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Information bulletin

Niger: Complex emergency

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Date of issue: 08 August, 2014	
Date of disaster: 05 August 2014	Point of contact: Pierre Kana, IFRC Country Representative
Host National Society: Niger Red Cross	
Number of people affected: 70,000	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant):	

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Red Cross Society of Niger will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

The situation

The region of Diffa in Niger, has long been facing serious gaps in the provision of food staples, health care and potable water for more than half a million inhabitants. The influx of an estimated 70,000 displaced persons from Nigeria has further aggravated this situation. Humanitarian organizations and authorities are mobilizing efforts to address the situation but serious gaps remain.

Since May 2013 with the increase in military activities in northern Nigeria, a large number of people have become displaced into Niger, Cameroon and Chad. The region of Diffa in Niger became the main destination for the displaced population and by the end of 2013 more than 37,000 refugees were registered. Diffa continues to receive approximately 800 displaced persons per week. The displaced are in a critical situation with needs in food, water, health and shelter.

As end of June 2014, some 70,000 refugees are hosted in Niger, most being women and children. Most of the displaced populations are hosted in communities; others are concentrating in the islands of the Lake Chad.

This number comes to increase the population of Diffa region (total of 489,531 inhabitants) whose life depends mostly on rain fed farming and livestock and the majority is already vulnerable communities with a lot of challenges such as:

- The region is experiencing a rainfall shortage since May and only 26% of farmers have sown, compared to 45% for last year
- Rainfall deficit is coupled with recess of pasture deficit
- As it is the case in all Sahel countries, Diffa is going through lean season
- Malnutrition rate is 13%
- HIV prevalence: 10% in the islands of Lake Chad where the displaced are being concentrated (the national rate is 0.6%)
- The beginning of the rainy season that may contribute to the development of related epidemics.

This complex situation is having a humanitarian impact and there is a need to think of urgent interventions to prevent a larger disaster and minimize the risks.

Needs include:

- Nutrition, Community based awareness and care: some 48 integrated health centers received logistics, medical equipment and medicines
- Full support to people leaving with HIV and prevention in Bosso and Lake Chad Island
- Potable water and sanitation infrastructure, Bosso and lake Chad Island

- Sanitation equipment and disinfection, and cleaning of Diffa prison
- Psychological support and care to displaced people (children and women)
- A framework and recreational space, exchanges, entertainment, information and of listening and guidance (lack of animation framework of the common life.)
- Some 2,000 animals in the north need food stock
- Food needs are not covered for 30,000 people (refugees, returnees and host populations). According to WFP almost 58,844 people have received necessary food parcel

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

More than 200 trained volunteers and a regional emergency relief team (25 members) are ready for deployment to assist victims and work together with other actors OIM, UNHCR, WFP, UNFPA, ICRC and IFRC and Participating National Societies. The National Society, supported by Luxemburg Red Cross, provides assistance to affected persons by providing temporary shelter. With the support of IFRC, nutrition, food security, and water and sanitation programmes have been extended to the affected zones and communities to assist refugees and host population (however the funding is very limited).

Damage and needs assessment, Shelter, Watsan and relief/supply distribution: ICRC provides assistance to displaced people and host communities with NFI, food, water and sanitation.

With the support of the IFRC, the National Society has extended its nutrition and food security, and water and sanitation programmes to refugees and host population as far as they are in the targeted areas. This support is integrated with peace building and social cohesion activities. However this programme will be closed within two months while the humanitarian challenges are increasing in the region.

Action taken by others

The authorities and its partners assisted around 28,792 displaced people (out of 70,000 currently recorded) and 30,052 host families. To contribute to the agricultural campaign 2014/15 they also distributed seeds and products to population in Diffa. FAO assists the pastoralists with livestock fodder. Save the Children distributed cash while other NGOs such as Samaritan Purse provided food. Niger Red Cross volunteers are accompanying (UNHCR, WFP, OIM and ICRC) in the distribution of non-food items and food to displaced population and providing water and sanitation infrastructure.

Way forward

While monitoring the situation with the National Society in Niamey with other Red Cross Red Crescent Movement components, IFRC is assessing the situation and discussing a Movement common response and coordination framework.

The IFRC released CHF 6,000 from its country plan to strengthen the operational capacity of Diffa branch in terms of communication, information, and training materials and logistic means as well as to support the evaluation mission.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Red Cross Society of Niger:** Ali Bandiaré, President; Tel: +227 96 97 35 29; Email: crniger@intnet.net
- **IFRC Niger Representation:** Pierre Kana, Country Representative; Tel: +227 20 738 334; Email: pierre.kana@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Regional Representation:** Momodou Lamin Fye, Regional Representative Sahel; phone: +221 33 869 36 41; email: momodoulamin.fye@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Zone:** Daniel Bolaños, Disaster Management Coordinator; phone: +254 20 2835 5213; email: daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org

For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

- **In IFRC Zone** Martine Zoethoutmaar, Resource Mobilization Coordinator; phone: +251 93 003 4013; email: martinezoethoutmaar@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- **In IFRC Zone:** Robert Ondrusek, PMER Coordinator; phone: +254 731 067277; email: robert.ondrusek@ifrc.org

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.