Nigeria

Last updated: 1 October

North-east Nigeria is experiencing a food security crisis, with an estimated 4.4 million people facing critical food shortages. Almost 800,000 people—the highest figure in 4 years—are on the brink of starvation in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, because they cannot access their agricultural fields due to ongoing military operations. More than half of households in the northeast are food insecure and food prices have increased by 20 percent since last year. Households can no longer afford to buy food, and to cope with hunger, families are forced to borrow money and food, sell their remaining assets, or adopt other negative coping mechanisms, pushing them deeper into a cycle of hunger, vulnerability, and despair. The combination of conflict, COVID-19 impacts, increased food prices and the effects of climate change are driving the needs and devastating livelihoods and people’s access to food.

Conflict, insecurity, violations of international humanitarian law, forced displacement, extensive presence of explosive remnants of war have cut people off from their main means of livelihood—farming, herding, and fishing. In the Northeast, hostilities are expected to continue to escalate and significantly disrupt normal livelihood activities, and a large part of those in need will likely continue to be inaccessible. As the lean season peaks from June to September, vulnerable households impacted by violence and displacement with limited access to livelihood activities will likely continue experiencing difficulties meeting their food and non-food needs.

According to the IPC and Acute Malnutrition Analysis (IPC AMN) of March 2021, the number of acutely malnourished children and women is expected to significantly increase during the 2021 lean season, with some 1.15 million children and over 124,000 women projected to be acutely malnourished. In addition, according to FEWSNET, households in hard-to-reach areas affected by conflict, inability to engage in normal livelihood activities, and limited market access will continue to face larger food consumption gaps and are expected to remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) through September.
FAMINE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT

The humanitarian community expressed in May the urgent needs for $250 million to scale-up a multi-partner, intersectoral response over the coming months. The plan requires funding for immediate action and aims to scale up on top in accessible areas in close coordination with partners and ensure that those hardest to reach receive the immediate food and nutrition assistance they need. During the G-7 meeting in May, the G7 committed to providing an initial $382 million to Nigeria; still, these commitments have yet to materialize. The most urgent funding is needed for the following sectors: Food Security, Nutrition, Health, WASH, Protection, and Enablers (i.e., Logs, UNHAS, Hubs).

The humanitarian community is looking into improving monitoring systems, prepositioning stocks, strengthening rapid response mechanism using local government and NGO distributions, as well as targeted advocacy for facilitation of passage and freedom of movement for humanitarians.

We appeal to Member States, and particularly to donors, to fulfil their financial commitments urgently for us to prevent famine from taking hold. The humanitarian community also appeals to all parties to respect their obligations under IHL, including to respect civilians and civilian objects, including crops, livestock, and objects required for food production and distribution, and to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of impartial humanitarian relief for all civilians in need. All States must use their influence to ensure that parties to armed conflict respect their IHL obligations.