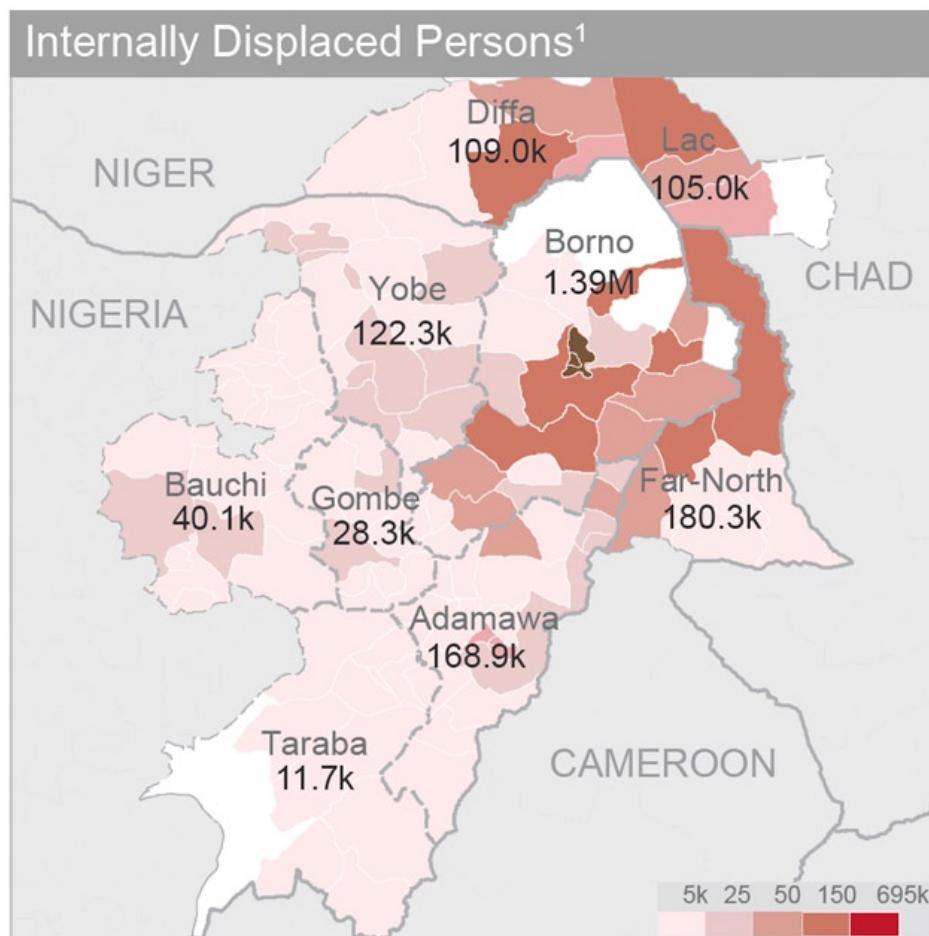
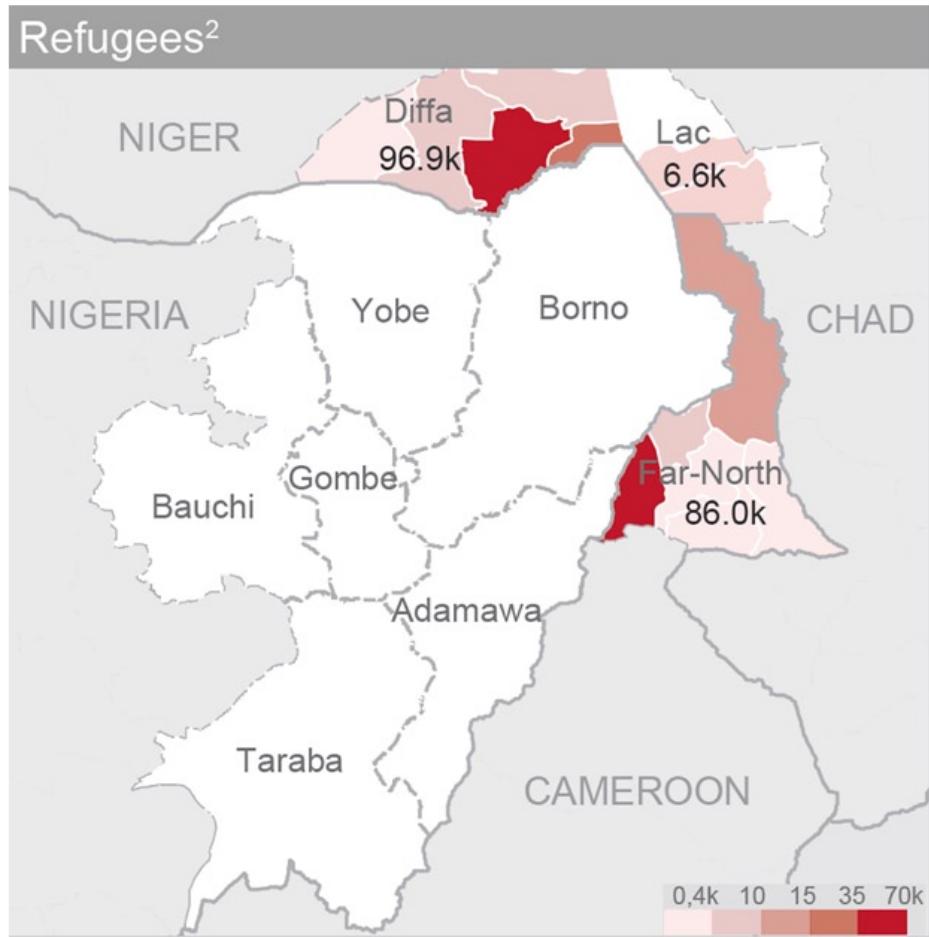
completely revised twice this summer by UN agencies and NGO partners. All agencies have increased their technical and personal capacity. The plan covers all aspects and therefore all sectors, including specific response to refugees. However, the funding of the response plan has not yet reached 30 per cent. Agencies and partners are therefore ready to act and we hope donors' response will be forthcoming.

If you were to decide on a priority to resolve the crisis/improve the situation, what would it be?

In the humanitarian sector, all sectors are priorities and it is for this reason that we must always demonstrate coordination and synergy in urgent responses. But security remains, above all, THE priority. We estimate that there are still at least one million people we cannot provide help to because they are in physically inaccessible areas. But the peoples of the Lake Chad Basin are among the most resilient in the world. They also need to be able to return to farm their land and feel that they can regain control of their future rather than having to be assisted.

Interview conducted in November 2016

Boko Haram's long-running violence and military counter-offensives have affected 21 million people living across the Lake Chad Basin. The suicide bombings, raids on villages and towns have uprooted 2.4 million people in Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. The majority of the displaced has been sheltered by communities who themselves count among the world's most vulnerable. Food insecurity and malnutrition have reached critical levels. The combined effect of growing insecurity, fast population growth and severe vulnerability resulting from a changing climate, environmental degradation, poverty and under-investment in social services is translating into record numbers of people in need of emergency relief. In 2016, nearly half of the region's population needed humanitarian aid, and UN agencies and NGOs aimed to reach 6 million people with assistance. While the humanitarian response focuses on addressing immediate needs to save lives, humanitarians call for concerted engagement of political, development and security actors to help stabilize the region and create conditions for people to survive and prosper.



(1) Cameroon DTM October 2016, Nigeria DTM Round 12, Chad CCCM/SHELTER/AME, ORS (<http://ors.ocharowca.info>) 2) UNHCR

Fatima Kyari Mohammed, *Community Engagement in Nigeria*

Nigeria and West Africa are topics dear to Fatima Kyari Mohammed. It is almost a personal affair in which mingle sincere emotion and active citizen engagement.

Since her early student days, Fatima Kyari Mohammed has been nourished by reflections and ideas on the political history of Nigeria that have enabled her to shape her views on the importance of the individual in development, and her involvement a few years later in Nigerian civil society. «If history makes sense, it is necessary that Nigeria and the whole region move towards a common destiny of progress», she says by way of introduction, almost as a need for clarification. This Nigerian woman who, in addition to English, speaks French, Hausa and Kanuri and has basic knowledge of Arabic and Spanish, as a result of her childhood spent abroad as a diplomat's daughter.

Fatima Kyari Mohammed is from a Muslim family from north-east Nigeria. Her mother is Shuwa-Arab and her father a Kanuri. She was naturally required to abide by the codes imposed on her by a family and society dominated by men, without abandoning reflections that place the community,



especially women, at the core of all political and economic activities. For her, it is not just a matter of equality, it is also a strategic necessity. «We cannot achieve social and economic progress if half of our capacity is ignored and unused,» says Fatima Kyari Mohammed.

«We cannot achieve social and economic progress if half of our capacity is ignored and unused,»

The reality in her country, Nigeria, commonly referred to as «the great economic power of the continent», is an unprecedented struggle against blind Boko Haram terrorism, a long-lasting Niger Delta rebellion, and an economic recession that is likely to plunge the country in a deep crisis.

But for Fatima Kyari Mohammed, this situation cannot constitute the destiny of a people. Nigerians voted for change in 2015 and demonstrated their commitment to peace and democracy. Better yet, political alternation took place in a responsible spirit and through responsible acts. «Voting at this





point in our history was a decisive act of commitment in favor of Nigeria's progress and development» insists Fatima Kyari Mohammed.

Her sense of responsibility and commitment allowed her to consolidate her ideas, including through a move to ECOWAS that marked her professional engagement and fostered her commitment to her country and the region.

For over a decade, she has worked with ECOWAS in different capacities on issues of regional security, organizational development, and regional integration. In her quest to do more and according to her "breach the gap between policy and community" Fatima Kyari Mohammed decided to launch her own NGO, the LikeMinds Project in 2006. It is a milestone in the life of this civil activist who continues, with a number of friends, to work on peace and justice in Nigeria.

If governments must always do more to meet the needs of the people, Fatima Kyari Mohammed believes that every citizen can and must contribute to peace and development.

It is with this mindset that the organization she runs, the LikeMinds Project, has been able to carry out several projects for the benefit of the population, in particular those affected by Boko Haram attacks.

«Our goal is to help citizens actively participate in building a peaceful, fair and just society by encouraging self-reliance and sustainable development projects»

With direct help to more than 50,000 families in the States of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Fatima Kyari Mohammed wants to do

more and quickly. «Our goal is to help citizens actively participate in building a peaceful, fair and just society by encouraging self-reliance and sustainable development projects».

Thanks to the collaboration and support of several companies, organizations, and individuals, the organization achieves its objectives through two key programs: «Volunteers for Peace» and «Vulnerable Communities». The programs have provided targeted support, including empowerment and inclusion of women, vulnerable children and orphans.

Beyond its usefulness, Fatima Kyari Mohammed's determination to improve the situation of vulnerable communities inaugurates a salutary change in development thinking. From now on, she and many others like her will play a major role in "the promotion of peace and development in West Africa».

«Cross-cutting issues in peace operations» at the heart of a training in Dakar

A training on «Cross-cutting and related issues in peace operations» was held from 28 November to 2 December 2016 in Dakar, Senegal. This meeting was co-organized by the Ministry of the Armed Forces of Senegal and the Ministry of Defense of Austria and supported by the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS). This regional forum, which brought together senior officers from the countries of the su-

bregion and European partners, was an opportunity to reflect on issues related to the operationalization of a collective security. The objective of the training was to strengthen the capabilities of military experts assigned to the assessment, design, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of peace support operations.

SRSG Ibn Chambas calls on the International Community to support the CNMC

The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, and Chairman of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC), Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, conducted an official visit to four European capitals: Brussels, Paris, London and Berlin from 17 to 24 October 2016.

The objective of the visit was to inform respective government partners and development institutions on the importance of the role played by the CNMC as a peaceful resolution mechanism which was established following the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2002 on the settlement of the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria; and to solicit their support to complete the remaining work of the physical demarcation of the land border, as well as to launch socio-economic projects to assist affected populations.

«The work of the CNMC is a leading example in the prevention of conflict and peaceful resolution of border disputes. The support of the international community to completing the physical demarcation of the border will help consolidate peace between the two neighbours,» said Mr. Ibn Chambas. The SRSG informed that both countries remain committed to complete this historical endeavour.

During his working visits, Mr. Ibn Chambas met with various senior officials of the European Union in Brussels, and with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Paris, London and Berlin. All the interlocutors expressed support for the work of the CNMC and for the efforts of Mr. Ibn Chambas to help the two neighbours complete the physical demarcation of their border.

Women of West Africa and the Sahel in solidarity with the people of Niger

From 25 to 30 September 2016, UNOWAS coordinated the annual solidarity mission in Niger of the Women, Peace and Security Working Group in West Africa (WPSWG - WA). This visit was the 5th edition of solidarity actions of the Working Group after those in favor of Mali in 2012, Guinea in 2013, Guinea Bissau in 2014 and Nigeria in 2015. The Delegation of the WPSWG - WA had Working sessions with the High Authority for the

Consolidation of Peace, the Minister for the Empowerment of Women, the First Lady of Niger, the President of the Parliament as well as women parliamentarians, the Minister of Youth, the African Network of women Ministers and parliamentarians of Niger (REFAMP-Niger), the National Youth Council, women's associations, networks and platforms.

Launching of UMOJA C5 pilot within UNOWAS

With the implementation of UMOJA C5 on 1st November 2016, all categories of staff and non-staff personnel (international staff members, national staff members, individual contractors, consultants and uniformed personnel) are administered in UMOJA. All the human resources constituting the best asset of the Organization are administered in the central administrative system which UMOJA. Umoja is an administrative reform that

enables the United Nations to operate more effectively by integrating and streamlining numerous business processes within a single, global solution for the entire Secretariat. It is a complete re-working of the way the United Nations Secretariat manages its administration, in both business processes and Information Technology solutions. Umoja replaces multiple and fragmented legacy systems such as IMIS, Mercury and Sun.



12 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT UNOWAS

- 1** UNOWAS is a Special Political Mission of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs.
- 2** UNOWAS was established in January 2016 following the request by the United Nations Security Council to merge the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel (OSES)
- 3** UNOWAS is led by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, M. Mohamed Ibn Chambas
- 4** M. Mohamed Ibn Chambas is also the Chairman of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC)
- 5** The main activities of UNOWAS are: preventive diplomacy; good offices; strengthening of coordination and partnership with regional organizations; facilitation of the implementation of the UNISS; promotion of good governance, human rights and gender mainstreaming; facilitation of the implementation of the International Court of Justice decision on the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria.
- 6** UNOWAS relies on a regional partnership. It works with ECOWAS, the G5 Sahel, the Mano River Union, the Commission of the Lake Chad Basin, the African Union, the United Nations System, civil society organizations and others entities.
- 7** UNOWAS facilitates the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS)
- 8** UNISS has three pillars: Governance, Security, Development and Resilience
- 9** UNOWAS has seven (07) components: Political Affairs; Regional Coordination and Partnerships; Human Rights; Gender; Research and Analysis; Liaison Cell; Public Information and Communication.
- 10** UNOWAS has a liaison Cell in Nouakchott (Mauritania) to support the G5 Sahel.
- 11** UNOWAS is a regional mission. It covers 17 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo-Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and (Chad).
- 12** Countries covered by the mandate of UNOWAS represent 7,428,527 square kilometers with a population of 339,158,813