

Enhancing Security and Protection around IDP settlements



61% of vulnerable displaced households are children. © UNHCR

Background

Humanitarian actors are alarmed by the **increasing incidents of insecurity within IDP sites and surrounding areas in north eastern Nigeria**. On 9 February 2016, two female suicide bombers attacked a site for internally displaced Nigerians in Dikwa Local Government Area (LGA) located some 90 kms west of the Borno capital, Maidugiri, killing more than 58 people and injuring more than 80. This follows an escalation in targeted attacks against civilians and IDPs in several areas in Borno in the recent past and the attempted attack on Dalori IDP Camp on 30 January 2016, as well as an attack inside Malkohi IDP camp in Yola, Adamawa on 11 September 2015 that resulted in the death of 7 IDPs and left 20 injured including humanitarian actors from the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

In September 2015, the **Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons issued**

a press statement condemning the attack in Malkohi camp and calling for improvement of security and for accountability measures against perpetrators. Taking note of “screening measures” implemented by authorities, the Special rapporteur reminded authorities that the vast majority of IDPs are innocent civilians and highlighted the need to ensure that security measures respect fundamental rights such as freedom of movement and family unity.

Within this context, military and security actors have introduced “**security and vigilance measures**” aimed at enhancing IDP security. These measures, often implemented by self-defense vigilantes like the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), include: (a) Transportation of IDPs, returnees etc. during the day to allow adequate time for screening at destination points (b) the use of military escorts; (c) body searches, and (d) deployment of anti-bomb squads to conduct sweeps in all the camps.

Measures to improve security and maintain civilian character of IDP sites.

The recent attack in Dikwa IDP camp has further brought to light an urgent need to increase the protection and security of already vulnerable IDPs in formal and informal settlements in NE Nigeria. To this end there must be concerted efforts by both security and humanitarian actors to minimize the risk of similar incidents in the future:

- Federal and State level authorities should **strengthen coordination and collaboration between security institutions and communities**. Priority areas for improvement include: information sharing; community policing; early warning systems; and community-based self-protection mechanisms.
- Humanitarian and security actors in camp settings should **proactively engage with IDPs in security risk mitigation measures** including crowd control, joint vigilance, emergency response capacities etc.

Military should continue to provide security in areas within reasonable proximity of IDP sites. Where State institutions are present, local authorities should **increase the presence of civilian law enforcement personnel e.g. police in and around IDP camps** to strengthen community engagement, surveillance, protection and to **maintain the civilian character of IDP sites**. Adequate deployment of women in police should be prioritized. Nigerian authorities have made public statements regarding measures to be taken to improve security in and around IDP sites. While authorities have the primary responsibility to maintain security of IDP sites, authorities should be vigilant not to introduce measures which are detrimental to the rights of IDPs, infringe on the humanitarian and civilian character of IDP sites or contravene national or international standards.

- **The Nigeria HCT should undertake high-level advocacy** with federal and state authorities on the need to maintain security in IDPs sites in full compliance with human rights and humanitarian law.
- OCHA, through its Civ-Mil Coordinator, should clarify **“entry points” for engagement with the military**.
- State level authorities and military actors should clarify the framework in which self-defense vigilante groups such as CJTF operate.
- Protection actors should continue to provide training and awareness raising on international protection standards, including on child protection and sexual and gender-based violence, targeted at military and law enforcement actors in an effort to **entrench human rights and civilian centered approaches in their operations**.
- Humanitarian actors welcome the presence of **UNDSS staff** in critical locations in the North East. This should be complimented by **improved information sharing and analysis** between UNDSS and humanitarian actors.

Freedom of movement in IDP sites

In its effort to ensure the security of IDPs, Nigerian authorities should recall their obligation to guarantee the freedom of movement and choice of residence of internally displaced persons, except where restrictions on such movement and residence are necessary, justified and proportionate to the requirements of ensuring security for internally displaced persons or maintaining public security, public order and public health (**Kampala convention - 9(2)(f)**).

- Protection monitors have reported several incidents of arrests of “suspected Boko Haram members” in or around IDP sites as well as limitations of movement of IDPs and civilians. Despite the fact that the vast majority of IDPs are innocent civilians, a perception is emerging which projects IDPs as security threats. Unchecked, these perceptions present a significant risk to IDPs and will likely fuel tensions between IDPs and host communities. Nigerian authorities should adhere to international laws and standards in enhancing the safety and security of IDPs by ensuring that measures taken to restrict IDP movement are proportionate to the perceived and real threats of their movement.
- Measures to restrict movement must be carefully considered in collaboration with humanitarian actors in order to ensure that such restrictions do not further increase the vulnerabilities of IDPs.



Teachers Village, Maiduguri: IDPs waiting to open the camp gate to conduct their daily activities. © UNHCR

Protection Sector, Nigeria



UNHCR Nigeria,
PSWG Secretariat