

# Humanitarian Situation Overview in Hard-to-Reach Areas

## Adamawa and Yobe States | Nigeria

July - September 2022

### CONTEXT

The ongoing conflict in Northeast Nigeria continues to create a complex humanitarian crisis that limits people's access to basic infrastructure and services, especially in hard-to-reach (H2R) areas of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (BAY) States.<sup>1</sup> Since November 2018, REACH has been collecting data in Northeast Nigeria to analyse and share up-to-date information on multi-sectoral needs to effectively support the humanitarian response to the affected populations.

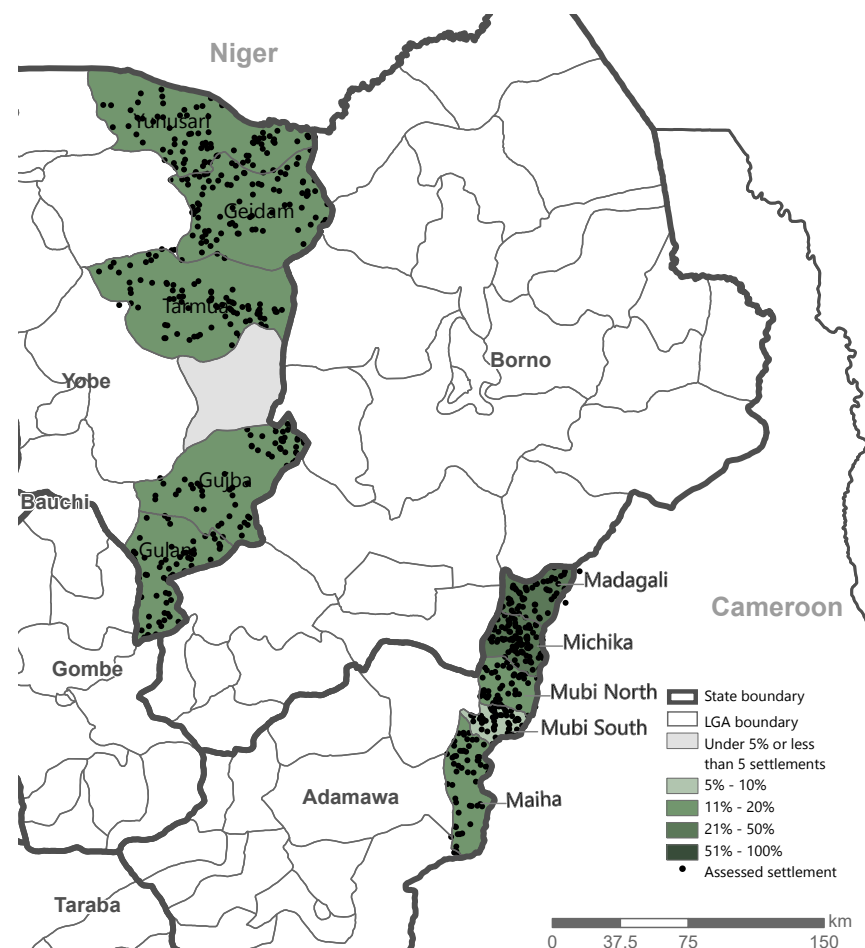
These H2R assessments aim to provide information on demographics, (inter) sectoral needs, access to services, displacement trends, and movement intentions to humanitarian service providers on about one million people living in H2R areas.<sup>2</sup> This report holds findings from settlements in five local government areas (LGAs) in Adamawa State (Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North, and Mubi South) and five LGAs in Yobe State (Geidam, Gujba, Gulani, Tarmua and Yunusari). The data for the situational overview was collected during the period of July and September.<sup>3</sup>

### KEY FINDINGS

- Findings suggest that **high inflation rates<sup>4</sup> and the adverse effects of floods limited and compromised access to shelter, food, clean drinking water, and essential services** in assessed settlements of Adamawa and Yobe. Factors such as open defecation, use of unimproved drinking water sources, and lack of adequate sanitary facilities indicate a vulnerability to disease outbreaks or health adversities in the assessed settlements of H2R areas.
- In the majority of assessed settlements in Adamawa (95%) and Yobe (69%), KIs reported that most people could not access enough food during the reporting period. In these assessed settlements, **a lack of access to food was mainly attributed to restricted access to cultivable land for harvest, protection risks and the exhaustion of harvested stock before the lean season** (June and December).
- Findings indicate **that heavy rainfall and floods in Nigeria may have compromised the safety of drinking water in the assessed settlements of H2R areas**, since majority of the community members (52%) relied on unprotected wells as the main drinking water source. Factors such as damaged water infrastructures, poor quality of available drinking water and long waiting time to access drinking water were reported as the most common barriers in assessed settlements.

- KIs from **less than half of all assessed settlements (43%) reported people had difficulty accessing information on humanitarian assistance, during the reporting period.** Findings indicate that factors such as lack of electricity and credit often deterred community members from using mobile phones and radio as a reliable form of communications.

**Map 1: REACH assessment coverage in Adamawa and Yobe States from July to September 2022**



## METHODOLOGY

The assessment adopted the “Area of Knowledge” methodology to monitor the situation in H2R areas remotely. This involved collecting settlement level data through key informants (KIs) and aggregating their responses at the LGA level to derive report findings. The data from KIs were collected through structured surveys and open-ended, in-depth interviews (IDIs). These KIs were selected based on the time frame of their contact with the settlement and detailed settlement knowledge. Hence, KIs were either (1) newly arrived internally displaced persons (IDPs) who had left a H2R settlement in the month before data collection or (2) individuals who had contact with someone living in a H2R settlement in the last month.

80 IDIs were conducted to contextualise further the data collected from the 1,319 KI interviews. In this context, the IDIs focused on discussions on displacement dynamics and the severity of humanitarian needs. In addition, secondary resources, including other REACH assessments and assessments conducted by other humanitarian organisations, were referenced to triangulate further the primary data collected from the structured KI interviews and the IDIs.

This situation overview presents results from the data collection held between July 14 and September 23, 2022, spanning five LGAs in Adamawa state (Madagali, Maiha, Michika, Mubi North and Mubi South) and five LGAs in Yobe (Geidam, Gujba, Gulani, Tarmua, and Yunusari). However, findings are not statistically generalisable and should only be considered indicative of the situation in the assessed settlements.

**Figure 1: Number of assessed settlements per LGA**

State	Adamawa					Yobe				
LGA	Madagali	Maiha	Michika	Mubi North	Mubi South	Geidam	Gujba	Gulani	Tarmua	Yunusari
Settlements	62	68	126	63	67	101	71	66	95	84

## POPULATION MOVEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

KIs from 85% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and 57% of assessed settlements in Yobe reported the presence of IDPs. Within these states, the LGAs with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of IDPs were Mubi South (99%), Mubi North (97%), Maiha (96%) and Gulani (86%). Since August 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has reported that over 7,700 individuals have

relocated or been displaced in Adamawa for several reasons, the primarily reported reasons of which are military activities, fear of attacks by Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs), poor living conditions, lack of humanitarian assistance, the possibility of communal clashes or for purposes of family reunification.<sup>5</sup>

KIs from 97% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and 72% in Yobe reported the presence of returnees. Here, the LGAs with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported the presence of returnees were Mubi South (100%), Michika (98%), Mubi North (95%), and Madagali (95%). During the reporting period, KIs from the majority of assessed settlements reported that most recent returnees came back to the settlement as recently as about four weeks in Yobe and about two months ago in Adamawa. Here, findings suggest that perceptions of improved security was a common factor in movement decisions for people in assessed settlements. Reports from International Organisation for Migration (IOM)'s quality of return assessment also indicated that returnees in Northeast Nigeria were experiencing a harmonious relationship with non-displaced communities, reporting a positive impact of returnee presence.<sup>6</sup>

However, the same report also highlighted that the increased pressure on key services, such as healthcare and education, could be attributed to overcrowding and a lack of adequate existing resources in these facilities.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, while findings suggest that displaced populations in some assessed settlements started returning recently due to impressions of increased safety; the impact of resettlement on key services of host settlements could potentially spur unrest within assessed settlements, especially as people continue to deal with the impacts of flooding.

According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the above-average rainfall in Nigeria has affected over 500,000 people and displaced over 100,000; specifically, in the Northeast, about 15,000 people have been displaced because of the flooding.<sup>8</sup> **In July, REACH conducted a rapid assessment in three H2R LGAs in Yobe state: Gulani, Gujba and Tarmua, to assess the humanitarian needs of settlements affected by the off-season atypical floods.**<sup>9</sup> Based on these rapid assessments, KIs from the majority of the assessed settlements reported that, either everyone or more than half of the population became displaced during the flooding.

As per the rapid assessment, KIs also reported that some of the people that remained in these assessed settlements could not leave because of their financial restrictions.<sup>10</sup> Findings also indicated that, within these settlements, shelters and farmlands were destroyed and livestock were lost due to the flooding. KIs reported that some major roads and marketplaces were also either damaged or blocked off. **With the increased destruction of property, food crisis, and WASH issues caused by the floods, more people in affected areas will likely be displaced in the coming months in 2022, within Northeast Nigeria.**<sup>11</sup>

## PROTECTION

As of July 2022, the UNHCR reported that the security situation in Northeast Nigeria remained unstable.<sup>12</sup> During the reporting period, assessments from Nigeria's national protection monitoring bodies highlighted multiple abductions, forced displacements, severe limitations to freedom of movement, discrimination against older persons and persons with disabilities, gender-based violence, loss of life, and property damage.<sup>13</sup> In August alone, UNHCR reported that 126 safety and security incidents, such as armed attacks, abductions, illegal vehicle checkpoints (IVCPs) and explosions of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) occurred while the region was heavily affected by severe flooding.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 2: Most commonly reported protection concerns perceived for women, girls, men and boys, by % of KIs**

Groups/Age	Protection concerns		
Women >18	Looting 28%	Domestic violence 17%	Violence by AOGs 17%
Girls <18	Early marriage 18%	Sexual violence 11%	Looting 16%
Men >18	Looting 47%	Violence by AOGs 23%	Domestic violence 10%
Boys <18	Looting 27%	Domestic violence 11%	Violence by AOGs 6%

KIs from 58% of assessed settlements in Adamawa reported that incidents of conflict that injured or killed civilian had occurred in the month prior to data collection. KIs from 91% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and 61% in Yobe also reported incidents of property looting, where most of the property was stolen from one or more households by armed groups. Here, the economic ramifications of looting on affected communities are potentially increased by already high inflation and staple prices.<sup>15</sup>

**Findings from UNHCR further highlight that women and children in the Northeast of Nigeria are highly vulnerable to the impacts of the ongoing conflict, as well as the increasing impact of climate hazards.**<sup>16</sup> KIs from 18% of assessed settlements reported that abduction of children was a key protection concern. Furthermore, in August

2022, findings indicate that AOGs reportedly attacked, abducted, and killed female farmers who reportedly identified as IDPs or IDP returnees in Gwozo, Bama, Banki and other host communities in Borno and Yobe states.<sup>17</sup> The LGAs with the highest proportions of assessed settlements where KIs reported women were not free to move within settlements because of security concerns were Gulani (100%), Tarmua (100%) and Yunusari (92%). IDI respondents indicate that women in these LGAs have restricted movement because of factors such as the prevalent conflicts, armed looting and other security concerns within the assessed settlements.

The 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)<sup>18</sup> also highlighted that climate hazards increased the protection risks for women and girls in the Northeast. With a disproportionate burden to provide the family with food, water and other sustenance, women and girls need to walk longer distances, increasing their exposure to sexual harassment and assault, ultimately increasing protection concerns for them.<sup>19</sup>

## FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS (FSL)

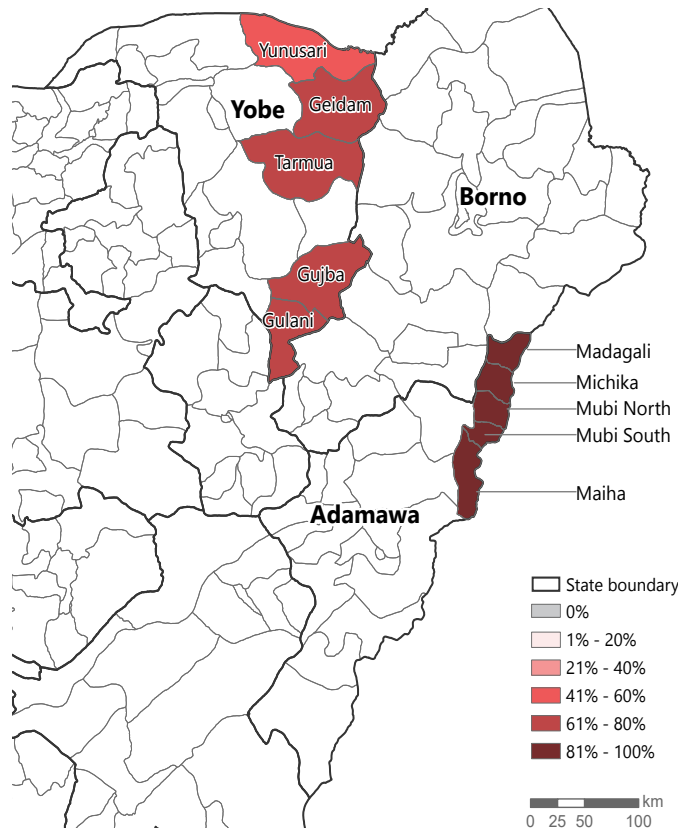
### Food access and barriers

**Findings indicate that the most commonly reported main sources of food in the assessed settlements of Adamawa and Yobe were food purchased with cash (43%), cultivation (35%) and wild food consumption (12%).** Specifically, in Adamawa, the most commonly reported source of food was cultivation (reported in 71% of assessed settlements), whereas in Yobe, the main reported source was purchased food (71%).

However, during the reporting period, findings indicate that most people in the majority of assessed settlements had not been able to access sufficient amounts of food in the month prior to data collection. The LGAs with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported inadequate access to food were Mubi South (63%), Mubi North (62%), Maiha (53%), Tarmua (38%) and Geidam (23%).

In Adamawa where the majority (71%) of people in assessed settlement relied on cultivation, the most reported reasons for limited access to food was the early exhaustion of the harvest (33%), lack of required cultivable land (22%), natural causes (18%) and protection issues that restrict farming (4%). Whereas, in Yobe where the majority (71%) of people in assessed settlements relied on purchased food, findings indicate that factors such as restricted access to markets because of protection issues, destruction of roads and infrastructures caused by the flooding<sup>20</sup> and high food inflation rate that soared to 23% in August 2022<sup>21</sup>, potentially led to limited access to food in Yobe.

**Map 2: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported most people did not have access to enough food per LGA**



### Food coping mechanisms

In 82% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that most people did not have access to sufficient food. **Findings indicate that the most reported strategy used by people in the assessed settlements in the week prior to data collection to cope with the lack of food was reducing the number of meals eaten (86%), limiting portion sizes at mealtimes (76%), adults not eating so children can (69%), relying on less expensive food (55%) and skipping an entire day without eating (38%).** Specifically, in terms of reducing the number of meals eaten, KIs also reported that most people in

assessed settlements of Yobe (45%) often had one meal a day and most people in assessed settlements of Adamawa (63%) had two meals a day as ways to cope with lack of access to food. Furthermore, FEWS NET also reported that community members used practices such as bartering, begging and wild food consumption to cope with the lack of sufficient and sustainable access to food.<sup>22</sup>

### Livelihood activities and barriers

Traditionally, subsistence farming and livestock rearing are the main livelihood practices in this region. However, between July and September, findings indicate that there has been an overall decrease in these livelihood practices; KIs reported that people in 62% of assessed settlements relied on livestock rearing and people in 58% of assessed settlements relied on subsistence farming. In majority of assessed settlements (92%), most people were reportedly unable to engage in their usual livelihoods because of protection concerns, followed by factors such as health problems (43%), change in market access (34%), movement restrictions (23%) and climatic conditions (4%). In addition, conflict and displacement also led to disruption of livelihood activities.<sup>23</sup>

KIs reported that people in assessed settlements relied on casual labour (80%) as the most commonly reported livelihood activity. Given the movement restrictions, lack of access to markets and flood damages, and protection concerns, people in assessed settlements have reportedly started relying on casual labour as a form of adaptation. **Findings indicate that people in assessed settlements faced livelihood barriers in Adamawa (67%) and Yobe (93%) reportedly relied on casual labour as their primary coping mechanism.** However, reliance on casual labour often leaves communities vulnerable, as workers in these irregular forms of employment are often required to work long hours for minimal pay, and without any employment rights and protections.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, relying on casual labour as a coping mechanism makes workers vulnerable to exploitation, while not being a reliable and sustainable source for sustaining livelihood.

KIs also reported that other commonly reported livelihood coping strategies in the month prior to data collection included gathering wild food (92%), borrowing food (76%), borrowing money (58%) and asking non-relatives for food (54%).

### **SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)**

Findings suggest that the flood-related damages, limited access to sustainable livelihood resources, and a lack of access to humanitarian aid potentially contributed to shelter and NFI gaps in assessed settlements. **In 79% of assessed settlements, KIs reported**



that people were living in makeshift structures. However, an OCHA situation report highlighted that makeshift shelters are unsustainable as they offer neither protection from harsh weather nor offer privacy.<sup>25</sup> The LGAs with the highest proportions of assessed settlements where KIs reported the use of makeshift structures were found in Gujba (100%), Gulani (94%), Madagali (84%) and Mubi North (82%), potentially because of the persisting security and protection concerns in these settlements.

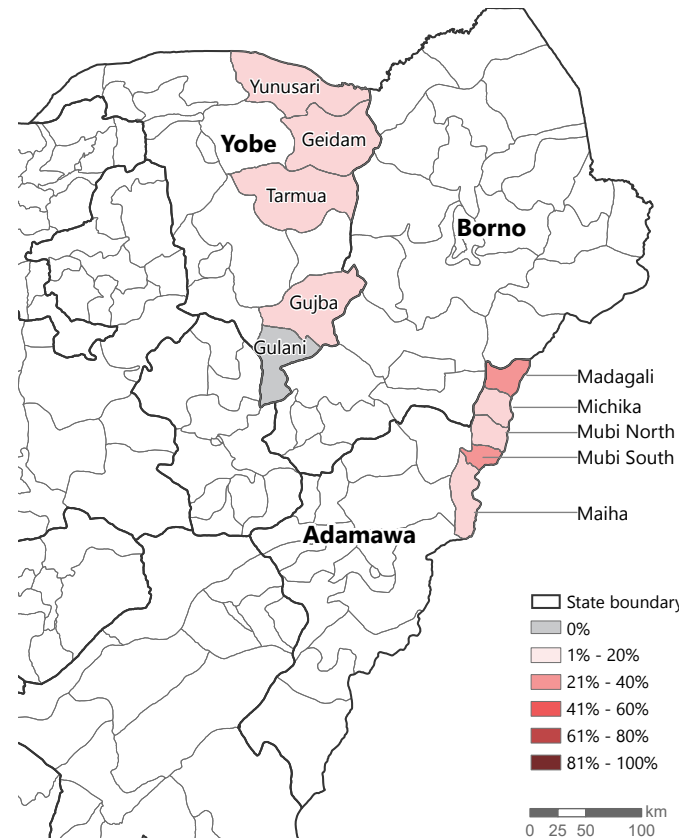
However, since June 2022, the atypical flooding in areas of the BAY states damaged farmlands, shelters, livelihood sources, and NFIs, especially in Madagali, Michika and Gujba.<sup>26</sup> IOM reported that the floods destroyed six camps hosting 15,618 IDPs in Adamawa and over 8,400 households were in immediate need of shelter.<sup>27</sup> IDI respondents reported that people in assessed settlements heavily rely on humanitarian assistance for makeshift structures and NFIs like blankets, plastics, and soaps to sustain their livelihoods. During the REACH rapid assessment conducted in July, **some KIs also reported that the remaining population in the assessed settlements had not received any form of aid or support at the time of data collection.**

Moreover, REACH's rapid assessment highlighted that the majority of the populated settlements in assessed LGAs of Gulani, Gujba and Tarmua were affected by the destruction of shelters and that many people were rendered homeless; farmland, livelihood assets and other household resources were also severely damaged.<sup>28</sup> This resulted in mass displacement in the area; the majority of KIs reported that the displaced population expressed their desire to return if they obtained support to rebuild their shelters and restore their livelihoods.<sup>29</sup>

KIs reported that the primary needs for affected people, both among displaced and remaining population, were food, shelter, NFI and household items such as clothing, mosquito nets, and blankets.<sup>30</sup> During the reporting period, KIs from 33% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 40% of assessed settlements in Yobe reported that people had access to soap, and in 25% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 27% of assessed settlements in Yobe, KIs reported that people had access to plastic sheets. Furthermore, KIs from 11% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and 1% in Yobe also reported that NFI distributions had taken place during the reporting period.

These floods, linked to the climate and ecosystem changes (unseasonal heavy rainfall, strong winds, desertification, and over-cultivation), have further increased affected populations' reliance on the scarcely available humanitarian assistance in H2R areas.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the damage caused by the floods (lack of access to roads, bridges, public buildings, and communication lines) has made H2R areas even less accessible, further complicating the provision of aid. **While findings suggest there is some access to items like soap and plastic sheets in assessed settlements, availability and access to essential resources is nevertheless often inadequate and, particularly in flooded areas, a lack of such resources could potentially lead to serious health, hygiene, and WASH concerns.**<sup>32</sup>

Map 3: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported there was at least one shelter damaged by flood in the month before data collection



## WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

In April 2022, the WASH Severity Classification (WSC) analysis classified Northeast Nigeria in severity Phase 4 (critical), due to the cholera outbreak, increasing malnutrition levels, and deteriorating public health conditions.<sup>33</sup> **Factors such as ongoing conflict and insecurity, climate variability and desertification, poor living conditions and low levels of access to basic hygiene were cited as possible reasons for the critical WASH concerns.**<sup>34</sup>

Findings from the most recent reporting period suggest that these challenges persisted in the assessed settlements in Adamawa and Yobe throughout the third quarter of 2022. The most commonly reported main drinking water sources in assessed settlements were unprotected wells (52%), surface water (22%), boreholes (9%), protected well (5%), and tap stands (1%).

Based on a report by UNICEF, the heavy rainfall and floods in Nigeria may have compromised the safety of the drinking water in assessed settlements, exposing people to water-borne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, and E. coli infection, among others.<sup>35</sup> In the assessed settlements where people reportedly have access to improved water sources, the main problems faced while collecting water were reported as insufficient/poor water quality (89%), damaged preferred sources of water (73%), low water quantity (67%), long water collection times (67%) and safety concerns (27%) in Adamawa and Yobe.

Figure 4: Main types of water sources by % of assessed settlements per state

	Adamawa	Yobe
Unprotected well	34%	68%
Surface water	37%	9%
Protected wells	1%	9%
Borehole	14%	5%

### Latrine usage

Findings indicate that in 26% of assessed settlements, some people use latrines. In those assessed settlements where most people did not use latrines, the most reported reasons were lack of access to communal latrines (23%), cultural reasons (13%), and damaged existing facilities (10%). Therefore, findings indicate that these restrictions may result in community members relying on unimproved pit latrines or improved pit toilets as sanitary facilities. However, according to the IDI respondents, some men in assessed settlements also commonly choose to defecate openly or use open pits because of longstanding traditional practices.

### Handwashing materials

Findings indicate that in only 4% of the assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 5% of assessed settlements in Yobe, KIs reported that people used soap and water for handwashing, predominantly because soap, as an NFI, has not been easily accessible in these locations. Instead of soap, findings suggest that people mainly relied on just using water in 67% and

77% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and Yobe, respectively. KIs also reported that in 6% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 8% of assessed settlements in Yobe, people used sand for handwashing.

According to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), factors such as open defecation, lack of proper sanitary practices and use of unimproved drinking water resources are indicators of health vulnerabilities that are known to be linked to disease outbreaks or other health adversities that the facilities would struggle to deal with within H2R areas, due to their limited healthcare resources and facilities.<sup>36</sup>

## HEALTH

**Findings suggest that insecurity, infrastructure damage, and general underdevelopment of service infrastructure in some H2R areas continued to constrain people's access to healthcare during the reporting period.** For instance, in Adamawa, KIs from 85% of assessed settlements reported people in the settlement did not have access to healthcare services, with the highest proportion of assessed settlements not having access in Madagali (92%). Similarly, in Yobe, no access to healthcare facilities was reported in 76% of the assessed settlements, with the highest proportions of assessed settlements not having access in Gulani (95%).

However, even before the conflict started in 2009, IDI respondents reported that there were no health services and facilities in some assessed settlements. Of those that did have access to health facilities, factors such as disruptions of humanitarian assistance in inaccessible locations, IDP relocations to areas with limited food resources and humanitarian assistance, delayed funding or funding cuts within the humanitarian sector and lack of available nutrition services were reported as barriers to healthcare access.<sup>37</sup>

## EDUCATION

In less than half (32% overall) of all assessed settlements, KIs reported there was no access to educational services within walking distance (30 mins on foot or less). The LGAs with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported no access to educational services within walking distance were Maiha (52%), Tarmua (52%) and Mubi North (47%). Therefore, **informal education services are reportedly the more prevalent form of education service available in majority of the assessed settlements (79%)**. Here, informal education refers to education not restricted by structured and government

approved curriculum, formal tests, grading and other conventions found in the formal Nigerian education system.

KIs from 52% of assessed settlements in Adamawa reported that they had access to formal educational services (using approved government curricula) within walking distance, whereas, in Yobe state, KIs from only 3% of assessed settlements reported having access to formal education. Across both states, KIs reported that children in almost all assessed settlements (98%) had access to informal educational services. Formal schools have been targeted by AOG attacks in the past, which has often led to school closures in many parts of the BAY states, rendering an estimated 1.9 million school-age children without access to formal education.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, the report from the Nigeria-Education in Emergencies Group also highlighted that protection concerns often deter girls from attending formal education in assessed settlements in the H2R areas of Adamawa and Yobe.<sup>39</sup> Reports show that factors such as recurring attacks on schools, abduction of female students and no access to educational services within walking distances often puts girls at risk of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, rape and exploitation, which deters parents from sending their daughters to school.<sup>40</sup>

While the barriers to education are generally tied to the effects of the conflict and safety concerns, KIs from assessed settlements also reported that additional barriers to accessing education included the lack of facilities prior to the conflict (69%) and teachers being displaced or quitting (11%).

## **“I” COMMUNICATION**

According to the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), Northeast Nigeria has mobile phone coverage along all major routes, towns, and villages, including the H2R areas.<sup>41</sup> However, IDI respondents reported that targeted destruction of the electricity, energy, and telecommunications network by AOGs, have often disrupted people’s ability to access information in H2R areas.

KIs reported access to radio signals in 99% of the assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 61% of assessed settlements in Yobe, whereas access to mobile phone coverage was reported in 83% of the assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 47% of assessed settlements in Yobe. Despite this, factors such as no electricity and phone credit often deterred community members from using mobile phones. In Adamawa, KIs reported people in 29% of assessed settlements did not have electricity, and in 11% of assessed settlements, they did not have credit. Similarly, in Yobe, KIs reported that people in 45% assessed settlements did not have

access to electricity, and in 1% of assessed settlements, people did not have credit to use their mobile phones. Therefore, despite access to functioning means of communication, such as radios and mobile phones, KIs from Adamawa and Yobe reported that people often relied on in-person communication as the primary source of information in the assessed settlements.

In 84% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 74% of assessed settlements in Yobe, KIs reported that people relied on in-person communication. **According to the IDI respondents, displaced people from the H2R settlements often obtained information and updates on the conditions of other settlements through interactions with newly displaced persons and/or residents on short visits to these sites.**

## **CONCLUSION**

Overall, the findings in this situation overview suggest that assessed settlements in H2R areas of Adamawa and Yobe states face shelter, food and nutrition, and WASH risks, likely compounded by the flooding across Northeast Nigeria.

During the reporting period, findings indicate that shelters in most affected communities were reportedly destroyed, rendering hundreds of people homeless. Food stocks and other livelihood activities were also severely affected by the floods; as a coping mechanism, people in the assessed settlements were reportedly relying on unsustainable and corrosive strategies. During this quarter, KIs reported that people relied on casual labour as the primary coping mechanism. In addition, some major roads and access routes, including key bridges linking several communities and marketplaces, were destroyed because of the floods, further restricting people’s access to food and health facilities. Factors such as the use of unimproved drinking water, open defecation, and lack of adequate sanitary facilities, combined with food insecurity caused by damaged harvest and high food prices, could potentially make the population vulnerable to malnutrition, health adversities and outbreaks of water-borne diseases. This comes at a time when service providers in Northeast Nigeria are already struggling to provide sustainable basic health facilities, services and NFIs.

Furthermore, assessed settlements heavily rely on humanitarian assistance for shelter, food and NFIs like soaps, blankets, plastics, and makeshift homes to sustain livelihood. However, the damage to infrastructures like roads and dams further restricts the mobility of humanitarian workers and isolates the H2R areas. Therefore, regarding the findings in this situation overview, continued monitoring of these areas is essential to provide information to inform the humanitarian response in the respective assessed settlements in the LGAs of Adamawa and Yobe.

## Endnotes

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2. OCHA. [Humanitarian Needs Overview – Nigeria 2022](#)
3. Unless otherwise stated, the data recall period is one month.
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## ABOUT REACH

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