

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY- GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS AND DEPUTY EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR,
KYUNG-WHA KANG**

Briefing to the Security Council on threats to international peace and security
caused by terrorist acts (Boko Haram)

New York, 30 March 2015

As delivered

Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian impact of Boko Haram atrocities in northern Nigeria and the neighbouring countries. On behalf of the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, I would like to deliver the following statement.

Mr President

Despite several reports of suspected Boko Haram attacks in Yobe, Gombe and Borno States, I can report that no additional humanitarian needs have so far emerged as a result of the election. We will continue to closely monitor the situation on the ground as the likelihood of electoral violence will remain high around the announcement of the results.

Mr. President,

Since the State of Emergency was declared in May 2013, the ongoing violent conflict in north-eastern Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin has forcibly displaced at least 1.5 million people in Nigeria and neighboring countries.

Throughout 2014, Boko Haram escalated its campaign, and communities in northern Nigeria have increasingly been caught in the crossfire between the insurgents and the National Army. The conflict has caused death and injury on a large scale, destroyed homes and infrastructure. More than 7,300 civilians have been killed by Boko Haram since the beginning of 2014 in the three State of Emergency States. This year alone 1,000 people have lost their lives. More than 300 schools have been severely damaged or destroyed. Less than 40 per cent of health facilities in affected areas remain operational. Gross human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence and child trafficking, are frequently reported.

The escalation of Boko Haram related violence in the region continues to hinder access to people in desperate need of humanitarian assistance and is limiting the scope of our response.

An overwhelming majority of the internally displaced people (IDP) reside within host communities and in 'camp-like' conditions clustered around schools, churches and mosques. Due to the lack of capacity, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), only 10 per cent of the over one million IDPs are staying in identified and accessible Government-run IDP camps in urban areas. The minimum humanitarian standards for shelter, food, water, sanitation, health or education are not being met in these camps due to lack of capacities in camp management and protection. The plight of civilians stranded or hiding in areas which humanitarian organisations are currently unable to reach is deeply concerning, especially those in areas still under the control of Boko Haram.

Mr. President,

As many as three million people in northern Nigeria will not be able to meet their basic food needs after July 2015 unless they receive well-targeted humanitarian assistance. While the Federal and State authorities have worked hard to provide assistance to many of those fleeing the violence, the humanitarian response in the north-eastern Nigeria remains overall poor and fragmented. Only nine operational partners, mostly international NGOs, are currently active in the three most affected states. In support of the National and State level Emergency Management Agencies' efforts, these humanitarian partners undertake emergency programmes in Protection, which include the provision of psychological first aid and psychosocial support or the registration and support to unaccompanied children, as well as other lifesaving activities in the sectors of water, sanitation, health or food distribution. These programmes, however, are limited in scope as they mainly target IDPs registered in the Government-run camps.

In addition to insecurity, lack of donor support is constraining the expansion of the humanitarian footprint. Humanitarian partners are ready to do more and scale up their efforts. To do so, donor engagement and continued financial support are critical. In addition, accurate and reliable humanitarian data and effective monitoring systems are needed for informed humanitarian planning, effective advocacy and sustained donor support.

From 9 to 12 March 2015, twelve Emergency Directors of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) visited Nigeria to assess the humanitarian situation and identify potential solutions to address the current challenges in north-east Nigeria. As a result of their visit, a three-month inter-agency action plan is being developed to support scale-up of critical protection and lifesaving response efforts and humanitarian presence in conflict-affected areas in the north east.

Mr. President,

The expansion of Boko Haram's activities is having a significant regional impact. In Cameroon, according to UNHCR, some 74,000 refugees had sought refuge in the Far North as of 25 March. Boko Haram cross-border attacks from Nigeria into Cameroon have also triggered the internal displacement of between 100,000 to 150,000 Cameroonians. In Niger, 50,000 people have been internally displaced, adding to the 100,000 Nigerian refugees and Nigerien returnees who have sought refuge in the Diffa region of Niger, since May 2014. . In

Chad the Boko Haram incursion has caused some 33,000 refugees and returnees as well as 14,500 IDPs seeking refuge around Lake Chad.

In the three affected countries, insecurity and logistical challenges have impeded access, which in addition to significant funding shortfalls, are preventing the scale-up of humanitarian response. The three Governments have requested international assistance to respond to the most pressing needs, which include protection, food assistance, water, non-food items, health and shelters.

Mr. President,

The massive displacement caused by Boko Haram cross-border incursions is placing immense strain on the already depleted resources of host communities who, in some areas, are as vulnerable as the displaced themselves. Food is more difficult to find in the market and prices have, in some instances, doubled or tripled. In Diffa, almost a quarter of children aged 6 to 23 months were suffering global acute malnutrition at the end of 2014. In Chad, over 30 per cent of those in host communities were food insecure in 2014. In north-east Nigeria, an estimated 4.6 million people are currently suffering food insecurity and 100,000 children are at risk of severe malnutrition.

The Boko Haram crisis is likely to have a broader impact on the Sahel region as Nigeria traditionally produces almost half of the region's cereals. On 15 March, the Emergency Relief Coordinator approved US\$28 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to address the regional humanitarian impact of Boko Haram. We hope that more support from the international community will follow to enable humanitarian actors to continue to reach those in need with lifesaving assistance.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian community welcomes the regional political commitment to tackle the ongoing violence in the northeast. In light of the current discussion in this Council, it is critical that the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), as a counter-terrorism force, limits its focus to creating conducive security conditions and an enabling environment for non-military related interventions, while adhering to International Humanitarian Law and taking all precautions to avoid civilian casualties. As the MNJTF is a *de facto* party to conflict, I ask Council Members to ensure that MNJTF operations remain distinct from civilian-led humanitarian operations. Maintaining distinction between the two is crucial in order to safeguard the actual and perceived neutrality and independence of humanitarian organisations. In addition the MNJTF should not be involved in facilitating the returns of refugees and IDPs. This must be carried out on a voluntary basis in line with International Humanitarian Law and the Kampala Convention, to which Nigeria is a party.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria and in the conflict-affected areas in neighbouring countries remains dire. The conflict continues to have a devastating impact on women, children and young people, as well as on many others who have been traumatized by violence. Additional funding to address the acute humanitarian needs of those affected by the conflict is urgently needed. So far, local organisations and communities have carried the weight of this response. The Government of Nigeria has stated its willingness and ability to

shoulder a significant portion of the operational and financing needs to respond to the crisis. However support from the international community is also needed to help to respond to the urgent humanitarian situation in north-east Nigeria. An international humanitarian presence is needed to advise and help coordinate a complex and fast-moving operation and to support the provision of the necessary protection measures for the civilians caught up in the conflict.

Thank you.