

Over half of schools remain closed in epicentre of Boko Haram crisis in Nigeria – UNICEF

29 September 2017 – About 57 per cent of all schools are closed in Nigeria's Borno state, worst hit by the Boko Haram insurgency and the subsequent humanitarian crisis, leaving an estimated 3 million children in need of emergency education support, even as the new school year begins, the United Nations child agency said today.

Children in northeast Nigeria are living through [so much horror](#), said Justin Forsyth, Deputy Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), in a press release on his three-day visit to Maiduguri, the epicentre of the crisis.

Since 2009, over 2,295 teachers have been killed and 19,000 have been displaced across the northeast. Almost 1,400 schools have been destroyed with the majority unable to open because of extensive damage or because they are in areas that remain unsafe.

The use of children as human bombs has sown a climate of mistrust among communities in the northeast, and a cholera outbreak has affected more than 3,900 people, including over 2,450 children.

In addition to devastating malnutrition, violence and an outbreak of cholera, the attacks on schools are in danger of creating a lost generation of children, threatening their and the countries future, Mr. Forsyth added.

However, some displaced children in Borno state are benefiting from education for the first time in their lives. In the Muna Garage camp on the outskirts of Maiduguri, an estimated 90 per cent of students are enrolled in school for the first time.

In the three most-affected states of northeast Nigeria, UNICEF and partners have enrolled nearly 750,000 children in school this year, establishing over 350 temporary learning spaces, and distributing almost 94,000 packs of learning material that will help children to get an education.

UNICEF is also working with partners to rehabilitate schools and classrooms and training teachers to build a stronger education system for the future.

UNICEF's life-saving emergency programmes in northeast Nigeria remain underfunded. With only three months left in the year, UNICEF has a 40 per cent finding gap in its needs for 2017.

[UN chief urges all parties to refrain from acts that could escalate tension in Cameroon](#)

28 September 2017 – Expressing “deep concern” over the deteriorating security situation in parts of Cameroon as well as heightened tensions related to planned events this Sunday, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called all parties to refrain from acts that could lead to further tensions and violence.

According to a [statement](#) attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres encouraged the Cameroonian authorities to continue their efforts to address the grievances of the Anglophone community.

“He urges the authorities to promote measures of national reconciliation aimed at finding a durable solution to the crisis, including by addressing its root causes,” the statement added.

It also noted that the UN chief supports upholding the unity and territorial integrity of the country and believes that genuine and inclusive dialogue between the Government and the communities in the South-West and North-West regions is the best way to preserve the unity and stability of the country.

The Secretary-General stands ready to support these efforts, including through the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa ([UNOCA](#)), the statement read.

[Lake Chad Basin: Vulnerable people ‘a step away from starvation,’ says UN aid chief](#)

28 September 2017 – The scale up of international assistance to the Lake Chad Basin this year has averted a famine in north-east Nigeria, even though millions of people are still suffering, according to the United Nations aid chief.

Having visited Niger and Nigeria earlier this month, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, told reporters today at UN Headquarters in New York: “There are still millions of people who have

suffered a lot and continue to suffer, many of them [just a step away from starvation.](#)”

He said that in field visits to Ngagam in Diffa – “the poorest region in the poorest country in the world” – and to Maiduguri, Pulka, and Gwoza in Borno state in Nigeria, he met “extremely vulnerable people” displaced by conflict.

“Those people want to go home, they want a chance to rebuild their lives. But they want to do that when it’s safe to do so,” stressed Mr. Lowcock.

About 1.8 million people in Niger are food-insecure. Some 800,000 children are affected by acute malnutrition and almost 250,000 people are either internally displaced persons, returnees or refugees from Nigeria, he highlighted.

In north-east Nigeria, around 6.5 million people need life-saving assistance. Nearly 5.2 million are severely food-insecure and 450,000 children will suffer from severe acute malnutrition, this year.

The crisis in the Lake Chad Basin, which covers Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, is complex as countries grapple with insecurity, climatic shocks, extreme poverty, the legacy of inadequate governance across vast parts of the region.

“But the way forward is also clear,” he asserted, highlighting the need to sustain the effective humanitarian response, and to ensure see better protection for people.

“Access has improved in many towns, but there’s also been a recent upsurge in horrific attacks on civilians in all four countries. In Niger, hostage-taking has increased, while in Nigeria children have been used as ‘human bombs,’” he said.

Turning to other areas of the world, Mr. Lowcock said “so far in Somalia, famine has been averted” while in South Sudan, there was “a famine declaration in a couple of counties in Unity state, that affected about 50,000 people earlier in the year, but that situation was brought under control pretty quickly.”

Calling it the world’s biggest humanitarian crisis, Mr. Lowcock pointed out that in Yemen, “we have so far again averted formal famine declaration, but the levels of suffering in Yemen are really astronomical. I mean, there’s a really dreadful situation.”

[**World has ‘every interest’ in better**](#)

managed migration – senior UN official

As the world continues to experience unprecedented waves of migration, United Nations experts are highlighting the importance of regional solutions to ensure that people and societies can benefit from this global phenomenon.

“Migration is a reality that crosses walls and barbed wire,” said Mohamed Ali Alhakim, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Speaking at its headquarters in Beirut, Lebanon at the opening of a [two-day meeting](#) on international migration, Mr. Alhakim stressed that to manage this transboundary reality, “regional and international cooperation must also cross borders.”

As one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations, ESCWA serves as a think tank for its 18 Member States; it brings together experts who work at the regional level to tackle global challenges, while still considering different national realities. Helping countries achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development has been at the heart of its focus.

“Is immigration not the oldest poverty reduction plan?” continued Mr Alhakim, noting that remittances in the Arab region amount to more than \$50 billion a year, more than four times the official development assistance (ODA) received by Arab countries.

Alongside its partners such as the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), ESCWA is facilitating discussions on what should be prioritized for the Arab region in the [Global Compact for Migration](#). This agreement, the first of its kind, is expected to offer solutions to better manage human mobility.

“The Arab region is particularly important because it’s at the centre of much of the conflict, it’s a major labour migration area, and it’s also an area that has sent a lot of people elsewhere in the world particularly to Europe, many of whom encountered difficulties along the way,” explained William Lacy Swing, the Director General of IOM.

In his address to the forum, he recalled that 3.5 per cent of the world population are international migrants who produce 9 per cent of the world’s global domestic product. That’s reportedly 4 per cent more than they would have produced if they had stayed at home.

Meanwhile, Louise Arbour, the UN Special Representative for International Migration, highlighted how much of a challenge it will be for the global compact on migration to be relevant to everyone; in the Arab region alone, countries have very different economic, social and environmental profiles.

“We know there are a lot of differences around the world but when you see such striking differences even within a region it brings home the idea that the compact is going to have to be very smart to have appeal and to be

implementable," she underlined.

The next regional consultations on the global compact will be held in October in Addis Abba at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and then in November in Bangkok at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)).

[Rohingya refugee crisis a 'human rights nightmare,' UN chief tells Security Council](#)

28 September 2017 – Noting that the humanitarian crisis that has resulted in displacement of hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas from Myanmar not only provides a “breeding ground” for radicalization, but also puts vulnerable people – including young children – at grave risk, United Nations Secretary-General called for “swift action” to prevent further instability and find a durable solution.

“The situation has spiralled into the [world’s fastest developing refugee emergency](#) and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare,” [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said today at a Security Council meeting on the situation in Myanmar.

At least 500,000 civilians have fled their homes in the country’s northern Rakhine state since late August and sought refuge in Bangladesh. According to estimates, some 94 per cent among them are members of the minority Muslim Rohingya community.

There have also been reports of burning of Muslim villages, as well as looting and acts of intimidation. Authorities in Myanmar have indicated that at least 176 of 471 Muslim villages in northern Rakhine have been totally abandoned.

“We have received bone-chilling accounts from those who fled – mainly women, children and the elderly,” added the UN chief, noting that testimonies pointed to serious violations of human rights, including indiscriminate firing of weapons, the presence of landmines and sexual violence.

“This is unacceptable and must end immediately.”



Secretary-General António Guterres briefs the Security Council meeting on the situation in Rakhine state of Myanmar, which has seen hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees fleeing to neighbouring Bangladesh over the last several

weeks. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

Failure to address the violence could result in a spill-over into central Rakhine – where an additional 250,000 Muslims could potentially face displacement – Mr. Guterres warned, stressing that Government must ensure the safety and security of all communities and uphold rule of law without discrimination. In his briefing, the Secretary-General also underscored that UN agencies and their non-governmental partners must be granted immediate and safe access to all affected communities.

Speaking also on the need to ensure safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of the refugees to their areas of origin, Mr. Guterres noted that the 1993 Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh and Myanmar could be a useful starting point, but it is not sufficient in the present circumstances, in particular as it does not refer to resolving the root cause of displacement as well as because it requires documents that the refugee Rohingya may not be able to provide.

“Ensuring the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees to Rakhine – in line with international refugee law – will require the restoration of mutual trust among the communities,” he said, noting that improved inter-communal relations forms a critical part of a sustainable solution to the crisis.

Mt. Guterres further noted that the issue of protracted statelessness must be resolved.

“The Muslims of Rakhine state should be granted nationality,” he stated, adding that while the present Myanmar citizenship legislation only allows it partially, an effective verification exercise should be conducted in the interim to allow those entitled be granted citizenship based on the present laws.

“All others must be able to obtain a legal status that allows them to lead a normal life, including freedom of movement and access to labour markets, education and health services,” he added.

In his remarks, the UN chief also spoke of a donor conference to be convened by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) and the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) as well as noted efforts by regional actors to help address the crisis.

“I look forward to effective and credible follow-up to the authorities’ stated commitment to greater access, including for the international community, the media and humanitarian actors,” he said, noting: “The regional cooperation with Myanmar will also be essential, and the United Nations fully stands behind this.”