JOINT MISSION TO-HARD-TO REACH AREA IN BORNO STATE:
BAMA CASE STUDY
JANUARY 2019

Key Highlights and Recommendations for Decision Makers

✓ Findings from the assessment confirm that pockets of people are indeed trapped in some hard-to-reach inaccessible communities with higher concentration around the swathes of Sambisa axis. However, the scale of habitation could not be ascertained;

✓ Though extremely restricted and controlled by Non State Armed Groups (NSAG), some level of livelihood activities, particularly farming activities are ongoing in some of these areas;

✓ Food intake may be poorly diversified, considering the absence of markets and the dependence of trapped individuals on the few varieties of cereals (millet and sorghum), pulses (beans) and other food commodities (okro and groundnuts) cultivated on their farmlands. The situation may be more critical in some areas where households are left for days without food;

✓ Nutrition situation could be severely critical given the complete breakdown of basic services (particularly health) and WASH challenges (open dug wells, open defecation), all of which has implication for nutrition, particularly food utilization due to high risk of sicknesses;

✓ Food security and nutrition partners should preposition a contingency stock to promptly and efficiently cater for the food and nutritional needs of new arrivals coming out from these hard-to-reach areas considering the fragile food intake, nutrition and WASH situation observed;

✓ Scale up of similar initiatives, particularly in other areas of Borno (Northern & Southern Borno) to test for homogeneity of the findings from this study. There is also a need to synergize with other partners (IOM, REACH International) working on similar initiatives to strengthen such with the aim to mainstream analytical approach into existing data collection systems for sustainability;

✓ During the Cadre Harmonise analysis, phase classification and estimation of affected population experiencing food and nutrition insecurity should take into account proportion of population trapped in these hard-to-reach/inaccessible areas vis-à-vis the total population in the area.

BACKGROUND
During the November, 2018 Cadre Harmonise (CH) analysis which covered 16 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), there were peculiar challenges encountered to classify the phase and estimate food and nutrition insecure populations in some hard-to-reach areas, particularly those in Borno State. Most recent reports from OCHA suggest that over 820,000 people are trapped in hard-to-reach areas and still inaccessible to humanitarian actors\(^1\). Findings from UNICEF’s recent rapid SMART survey of new arrivals from inaccessible areas show alarming number of children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)\(^2\).

---


Moreover, according IOM’s latest Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT), a significant number of newly arrived people left their previous place of abode due to poor living conditions. Whilst proxy evidence suggests high level of deprivation in some of these inaccessible areas, the scale of need, including prevailing food security situation in these areas remains largely unclear to the government and humanitarian community.

To this end, WFP, FAO and FEWS NET under the leadership of the Nigerian Government through the National Programme for Food Security (NPFS) and Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) undertook a fact-finding mission to hard-to-reach areas of Borno State, using Bama as a case study. The mission aimed to obtain first-hand information on the food security and livelihood situation including the functionality of basic services and markets in these areas. The team as well explored opportunities to leverage and harness similar ongoing efforts by partners such as IOM’s Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT) and REACH International’s multi-sectorial hard-to-reach project. Potentially, findings from the assessment would enhance data reliability for the next round of CH analyses in March 2019 and beyond, thereby improving the credibility of the entire results.

OBJECTIVES
The main objectives of the study were:

a) To gain insights into the situation of food security, nutrition, WASH and livelihoods in inaccessible areas around Bama LGA;

b) To make evidence-based recommendations on ways to analyze and estimate the population currently trapped in inaccessible areas during the next CH analysis in March 2019.

METHODOLOGY
The mission team met with representatives of SEMA, IOM and REACH International in Maiduguri on the 23rd January, 2019 to explore opportunities to leverage existing information that are obtainable from these key stakeholders. The findings from this crucial meeting informed the detailed work plan for

---

3 IOM’s Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT), November 2018. [link]
the assessment including organizational resources (staff, approval letters, contacts, tools etc.) that could readily be sourced on-ground in Bama during the assessment.

The assessment was conducted on the 18th January 2019 in Bama IDP Camp on new arrivals (who came into the camp between the 1st and 17th of January, 2019). The team held key informant interviews (KII) with staff of IOM to obtain more information on the trend of new arrivals, particularly those from inaccessible areas. IOM staff also supported with the identification of these new arrivals from inaccessible areas. The assessment team conducted five focus group discussions (FGDs) with male and female groups of the newly arrived IDPs that arrived within a period of 3 months from villages that remained inaccessible to the humanitarian community. Interviews were facilitated by interview guides and co-moderated by trained IOM enumerators that were fluent in Hausa and Kanuri.
FINDINGS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Camp Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDPs</th>
<th>New Arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30,618 people</td>
<td>216 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9,125 households)</td>
<td>(71 households)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bama IDP Camp’s total population and new arrivals between the 1st and 17th of January, 2019 (IOM).

Communities of Interview New Arrivals

The respondents from the focus group discussions arrived from 12 villages around Bama namely: Jiwa, Chongolo, Bulakari, Sabilwuda, Daraja, Kalari, Balgeri, Jiwa, Kulbawi, Tufa, Abaram, Bulakare and Suraja.

Mode of Escape

All respondents consented that they escaped from captivity. Some of them highlighted that they escaped from their trapped villages by “sneaking out in the night”.

Distance between Villages and Bama

The distance between the trapped communities and Bama ranged from 15 kilometers (Abaram) to 120 kilometers (Tufa). The distance from some communities close to Banki (Daraja, Kalari, and Balgeri) was also more than 100 kilometers.

Mode of Transportation to Bama

Most of the respondents travelled on foot or with bicycles whilst escaping and then joined public transport along major roads. Some said they were picked by military vehicle on the major roads. Respondents, particularly those from Abaram, used military transport down to Bama.

Duration of Travel

The travel between most of the communities and Bama took about one to two days except for Jiwa, Kulbawi and Tufa which took three to four days and Sabilwuda around Sambisa axis which took eight days.

Items Arrived With

The respondents arrived with nothing in most cases due to the emergency and stealth nature of their escape except for a few that arrived with personal belongings such as clothes, water and cooking utensils (particularly among women).

Number of Years Trapped

The respondents were trapped in the communities between three to four years in most cases except for Jiwa, Chongolo, Bulakuri and Sabilwuda where respondents were trapped for five years.

Number/Gender of Individuals Still Trapped

Between 12 (Abaram) and about 5,000 (Sabilwuda) people were still trapped in the communities when the respondents escaped, according to the new arrivals. Most of these trapped people were locals with a few non-indigenes. Majority of these trapped individuals were women and children as most men were either dead or had escaped.
FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION

Food Consumption and Coping Strategies

Food Source
The predominant source of food consumed across all the communities was own produced food comprising few cereals (millet and sorghum) and pulses (beans). In a few cases, the alternate source of food in inaccessible areas forage of wild fruits and vegetables from nearby forest as seen in the cases of Jiwa, Kulbawi and Tufa.

Food Consumption Pattern
The respondents said households in most of the communities often consumed between one to two meals daily while trapped in captivity. However, people trapped in the farthest community around Sambisa axis (Sabilwuda) said they are sometimes left without food for as long as five days, which depicts the severity of the situation in such areas.

Coping Strategies
The most reported coping strategies when households in times of food shortage were consumption of less preferred meals, forage of wild fruits and vegetables and begging from other community members that were better off. Households did not report any livelihood- or asset-based coping strategies as there was no enabling environment to use such (sale of assets, sale of livestock etc.)

Livelihoods

Main Income Sources
Farming remained the major means of livelihood in most of the communities in spite of the restrictions. This was further confirmed by results from satellite imagery analysis where farming activities were observed in some of the hard-to-reach areas around Bama town (See Annex). Moreover, there were indications of some level of trade by barter system in some of the communities where individuals offered causal labor on farmlands in exchange for food. Some of the respondents highlighted that all their livestock had been stolen or seized by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG).

Access to Farmland
Farming households had unhindered access to farmland due to the limited number of people left behind within their communities. However, households lacked full access to their harvest as a particular proportion of such is forcefully taken by the NSAGs.

Crops Cultivated
The main crops cultivated across the communities assessed were Sorghum, millet and okro with a few exceptions in Jiwa, Chongolo, Bulakari, Abaram, Bulakare and Suraja where beans and groundnuts were also cultivated. The limited diversity of crops cultivated and heavy reliance on own produced foods has implication for nutrition, that is, poor dietary diversity of meals consumed within the areas.

Livelihood Evolution
Respondents complained of depleted assets including livestock, very poor trade and employment opportunities, and limited access to agricultural produce for households involved in farming. All of these contributed to the abysmal livelihood situation in most of the inaccessible communities, particularly compared to pre-insurgency.

Inter-community Movement
Inter-community movement between the trapped communities is quite restricted, monitored and controlled by NSAGs in situations where permissible. The restricted inter-community movement has implication for trade and livelihoods.

Willingness to Return to Home Community
Most of the respondents said they would not want to return to their communities of origin where they were trapped. However, if peace and normalcy is restored, they would be happy to go back home.
Basic Services

Markets
Markets are not functioning in all the communities represented in the focus group discussions (FGDs). However, some respondents indicated the existence of a few food collectors that bulked the produce from some of these communities through a ‘black market system’. It was believed that these collectors had understanding with some of the NSAGs.

Health Facilities
There are no functional health facilities in all the communities. This leaves the inhabitants to a high risk of sicknesses as respondents highlighted that they relied on traditional herbs when any member(s) of their household fell sick. This has implication for nutrition, particularly among children as food utilization would be impaired in the phase of untreated illnesses.

Education
There are no functional schools in all the communities and other basic public and social services (police, fire service etc.) were as well lacking.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Source of Water
Most households in the trapped communities lack access to potable water as the main source of water in these areas was hand-dug wells without cover, flowing rivers and streams. Lack of access to safe potable water heightens the risk of water-borne diseases, which is further exacerbated by the absence of healthcare services within these communities.

Sanitation
The main type of latrine used in some of the communities was pit latrines situated just outside the houses with the exception of communities like Jiwa, Kulbawi, Tufa, Abaram, Bulakare and Suraja where open defecation in bushes was commonplace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion
Findings from the assessment confirm that pockets of people are indeed trapped in some hard-to-reach communities with higher concentration around the swathes of Sambisa axis. However, the scale of habitation could not be ascertained. Moreover, some level of livelihood activities, particularly farming activities are ongoing in some of these areas, albeit with restrictions and control by NSAGs.

Food intake may be poorly diversified, considering the absence of markets and the dependence of trapped individuals on the few varieties of cereals (millet, sorghum), pulses (beans and groundnut) and other food commodities like okro, cultivated by the households. The situation may be more critical in some areas where households are left for days without food. The poor food diversity is due to the limited varieties of cereals that are cultivated within these hard-to-reach areas. This would potentially impact negatively on the nutrition situation.

The nutrition situation could be severely critical given the complete breakdown of basic services (particularly health) and WASH challenges (open dug wells, open defecation), all of which have implication for nutrition due to high risk of sicknesses. Therefore, the findings from this assessment has implication for nutrition, as well as food intake, due to the potential challenge of food availability and utilization, which would be likely exacerbated during the lean and rainy season, due to the limited availability of food stocks coupled with the upsurge of water borne diseases such as malaria and diarrhea.
Recommendations

- Food security and nutrition partners should preposition a contingency stock to promptly and efficiently cater for the food and nutritional needs of new arrivals coming out from these hard-to-reach areas, considering the poor food intake, nutrition and WASH situation observed.

- Scale up of similar initiatives, particularly in other areas of Borno (Northern & Southern Borno) to test for homogeneity of the findings from this study. There is also a need to synergize with other partners (IOM, REACH International) working on similar initiatives to strengthen such with the aim to mainstream analytical approach into existing data collection systems for sustainability.

- During the Cadre Harmonise analysis, phase classification and estimation of affected population experiencing food and nutrition insecurity should take into account proportion of population trapped in these hard-to-reach areas vis-à-vis the total population in the areas.

- Cadre Harmonise analysis should adequately take into consideration, the food security and nutritional condition of people in these hard-to-reach areas (current & projected periods), with more emphasis on nutrition, using proxy measures such as the findings from this assessment and similar studies.

Special appreciation to Borno SEMA, IOM, REACH International and the Food Security Sector Coordinators in Maiduguri for their support to the success of the study.
Annex 1: Indication of cultivation in settlements around Bama town

Settlements within a 30 km radius of Bama Town

Sources:
- Settlement, Open Street Maps
- World Settlement Footprint 2015
- DLR German Aerospace Center
- Observations from Digital Globe Image data and Sentinel-2.

Produced 03 March 2019
© World Food Programme 2019
Annex 1a: Indication of cultivation in settlements around Bama town (Sample from Grid 12J)

Annex 1b: Indication of cultivation in settlements around Bama town (Sample from Grid 17I)