

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.