



UNMAS Nigeria



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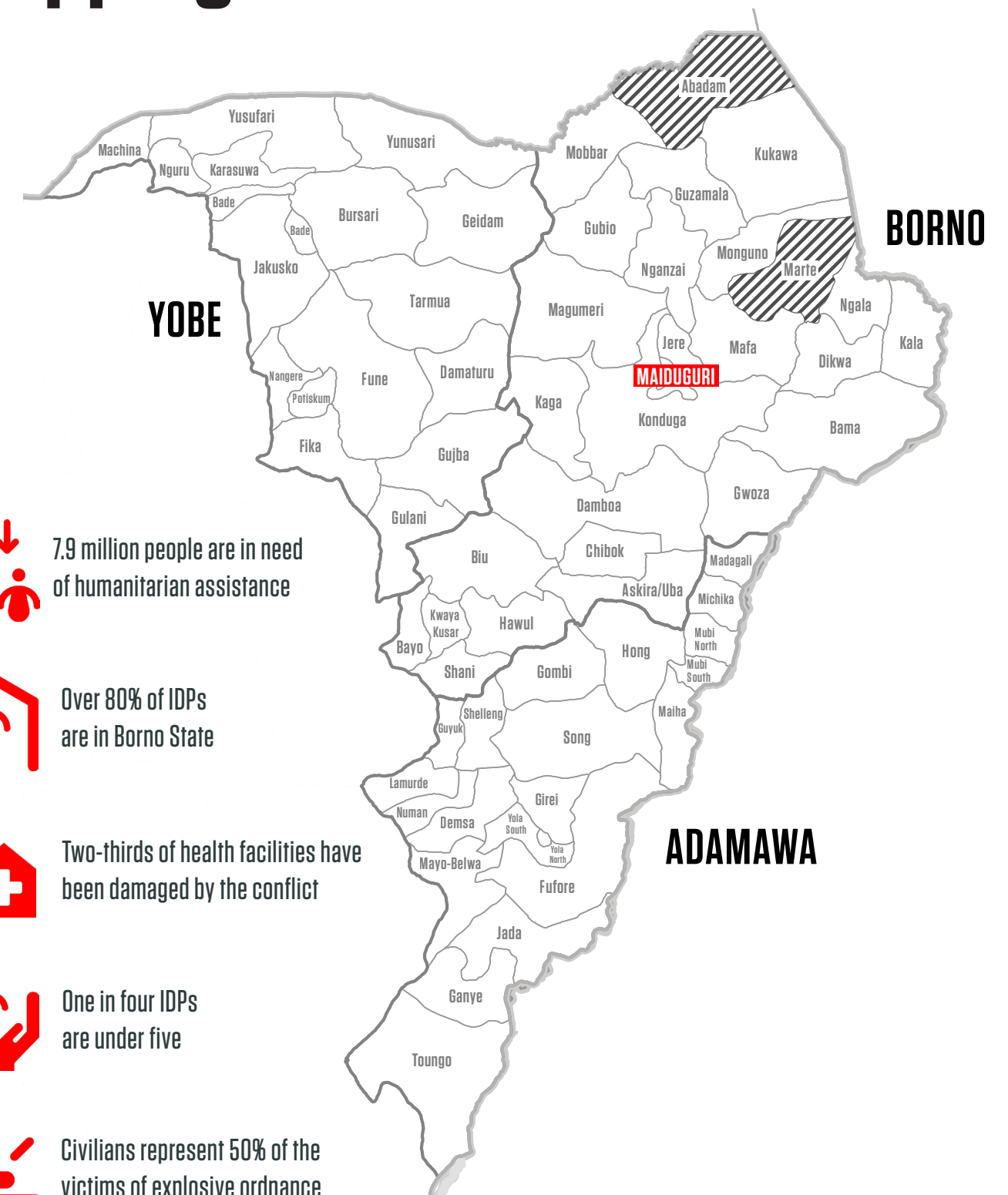
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Everyday challenges: crossing the trenches to collect firewood



Photograph © UNMAS/Alice Whitehouse

Mapping the northeast



7.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance



Over 80% of IDPs are in Borno State



Two-thirds of health facilities have been damaged by the conflict



One in four IDPs are under five



Civilians represent 50% of the victims of explosive ordnance




75% of Borno State is inaccessible to humanitarian actors

Ten year siege

The security situation in the northeast of Nigeria remains critical. More than ten years of conflict have ravaged vast areas and devastated entire communities. Insecurity is preventing people from returning to a normal life, leaving families dependent on humanitarian assistance for survival.

Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG), namely Boko Haram, continue to routinely carry out attacks against civilians and clash with national security forces for the control of territory. Overall, the military exercise control over the territories, major towns, and strategic routes.

 The humanitarian crisis in BAY states remains one of the 10 most severe humanitarian crises in the world today

Global Humanitarian Overview 2020, OCHA

RISE IN ATTACKS

In general, the type of attacks carried out by NSAG mainly revolve around direct confrontations, Person-borne IED (PBIED), Vehicle-borne IED (VBIED), Victim-operated IED (VOIED) and Command-operated IED (COIED) either along road axes, against military positions, and in urban areas.

DRIVING DISPLACEMENT

While Borno State was at the epicenter of continuing hostilities, sporadic incidents have also been reported in the States of Yobe and Adamawa.

July 2018 to December 2019 saw waves of displacements caused by insecurity, increased attacks by NSAGs and military operations, resulting in a significant increase in humanitarian needs and protection risks.

HUMANITARIAN IMPACT


The rise in violence has also directly affected humanitarian actors who have increasingly become targets of attacks. A total of twelve aid workers lost their lives in 2019, twice more than the year before. Meanwhile, kidnappings have also increased.

While the intentions behind some of the attacks remain unknown, based on previous experiences they could be aimed at collecting supplies, and/or abducting humanitarian personnel for ransom.

Despite the challenges, humanitarian actors reached more than 5.6 million people in 2019. The UN and partner NGOs aim to provide assistance to 5.8 million people in 2020.

CONGESTION

Since the beginning of 2019, over 140,000 people have been arriving in already congested camps, stretching a majority of sites to capacity. An estimated 6,588 households are still sleeping out in the open or do not have proper shelter and are exposed to harsh weather conditions, disease outbreaks and abuse.

 In total, 7.9 million people in Nigeria are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020

LIVELIHOODS

Food security has drastically deteriorated. Findings from the October 2019 Cadre Harmonise analysis indicate 2.95 million people were food insecure across the BAY States (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe). This marked a 72 percent increase from October to December 2018 post-harvest period findings.

In 2019, access to people in need became even more difficult and the humanitarian space shrunk for the first time since 2016. Across the three states, a total of 1.2 million people are out of reach for humanitarian actors and cut off from much needed assistance.

Why is UNMAS here?

At the request of the UN Country Team (UNCT), a technical scoping mission was conducted by UNMAS in April 2017. Following this, UNMAS was asked to provide humanitarian mine action assistance in the northeast of the country.

As a result, UNMAS deployed a small team in July 2018 to provide technical assistance, including coordination, planning, technical advice and support to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the humanitarian community, affected populations, and national authorities.

Since 2018, UNMAS has developed the following:

- **An Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) programme** to ensure that life-saving information can be provided to all children and adults across the three States.
- **Non-technical surveys (NTS)** to identify areas contaminated by explosive ordnances, preventing accidents through identification of hazardous areas and allowing land to be returned to its purpose when there is no evidence of contamination.
- **Capacity building** for local NGOs and support to the Police Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit based in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe in order to ensure they can effectively and safely proceed with multi-clearance tasks in the future.



EORE delivered to over 400,000 people within conflict affected communities, IDPs in

camps and host communities, refugees and returnees. EORE also provided to 502 humanitarian workers and 215 stakeholders.



The mine action sector trained 68 EOD police and 18 members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence

Corps on Emergency Trauma Bag and first responder to enhance their capacity.



The mine action sector conducted 124 non-technical surveys in BAY, resulting in the release of

111 safe lands and 11 Spot tasks.

Meet the team



Lionel Pechera
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'She is bleeding, right? Allow her to go, she will die before reaching home.'

Above: a row of shelters in Teacher's Village IDP Camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

Baba, is this a soldier?

Set up in 2014, Teacher's Village in Maiduguri was intended as accommodation for state teachers. However, the site has since become home to over 30,000 civilians fleeing the conflict in Borno State. One mother tells the traumatic story of how she and her children fled their village.

"It's Tuesday at 8 o'clock, the father of my children is lying down. I told him Boko Haram people have come, don't go to where they are, they are almost here. We went out and he also went. Boko Haram people came in a car, and my husband is a community leader, he said: 'Babulama, your time has come today.'

My husband told the children to come with me, then he asked: 'Baba, is this a soldier?' He said that he was not a soldier, he was with Boko Haram.

He started running, I was holding my small daughter. Then ten Boko Haram members came to our place. I was screaming and the children were also screaming.

One of the Boko Haram held my son and the other one held me. My son was crying. He said, 'Baba, I have all the children, finish him.' Then he shot my husband. I was sitting down screaming. I was 4 months pregnant, then I started bleeding.

Right: Map showing the location of Maiduguri in Borno State



He was still moving a little bit then the other Boko Haram said: 'Baba, this babulama did not die, go and shoot him again.' He shot him again, his face was not on his head.

I ran towards him, I was crying, then they told me 'you are not the one I killed, it is your husband I killed, so you should go home'. I told him I am not going, then he turned back and told the others that this woman is talking back to me. He took his gun out. I held my two children and I told him to finish all of us.

One of the others said, 'you killed her husband, right? And the four children are with her, right? And she is bleeding, right? Allow her to go, she will die before reaching home.'

Above: a women and girls safe space in Teacher's Village IDP Camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

Below: telling her story. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

I am bleeding and my body has swollen, I am holding one of my sons and the other one on my back. The blood stopped but I was falling down and getting back up again until I reached Monguno. I was very sick, I couldn't eat anything. Boko Haram came to Monguno, so I came to Yerwa, and now my children are not going to school."





Everyday challenges

In the camps of Borno State, travelling beyond the protective trenches that surround the camp is not an option. With members of NSAGs patrolling roads and land nearby, stepping beyond the trench could prove fatal.

With travel limited, collecting firewood poses a major challenge to individuals making the perilous journey. The lack of access to land beyond the trenches severely limits farming and agriculture, as well as the collection of firewood.

As a result, IDPs are ever-more reliant on humanitarian assistance to provide them with the food and supplies they need. It also means that the humanitarian community is unable to access and use the land to expand the camps and build more shelters.

“We just pray our village will be safe so that we can go and farm, that is all that we want.”

Above: a man transports his firewood and water back to his home in Banki IDP camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

In Dikwa IDP camp, we spoke to a mother who had recently lost her husband when he went out to collect firewood. As he and his friends searched for the firewood, they came across an explosive device that detonated upon impact.

“He used to bring the firewood so that he could sell it and buy us food to eat. When this happened to him we were thinking where we can we go now. His body was brought home and we looked at him with tears in our eyes. We cried so much.

What we need now is food, mats, soap, a grinding machine, water taps, kettles, cloth, and also for the world to be free of conflict - that is what we want. For us to go to our farms and plant without Boko Haram there.”

With the ongoing dangers of travelling beyond the trenches showing no signs of wavering, many wood collectors are now having to use escorts to travel into the forest to find wood.

A man selling chopped wood in Dikwa told us of the change in strategy: “When we are going to the bush we go with an escort or with civilian JTF in their car. If there is an escort, we don’t encounter any problems, we don’t see anything.”

Unfortunately, for a group who recently travelled without an escort, the outcome was fatal. “Those who went with a wheelbarrow are the ones who caught the bomb. It blasted and killed one man and two boys, but when we went there with the car nothing happened to us.”

Even so, they have had to strategise how and when they travel by car. “Sometimes we change location to prevent ourselves from harm, we don’t follow the same road and sometimes we walk by foot to avoid being hurt.”



Above: a man carries firewood he has purchased. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

In Banki IDP camp, a wood salesman explained that he and his brothers are scared of going into the woods to collect firewood. They are all too aware of the dangers associated with the journey. “Sometimes you are in the bush doing your work and someone fires at you. We have to run away.”

They now leave the collection of the firewood to the military, and buy what they need from them later on. However, in a camp with a population of over 42,000 people, the demand for firewood is extraordinarily high and not every household receives what they need.

Life in Banki IDP camp is certainly not easy. Everyday challenges are exacerbated by the dangers that lie beyond the trench. Even if you travel by car, the threats are not necessarily avoidable with many IEDs planted on the roads, ready to detonate upon impact.

The use of IEDs by NSAGs has grown exponentially in recent years and citizens are often a target of these attacks. Explosive Ordnance Risk Education is essential to help reduce the number of IED casualties, not just in Banki but in Borno State as a whole.

“We don’t follow the same road and sometimes we walk by foot to avoid being hurt.”

“Sometimes you are in the bush doing your work and someone fires at you.”

Left: heading back to his home, a man cycles with his purchase of firewood. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse



Left: the barbed wire-lined camp walls stand just metres from the school classrooms in Banki IDP Camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse



Above and left: students lead outdoor classes in Banki IDP Camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse

Educating the next generation

Access to education for IDPs remains limited due to an insufficient number of teachers and functional schools inside the camps.

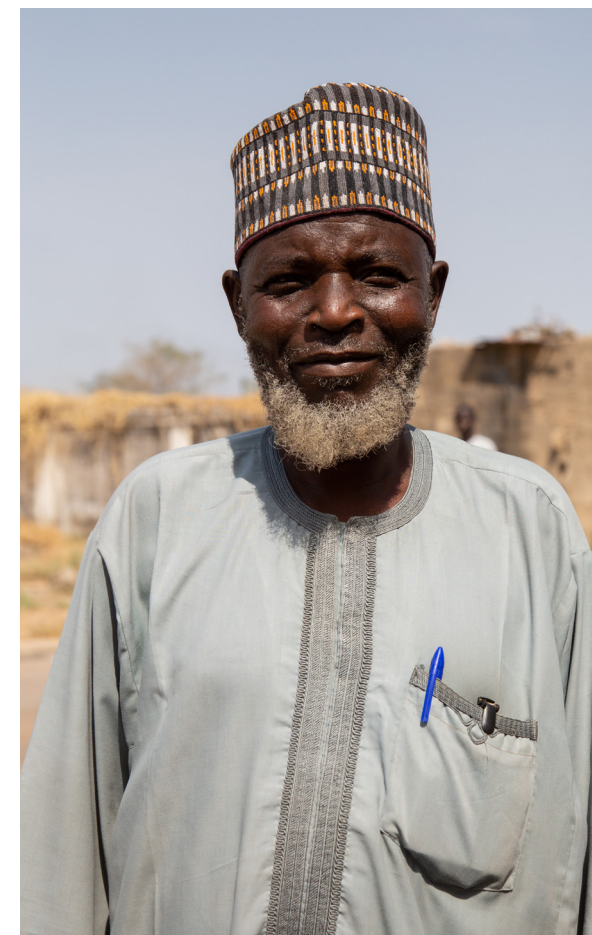
Three years ago, the school in Banki IDP Camp was burnt to the ground by NSAGs. Nobody could go to school. Eventually, teams from UNICEF were able to rebuild the school and find teachers to lead the classes.

Places at the school are limited. According to one of the teachers, currently only one in ten children are able to attend. The teachers are all volunteers and will often teach four or five different subjects.

In Banki IDP Camp, “only one in every ten children attend school.”

Newly arriving IDPs do not have access to education as space in the existing school cannot support the intake. Speaking to the teachers in Banki, it was clear that the needs are immense and if the next generation is to have any future whatsoever, education needs to become a priority.

For the headteacher of the school, the demand for places is overwhelming and he and the teachers already struggle to provide education to the students enrolled. High-performing students can be seen leading outdoor lessons for the younger students. With limited resources available for teaching, repetition is often the main learning method.



“They don’t know anything about explosives.”

The headteacher also stressed the need for Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) in Banki IDP Camp, saying that many people are not aware of the explosive threats that they might encounter outside of the trenches.

In January 2019, UNMAS Nigeria selected the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) as a grantee through a competitive procurement process to conduct EORE sessions in the state of Borno for a period of five months.

Teams delivered context-specific EORE sessions on the risks posed by explosive hazards to conflict-affected populations across Borno State. Overall, the sessions were delivered to 36,422 men, women and children.

Left: The headteacher at Banki IDP Camp. Photograph © Alice Whitehouse



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