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HIGHLIGHTS

- USD\$ 28 million allocated from UN Central Emergency Fund to assist people affected by Boko Haram's insurgency.
- Boko Haram, insecurity exert misery in Cameroon's Far North Region.
- Millions of people in Ebola-affected countries risk serious food shortages during the June-August lean season.
- Significant drop in EVD cases recorded in March.

KEY FIGURES FOR WEST AFRICA AND SAHEL

People in IPC 3 from March - May **4.7 Million**

People in IPC 3 from June-August **7.3 Million**

FUNDING OF THE SAHEL STRATEGY

USD\$1.96 billion requested

USD\$ 229 million received (in SRP)

Nigeria crisis: US \$28 million to assist conflict-affected populations

In mid-March, the United Nations humanitarian chief Valerie Amos approved US\$28 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support life-saving relief work in response to the recent spike in regional displacement sparked by Boko Haram violence.

The allocation was announced soon after the visit of a group of 14 Emergency Directors from UN and INGO agencies to Yola, a northeastern Nigeria city whose population doubled to 600,000 due to the insurgency. Across impacted areas, about 90 percent of those displaced are being hosted by communities who, like many in the Sahel, themselves already face food insecurity and malnutrition and are vulnerable to disease outbreaks and natural disasters.

Most pressing needs

Complementing the ongoing work by governments and humanitarian teams, the CERF allocation will enable rapid surge and increase in international humanitarian action to respond to the most pressing relief needs of the most vulnerable people directly affected by the violence. Food, clean water, shelter, medicine, protection and security, particularly for women and children, who are exposed to or have suffered violence and brutality, are the top priorities.

Regionally coordinated

Given the urgent need to scale up humanitarian operations, the regionally coordinated \$28 million rapid-response allocation will go to relief agencies operating in Nigeria (\$10 million), Cameroon (\$7 million), Niger (\$7 million) and Chad (\$4 million).

"The crisis in the northeast has had a devastating impact on tens of thousands of families across the region, yet our operation to respond has not yet received the support it deserves from the international community", noted Robert Piper, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel. "Beyond addressing life-saving needs, the CERF allocation also gives a clear signal about the scale of the emergency and the extent of the protection crisis we are witnessing. Governments of the region will require international support to match the level of the needs."

To date, the 2015 humanitarian appeals for Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad have all received less than 15 percent of their funding requirements. Recently, an Inter-Agency Regional Response Plan worth USD \$174 million was launched to respond to the needs of protection, education, health and nutrition, shelter and WASH for the projected 240,000 beneficiaries in 2015 in Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

In 2014, CERF allocated more than \$8.7 million to relief agencies responding to the regional impact of ongoing crisis in Nigeria. Almost \$3.6 million went to life-saving relief, including the provision of clean water, health services and protection in Nigeria, and

another \$5.2 million allowed humanitarian partners to provide urgent food, shelter and medical support to refugees and host communities in Niger.

Security in the Far North Region is extremely volatile due to Boko Haram attacks on civilians, confrontations between the army and the insurgents as well as the presence of unexploded ordnances (UXOs)

Boko Haram ups misery in Cameroon's Far North

Boko Haram's militancy and worsening insecurity are inflicting deep human suffering in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes due to the insurgency and insecurity. In addition, an estimated 74,000 Nigerians have sought refuge in the region.

Displacements spike

To date, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has registered 41,822 Nigerian refugees of whom 32,872 are living in Minawao camp, the main refugee settlement in the Far North Region.

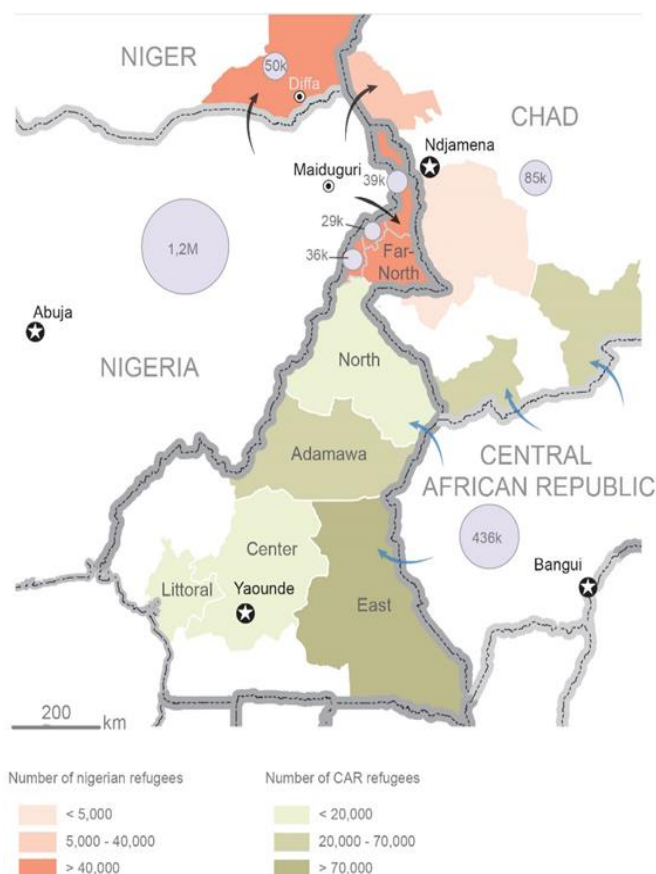
However, at the end of March Cameroonian authorities said that there were 74,000 refugees, 25,000 of whom had recently arrived in localities along the border with Nigeria.

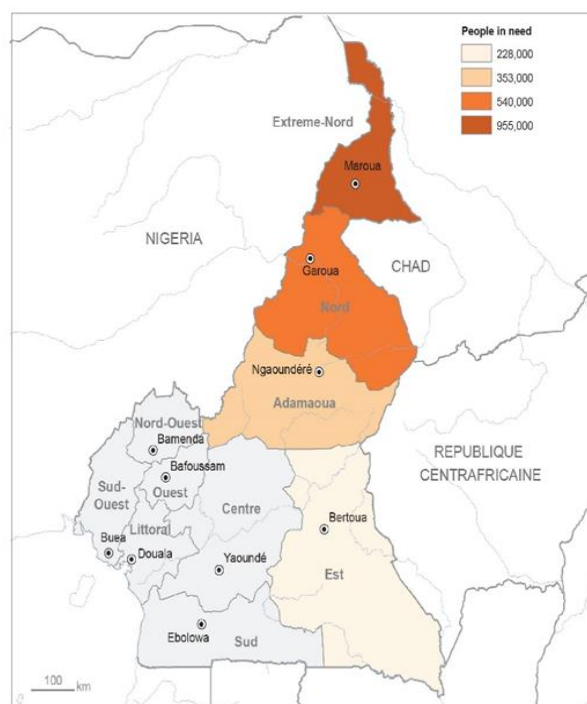
An assessment by WFP in March identified 106,000 IDPs in the Far North, mainly in Logone and Chari, Mayo Sava and Mayo Tsanaga districts. All the IDPs are living with host communities and not in camps. Humanitarian actors believe that the internally displaced will remain with host communities rather than move elsewhere.

Dire indicators

The Far North Region is one of Cameroon's poorest, with dire human development indicators. The population displacement and the drastic livelihood disruption caused by the insurgency have worsened the plight of many. Farmers have abandoned their fields, depriving them of sufficient food and income and there have been cases of cattle theft. Cross-border trade has nearly been choked off.

Around one million people are currently food insecure in the Far North and North regions, three times higher than it was two years ago, according to recent assessments. Malnutrition has also risen 40 percent since 2014, with refugees and IDPs particularly affected.





Basic services have also been affected by insecurity and violence. Around 120 schools were forced to close in 10 districts of the Far North in the 2014-2015 academic year. Some 33,163 children (43 percent girls) are out of school or have been forced to seek learning outside of their native communities and more than 29,000 students risk losing the entire school year.

Security in the Far North is extremely volatile due to Boko Haram attacks on civilians, confrontations between the army and the insurgents as well as the presence of UXOs. Humanitarian access to certain border areas is impossible. Since the intervention of the Chadian army, Boko Haram militia raids in Cameroon have reduced, but security remains fragile.

Humanitarian presence by UN and other international NGOs is being shored up to respond to the unfolding crisis that has heightened vulnerability of the displaced, especially women and children who make up the majority of IDPs

Nigeria: Worrying food outlook in conflict-hit states

Boko Haram's insurgency and insecurity in north-eastern Nigeria have significantly curtailed daily livelihood activities. Access and availability of food is limited. Much of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states will continue to experience at least crisis levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) through to the main harvest in October 2015, according to FEWSNET.

Chad, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria are continuing their military campaign against Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria and in border areas. Chad, Niger and Nigerian troops have reported recapturing several towns from the militants since launching the regional offensive in January, reversing a rise in the insurgency that has displaced around 1.5 million people within Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

Food security worsening

Households in other parts of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states that are relatively less affected by conflict still have limited access to markets and income-earning opportunities. Many of those living in these areas are already under stress (IPC Phase 2), and will move to crisis (IPC Phase 3) in April as their lean season begins earlier than normal.

Most households outside of the northeast are engaged in normal seasonal off-season agriculture and income earning activities. As market prices for key staples remain stable or decline, good food consumption is guaranteed for most households outside conflict-affected states. Consequently, minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity is expected through at least June 2015.

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Humanitarian presence by UN and other international NGOs is being shored up to respond to the unfolding crisis that has heightened vulnerability of the displaced, especially women and children who make up the majority of IDPs. Currently there are 21 humanitarian actors, including UN, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, other international NGOs and the Nigerian National Emergency Management Agency in the three states under recurrent Boko Haram attacks and the surrounding states in the northeast.

Opposition wins elections

The counter Boko Haram offensive prompted Nigeria to postpone presidential and parliamentary elections in February by six weeks to 28 March. In the presidential vote, the opposition All Progressives Congress party of retired army General Muhammadu Buhari achieved a historic feat, unseating an incumbent president through the ballot. The outcome also marked the first civilian transition of power since the end of military rule 16 years go.

There were fears of violence in the aftermath of the 28 March elections which were billed as Nigeria's closest fought in recent memory. However, defeated president Goodluck Jonathan conceded the loss and urged for peace. As regards security, analysts observe that given Buhari's military background, the counterinsurgency against Boko Haram will be sustained.

In the conflict-hit northeast, insecurity remains a significant obstacle in delivering on the most pressing humanitarian needs that include protection, shelter, food and access to education and health services for both displaced persons and host communities.

Ebola-affected countries need immediate food security action

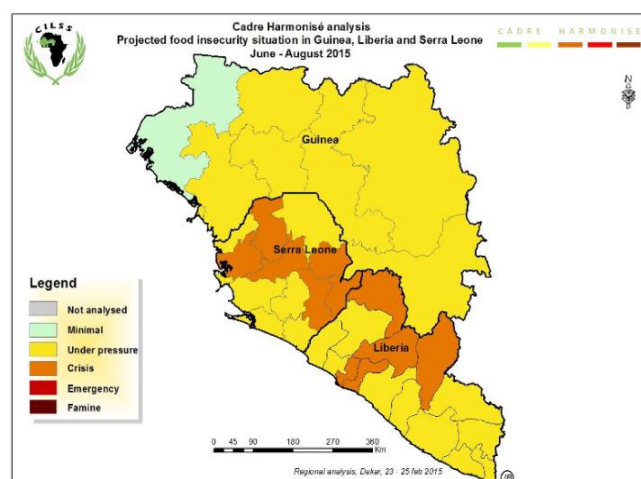
Over the lean season, between June and August 2015, over 2.2 million persons in the three affected countries will experience crisis levels of food insecurity, requiring urgent food assistance.

The Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and its partners released a report in March on the current food security situation in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The latest harvest has improved the current access to food, while the lifting of movement restrictions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the recent reopening of the main border crossing points should trigger the recovery of markets and trade in the coming months. However, the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak is still having a negative impact on food security and livelihoods due to the effect of disruptions on economic and farming activities over the past year.

Purchasing power eroded

The outbreak and related containment measures have eroded households' livelihoods leading to decreasing purchasing power and food stocks in the most EVD affected areas, while border closures and others movement restrictions have decreased trading opportunities in other areas. The report indicates that over 1.2 million people are currently



in a food security crisis situation - phase 3 on the international food insecurity scale - and need immediate assistance to protect their livelihoods and reduce acute malnutrition. In addition, the food security of 3.9 million people is under pressure. Interventions are required to strengthen their resilience capacity and vulnerability to shocks.

Over the lean season, between June and August 2015, a total of 6.8 people are expected to face food insecurity, of whom 2.2 million people are expected to experience crisis situation and will this require emergency food assistance

The report presents the results of the Cadre Harmonisé (CH) analysis held in Dakar on 23 - 26 February 2015. This analysis was conducted by CILSS with FAO and other members of the CH Technical Committee, as well as representatives of the Governments of the three countries. Using the [CH methodology](#), partners analysed the information collected during recent assessment missions focused on market function and households' capacity to access food, as well as other secondary information.

The report calls for assistance to the most vulnerable households during this year's lean season, maintaining efforts to eradicate Ebola and supporting the recovery of local economies among other recommendations to improve food security. A detailed report for each country will soon be released, as well as the reports from the market assessment missions.

Farmers need urgent help to plant in the Central African Republic



A woman prepares cassava for a meal in Mpoko displacement site in the capital Bangui. OCHA/Gemma Cortes

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in March launched an urgent appeal to help provide farmers in the Central African Republic (CAR) with seeds and tools for the country's upcoming planting season, warning that without additional assistance vulnerable populations risked a further deterioration of their livelihoods.

Around 1.5 million people in the CAR are short of food amid ongoing hostilities throughout the country, and that number is likely to rise unless farmers get seeds

before the planting season begins in April.

"The smooth implementation of the agriculture campaign activities is key to contribute to the decrease of political tensions, of which the main cause is extreme poverty," said FAO's Representative in CAR, Jean-Alexandre Scaglia. "Agriculture remains the most important source of income for the majority of the population in the country."

More than two years of civil war and sectarian violence have displaced thousands of people in CAR. According to UN estimates, nearly 440,000 people remain displaced inside the country while some 190,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

Agricultural output has fallen by around 60 percent from pre-crisis levels and the lean season between harvests is expected to begin four months earlier than usual this year, the FAO said.

"The smooth implementation of the agriculture campaign activities is key to contribute to the decrease of political tensions, of which the main cause is extreme poverty," FAO's Representative in the Central African Republic

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Livestock numbers have fallen by more than three quarters as a result of cattle raids over the last two years. Food reserves in rural areas are down by 40 percent from normal levels due to attacks and violence.

US \$6.2 million urgently needed

FAO and its Food Security Cluster partners have identified 150,000 crisis-affected households - farmers, returnees and host families - that had not received support and require immediate assistance.

FAO has already secured funding to assist 86,400 households, but it needs an additional \$6.2 million to support the remaining 63,600 for the upcoming main planting season.

Each family will receive critically needed inputs such as seeds and tools to cultivate 0.5 ha of land, which will cover food needs for up to five months, reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance and stabilise their income.

Thanks to funding received in 2014, FAO and partners assisted over 140,000 households and managed to contain a major food crisis in the country.

The 2015 agricultural season has been planned within the framework of the Food Security Cluster. FAO's distributions of agricultural inputs are carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and partner NGOs as well as the World Food Programme for the distribution of food rations to avoid seed consumption.

The Food Security Cluster, co-led by FAO and WFP, brings together around 70 organisations jointly working on food security strategy, information management, coordination of interventions and identification of priorities.

This year, FAO is implementing a \$42 million programme in CAR to respond to the immediate needs of the population, building the resilience of 90,000 rural households through an integrated community-centred approach.

In Guinea, hostility towards health workers remains challenging; overcoming community resistance will be key in bringing down the number of new cases to zero.

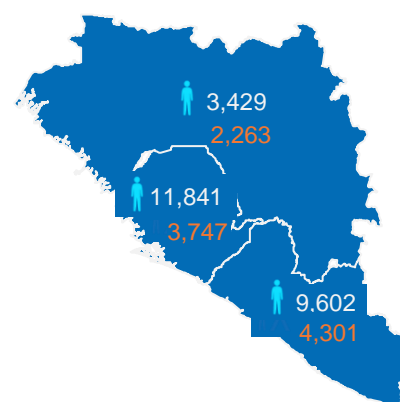
Ebola: March sees huge drop in cases

In the week leading up to 22 March, 79 confirmed cases were reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone - the lowest infections rates in 2015. The figure also marked almost a 50 percent drop in cases compared to the week before.

Liberia, which had gone for three consecutive weeks without a confirmed case, reported the first such case on 20 March. The patient, a woman who sold food at schools and a market in the capital Monrovia, died of the virus on 27 March.

Sierra Leone imposed another lockdown. The 27-29 shutdown confined around 2.5 million people in their homes in the capital Freetown and in hotspot areas of the north and western regions. Authorities said the measure, during which volunteers conducted door-door visits to check for sick people and raise awareness, was successful.

In Guinea, President Alpha Condé on 28 March, declared a 45-day "health emergency" in the prefectures of Forécariah, Coyah, Dubréka, Boffa and Kindia that include measures such as temporary closure of hospitals and clinics where cases are detected, stricter rules on burials and lockdowns to cut down infections.



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As of 22 March, there were a total of 24,872 suspected, probable and confirmed cases and 10,311 deaths in the three West African countries.

Funding Status Overview

2015 Sahel Appeal Funded at 12 percent as of 3 April



As of 3 April, the Sahel Humanitarian Strategic Response Plan (SRP) for 2015 was funded at 12 percent, receiving US\$ 229 million of its revised US\$ 1.95 billion requirement. In addition, US\$ 121 million have been contributed to humanitarian operations in the Sahel outside of the joint plan. The US, Japan and the European Union are the top three donating entities to the Sahel response plan thus far.

Humanitarian response plans for Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad where humanitarian operations include emergency response to populations affected by the regional impact of the crisis in north-east Nigeria have all received less than 15 per cent of their requirements thus far. The Agriculture and nutrition sectors are also particularly under-funded with zero and 11 percent funding respectively.