

Pulka Displacement Overview

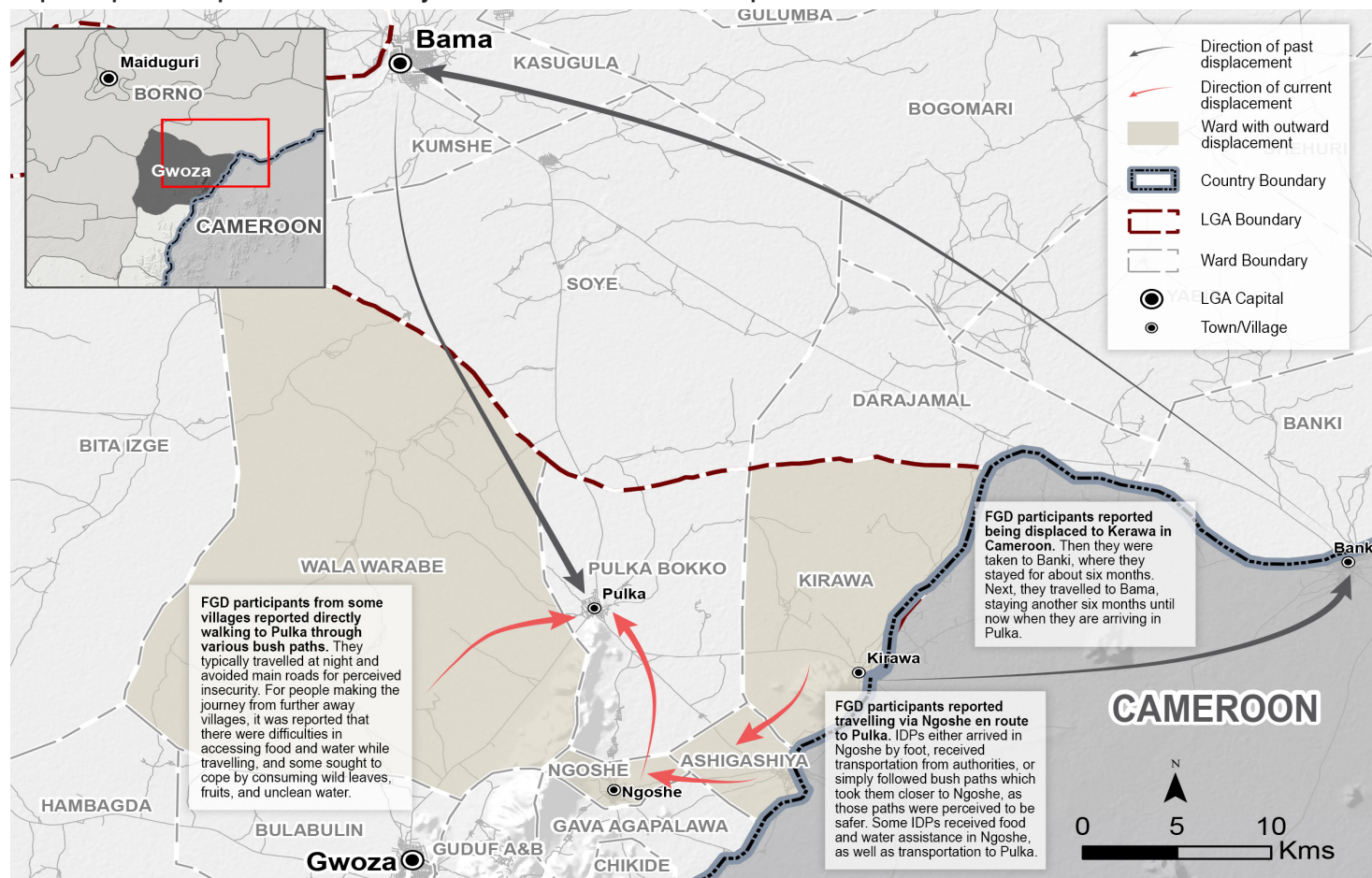
Pulka Town, Pulka Bokko Ward, Gwoza LGA, Borno State, Nigeria

9 February 2018

Key Findings

- Two main patterns of displacement into Pulka IDP camps were observed. The first is the arrival in Pulka of newly-displaced IDPs from nearby wards in Gwoza and Bama LGAs. These households have been travelling in small groups through the bush or were transported by the military from Ngoshe to Pulka. The second pattern consists of IDPs originating from Gwoza who are now arriving in Pulka after being intermittently displaced for three years. Some have moved between different villages in Gwoza, while others have travelled between camps in Cameroon, Banki, and Bama before coming to their current location.
- Some FGD participants reported travelling directly from their village to Pulka by foot through the bush, while others passed through villages en route to Pulka. Authorities have reportedly provided food and water assistance, as well as transportation to Pulka, to some IDPs.
- There is an immediate need for increased access to water for IDPs in Pulka. FGD participants reported queues lasting 24 hours or more and going more than a day without accessing water. Self-support is also a major challenge, as access to income generating activities is reportedly non-existent.
- According to recently displaced IDPs, at least 30 villages near their areas of origin had remaining households, with the number of households estimated to be 5,595. These villages were in Chikide, Dure, Gava Agapalawa, Kirawa, Ngoshe, Pulka Bokko and Wala Warabe wards of Gwoza LGA, and Soye and Darajamal wards of Bama LGA. Many remaining households reportedly intend to leave at the first opportunity, with Pulka as a likely destination due to its improved security, reunification with people from their villages, access to services and it is the closest safe place. However, some of these households reportedly want to stay until they have completed their dry season harvest, potentially at least through February. Once the harvest season is done, additional people may try to escape to Pulka, or other safe locations.
- Newly displaced people reported that remaining people in their villages of origin face food security and livelihood concerns due to AOGs stealing their produce, and challenges accessing their farmland due to insecurity. Most shelters were reportedly destroyed, with remaining households said to be sleeping either in the bush or in nearby caves. FGD participants reported access to water in some villages, but through unprotected water sources such as open wells. Priority needs in IDPs' villages of origin were reported as personal security, food and water.
- According to recent IDP arrivals, remaining people in their villages of origin faced severe protection issues and were unable to leave due to AOG presence in their villages. IDPs reported numerous protection concerns in their villages of origin, including forced labour, forced recruitment into armed groups, forced marriage, kidnapping, theft and looting of food and livestock, threats of physical violence, killings, and movement restrictions. Landmines were reportedly planted around some villages to prevent people from leaving, though this could not be directly confirmed. Men faced death if caught trying to escape, while women were beaten, and households were often forced to leave their elderly behind while fleeing as they would be unable to keep up with the group.

Map 1: Reported Displacement Routes by New Arrivals at Pulka IDP Camps



Pulka Displacement Overview

Introduction

In recent months, the town of Pulka, in the Gwoza Local Government Area (LGA) of south-east Borno State, has seen a growing influx of new internally displaced person (IDP) arrivals. While both Pulka and the nearby town of Gwoza have been frequent destinations since 2013ⁱ for IDPs fleeing conflict in surrounding areas of northeast Nigeria, this new wave of IDP arrivals are contributing to the already intense humanitarian needs in Pulka. According to the International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM), 10,844 IDPs were residing in Pulka as of December 2017ⁱⁱ, with an additional 987 IDPs arriving from 27 December to 29 January aloneⁱⁱⁱ. This is an addition to Pulka's pre-conflict population of 11,545ⁱ. Many villages around Pulka are inaccessible due to conflict between the Nigerian government and Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs), and only limited information is available on the populations living in these areas. As a result, humanitarian actors have faced challenges in anticipating and preparing for new IDP arrivals.

To fill these information gaps, REACH conducted a rapid assessment in Pulka from 30 January to 2 February 2018. The assessment focused on recent displacement patterns, the movement intentions of IDPs in Pulka and remaining populations in inaccessible nearby villages, and conditions in inaccessible villages from which IDPs had fled. REACH conducted 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 22 male and 19 female IDPs who had been displaced in the past two months and interviewed 29 Bulamas (traditional leaders) of displaced communities in Pulka^{iv}. Findings should be considered indicative only.

Displacement Overview

Newly Displaced Arrivals in Pulka Town

Recent IDP arrivals in Pulka have reportedly followed two main displacement patterns. The first consists of arrivals from nearby inaccessible villages in Gwoza and Bama LGAs, most of whom had been displaced for the first time. The second are IDPs who had been displaced since 2014 from Gwoza and Bama LGAs to other locations such as Cameroon and Maiduguri, and were now returning to Pulka, closer to their villages of origin, both voluntarily and involuntarily.

Both FGD participants and key informants reported having knowledge of a number of villages in their areas of origin with people still remaining. They reported 30 villages on which they had recent information in the last two months, estimating a total of 5,595 households remaining in them. These Bulamas also reported a total of 18 known villages that are completely empty, where an estimated 1,140 households have been displaced since November 2017, from Kiriwa, Chikide (Gwoza LGA) and Darajamal (Bama LGA) wards. It was not clear how many of these households had come to Pulka. FGD participants reported about 110 households left their villages of origin to come to Pulka with them, while at least 400 households remained unable to escape.

For the four villages of origin with recently displaced households represented in the FGDs, participants reported that AOGs had imposed severe movement restrictions that prevented people from leaving, and that remaining people faced frequent harassment. In some villages, landmines have reportedly been installed to prevent outward movement. Households that had left these four villages had reportedly done so through informal routes, often in small groups (15-20 households), in order to evade movement restrictions, and were leaving due to insecurity and deteriorating conditions in their villages.

Area of Knowledge (AoK) Methodology

REACH conducted key informant interviews with displaced Bulamas, and FGDs with participants from households displaced into Pulka within the last two months. Data was collected from 31 January to 2 February 2018, with support from Oxfam. In total, six FGDs were conducted, each consisting of participants from two villages from which IDPs had recently arrived to Pulka, covering a total of six villages. Three FGDs were conducted with Bulamas and other men, and three were with women from the same villages. Of the six villages represented by participants in the FGDs, participants were recently displaced from only four of them within the two months prior to data collection. Participants from the other two villages (Ngoshe and Ashigasheya) had left their villages of origin in 2014 and been displaced multiple times over the last three years. Participants were asked about their displacement experience, routes taken, and their needs both in their village of origin and current location.

Key informants were asked to report on any villages with displaced and remaining households for which they had information on within the last two months. FGD transcripts were analysed for common themes experienced by displaced households, and for differences reported between men and women. Other IDPs, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) members, and the LGA chairman were all cited by interviewees as key sources of information.

Most participants reported taking various routes through the bush to reach Pulka. For people travelling through the bush, there was little access to assistance, reportedly forcing some people to cope by eating wild leaves and fruit from vegetation they would normally not eat, and drinking unclean water. In some cases, authorities assisted households by provided food and water, or transportation to Pulka. However, households transported by local authorities were reportedly unable to carry their belongings with them, and some had lost their identification documents on the way.

FGD participants frequently cited the following reasons for choosing to come to Pulka: it was the nearest accessible location that was safer and more secure than their areas of origin; they did not have the resources to go elsewhere; they wish to reunite with people from their villages already in Pulka; and aid and services were available in Pulka. It was also reported that Pulka was the destination that remaining people in participants' villages of origin would most likely choose, for similar reasons to those cited above. Other than Pulka, participants mentioned that some remaining people might choose to travel to Gwoza and Wala towns in Gwoza LGA, or to Cameroon.

Most participants reported that they would be willing to return to their villages of origin if authorities told them that it was safe, most commonly because they wanted to return to their farms, which was their main source of livelihoods, and because of personal attachment to their places of origin. However, some said that they would be hesitant to return immediately due to the trauma they experienced in those villages.

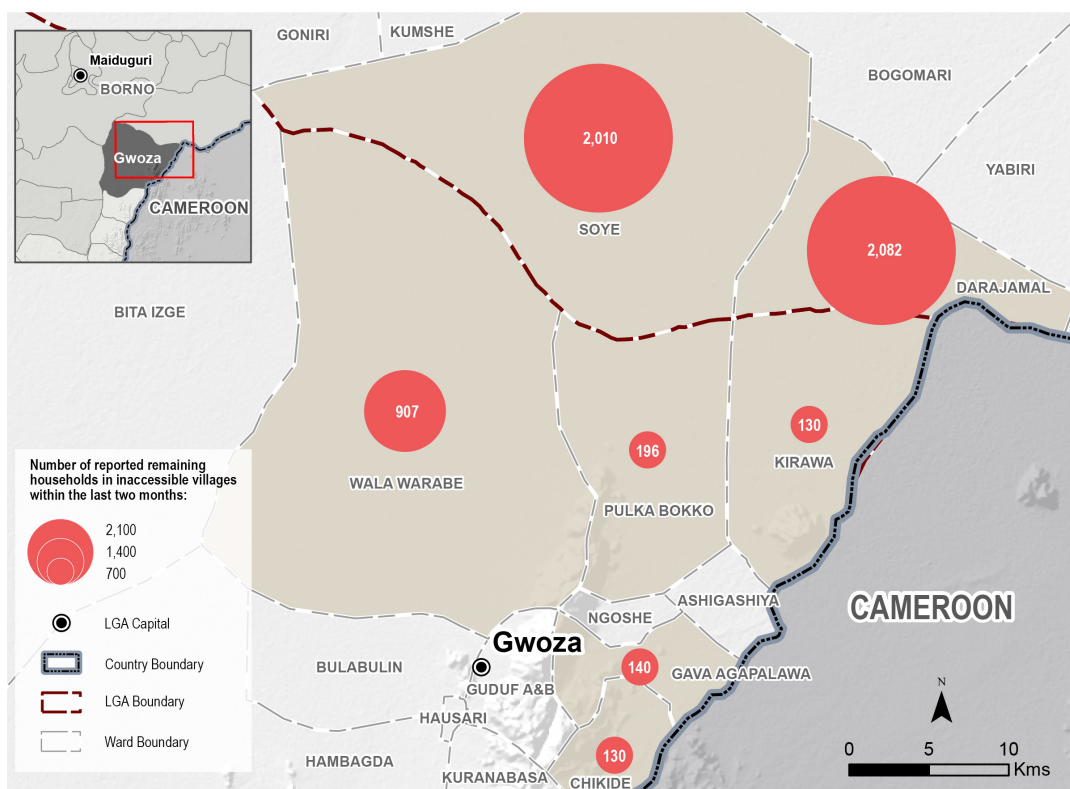
Pulka Displacement Overview

Map 2: Reported Remaining Households by Ward

Remaining households were identified from key informant interviews with Bulamas who had been displaced to Pulka town. Only households in villages for which they had information within the last two months were included.

FGD participants and Bulamas did not report knowledge of any remaining households in Ngoshe or Ashigasheya wards within the past two months. However there were reports of two villages in Ngoshe where all households had been displaced within this time period.

This is not an exhaustive list of remaining households. Households may or may not have displaced since the last known information.



Arrivals in Pulka Following Multiple Displacement

In addition to the four villages described above, FGDs were also conducted with IDPs from the major ward towns of Ngoshe and Ashigasheya, who had left their villages of origin in 2014 and 2015 but had since moved through several locations before arriving in Pulka. IDPs from both villages reported that their larger group with whom they had originally left with had gradually split up, with households moving to various locations including Cameroon, Bama, Banki, and Maiduguri. FGD participants from Ngoshe reported moving every 4-6 months between different villages within Gwoza LGA, having to relocate multiple times due to security concerns in each destination. Ashigasheya participants reported being displaced first to Cameroon, then moving to Banki, Bama, and most recently Pulka, with some of these secondary displacements being voluntary and others occurring at the request of the military.

Needs and Conditions in Areas of Origins

FGD participants described conditions in their villages of origin, with protection, food, and water frequently reported as priority needs in those villages (see Table 2). They also reported that those who had remained in their villages of origin were either intending but unable to leave due to movement restrictions, were waiting to harvest their crops before leaving, or were affiliated with the AOGs. Those attempting to leave the assessed villages reportedly faced significant risks while doing so. Men could face death if caught, while women faced the risk of physical violence. Elderly people were usually unable to make the journey, and therefore often had to remain in their villages of origin. AOGs have reportedly seized money, clothes, livestock and other goods by force.

Table 1: Reported inaccessible villages with remaining households

Ward	Inaccessible villages with remaining households reported	Remaining households reported
Gwoza LGA		
Chikide	3	130
Gava Agapalawa	2	140
Kirawa	3	130
Pulka Bokko	4	196
Wala Warabe	5	907
Bama LGA		
Soye	3	2,010
Darajamal	12	850

Needs and Conditions in Current Location

FGD participants were asked about their current needs in Pulka and on their priority needs on return to their villages of origin (see Table 3). In their current location in Pulka, participants noted water, food, fuel for cooking, livelihoods and shelter as key needs. Upon return to their village of origin, participants stated they would need support in shelter, livelihoods, food, and access to healthcare and education.

Pulka Displacement Overview

Table 2: Needs and Conditions in Villages of Origin

Protection	Reported protection issues included forced labour, forced recruitment, forced marriage, killings, kidnappings, and threats of physical violence. Severe movement restrictions were in place as AOGs had prohibited residents from leaving. If caught while trying to escape, men faced death while women faced physical violence. Within villages, women reportedly faced verbal harassment by AOGs if seen outside their homes. Participants from two villages reported the presence of landmines in their villages preventing people from leaving. AOGs have reportedly seized money, clothes, livestock, and other goods by force. For people travelling through the bush, there was limited assistance, reportedly forcing people to cope by consuming wild leaves and fruits they would not normally consume, and drink unclean water.
Shelter	Villages consisted of a mixture of mostly mud shelters or brick houses, but also included some makeshift shelters. Respondents from some villages reported that most houses had been completely destroyed, while others reported the removal of roofs by AOGs. In those villages, the remaining were either sleeping in the bush or nearby caves.
Food Security	Participants reportedly planted guinea corn, beans, groundnuts, onion and maize this past season, but not every household had been able to collect their harvest. The main barrier mentioned to accessing food was forced seizure of produce by AOGs. Participants from two villages reported leaving behind all their harvest in their barns, while displaced people from two other villages were unable to harvest crops before leaving. Participants generally reported eating three meals a day prior to displacement.
Livelihoods	People in assessed villages had traditionally relied on selling food and cash crops, although some engaged in petty trade. However, participants reported that households faced significant barriers to accessing livelihoods, mainly AOG seizure of livestock and goods and difficulty in accessing farms due to insecurity. While markets in most villages of origin were reportedly no longer functioning, participants from some villages reported that limited market activity may still have been ongoing, despite a lack of access to cash and challenges for traders in reaching these villages.
Water	Respondents from one village in Kirawa ward reported having 15 unprotected wells, but no boreholes in their village of origin. One village from Wala Warabe ward reported five wells and one non-functional borehole. Participants from both villages did not believe currently remaining people face challenges in accessing water. Participants from Ngoshe reported 15 wells and 1 functioning borehole maintained by the military, while those from Ashigasheya indicated there were 40 unprotected wells and 20 boreholes, though none of the boreholes were reported to be functional.
Health	Remaining households reportedly did not have access to health services because they could not leave their villages. While the presence of health facilities was reported in some villages, none were currently believed to be functioning.
Education	Participants reported that children in villages of origin did not have access to formal education, while some had access to informal education such as Islamic schools
Priority Needs	FGD participants most commonly identified the ability to leave their village, food and water as the key needs for remaining people in their villages.

Table 3: Needs and Conditions in Current Location

Protection	Participants reported no security threats to them in Pulka, other than a few movement restrictions. Currently IDPs are able to move around the town, but have to get permission from the military to leave the town. There is also an evening curfew. Some households had reportedly lost their identification documents because they had been hidden in homes that had now been destroyed, or were confiscated on arrival to Pulka.
Food Security and Livelihoods	In their current location, participants reported accessing food assistance and receiving rice, beans and oil each month from Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). Many stated that the food was only just enough to meet household needs, and most reported being able to have three meals a day though the food was still not enough to eat like they used to. Currently there was no means to access food in the camps other than humanitarian assistance. For those without sufficient food, they skipped meals and prioritised providing food to their children. Some women also reported coping through doing menial jobs, begging and eating others' leftovers.
WASH	Accessing water is a major challenge according to participants. They reported that there are not enough boreholes in their current location, and that it could take more than 24 hours to queue for water. People sometimes reportedly go more than a day without accessing water and skip bathing for days.
Health	Participants reported accessing health services through clinics run by MSF and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Pulka.
Education	Participants reported that their children were attending UNICEF primary schools in the camps.
Priority Needs	In their current location in Pulka, participants noted water, food, fuel, livelihoods and shelter as key needs. Upon return to their village of origin, participants stated they would need support in shelter, livelihoods, food, and access to healthcare and education.

Pulka Displacement Overview

Key Information Gaps

Based on the primary and secondary data available (OCHA and DTM sources), the following information gaps can be identified:

Number of remaining households in inaccessible areas

The number of villages with remaining households and the number of those households in inaccessible areas is likely greater than what is reported here. While all Bulamas displaced in Pulka were interviewed, it cannot be certain that information was captured for all villages with households displaced in Pulka, as IDPs from some villages may not have arrived with their Bulamas. Additionally, information was not gathered on villages from which IDPs displaced to other locations (such as Gwoza or Cameroon) instead of Pulka.

Severity of needs in areas of origin

FGD participants provided indicative, qualitative information on some inaccessible villages, but cannot necessarily be generalised to all villages where people are remaining. Moreover, while FGD participants provided information on the priority needs in assessed villages, their inability to quantify the severity of need means that comparisons between villages may be difficult, especially given that data on these villages was collected remotely instead of through direct field visits.

Triggers for major displacement

Findings suggest that people were leaving villages as the opportunity arose, although some of the remaining households reportedly intend to leave after their dry season harvest. However, there is not a clear understanding about what contextual changes, such as reduction in movement restrictions, may occur that could trigger a larger, sudden movement of households towards Pulka.

Endnotes

1. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Factsheet. NE Nigeria : Pulka, Gwoza LGA. November 2017.
2. IOM DTM Nigeria. Round XX Dataset of Baseline Assessments.
3. IOM DTM Nigeria. Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT) Reports No. 47-51.
4. REACH exhaustively interviewed Bulamas in all five IDP camps in Pulka town during the data collection period. Camps and locations outside Pulka town were not assessed.

About REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. All REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms.

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