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Assessment Team: Mustapha Mohammed Grema, Hasiya Mshelia, Muredach Kelly

DATE OF REPORT: 21st April 2017

**Basic details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date(s) of field assessment</th>
<th>19th April 2017</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Mobbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location name</td>
<td>Damasak town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location type (town / village / camp)</td>
<td>Town, LGA capital</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Methodology note**

Methodology is based on key informant interviews (KII), AGDM focus group discussions (FGDs) and structured direct observation (DO). The tools used are adjusted to the context and designed to triangulate information collected. Methodology design tries to capture maximum extend of information from multiple sources and taking into account views and needs of various groups in the population in shortest possible timeframe.

Assessment team members are trained on the methodology received pre-departure brief and de-brief upon return; team members speak languages locally used and include male and female.

Total of 2 KII and 2 FGDs were conducted.

*Due to the short timeframe for data collection errors and omissions are possible. Please share any comments and observations on the quality and accuracy of this report with the author as soon as possible through: filip.lozinski@nrc.no*
Context, general security situation, population movements

On 24th November 2014 morning almost all population left Damasak town, displaced to Niger. Displacement was triggered by a threat received from the opposition group, which subsequently took the town.

Displaced Damasak residents stayed for about 2 years in Niger without possibility of engaging in livelihood activities and with very limited assistance. The town was taken back by Nigerian military in June 2016.

Due to no livelihood prospects in Niger, and as security situation in the area improved, returns started by the end of 2016 and continue to date at a small pace (estimated at up to 40 households/300 persons daily). Original town and nearby area population before the crisis was estimated at 100.000HH/700.000 persons; now it is estimated at 30.000HH/210.000 persons.

Returnees, after about 2 years of displacement with no ability to conduct agricultural activities or other IGAs have almost no resources or capacity for settling and re-establishing their livelihoods.

Although the crisis is ongoing, no major security issues were observed or cited. Returnees also did not express concerns with their return, no problems with crossing the border nor screening by Nigerian or Niger police, military or immigration. They expect security situation to be stable in the area and are not anticipating having to move at any time in future.

UXOs or ERW were cleared in the town and not cited as any concern. No other security incidents inside the town were reported; some inter-communal tensions were reported through previous assessment in one of the small communities next to Damasak (Kroto village). Military performs patrols for up to 30km radius.

Local infrastructure, which existed before the crisis, is largely damaged or destroyed, with no capacity of residents to rebuild it. Some rehabilitation is done by local authorities or the military and though aid agencies.

Estimated population and affected population in the area; numbers, description and registration initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Estimated current population of site</th>
<th>Total HH</th>
<th>HH assessed as in need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damasak Town</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDPs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host community</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Returnees</td>
<td>30 000</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>30 000</td>
<td>28 500</td>
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</table>

Reliability of the population numbers can’t be assessed – it is based on KI observations. According to these Damasak prior to the crisis was the third largest town in the state, after Maiduguri and Bama.

Below figures are mainly from the KII sources, with an attempt to cross-check with earlier interagency assessment. However both IA IRNA and this assessment note discrepancies and need for better planning figures to be established.

Original town and nearby area population before the crisis was estimated by KI at 100.000HH/700.000 persons; now it is estimated at 30.000HH/210.000 persons. Returns continue at slow but steady pace, estimated at about 40HH/300 persons daily. However, according to IA IRNA there is about 8-9.000HH remaining in Niger or MMC (not 70.000HH as above would suggest).

There are no SEMA/NEMA representatives. Immigration officials may be keeping more accurate information on the returns movement however were not available during this assessment.

As reported in previous assessment, ICRC in conjunction with the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) have been registering returnees since 26 February 2017 – registering 65,000 returnees till 8th April.

There are two communities in Damasak, with good relations with each other, staying in Zana Lawan Ballama (Damasak central) and in Zana Lawan Madu neighbourhoods. Both communities are in need of same type of support; in each there are many female headed households, disabled and unaccompanied elderly persons and persons with other vulnerabilities. Such persons with specific needs can count on quite significant support from their communities.
Population returning to Damasak settle directly in areas they were displaced from. There are neither camps nor transit sites. Residents from locations outside of Damasak stay inside the town, sharing accommodation with residents – relatives etc. Estimated village 1% - 2 % (based on FGD from Damasak central neighbourhood) are those who could not return to their homes in nearby villages.

### Key problems and priorities identified by the affected population

Priorities stated at all interviews, and consistent with previous assessment:

1. Food (ICRC distributions are not enough as do not target all population; there are serious concerns if these distributions will not continue or expand to accommodate newly returned)
2. Basic NFIs (cooking utensils, personal hygiene items, especially for woman, jerrycans)
3. Drinking water supply expansion
4. Shelter
5. Education – school operation re-starting
6. Market operations re-starting
7. Livelihood (agricultural) inputs

### EXTERNAL CAPACITY - LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS OPERATING IN THE AREA

**Implementing organisation and type of programme**

ICRC is conducting monthly food distributions. Information obtained through KII and FDS: one distribution was done in March, one is currently being implemented with three more planned (thus covering till end August). Blanket distribution for about 60% of the population (15,000HH targeted in total). Additionally small scale shelter intervention was conducted and more planned (few hundred HH).

MSF is present providing basic healthcare services and medicines.

WHO has carried out Polio Eradication campaign.

Government is supporting some houses rehabilitation, along main roads, through cash provisions; according to information obtained it suffice for roof/external wall rehabilitation of limited number of houses.

Vast majority of returnees have no resources to rebuild their houses or construct temporary shelters.

**Information in this section need to be verified with respective organizations.**

### SHELTER AND ESSENTIAL NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFIs)

Majority of residents have returned to their homes or compounds. Residents of nearby villages are sharing with relatives who live in the town. Close to all houses were destroyed or significantly damaged, with residents having no capacity to rebuild them. Some are living in makeshift shelters constructed with traditional materials - no plastic sheeting material were observed nor stated. Government support rebuilding of few houses along main roads.

Essential NFIs are of short supply. Of particular concern cooking utensils were cited – these often have to be shared between households. Otherwise, sleeping materials, cloths, solar lights were mentioned as needed.
**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

Water is supplied through 3 commonly accessible boreholes (repaired by ICRC). However through IA IRNA 11 boreholes were mentioned as rehabilitated by government (perhaps they include not freely accessible one too). Water quality is perceived as good. Quantity is not sufficient – woman have to queue for up to 2 hours to fill 1 jerrycan. It is agreed that on average one family has to cope with 1 max 2 jerrycans a day (average 30L).

Some of the private compounds in the town has own boreholes; these are occasionally available to the public for free or at a cost. Before the crisis one jerrycan of water delivered costed 10 Naira; currently it is 25 naira. For comparison: in MMC 12-14 jerrycans with delivery are sold for 100N. Many of those privately owned boreholes require fuel for operation. Occasionally water is also available through the source (borehole) at military compound.

In addition there are shallow wells, however with limited yield in dry season and water perceived as poor quality. Finally there is a dry river bed (during dry season), where some water can be obtained through digging pits.

Jerrycans are highly sought item as majority are old and in poor condition; no chlorination or other kind of treatment systems are practiced.

There are close to none sanitation facilities (latrines, bathing facilities etc.). The few observed are unsafe makeshift facilities. Open defecation is practiced. Sanitation was not mentioned as priority through FGDs, suggesting the need for hygiene promotion activities.

Water supply is very limited, including for hygiene. Personal hygiene materials are very limited and cited as high priority. This includes women personal hygiene items, stated as one of the top priorities by women.

No solid waste management.

**FOOD SITUATION AND LIVELIHOODS**

Food situation is cited as main priority across all interviews and within previous assessment.

Majority of residents rely on food distribution by ICRC (which do not cover all population, but are being shared by communities). KII and FGDs report that 5 in total were planned: one done last month, one currently ongoing and 3 more in coming months, covering the needs till end August. It was not clear if the incoming returnees will be added to the planned food distributions.

Markets practically not functioning currently nor population is having resources to buy food items.
Food stocks are minimal and comprise food rations provided by ICRC.
Stability of supply depends entirely on distributions by aid agencies.

Food utilization – cooking equipment is available, but limited and often shared. Firewood is the only source of energy and is being collected in immediate vicinity of the town (assessed by women as nearby and with no security concerns at this point; concerns will arise when woman will be forced to walk further to collect firewood).

People consume food usually once or maximum twice a day. The diet is based on rice; maize, beans, millet, some cooking oil and condiments. No discrimination in food consumption within households stated; reportedly vulnerable members of the community receive support from their neighbours.

**LIVELIHOODS**

Majority of population has no resources to restart agricultural activities (in which more than 90% found occupation before the crisis were engaged in) – such as seeds, tools, other inputs or livestock. Population is determined to commence some farming activities during coming rainy season.

Prior to the crisis population engaged in farming (rain fed and irrigated vegetable gardens), some fishing and livestock.
### MARKETS AND MARKET SUPPLY CHAINS

According to the FGD participants local market is virtually not functioning – as residents have almost no money to shop and due to difficulties (and distance) to bring in the supplies. Additionally small traders and business owners have no capital to invest in stocks. Finally, there are security concerns along the main supply road to Maiduguri town (section of which are done with military escorts), additionally rising potential cost of supply.

There were some reports on military restrictions in bringing in supplies; certainly there are imposed on fuel.

Before the crisis the town was regarded as wealthy and major export hub to Niger. Currently markets in Niger seem to be functioning better (even if expensive) and some FGD participants stated that they would consider commuting to Niger for buying few key items, even if the prices in Niger are high.

### LEGAL DOCUMENTATION, HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY ISSUES

During FGDs some participants stated that they do not have legal documentation; this is an issue as it prevents them to commute to Niger to obtain some basic commodities.

Additionally, no possibility to obtain birth certificates was of concern to some interviewees, as it may pose problems with education and legal documentation.

Housing, land and property issues were not reported as problems. Returnees settle in their property.

### EDUCATION

Formal education activities were conducted before the crisis. Currently no formal or other education activities ongoing, nor planned to re-start in foreseeable future. Educational infrastructure damaged.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – LOGISTICS, COMMS AND ACCESS

**ACCESS**
- Access by UNHAS helicopter upon request (landing site at the military compound).
- Access from Niger (border crossing open for commercial traffic and returnees, needs to be verified if for humanitarian agencies).
- Access by road under military escort.

**COMMUNICATIONS**
- No network service providers from Nigeria; currently coverage from Orient – Itel – a Network Service Provider from Niger.

**TRANSPORT, FUEL ACCESSIBILITY, ELECTRICITY SUPPLY, OFFICE/STORAGE SPACE**
- No fuel storage or sale observed. Restrictions in fuel transport by military.
- Road to the border crossing with Niger at Diffa open and available without escort; supply from Niger theoretically may be possible, however it is remote part of Niger with not developed markets and high costs; trade was usually going out from Nigeria in the past.
- Access to Maiduguri, main supply centre possible, under military escort.
- No electricity supply from the national grid.

Limited storage capacity and office space, usually requiring rehabilitation works (masonry, roofing, electrical and plumbing installations etc.)