

Top UN aid official calls for urgent support for Chad

A senior United Nations aid official has called for urgent funding to support 4.4 million people in Chad, including refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, as well as the communities hosting them.

Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator Ursula Mueller [made the appeal](#) on Tuesday at the end of her first visit to the landlocked country, located in central Africa.

Ms. Mueller underscored the need for durable solutions to the crisis in the Lac region.

The activities of the extremist group Boko Haram, as well as violence in Sudan and the Central African Republic, have affected 500,000 people there, including 137,000 people the UN has deemed particularly vulnerable.

“During my visit to displacement sites, I saw the difficult living conditions and lack of means displaced communities face,” Ms. Mueller said.

“It is unacceptable that these men, women and children who have lost everything, their home, belonging, livelihood and very often family members, continue to live in fear and uncertainty.”

Chad was the final stop on a 10-day mission which also took Ms. Mueller to the Central African Republic (CAR) and Cameroon, where she saw first-hand the devastating humanitarian consequences of ongoing violence.

The humanitarian emergency across the Lake Chad basin is among the most severe in the world, according to the UN humanitarian affairs office, [OCHA](#), where Ms. Mueller is second in command.

Lake Chad Basin: Crisis Overview

Most recent key figures

Living in affected area

17.2M

Food Insecure

4.51M

Children suffering from acute malnutrition

515k

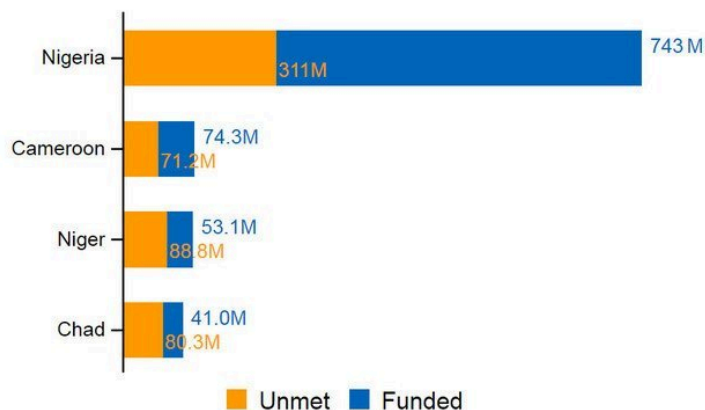
People in Need

10.9M

People Displaced

2.25M

Requirement for 2018 (in US \$)



OCHA

Lake Chad Basin: Crisis Overview

Persistent insecurity and Boko Haram operations mean that more than 10 million people in four countries – Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria – will need aid assistance this year just to survive.

OCHA said the closure of Chad's border with Nigeria from the beginning of the crisis in the Lac region in 2015, together with the continued implementation of emergency measures, have also had an impact on local populations who already face poor regional development.

Ms. Mueller said she was moved by the solidarity of host communities who are sharing the little they have with those forced to run for their lives.

"It is essential to strengthen the livelihoods of these communities who are the first lifeline for those fleeing violence and insecurity," she stated.

The crisis is taking place against a wider backdrop of recurrent food shortages and entrenched poverty across Chad, where nearly four million people require emergency food assistance and more than 200,000 children under five are at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition.

However, funding for humanitarian operations there has not kept pace with increased needs.

Ms. Mueller urged countries to step up their support to Chad, which requires \$544 million in humanitarian funding this year.

So far, less than four per cent has been received.

UN mission welcomes Afghan Government's proposal for peace talks with Taliban

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan on Wednesday welcomed the Government's renewed call for unconditional peace talks with the Taliban and expressed strong support for its vision for peace.

The Government presented the proposal at an international conference aimed at creating a platform for peace talks.

"The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) welcomes the Afghan Government's [renewed call for unconditional peace talks](#) with the Taliban and the outlining of a framework for peace, presented at the Kabul Process II conference in the Afghan capital today," said a UNAMA press release.

The Mission "strongly supports the vision for peace through intra-Afghan dialogue and urges all parties involved to engage at the earliest time," the release said.

UNAMA commended the stated preparedness of Afghan authorities to discuss all issues as part of a peace process, including such key aspects as the constitution and the lifting of sanctions against persons and entities, as well as the release of prisoners.

The UN Security Council established UNAMA, a political mission, in March 2002. However, Afghanistan remains a country undergoing conflict, which threatens the sustainability of its achievements, according to the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

Peace negotiations between the Afghan Government and armed opposition groups are [the only alternative](#) for ending the conflict, the DPA says, noting that the region and the broader international community have a stake and a role in helping to create the conditions for peace.

The conference, held in Kabul, brought together all of Afghanistan's neighbouring States, along with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – as well as other parties, to establish a consensus among regional and international stakeholders on the imperative for an Afghan-led peace process.

"UNAMA is encouraged by the active participation of the countries and organisations present; we look forward to increased cooperation to assist with Afghan peace efforts and to address the shared problem of terrorism and transnational crime," the release said.

[Libya: Tawerghans must not be held hostage to political crisis, UN says, urging safe return](#)

The United Nations and its partners in Libya have called for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the population displaced from the northern town of Tawergha without a delay, expressing deep concern about the situation faced by these people living in makeshift-tented settlements in nearby areas.

“Hundreds of people, wanting to exercise [their legitimate right of return](#) have been stuck in open areas under difficult weather conditions and without access to basic services for over three weeks,” said Maria Ribeiro, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, in a statement issued Tuesday by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

“Their voluntary, safe and dignified return should not be delayed any further and Tawerghans should not be held hostage to the political crisis in the country,” she added.

According to a [press release](#) from the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR), the entire population of around 40,000 people in Tawerghan was forcibly evacuated in 2011 as collective punishment for their perceived support for deposed leader Muammar Gaddafi, with their return blocked by armed groups.

An agreement for the return was finally signed in March 2017, which was followed by a Presidency Council decree in December 2017 to initiate the return process from 1 February.

The Libyan authorities have the primary responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their jurisdiction and to prepare the conditions for their safe return, including the clearance of explosive remnants of war, Ms. Ribeiro said, expressing the UN’s readiness to support these efforts.

[UN chief condemns abduction of school girls in north-east Nigeria, calls for](#)

[their immediate release](#)

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has denounced the abduction of more than one hundred school girls by suspected Boko Haram insurgents during an attack on an educational institution in north-eastern Nigeria and called for their safe return to their families.

In a [statement](#) attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres strongly condemned the abduction and the attack which took place on 19 February on the Bursari Government Girls Science Secondary School, located in the town of Dapchi in Nigeria's restive Yobe state.

"The Secretary-General calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all missing girls and for their safe return to their families," read the statement.

The UN chief also urged Nigerian authorities to swiftly bring those responsible for the act to justice.

Also in the statement, Mr. Guterres reiterated UN's solidarity and support to the Governments of Nigeria and other affected countries in the region in their fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

[According](#) to the [Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict](#) – which works for the protection and well-being of children affected by armed conflict – schools in northeast Nigeria continue to be attacked at an alarming rate.

It is estimated that almost 1,400 of educational institutions have been destroyed since the beginning of the insurgency in 2009.

Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative expressed that "overwhelmingly, attacks focus on the abduction, forcible recruitment and use, killing and maiming as well as sexual abuse of innocent Nigerian girls whose only crime is to be female and to dream of an education."

"These abhorrent crimes must stop now. I call on all those with the means to engage to stop these violations and return our girls unharmed," she added.

[South Sudan: UN peacekeeping review urges emphasis on supporting political](#)

process

A latest review of the United Nations peacekeeping operation in South Sudan has found that reaching a political solution to the ongoing conflict is the most effective way to protect civilians, a senior UN official said Tuesday, urging a renewed focus on supporting the political process.

“A sustainable political resolution of the conflict is also the only avenue to chalk out a viable exit strategy” for the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita told the Security Council.

UNMISS was established in 2011 as a capacity building tool to assist a Government that lacked the capability to deliver services to its people, she said.

However, following the December 2013 outbreak of violence, UNMISS evolved into a Mission where protection of civilians, including from national security institutions, has become the main focus.

“This requirement unfortunately, remains valid,” she said, noting that tens of thousands of civilians are estimated to have been killed since the conflict began in December 2013 while over four million have been displaced, half of which are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

As documented once again by the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry which published its report last Friday, human rights violations and abuses, including horrific incidents of sexual violence, have reached alarming levels, and impunity for these crimes remains the norm, Ms. Keita said. Moreover, over 200,000 internally displaced peoples continue to be protected on UNMISS bases, with the assistance of humanitarian partners.

The review found that largely over 50 per cent of the Mission’s uniformed personnel are currently devoted to protecting these sites.

These sites only represent a fraction of the South Sudanese civilians in need of protection.

“There are no easy answers to this dilemma. There will never be enough troops to protect both the ‘protection of civilians’ sites and extend UNMISS’s protection footprint to other areas of large displacements, in a country as large as South Sudan,” she said.



OCHA/Charlotte Cans

People at a Protection of Civilians Camp in Malakal, South Sudan, peacefully demonstrating and carrying signs, waiting on the side of the road for a UN convoy to pass by. (file)

Increasing the effectiveness of protection efforts beyond these sites will need to continue being a major priority of the Mission, notably through the development of an integrated and 'people focused' system-wide protection approach, aimed at filling existing gaps, generating synergies and removing duplication and thus possible wastage of resources.

Since the Security Council decision in August 2016 to deploy the Regional Protection Force (RPF), the security conditions in Juba, have changed substantially. Today, while the risk of instability and violence remains, the threat of military conflict in the capital has considerably diminished.

The current environment of Juba, therefore, may call for some adjustment of the RPF mandate as currently scripted, Ms. Keita said.

Following the review, the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operation has ordered a military and police capability study to explore how less troops can be dedicated to the 'Protection of Civilians' sites, and more are projected throughout the country to protect other civilians under imminent threat of violence.

This capability study will also need to address the configuration of the RPF.

South Sudan came into being with extremely limited institutional capacity in all areas of governance and government services, with the exception of military forces. This situation has not improved in subsequent years.

Poor governance and economic collapse have compromised already weak rule of law institutions. In the current political and security environment, the review found that a full-scale return to capacity-building rule of law

institutions is not warranted.

“It is our considered judgement that the most effective way to protect civilians in a sustainable way is to reach a political solution to this conflict,” she said.

The four-pillared mandate of UNMISS remains valid, but the focus of the Council and the region should undoubtedly be on its fourth pillar, which is to support the political process, she said.

“Without progress on the political process, the Mission is likely to have to be deployed for a considerable amount of time, at a considerable cost to the international community,” she concluded.