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R.E.S.T.O.R.E

Resilience and Environmental Sustainability of Resettled Enclaves
(R.E.S.T.O.R.E) in the Lake Chad Region: Borno State



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November 2025

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Foreword

The Lake Chad region stands at a critical historical juncture. For over a decade and a half, the people of Borno State have endured the dual burdens of a brutal insurgency and severe environmental volatility. What began as a security crisis has evolved into a complex multidimensional emergency, reshaping the physical and social landscape of the region. Yet, amidst these trials, we witness the profound resilience of a population determined to reclaim their lives, their lands, and their dignity.

This report, Resilience and Environmental Sustainability of Resettled Enclaves (R.E.S.T.O.R.E) in the Lake Chad Region: Borno State, arrives at a pivotal moment. The significant gains made by our armed forces, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have led to the recovery of territories and enabled the State Government to embark on an ambitious Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RRR) agenda. The unprecedented surrender of thousands of combatants and their families has necessitated the innovative, non-kinetic approach known as the '*Borno Model*', a strategy that seeks to balance justice with reconciliation.

However, as this study meticulously documents, the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to their ancestral homes is not the end of the challenge, but the beginning of a new, fragile reality.

Our findings reveal that while resettlement is a strategic necessity to re-establish governance and reduce humanitarian dependency, the conditions on the ground remain precarious. Many returnees in towns such as Baga, Marte, and Malam Fatori find themselves in "garrison towns" communities secured by trenches yet surrounded by persistent threats. The data indicates that the intersection of security and livelihoods is the friction point of recovery; our people cannot fully rebuild if venturing beyond a parapet to fish or farm invites the risk of abduction, extortion, or death by Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the environmental dimension. The changing hydrology of Lake Chad and the extreme weather events, such as the devastating floods of 2022 and 2024, act as threat multipliers, compounding the hardships faced by vulnerable communities. Sustainable peace requires sustainable lands. The revival of the agricultural engines of the state from the wheat fields of the Jere Bowl to the fisheries of the Lake is contingent upon our ability to secure these resources against both insurgent exploitation and climate degradation.

OSPRe presents this report as a roadmap for transition. We advocate for a shift from isolated, defensive postures to open, secure environments where social and economic life can flourish. We call for the harmonization of humanitarian aid with long-term development investments, and a strengthened synergy between military operations and civilian law enforcement.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Heinrich Böll Foundation for their partnership in bringing this critical research to fruition. To the policymakers, development partners, and security stakeholders reading this: let the insights within these pages guide our collective efforts. We must move beyond merely resettling our people; we must RESTORE the environmental and security conditions necessary for them to thrive.


Chris Ngwodo
Director General



Bicycles belonging to farmers working in the field are parked beside a nursery covered with a protective net. [Photo: OSPRE]

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Executive Summary

The Lake Chad region is confronted with multidimensional crises fuelled by years of insurgency and humanitarian distress, exacerbated by environmental pressures and socio-economic vulnerabilities. In Borno State, the epicentre of the Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgency, conflict has disrupted livelihoods, displaced millions, and degraded critical infrastructure.

Military operations against insurgents have led to the recovery of territories and enabled the State government and its partners to invest in reconstruction and resettlement efforts. These initiatives have supported the return of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to their hometowns or nearby locations. The large-scale defections and surrenders of Boko Haram and ISWAP members, along with accompanying civilians, have introduced additional complexities, necessitating a strengthened non-kinetic approach to under the Borno Model for deradicalisation and reintegration.

Despite this progress, conditions in many resettled areas remain fragile. They continue to face significant livelihood and security challenges due to limited access to safe farming and fishing zones and persistent threats from insurgents. Returnees have been killed or abducted while venturing beyond these lines. Insurgents have also exploited desperation for resources for livelihood by imposing levies on farming and fishing activities.

This year, a resurgence of attacks has heightened insecurity and raised concerns about the safety of returning populations. Recent incidents, including attacks in Darajamal village in Bama Local Government Area, Kirawa in the border community of Gwoza Local Government Area, and New Marte in Marte Local Government Area led to destructions and secondary displacements. In addition to security concerns, heavy rainfall and flooding has further strained already vulnerable communities, resulting in the loss of farmland, damage to shelters, and disruption of livelihoods. These environmental shocks compound the hardships faced by the local population.

Nonetheless, resettlement is viewed by authorities as a necessary step to reestablish governance and enable displaced persons to rebuild their lives outside displacement camps, particularly in the context of declining humanitarian funding for the region. The long-term sustainability of the resettlement in Borno and the wider Lake Chad Basin will depend on navigating the complex intersection of security, livelihoods, and environmental resilience.

Recommendations

Resettlement Approach

- Authorities should consolidate existing capacities and prioritise investment in safer areas.
- Expand the establishment of new settlement clusters for communities from remote and insecure areas, maximising security, access to services, and enabling delivery of humanitarian and development support.
- Reinforce technological enablers for security, including long-range surveillance cameras and drones, to improve early warning and response.

Counterinsurgency

- Strengthen early warning and Quick Reaction Force (QRF) to halt repeated attacks and support overstretched defensive positions.
- Improve intelligence gathering, proactive patrols and capacities to counter evolving insurgent tactics, including drone and night attacks.
- Transition from isolated trench-protected communities to open and secure environments where returnees can function socially and economically.
- Capture and secure major insurgent enclaves (Timbuktu Triangle, Sambisa, Mandara Mountains) and dominate Lake Chad, wetlands and strategic islands.
- Expand the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) capabilities with improved airborne, land, amphibious, and riverine assets to secure waterways, trade corridors, and agricultural zones.

Law Enforcement

- Enhance the capacities of police, DSS, Immigration, Customs, and NSCDC to secure low and moderate-risk areas, enabling the military to concentrate resources on high-risk zones.
- Establish a transparent process for the future of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF): integrate qualified members into security agencies, community policing, or convert them into Rangers.
- Scale up IED detection and clearance capabilities of civilian security agencies to safeguard civilians in resettled areas.
- Strengthen the criminal justice and judiciary system to uphold the rule of law, resolve disputes, including land and farmer–herder conflicts, and support transitional and restorative justice.

Civil Society

- Strengthening civil society organisations' role as key actors for non-kinetic security, early warning, peacebuilding, and community engagement.
- Enhance participation in countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts among returnees and assist with deradicalisation, tracking ex-combatants, and trauma healing.

Governance, Natural Resources, and Resilience

- Strengthen local governance, basic service delivery, and address disparities between accessible and remote areas, especially around Lake Chad.
- Coordinate humanitarian support with development investments in health, WASH, energy, markets, and education.

- Federal MDAs should drive infrastructure rebuilding and support sustainable livelihoods, especially power, water resources, agriculture, and fisheries.
- Harness economic opportunities: gum Arabic, spirulina, sustainable fisheries, and climate-smart agriculture.
- Expand climate adaptation and land restoration efforts, improve flood response systems, and integrate environmental risk into resettlement planning.

Non-Governmental Actors

- Complement government efforts by delivering humanitarian assistance and reinforcing public institutions in remote areas.
- Promote sustainable resource management, land rehabilitation, demining, and conservation.
- Lead initiatives in climate-smart agriculture, fisheries development, renewable-energy powered social enterprises, and capacity building for local governments.

International Actors

- Harmonise humanitarian and development planning to ensure coherence in Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RRR) across the region.
- Strengthen financial and technical support for climate adaptation, loss and damage, and resilience building.
- Enhance regional cooperation through the Lake Chad Basin Commission to improve security coordination, water management, transport, and trade infrastructure.



FIGURE 1: Focus Group Discussion in Damasak, Borno [Photo: OSPRE]

1.0 Methodology



FIGURE 2: OSPRE/NCCRM Project Team during a KII Interview at an orchard farm in Jere [Photo: OSPRE]

This report on the Resilience and Environmental Sustainability of Resettled Enclaves (R.E.S.T.O.R.E) in Borno State is based on data collected over several months, using a mixed-methods approach that combined qualitative field research, geospatial analysis and a review of relevant reports and policy documents on the Lake Chad conflict, displacement trends and resettlement initiatives. Fieldwork was conducted through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with a wide range of stakeholders, including returnees, security personnel, government officials, humanitarian actors, and experts on the Lake Chad conflict.

FGDs were carried out in the following locations:

- Baga
- Mafa
- Bama
- Monguno
- Marte
- Damasak
- Maiduguri/Jere
- Konduga

These engagements explored community vulnerabilities, security dynamics, resettlement conditions, and local adaptive strategies. Respondents' names were anonymised to protect their safety and privacy.

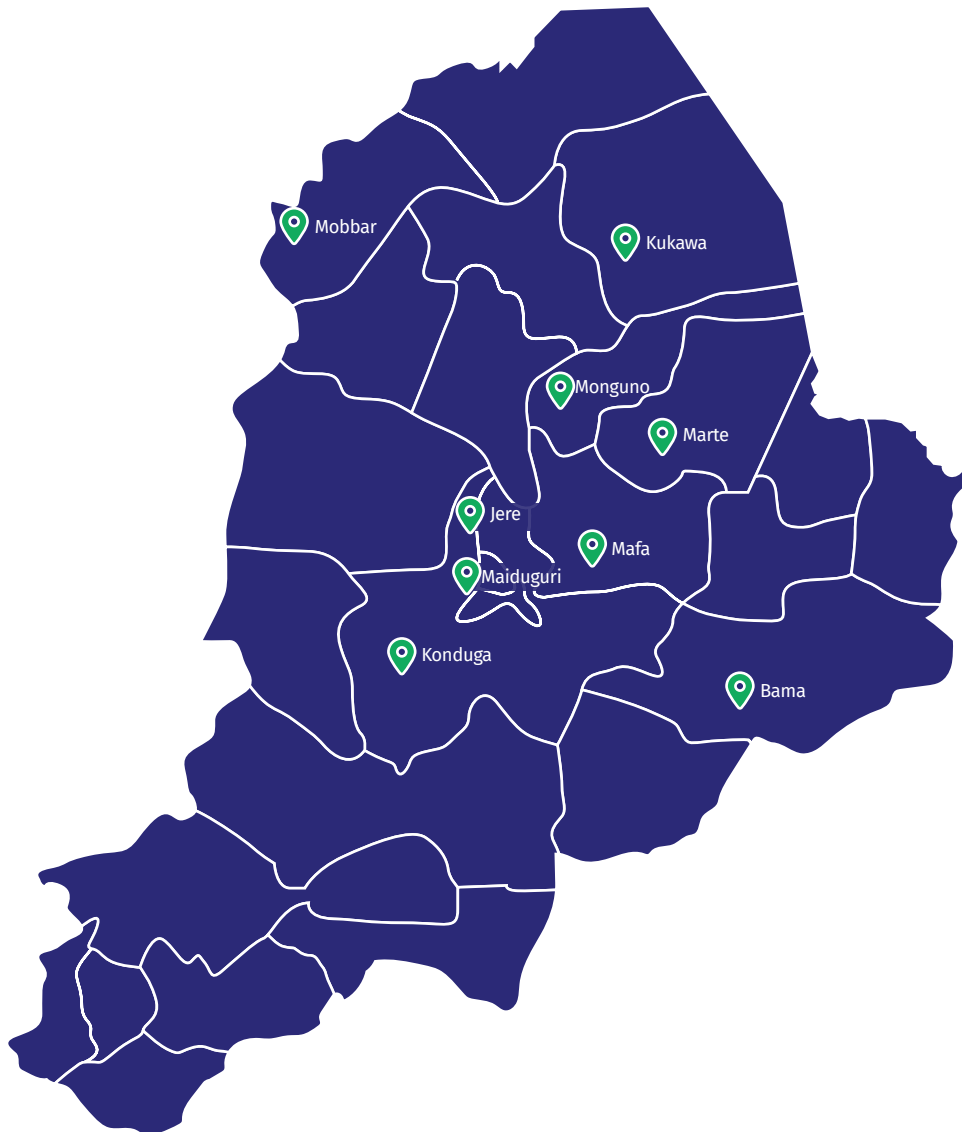


FIGURE 3: Map of Borno State showing locations where FCDs were conducted

2.0 Background



FIGURE 4: Security Outpost at the Outskirts of Zabarmari [Photo: OSPRE]

The Lake Chad region, situated in West-Central Africa at the confluence of Chad, Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon, has over the past several decades experienced prolonged periods of turbulence and instability. These conditions are underpinned by a complex interplay of socioeconomic, political, and environmental pressures that are mutually reinforcing and collectively exacerbate the region's fragility.

From the 1970s and the early 2000s, the region faced a diverse array of challenges, including a brief war between Nigeria and Chad over control of several islands, the influx of armed rebels involved in banditry, and large-scale illicit arms trafficking¹. During this period, the region was also struggling with the impacts of underdevelopment, education deficit, economic inequality and widespread public discontent. Some of these deeply rooted social vulnerabilities can be traced to policies of the colonial era, particularly those related to governance and education, as well as the legacies of the Kanem-Bornu Empire.

Corruption, social injustice, and the failure of democratic institutions to deliver meaningful improvements for a rapidly growing population in Nigeria's north-eastern region, where a key portion of the southern part of the Lake Chad basin is situated, contributed to grievances and resentment. This was especially pronounced in Nigeria's north-eastern states of Borno and Yobe, where the benefits of the country's oil wealth were scarcely felt by the largely impoverished population².

¹<https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/34503/nigeria-border-issues-around-lake-chad-cause-concernenvironmental,environmentaldesertificationclimate-related,desertification,,waswereo>

²<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19392206.2025.2500769#d1e185>

The North-East is geographically remote from Nigeria's main economic hubs, Lagos in the south, the oil-producing Niger Delta, and the federal capital in Abuja, exacerbating structural disparities in wealth distribution and economic opportunities. Development indicators and access to public services have long remained among the lowest in the country, compounded by a weak civil service and an underperforming education sector.³

This environment provided fertile ground for the spread of extremist ideologies and facilitated recruitment into groups that presented themselves as resisting entrenched social and political ills. Over time, this generated the momentum that ultimately escalated into a violent insurgency. Beneath these challenges were also the effects of environmental and climate-related risks, most notably drought, desertification, and the shrinking of Lake Chad, which became tightly interwoven with the broader web of socio-economic and political pressures.



FIGURE 5: Map showing Borno State and Lake Chad

³<https://www.afd.fr/sites/default/files/2018-08-04-37-14/Crisis%20and%20Development.%20The%20Lake%20Chad%20Region%20and%20Boko%20Haram.pdf>

2.1 Environment, Climate and Vulnerability Context

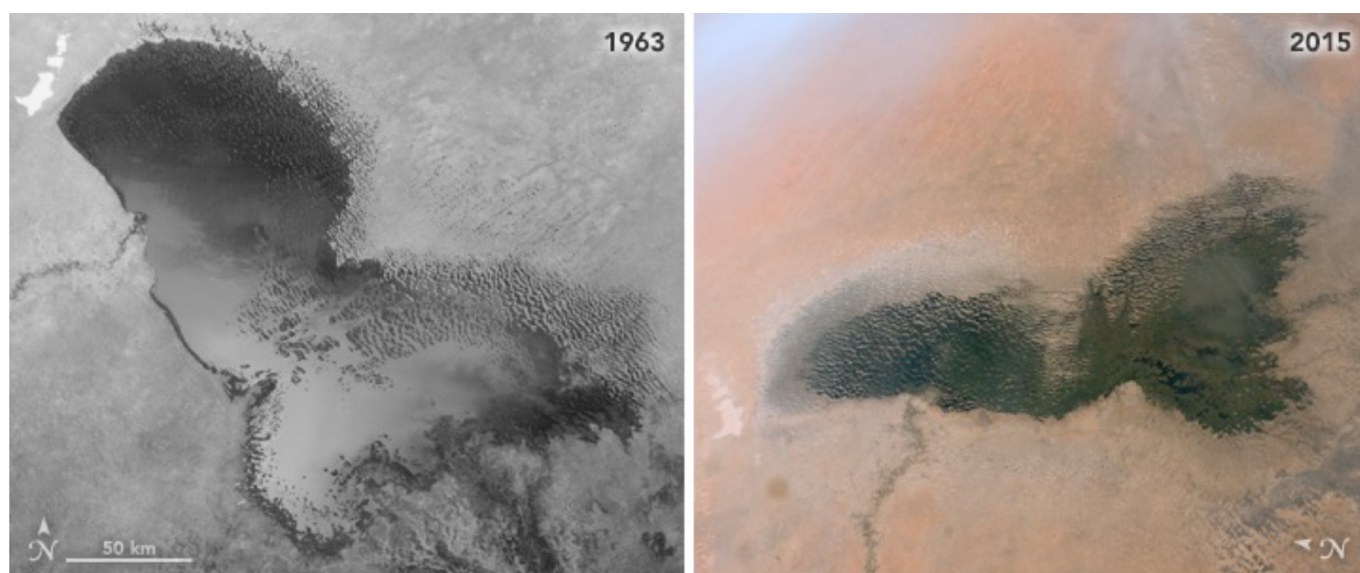


FIGURE 6: NASA Earth Observatory images of Lake Chad

The Lake Chad region features a blend of Sahara and Savannah-type vegetation. It consists of two basins - north and south - separated by the “Great Barrier”. The main inflows come from the Chari-Logone and Komadougou Yobe river systems, while the remaining inflows are from rainfall and smaller tributaries. The Lake, dotted with numerous islands, covered a massive area of up to 25,000 km² in the 1960s, but decades of severe drought and unsustainable water use reduced its surface area. The volume of water in Lake Chad is closely linked to climatic conditions, as its closed drainage system depends largely on rainfall within the catchment area. The severe droughts of the 1970s and 1980s significantly decreased its size, shrinking it to less than 2,000 km² by the 1990s.⁴

In recent decades, the southern and northern sections of Lake Chad have experienced varying degrees of transformation and recovery, with the lake’s size fluctuating between seasons. Remote sensing analyses reveal these dynamic hydrological shifts, illustrating how islands are alternately exposed or submerged as water levels recede and rise. Recent studies have also shed light on important interactions between open surface water and inundated vegetation. The Shoring Stability in Lake Chad report notes that the lake has since expanded to approximately 14,000 km², maintaining a relatively stable size over the past two decades. Moreover, total water storage, which accounts for the lake’s surface area, soil moisture, and groundwater, has reportedly increased during this period.

Likewise, the findings indicate that Lake Chad is highly sensitive to the broader climate variability affecting the region, manifested in the increasing fluctuations of the lake’s size, rising temperatures, and the growing frequency of extreme weather events. The intense flooding recorded in 2022 was regarded as the most significant in the past six decades, comparable to the major wet period of the 1950s and 1960s.⁵ According to the Lake Chad Basin Commission’s (LCBC) 2022 Hydrological Report, the lake filled up rapidly that year, following rainfall levels higher than the 1981–2010 average across the basin. The report noted that “its volume is comparable to that of an average lake with a surface area of about 24,000 km².” As of 20 October 2022, the lake’s water level reached 280.59 meters, surpassing the “Great Barrier” that separates the southern sub-basin from the northern axis.⁶

These shifts carry significant consequences for local livelihoods and the rural economy, particularly fishing, farming, and pastoralism, which are closely tied to environmental and climatic patterns. This inadvertently drives both the region’s

⁴<https://adelphi.de/system/files/mediathek/bilder/Lake%20Chad%20Shoringplaysplays%20up%20Stability.pdf>

⁵<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-75707-4>

⁶<https://cblt.org/download/hydrological-situation-in-the-lake-chad-basin/>

stability and its inherent vulnerability and fragility. For example, periodic receding of the lake creates both challenges and opportunities: new areas become available for farming and grazing, which also create the risk of resource conflict, while higher rainfall enhances agricultural productivity in several localities. However, the same rainfall has also caused river overflows, leading to widespread flooding, material losses and the displacement of communities across the region. The Lake Chad Basin Commission reported that the rainfall in 2022 helped farming; however, the resulting overflow of major rivers caused flooding and material losses and displacement.

The 2023 assessment indicated that Lake Chad's filling conditions continued to improve during the rainy season, supported by runoff from its tributaries, despite a slight decline in overall water volume. The maximum lake level recorded in 2023 was 280.6219 m on 24 November, compared with 281.3 m observed on 16 December 2022, indicating a slight decrease of 0.29%. Rainfall in 2023 increased the overall surface area of Lake Chad, although the extent of open water was lower than in 2022. The total area covered by open water and marshes was estimated at 13,500–14,000 km² in 2023, compared with 16,000 km² in 2022.⁷ River flows in the Chari-Logone and Komadougou Yobe systems were consistent with expectations but below those recorded covering 2019/2020 to 2022/2023 seasons, and no major floods occurred. These conditions highlight the lake's sensitivity to rainfall variability.



FIGURE 7: Members of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) on a motorcycle along the Maiduguri–Mafa road. [Photo OSPRE]

⁷<https://cblt.org/download/hydrological-situation-in-the-lake-chad-basin/>

3.0 The Protracted Insurgency



FIGURE 8: Rice farm in Zabarmari, located in the Jere Bowl formed by the flow of the Ngadda River. [Photo: OSPRE]

What began sixteen years ago as an uprising by the violent extremist group known as Yusufiyya in Maiduguri, the capital of Nigeria's north-eastern Borno State, gradually evolved into a protracted insurgency and campaign of terrorism. Security forces initially subdued the insurrection and arrested several members, including the group's charismatic founder, Muhammad Yusuf, who would later be killed in custody. Although the movement regrouped and adopted the name Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād (JAS), translated as People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad, the public widely referred to it as "Boko Haram," a label that underscored its rejection of Western education and quickly became the group's dominant identifier.

Under the new leadership of its late leader, Abubakar Shekau, the group unleashed a brutal wave of violence, including the use of suicide bombers against communities in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. They also carried out terror attacks outside the north-east. At its peak, between 2014 and 2015, Boko Haram overran military bases and captured territories across more than several Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the three states. The fighting reached the shores of Lake Chad, leading to the dislodgement of the Multinational Joint Task Force headquarters located in Baga, and eventually extended into other countries bordering the lake.

In 2015, the group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and rebranded as the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)⁸. Internal divisions led to a split in 2016, with a faction headed by Abu Musab al-Barnawi (Habib Yusuf), the son of the group's founder, retaining the ISWAP designation. It would subsequently grow to become the dominant terror organisation in the Lake Chad region. The insurgent groups maintain a rural insurgency, exerting influence and control in remote areas around safe havens along the shores and islands of Lake Chad, as well as in other strongholds, such as the infamous Sambisa Forest and the Mandara Mountains.

3.1 The Exploitation of Natural Resources

The exploitation of natural resources and the rural economy has been integral to the insurgents' campaign, enabling them to control and profit from populations "trapped" within their areas of influence or seeking livelihoods there. In addition to taxing and regulating local economic activities, insurgents frequently plunder resources following raids on communities and military bases.

Although both major factions have adopted similar social and economic strategies to sustain themselves, maintain their grip on the population, and remain a persistent threat, ISWAP has been notably more successful in establishing a proto-state structure and harnessing surrounding resources.⁹ This success is largely attributed to its ideological reasoning and governance model, which includes administering a range of public services, including judicial functions, healthcare, water provision, and canoes for transportation. It presents itself as an alternative form of governance, filling the gaps left by the state in many remote communities. In these areas, the absence of effective state presence has allowed such actors to assume roles traditionally associated with government.¹⁰

Through its media propaganda, ISWAP portrays itself as a functioning authority, showcasing its efforts to encourage trade and regulate business, as well as the activities of its hisbah (religious police) and zakat (alms) collection teams. Other factors contributing to its comparative advantage include its lethal capability and broader geographical reach. Furthermore, ISWAP's portrayal of itself as non-violent toward cooperative Muslim populations has been instrumental in winning hearts and minds, an essential factor for maintaining interaction with local communities and sustaining its economic base. However, the group also employs brutality against communities that refuse to cooperate. A notable example is the 2024 mass killing in Yobe State, reportedly linked to a community's refusal to continue paying imposed levies.¹¹

The group's economic strategy depends on its ability to enforce authority over highly productive agricultural lands in the hinterlands, as well as around the wetlands and islands that attract both local residents and migrants from other regions. These areas support key rural activities such as farming, fishing, cattle rearing, and the trade of agricultural by-products like dried fish, smoked meat and hides. These sectors provide steady revenue through taxation, commissions, and direct participation. The insurgents also establish arrangements with providers of commodities, such as firewood, to bring in supplies like fuel and food items, which are then dropped at designated bush locations for collection by the insurgents.¹² In exchange, they get security guarantees and access.

The New Humanitarian estimates that ISWAP earns the equivalent of more than \$191 million annually from taxes levied on fishers and livestock owners.¹³ Beyond trade and taxation, ransom payments are also an important source of funding. These transactions are mostly unreported and difficult to trace, yet they provide a crucial stream of revenue that helps sustain the group's fighting capacity and supports its governance structures within the territories it controls.

⁸ <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/a-biography-of-boko-haram-and-the-baya-to-al-baghdadi/>

⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/nigeria/273-facing-challenge-islamic-state-west-africa-province>

¹⁰ Online KII interview with Lake Chad conflict researcher, September 2025.

¹¹ <https://humanglemedia.com/iswap-attack-devastates-mafa-in-northeast-nigeria-leaving-a-grim-toll-of-death/>

¹² KII interview with Journalist in Maiduguri, August 2025.

¹³ <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2025/07/24/when-rebels-rule-iswap-formula-winning-support-nigeria-northeast-tax-control>

3.2 The Counter-Insurgency and Government Response

As the insurgency intensified, the Nigerian government responded with a series of interventions, including the declaration of a state of emergency and the launch of large-scale counterinsurgency operations. These efforts escalated further in 2015 with the relocation of the military command centre from Abuja to Maiduguri,¹⁴ and the enhanced operations and coordination resulted in the recovery of several towns previously under insurgent control.

Nigeria's efforts were supported by regional forces from neighbouring countries. The revitalisation and expansion of the MNJTF to conduct joint and independent operations within and beyond national borders has played a crucial role in sustaining military pressure against the insurgents. The origins of this regional alliance date back to 1994, when Nigeria established the MNJTF to combat trans-border armed banditry around Lake Chad. Initially, the Force operated in liaison with the military and security agencies of the LCBC member states. However, in 1998, it became fully multinational, with active participation from Chadian and Nigerien forces in operations.

As part of its counterinsurgency strategy, the government has also supported the CJTF and other community-based volunteer security groups that emerged from local populations to assist in the fight against insurgents. These groups have become a valuable source of local intelligence and play critical roles in supporting military operations, including patrols, surveillance, and providing armed protection for communities.

Additional countermeasures have focused on restricting the insurgents' ability to exploit natural resources and the rural economy. For instance, the government imposed restrictions on the movement and sale of livestock and smoked fish, key commodities in the insurgents' supply chain.¹⁵ The military would intercept and destroy fish consignments and vehicles as part of the policy.¹⁶ This restriction was later relaxed as authorities sought to balance security imperatives with the livelihood needs of local communities dependent on the sector.¹⁷



FIGURE 9: A trader displays smoked fish at Baga Road Market in Maiduguri. [Photo: OSPRE]

¹⁴ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/184543-boko-haram-nigerian-military-moves-command-centre-to-maiduguri.html?tztc=1>

¹⁵ <https://www.tvcnews.tv/army-bans-commercial-transportation-sale-of-fish-in-borno/>

¹⁶ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/348302-to-stifle-boko-haram-nigerian-army-burns-down-four-fish-vehicles.html?tztc=1>

¹⁷ <https://guardian.ng/features/zulum-supports-borno-fish-farmers-traders-with-vehicles-cash/>

4.0 Destruction, Displacement and Humanitarian Crisis



We have faced many problems in different ways. In the past, people came and killed our children, dragged us away, and injured us. We didn't know if they would come back again. At one point, they slaughtered one of my sons.¹⁸

Resettled Woman in Bama

The conflict has resulted in an estimated 350,000 direct and indirect deaths and plunged millions of people into severe humanitarian need¹⁹. As of August 2025, there are an estimated 6.3 million people across the Lake Chad region, including 3.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), over 2.6 million returnees, and half a million refugees.²⁰ Borno State in Northeastern Nigeria bears the greatest burden of insecurity in the region and hosts the largest number of displaced persons, who have sought refuge in host communities and displacement camps in the country and the neighbouring Lake Chad Basin countries.

The sustained violence has also crippled socio-economic activities across affected areas. According to a World Bank (2016) report, the cost of destruction in Borno State was estimated at USD 5.9 billion, covering extensive damage to agriculture, education, health facilities, markets, and housing.²¹ In 2013, the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) reported that Boko Haram insurgents had displaced about 19,000 farmers from their wheat and rice fields during the harvest season. The attack occurred under the area of the South Chad Irrigation Project (SCIP), where 5,000 hectares of wheat had been harvested, while an additional 3,500 hectares were left unharvested.²²

The suffering has been compounded by food insecurity resulting from the loss of livelihoods and restricted access to farmlands, with devastating effects on household income and community resilience. The conflict also disrupted the trade of commodities from Borno to other parts of the Northeast and across international borders into Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.

¹⁸ Quote is from FGD interviews conducted in Bama, August 2025.

¹⁹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/northeast-nigeria-insurgency-has-killed-almost-350000-un-2021-06-24/>

²⁰ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/situation-lake-chad-basin-dtm-monthly-dashboard-77-august-2025>

²¹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/542971497576633512/pdf/2016-04-29-North-East-Nigeria-Recovery-and-Peace-Building-Assessment-Volume-I-single-rev-1-2-3.pdf>

²² <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2013/06/boko-haram-sacks-19000-wheat-rice-farmers-in-borno/>

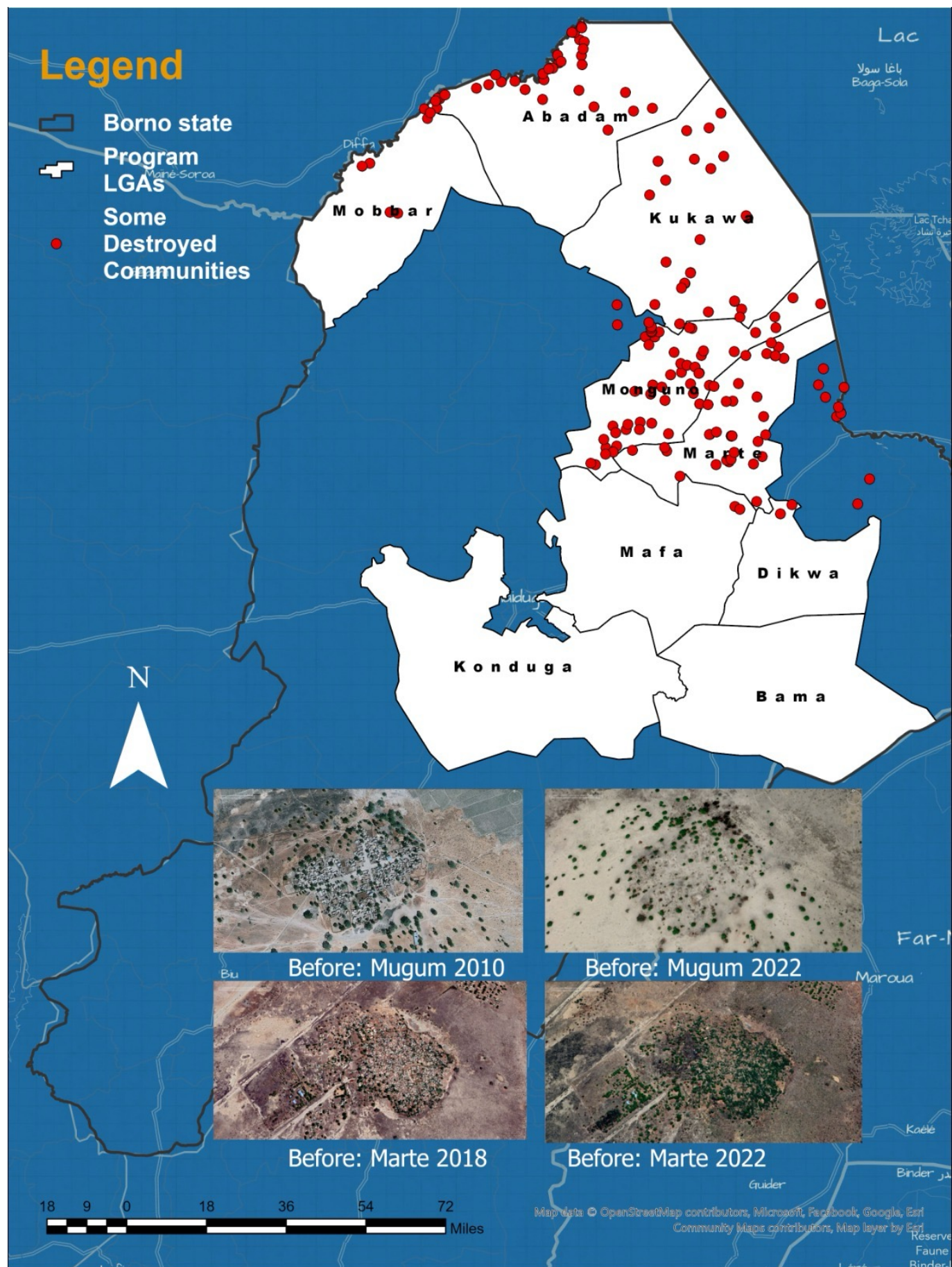


FIGURE 10: Image showing some of the destroyed and displaced communities

4.1 National and International Response

In response to the deepening displacement and humanitarian crisis, the Nigerian government launched several initiatives, including the Presidential Initiative for the North East (PINE) and the Presidential Committee on the North-East Initiative (PCNI), both later integrated into the North East Development Commission (NEDC).²³ Institutions such as the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development have also played critical roles in coordinating aid delivery.

Similarly, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMAs) have been instrumental in supporting IDPs and managing displacement camps. The international humanitarian community has been a key provider of life-saving assistance, delivering food, health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, as well as shelter, non-food items, and education support to IDPs and host communities across the region. However, funding shortfalls have already forced reductions in aid coverage, risking the closure of nutrition clinics and placing hundreds of thousands of children and displaced people at risk.

4.2 Security and Stabilisation Push

Following the military successes that led to the recovery and stabilisation of some communities, authorities initiated policies focused on reconstruction and the restoration of basic services as part of efforts to resettle internally displaced persons (IDPs) and facilitate the return of refugees to liberated towns. These towns were fortified with trench systems designed to prevent insurgent infiltration and vehicle-borne assaults. They became known as garrison towns, secured areas that housed military formations ranging from battalions to brigades, along with smaller outposts depending on operational needs.

The military was forced to regroup and adopt the super camp strategy after ISWAP launched a wave of attacks on vulnerable bases between 2018 and 2019, in an effort to curb the growing frequency of insurgent raids, casualties and loss of equipment. These super camps concentrated troops in larger, more defensible positions, from which soldiers were deployed for patrols, raids, and the protection of major transport routes between garrison towns. While this strategy enhanced military survivability, it also allowed insurgents to gain freedom of movement, and also diminished civilian protection and impacted access to livelihoods.²⁴ Subsequently, as the military strengthened its fighting capabilities through reorganisation, better equipment, and operational adjustments, it gradually resumed forward deployments, even into areas at the fringes of insurgent-held zones. This renewed posture coincided with an escalation of military operations and contributed to accelerating the government's resettlement and stabilisation agenda.

The Regional Stabilization Facility (RSF) is a key financing mechanism developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate the implementation of the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery & Resilience (RSS), established by the Lake Chad Basin Commission. With support from Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK), the Netherlands, and the European Union (EU), the facility operationalises the RSS across the Boko Haram-affected areas. The goals are to improve community safety and security; restore essential infrastructure and basic services; and provide livelihood opportunities for households in the region.²⁵ Another intervention was the Multi-Sectoral Crisis Recovery Project (MCRP), through it, the state government worked to rehabilitate and improve critical service delivery infrastructure, enhancing livelihood opportunities for conflict-affected communities, and strengthening social cohesion. The MCRP also integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to promote long-term environmental and economic resilience.

The World Bank has launched a new initiative, the Solutions for the Internally Displaced and Host Communities Project (SOLID) to improve access to basic services, expanding economic opportunities for IDPs and host communities, and strengthening local institutions in targeted Local Government Areas of Northern Nigeria.

²³ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/329123-buhari-directs-nedc-to-take-over-activities-of-pine-pcni-other-north-east-initiatives.htm#successes>

²⁴ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/nigerias-super-camps-leave-civilians-exposed-to-terrorists>

²⁵ <https://www.undp.org/africa/regional-stabilization-facility-lake-chad-basin>

In May 2024 Borno, Adamawa and Yobe launched State Action Plans for Durable Solutions to end the displacement, address its root causes, and invest in the long-term future of the state.²⁶ The initiative is anchored on the Borno State 25-Year Development Framework and the 10-Year Strategic Transformation Initiatives, which together outline a vision for sustainable peace, recovery, and development. The total cost over a period of three years is estimated at USD 2.7 billion. During this period, Borno State will allocate 15 percent of its total budget to implement this strategy. The Borno State Government has also launched an initiative for climate resilience, afforestation and land restoration including domesticating the Great Green Wall and establishing an agency to manage it.²⁷



FIGURE 11: Operation Hadin Kai Headquarters, Maiduguri. [Photo: OSPRE]

²⁶ https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/borno_sap_final_0.pdf

²⁷ KII interview with Government official in Maiduguri, August 2025

5.0 Boko Haram Reintegration Dilemma

”

... In my opinion, our community will accept them because we have Bulama and Lawan. If they accept them we have no choice but to also accept them, because we obey them. If we meet somewhere in the town like market, I am not afraid of them, I will treat them normally.²⁸

Resident of Maiduguri

The skirmishes between the two rival factions of Boko Haram reached a climax in 2021 with ISWAP's seizure of the Sambisa Forest and the death of Abubakar Shekau. ISWAP's efforts to fully absorb the remaining Boko Haram faction faced mixed outcomes: while some fighters defected and joined ISWAP, others surrendered to government forces alongside civilians, and a number continued to resist in areas such as the Lake Chad Basin and the Mandara Mountains. By April 2025, Borno State Governor Prof. Babagana Zulum estimated that more than 300,000 individuals, including both fighters and non-combatants, had surrendered and fled insurgent-held territories to government-controlled areas. Among them were farmers, women, and children who had been held captive by the insurgents, including some of the Chibok schoolgirls.

The unprecedented scale of these defections led to the development of the “Borno Model” for Peace, Reconciliation and Development, which was designed to include deradicalisation, rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement of low-risk persons as well as, transitional justice and reparation for the communities. It also provides vocational skills training, religious reorientation, and limited financial assistance to participants. The model benefited from the state's experience collaborating with Operation Safe Corridor, a military-led deradicalisation and rehabilitation programme, to manage the reintegration of former Boko Haram members. The Borno Model is built on a set of structured principles which include the voluntary surrender, screening, rehabilitation, and reintegration of individuals. The process begins with voluntary surrender, followed by initial screening and transportation to designated centres for further assessment.

At the Centre, individuals undergo continuous screening, psychosocial support, and rehabilitation programmes. Those categorized as low-risk receive tailored support to prepare them for societal reintegration and ongoing risk assessments. While for high-risk individuals, the model is designed to provide a longer-term rehabilitation. Once deemed ready, individuals processed for release are supported with material assistance, vocational starter packages, and official documentation to facilitate their return to communities. The final phase is reintegration, following the completion of screening, deradicalization, and rehabilitation.

There are concerns about the impact of the shortcomings of the process, such as limited funding, inadequate follow-up after

²⁸ Quote from Interview in Maiduguri, August 2025

participants leave the camps, inefficient screening processes and the risk of relapse among returnees.²⁹ The reintegration process also faces other challenges, such as assimilation into the community and skepticism from the public.³⁰

”

We are really happy with the repentant Boko Haram members; that is what we want for all of them, to repent.³¹

Resettled Farmer in Baga



FIGURE 12: A defensive trench constructed between Maiduguri-Mafa, Borno State serves as a security against insurgent incursions. [Photo: OSPRE]

²⁹ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/orno-model-s-valuable-lessons-on-handling-boko-haram-deserters>

³⁰ KII Interview in Maiduguri, August 2025

³¹ Quote from FGD Interview in Baga, August 2025

6.0 Resettlement Policy



Baga is well known for farming, fishing, and business. Before, the town was very prosperous, we didn't depend much on government help. But during the crisis, many of us had to leave and even depend on aid in Maiduguri. Now we are trying to rebuild.³²

35-year-old Farmer and Father of 6 Children in Baga

The Resettlement Policy began in 2015 with the establishment of the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RRR) by the Borno State Government to facilitate the provision of amenities from housing, education, health, and agriculture in communities located in Bama, Konduga, Mafa and Kaga local governments.³³ The state government collaborated with governmental, non-governmental and international partners in an attempt to implement the strategy.³⁴ The policy gathered significant momentum around 2021 and resulted in the shutting of over a dozen formal and informal camps in Maiduguri and the movement of people back to their ancestral communities or safer locations near their original communities.³⁵

Several locations such as Bakassi, Farm Centre, Stadium, Teachers Village, Dalori I, Dalori II, Custom House 2, Kawar Maila Camp, and 400 Housing Estate located across Jere, Konduga, and Maiduguri Metropolitan Council (MMC) Local Government Areas (LGAs), were closed between May 2021 and 14 June 2024. Additionally, IDPs residing in Muna El-Badawy Camp in Jere and the International School Camp in Ngala were relocated to their respective local governments of origin. Following these closures, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessed that the relocation programme affected 169,829 IDPs.³⁶

The resettlement has drawn mixed reactions and encountered numerous hurdles and pushbacks due to concerns over security challenges, lack of livelihood and willingness of the IDP to return. In 2018, the government commenced the movement of IDPs of Guzamala extraction living in the Bakassi IDP Camp in Maiduguri to Gudumbali. The IDPs numbering about 2,043 individuals, making up 378 households, constituted the first batch of returnees.³⁷ However, the control over the area became untameable and lost. A similar incident occurred in Kukawa, where insurgents raided the town following the resettlement of displaced persons,³⁸ despite efforts by the authorities to enhance security and fortify the area through the

³² Interview in Baga

³³ <https://blueprint.ng/rebuilding-borno-ahead-of-may-2016-deadline/>

³⁴ <https://mrrr.bo.gov.ng/#:~:text=The%20Ministry%20of%20Reconstruction%2C%20Rehabilitation,Read%20more>

³⁵ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/612748-settling-into-penury-resettlement-schemes-leave-former-borno-idps-distraught.html?tztc=1>

³⁶ https://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/Population%20displacement%20update_June%202024_final.pdf

³⁷ <https://thenationonline.ng/over-2000-idps-return-home-to-guzamala-local-government-of-borno-state/>

³⁸ <https://dailytrust.com/iswap-invasion-and-abductions-in-kukawa/>

construction of a trench system.³⁹

An important strategic rationale underpinning the government's resettlement policy was articulated by the Borno State Governor, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, who stated that "Boko Haram can never be eradicated without resettlement taking place. People have to go back to their homes and earn their livelihood."⁴⁰ The government has sought to support this process by providing housing, food assistance, money and healthcare services to returnees. However, some beneficiaries take advantage of these incentives and later return to Maiduguri to resettle within host communities because of livelihood and safety concerns.⁴¹

The situation is further complicated as humanitarian organizations do not have access to many of the resettlement locations.⁴² They are unable to evaluate the situation and availability of basic needs like healthcare and drinking water.⁴³ For example, in New Marte, one of the hard-to-reach areas for humanitarian agencies, living conditions are difficult for the resettled populations who struggle to rebuild their lives without adequate external support. Residents rely on rainfall for farming.⁴⁴ Some communities in the region will be difficult to resettle, either because they are located too close to areas that remain safe havens for insurgents or because they have been completely destroyed and reclaimed by vegetation.



The resettled communities, particularly those whose return was facilitated by the state government, are often not reinstated in their ancestral villages, but largely accommodated in the headquarters of their local government areas.⁴⁵

Journalist Based in Maiduguri

6.1 Camp Closure and Resettlement Process (2021-2025)

Closure of Formal IDP Camps: In January 2021, Governor Zulum announced the closure of all formal camps in Maiduguri and relocated residents to new settlements. Investigative reporting shows that the government offered three options: (1) relocate to a government-built resettlement site, (2) return to their ancestral village without housing assistance, or (3) receive support to rent a house in Maiduguri metropolis.⁴⁶ After resettlement, the state banned aid deliveries to the sites, arguing that continued assistance fostered dependency.⁴⁷ However, humanitarian groups warned that these decisions were coercive and prematurely exposed civilians to insecurity and poverty.⁴⁸

Rehabilitation and Resettlement Projects: The state government, the North East Development Commission (NEDC) and

³⁹ <https://www.thisdaylive.com/2024/08/05/mnjtf-restores-peace-in-kukawa-returns-idps-to-ancestral-home>

⁴⁰ <https://dailytrust.com/after-10-years-11000-idps-relocate-as-borno-shuts-camp/>

⁴¹ Online KII interview with Lake Chad conflict researcher, August 2025

⁴² KII interview with a humanitarian worker in Abuja, October 2025

⁴³ ibid

⁴⁴ FGD Interview in Marte, August 2025

⁴⁵ KII Interview with journalist in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁴⁶ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/612748-settling-into-penury-resettlement-schemes-leave-former-borno-idps-distraught.html#:~:text=In%20January%202021%2C%20the%20Borno,suffering%20occupants>

⁴⁷ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/features-and-interviews/612748-settling-into-penury-resettlement-schemes-leave-former-borno-idps-distraught.html?tztc=1>

⁴⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/rethinking-resettlement-and-return-nigerias-north-east-crisis-group-africa-briefing-ndeg184-16-january-2023#:~:text=What%27s%20new%3F%20In%20Nigeria%27s%20Borno,to%20move%20to%20unsafe%20areas>

partners have built thousands of housing units to encourage returns and make conditions liveable. For example, NEDC constructed 1,000 two-bedroom flats in Ngwom and handed them over to the state for allocation to returnees.⁴⁹ Similar projects were undertaken in Logomane and Gajibo with 500-house sites each.⁵⁰ The State Government has also undertaken the relocation of communities away from the fringes that are difficult to secure and govern, as exemplified by the RUGA settlement project in Mafa Local Government Area.

Return Incentives and Restrictions: Returnees often received one-off cash grants (e.g., NGN 50,000 to heads of households and NGN 25,000 to wives) and food and household kits,⁵¹ from the government. The level of assistance for returnees from the government and aid agencies has declined after the initial support.⁵² The diminished assistance has further worsened living conditions, leaving families, especially those with children, struggling to survive. In some cases, the hardship has become severe that households face acute levels of deprivation.⁵³ Women in the resettled communities explained that many of them own sewing machines and make caps as a source of livelihood. However, lack of financial capital is their biggest challenge, noting that the absence of such support often drives some members of the community into stealing and other negative activities.⁵⁴ Human rights organisations criticized the ban on humanitarian assistance in resettled sites and called for the suspension of camp closures until safety and basic services are ensured.⁵⁵

International support for Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement: Borno State's RRR programme has received varying degrees of support from international donors and development partners.

The European Union launched nine projects worth €123 million in 2028 to build resilience and support conflict-affected people and communities.⁵⁶ These projects provide basic services (health, education, nutrition, water/sanitation and electricity) and social protection (livelihoods, vocational training and safety nets).

The European Union funded the installation of containerized solar micro-grid systems as part of its support for recovery, resettlement, and resilience efforts in Borno State. The beneficiary communities include Bama and Gwoza General Hospitals; Mainok in Kaga LGA; Auno in Konduga LGA; Gajiganna in Magumeri LGA and Dikwa in Dikwa LGA. In Bama and Gwoza General Hospitals, the solar power plants collectively generate approximately 444,300 kWh of electricity annually, resulting in savings of about ₦49.76 million in diesel costs and a reduction of 476 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year. The Local Government Areas of Bama and Gwoza are among the largest in Borno State, with a combined residential population of over 500,000 people and an additional 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in camps.

In January 2025, the German Ambassador to Nigeria and the UNDP Country Representative inaugurated a resettlement project in Monguno, Borno State. The initiative comprises 1,000 low-cost two-bedroom houses, 900 semi-permanent shelters, and an ICT centre. A total of 1,874 households, selected from 18 communities that had lived in IDP camps for several years, benefited from the project. The housing units were constructed through a partnership between the German Government, the UNDP and the State Government. The first Letter of Agreement (LoA) signed in 2020 under the RS German Initiative launched the construction of 500 housing units. A subsequent LoA, signed in 2023 under the RSF German Reintegration Funds, facilitated the completion of the remaining 500 houses, 900 semi-permanent shelters, and the installation of 375 solar-powered streetlights, according to the Borno State Governor.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ <https://www.viewpointhousingnews.com/fg-built-1000-housing-units-for-idps-in-borno-state-nedc/#:~:text=The%20Managing%20Director%2C%20North,East>

⁵⁰ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/nigeria/nigeria-situation-report-12-december-2023#:~:text=Situation%20Overview%20Borno%20State%20Government,to%20close%20more%20IDP%20camps>

⁵¹ <https://humanglemedia.com/govt-resettles-1600-displaced-households-in-nigerias-borno-community/#:~:text=The%20Borno%20state%20government%20has,in%20Ngurosoye%2C%20North%20East%20Nigeria>

⁵² FGD interview in Bama, August 2025

⁵³ FGD interview in Mafa, August 2025

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/rethinking-resettlement-and-return-nigerias-north-east-crisis-group-africa-briefing-ndeg184-16-january-2023#:~:text=What%27s%20new%3F%20In%20Nigeria%27s%20Borno,to%20move%20to%20unsafe%20areas>

⁵⁶ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/38615_en#:~:text=Over%20one%20million%20people%20will,youth%20and%20other%20vulnerable%20groups

⁵⁷ <https://theafricangong.com/2025/01/20/german-ambassador-undp-inaugurate-idps-resettlement-mass-housing-in-borno/#:~:text=German%20>

6.2 Humanitarian Concerns over Resettlement and Return

The use of civilian population to secure state control without adequate security exposes them to dangers.⁵⁸ Human rights and conflict monitoring organizations have repeatedly warned about the risks of premature or unsafe returns. In 2021, Amnesty International cautioned that returning displaced persons to unsafe areas could violate the government's responsibility to protect the right to life, noting that many resettled communities still lack access to basic services.⁵⁹ Similarly, in 2023, the International Crisis Group observed that the hasty implementation of resettlement programmes placed displaced persons at heightened risk by relocating them to areas close to conflict zones and cutting them off from humanitarian support. The report warned that these conditions could enable insurgents to establish economic or social ties with resettled populations, undermining long-term security.⁶⁰ Another study by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), released in May 2025, found that 58% of relocated individuals interviewed reported having no choice in the relocation process, raising serious concerns about the voluntariness and inclusivity of resettlement decisions.⁶¹

SCAN THE QR CODE to access the Geospatial Analysis of the Landscape Across Selected Locations in the RESTORE Study Area. Alternatively, you may use the link below:

<https://arcg.is/fXXDD>

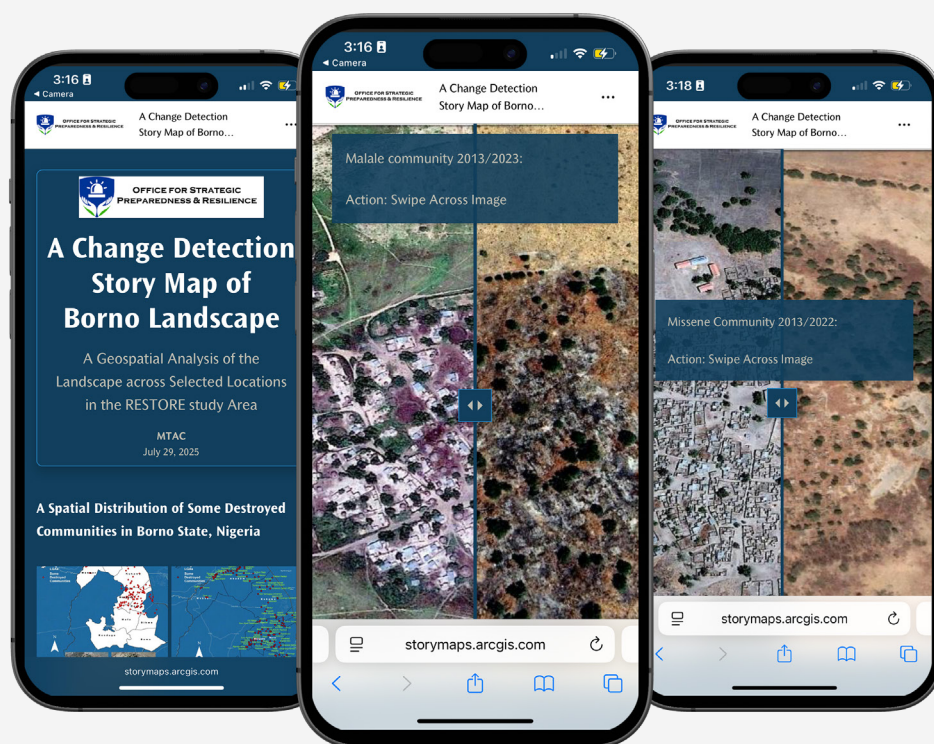


FIGURE 13: An image of the platform

Ambassador%20to%20Nigeria%2C%20Annet,Local%20Government%20Area%20of%20Borno

⁵⁸ KII interview with a humanitarian worker in Abuja, October 2025

⁵⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/nigeria-plans-to-close-idp-camps-in-maiduguri-could-endanger-lives/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/b184-rethinking-resettlement-and-return-nigerias-north-east>

⁶¹ https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/lost-land-broken-homes-the-struggles-of-returnees-and-relocated-persons-in-northeast-nigeria/lost-land-broken-homes-the-struggles-of-returnees-and-relocated-persons-in-northeast-nigeria_final.pdf

6.3 Resettlement, Livelihoods and Environment

”

So up till now, the place is not safe. Even us that you see we are going to fish, if we go we hardly catch the fish. This is the situation that we are in now.⁶²

37-year-old Fisherman in Baga

The interplay between resettlement, livelihoods, and the environment is fundamental to achieving sustainable recovery and resilience in the region, particularly at a time when funding for humanitarian operations has drastically declined. It provides the physical and social foundation for restoring livelihoods, rebuilding communities, reviving local economies, and re-establishing government presence. At the same time, the environment provides essential resources that sustain agriculture, pastoralism, and other livelihood activities. Land, water, and vegetation are vital to daily life, and the lack of these resources poses serious challenges.⁶³ It also plays a critical role in enabling adaptation to climatic shocks, either through natural coping mechanisms or with external assistance, while ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources that underpin long-term recovery and stability.



FIGURE 14: Google Earth satellite image shows farmlands and solar-powered irrigation systems drawing water from the canal near the resettled town of Baga

⁶² FGD Interview in Baga, August 2025

⁶³ FGD interview Konduga, August 2025

In Damasak, the third-largest town in the state after Maiduguri and Bama, the river formed by the confluence of the Yobe River and the Komadugu Gana River serves as a vital resource for the resettled population. It supports farming, provides water for livestock, and meets various domestic needs.⁶⁴ The State government has also been investing billions of naira in irrigation systems, including those powered by renewable energy, to promote agricultural activities across both dryland and wetland areas. Approximately ₦1.5 billion was reportedly allocated for projects in Gamboru Ngala and Marte. Authorities have also drilled tube wells in Damasak, enabling farmers to cultivate a 16-kilometre stretch of land and expand groundwater irrigation.⁶⁵ Additionally, about ₦2 billion has been invested to cultivate 1,000 hectares of farmland in Baga through a solar-powered irrigation system,⁶⁶ while another report indicates the development of a 2,000-hectare solar-powered surface irrigation project in Mile 3, Baga.⁶⁷ The water supply has supported the growing of crops such as onions, wheat, and rice.⁶⁸

The resuscitation of agricultural activities at varying scales, particularly wheat production, has the potential to generate multifaceted economic benefits. The Lake Chad Research Institute has played a key role in providing improved wheat varieties and promoting cultivation in Borno. Favorable conditions, such as lower temperatures during the Harmattan season, soil and the availability of suitable irrigation systems, particularly around Lake Chad aided adoption and productivity. These factors once made Marte area one of the best locations for wheat production before the insurgency disrupted agricultural activities.



We carried out a survey in 2016.... We found that here in Borno, farmers on average have 3.2 tonnes per hectare, compared to other states like Jigawa and Kano, where they have about 2.5 tonnes per hectare.⁶⁹

Government Official

The state government has also developed a cluster community for pastoralist in Mafa, where a four-square-kilometre area accommodates 461 nomadic families from eighteen communities. Each of the 461 families received a pair of bulls and heifers, goats and a relief package of food and non-food items.⁷⁰ The settlement is a model approach for modernising livestock production and mitigating resource conflicts between herders and farmers. The location provides pasture, water points, and milking areas for pastoralists, along with essential amenities such as housing, a primary health centre, a market, and a veterinary clinic within its perimeter, which is protected by a defensive trench and security personnel.⁷¹

The fishing sector, which holds significant value for the local population and the wider region, has improved in recent years. However, it still faces several challenges that hinder its full recovery to pre-conflict levels and limit its potential expansion into an industrial sector capable of supporting regional fish supply and creating direct and indirect jobs across the value chain, from processing and packaging to rope production, boat fabrication, and transportation. Before the conflict, the major hub of fish trading along the lake's shores was Baga, where fishermen brought their catch from the islands to waiting traders, who then transported to dealers in Maiduguri and onward to other places. Today, limited access to the lake due to the extreme security risks posed by the insurgents' substantial presence in the area and dense aquatic weeds, which

⁶⁴ FGD interview in Damasak, August 2025

⁶⁵ <https://cbda.gov.ng/news/zulum-urges-chad-basin-authority-to-invest-in-groundwater-irrigation>

⁶⁶ <https://cbda.gov.ng/news/zulum-urges-chad-basin-authority-to-invest-in-groundwater-irrigation>

⁶⁷ <https://businessday.ng/news/article/zulum-pays-sympathy-visit-to-baga-warns-against-colluding-with-insurgents/>

⁶⁸ FGD interview in Baga, August 2025

⁶⁹ Interview with government official in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁷⁰ <https://punchng.com/orno-unveils-ruga-settles-461-herder-families/>

⁷¹ KII Interview with official in Mafa, August 2025



FIGURE 15: A herd of cattle grazing in open pastures within the resettled RUGA Settlement in Mafa, Borno State. [Photo: OSPRE]

obstructs the movement of military boats needed to secure access,⁷² has prevented the fishing from resuming on large scale.

In the meantime, the Ngala area has emerged as a crucial trading point for the traders, transporters and fishers, with fish supplies now coming from various border communities around Chad and Cameroon.⁷³ Despite this progress, the security situation remains highly fragile. This is illustrated by the deadly attack on the military position in Wulgo in March 2025,⁷⁴ and the attempted infiltration in October.⁷⁵

The intersection between resettlement, livelihoods, and sustainable environmental resources is critical for conflict recovery and resilience. However, progress remains heavily dependent on the broader security landscape, which continues to be highly volatile in many areas within the range of insurgents, particularly ISWAP. Due to these risks, many resettled communities face restrictions that hinder livelihood activities. These include strict controls on fertilizer, which has become expensive due to concerns about its possible diversion by insurgents for bomb-making. As a result, many farmers now use organic manure instead, collecting cattle dung and spreading it on their fields.⁷⁶ The military has also imposed limits on movement beyond the protective trenches surrounding the communities or a certain distance, as well as restrictions on the types of crops that can be cultivated such as tall crops that will obstruct lines of sight, further constraining what they are able to grow.⁷⁷ Those who venture beyond these perimeters and safe zones to farm, fish, or gather firewood face considerable risks, including extortion, abduction, or even fatal attacks. In one tragic incident, at least 40 farmers and fishermen from Baga were killed in Dumba on the shores of Lake Chad.⁷⁸ Despite these dangers, economic necessity continues to drive people to pursue livelihood opportunities in insurgent-controlled areas known as Daula. They venture into these areas to farm or fish but refrain from carrying identification cards or mobile devices. In return for being granted permission, they are to pay a levy imposed by the insurgents.⁷⁹

⁷² KII interview with security official in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁷³ Interview in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁷⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/islamist-fighters-attack-two-nigerian-military-bases-security-sources-say-2025-03-26/>

⁷⁵ <https://prnigeria.com/2025/10/25/military-repels-iswap-fighters/>

⁷⁶ KII Interview with Journalist in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/01/nigeria-boko-haram-must-end-vicious-killing-spree/>

⁷⁹ KII interview with Journalist in Maiduguri, August 2025

”

Life was enjoyable [in Baga]. You do your business, go fishing.....You don't think of anything; you are not bothered about someone collecting something from you, let alone killing you, during that period... You could go to far places on the water to look for what you wanted... You enter the market and there are traders, even from Enugu and everywhere from the south of Nigeria, who come to buy. If it's farming you want, there is beans cultivation, maize, and other things, including onions... The onions grown in Lake Chad were massive.⁸⁰

Middle Aged Farmer in Zabarmari



FIGURE 16: Group of women returning home with firewood in a RUGA Settlement in Mafa

⁸⁰ Quote is from Interview in Zabarmari, August 2025.

6.4 Threats to Sustainable Resettlement



We have areas we call the parapets, areas that the military has declared safe for farming and fishing activities...then the citizens are advised not to go beyond that parapets...the parapet is like a safe zone...for any activities.⁸¹

Security Official in Maiduguri

Insurgents perceive the resettlement process as an attempt by the government to establish new strongholds, populated by civilians loyal to the state. At the same time, they see returning populations as an opportunity for revenue extraction,⁸² given the need for resources which are in areas under their control or influence. As a result, civilians in resettled areas continue to face significant risks that undermine safety, recovery, and stability. In many of the local government areas, security conditions are relatively better in the headquarters where military and security deployments are stronger,⁸³ while communities on the fringes are exposed to attacks and intimidation. In certain situations, the group can choose to play the long game by deliberately refraining from attacks in an area, even when they have the capacity to do so.

The threats range from direct attacks, kidnapping outside safe zones, and ambushes to danger of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), remnants of previous combat or devices deliberately planted by insurgents along key supply and transit routes used by civilians and security forces. In June, at least four people were killed and more than a dozen injured when a pickup truck struck an IED along the Maiduguri–Damboa road.⁸⁴ The same month, at least 26 people were killed by roadside IEDs while traveling between Rann and Gamboru Ngala.⁸⁵ Earlier, in April, eight people were killed and eleven others injured in a similar incident on the same route.⁸⁶ In July, soldiers recovered 56 IEDs planted under a bridge linking the garrison towns of Marte and Dikwa.⁸⁷ In August, police operatives recovered an unexploded ordnance from a farmland in Dikwa,⁸⁸ while in the same month, two children were killed and six others injured when an IED they mistook for scrap metal detonated in Konduga.⁸⁹

Authorities have sought to mitigate these threats through awareness campaigns and explosive ordnance removal operations involving the Nigerian military, police explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) units, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).⁹⁰ These efforts are supported by international partners, notably the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), which has provided capacity-building, technical assistance, and community-based risk education to reduce casualties and enhance local preparedness.

The insurgents also established checkpoints along key road corridors within their areas of influence, where they intercept

⁸¹ Quote from KII interview with security official in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁸² Online KII Interview with Boko Haram Conflict Researcher, October 2025

⁸³ Online KII Interview with Lake Chad Conflict Researcher, August 2025

⁸⁴ <https://businessday.ng/news/article/bomb-explosion-kills-four-passengers-14-others-wounded-in-borno-highway-2/>

⁸⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/4/29/roadside-bomb-blast-kills-26-in-nigerias-restive-northeast>

⁸⁶ <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/8-killed-11-injured-in-ied-explosion-in-northeastern-nigeria/3536641>

⁸⁷ <https://radionigeria.gov.ng/2025/07/04/troops-recover-56-iswap-ieds-on-borno-bridge/>

⁸⁸ https://punchng.com/photos-police-uncover-bomb-on-borno-farm/#google_vignette

⁸⁹ <https://dailytrust.com/ied-explosion-kills-2-injures-6-others-in-borno/>

⁹⁰ KII Interview with security official in Maiduguri, August 2025

vehicles. To mitigate these livelihood and security challenges, authorities use the Agro-Rangers,⁹¹ which comprise of NSCDC personnel and CJTF members to protect farmers and pastoralists in the fields. The state government provides logistical support to the unit; however, their presence remains limited to certain areas. For its part, the military also protects farmers and escorts vehicles moving through high-risk roads to deal with the threats of IEDs and interception. In Baga, the government has deployed swamp buggies to help remove vegetation and reopen more sections of the canal and improve access for agricultural activities including fishing as well as military riverine operations such as boat patrols and amphibious maneuvers.⁹² In June, insurgents attempted to attack the equipment used for the 60-kilometre waterway clearance between Baga and Baga Sula communities in the Republic of Chad.

”

If you enter bush they will kidnap you and demand almost 1 million naira for ransom.⁹³

Widow and Caregiver to 11 Children in Mafa



FIGURE 17: Members of the NSCDC and CJTF, serving as Agro-Rangers providing security for farmers working on their farmlands in Mafa. [Photo: OSPRE]

⁹¹ KII interview with security official in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁹² KII interview with security official in Maiduguri, August 2025

⁹³ Quote is from FGD Interview in Mafa, August 2025

Additional challenges have emerged from tensions between returnees and the host community due to the demand for resources.⁹⁴ Many returnees lack ownership of farmland, as these areas are not their original homes. As a result, they struggle to get their own land and are limited to working as laborers on others' farms. There is also conflict between herders and farmers over grazing and the destruction of farmlands.⁹⁵ Herders themselves have been affected by the insecurity, including cattle rustling and environmental stress. The return of more people to their communities has further increased pressure on farmland and natural resources, heightening the potential for violence. In September, the police in Borno launched an investigation into a farmer–herder clash in Modukoruri village, Gubio Local Government Area, after herders allegedly trespassed on a beans and millet farm.⁹⁶ In response to such incidents, the State Government previously established a committee to address recurrent clashes, primarily between Fulani and Shuwa Arab herders and farmers from agrarian communities across the state, with the aim of encouraging dialogue and peaceful resolution of disputes.⁹⁷ There have also been incidents of elephant-human conflict in Gamboru Ngala and Kala-Balge Local Governments.⁹⁸

In the same vein, extreme weather events and environmental issues, particularly drought, desertification and floods, pose a challenge to conflict recovery, livelihood, and resilience in the region. In 2023, farmers in parts of Borno grappling with a prolonged dry spell and shortage of rainfall resorted to prayers.⁹⁹ However, in 2024, many farmers suffered significant losses due to extreme rainfall and flooding. One farmer reported spending between ₦600,000 and ₦700,000 on cultivation, only for the floodwaters to wash away the entire farm.¹⁰⁰ The flooding, which occurred in September 2024 following the failure of the Alau Dam, displaced at least 400,000 people in Maiduguri.¹⁰¹ Flash floods caused by extreme rainfall caused havoc in Mafa and Dikwa Local Government Areas.¹⁰² The flooding in Maiduguri destroyed nearly 40 percent of the seedlings raised by the State Great Green Wall initiative to combat desertification and its impacts¹⁰³.

6.5 Resurgence and Resettlement Fragility

The fragile stability underpinning resettlement and recovery efforts in Borno is being threatened by a renewed wave of insurgent violence. Since the first quarter of 2025, there has been a resurgence of violent attacks by ISWAP targeting both military formations and civilian communities. These attacks have led to casualties, temporary displacements and destruction. In April, the State Governor warned that insurgents were gaining strength and indicated the state may be losing hard-won ground. The renewed wave of violence, marked by active participation of foraging fighters and evolving insurgent tactics including the use of small drones to drop bombs,¹⁰⁴ employing motorcycles for swift mobility, and night assaults, risks reversing the progress achieved in recent years, particularly the military presence in many hinterland locations. Although the intensity of attacks slowed during the rainy season, it has begun to pick up again.

Resettlements in contested regions lead to displacements, reinforcing the view that such strategies are ineffective.¹⁰⁵ In October 2025, ISWAP launched coordinated assaults on the key garrison towns of Dikwa and Mafa. Earlier, in May, at least 20,000 people fled New Marte temporarily after insurgents overran the local military base; the town, resettled about four years ago, was the only inhabited and state-controlled settlement among more than 300 towns and villages in Marte Local

⁹⁴ https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/lost-land-broken-homes-the-struggles-of-returnees-and-relocated-persons-in-northeast-nigeria/lost-land-broken-homes-the-struggles-of-returnees-and-relocated-persons-in-northeast-nigeria_final.pdf

⁹⁵ FGD Interview in Konduga, August 2025

⁹⁶ <https://gazettengr.com/police-launch-investigation-into-farmer-herder-violent-clash-in-borno/>

⁹⁷ <https://ndarason.com/en/farmer-herder-clashes-do-not-panic-and-do-not-take-the-law-into-your-own-hands/>

⁹⁸ <https://punchng.com/stray-elephants-from-cameroon-invade-borno-communities-destroy-farmlands/>

⁹⁹ <https://www.thecable.ng/extra-borno-farmers-to-hold-special-prayers-over-delay-in-rainfall/>

¹⁰⁰ Interview in Maiduguri, August 2025

¹⁰¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/care-borno-state-flood-response-gender-protection-and-safety-risk-assessment-report-november-2024-borno-state-jere-mmcc-and-ngala-lga>

¹⁰² https://www.vanguardngr.com/2024/09/borno-flood-decomposed-bodies-recovered-others-missing-in-mafa-dikwa-report/#google_vignette

¹⁰³ KII interview with Government official in Maiduguri, August 2025

¹⁰⁴ <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/482>

¹⁰⁵ Online KII interview with Boko Haram conflict researcher, October 2025

Government Area.¹⁰⁶ In early September, an attack on Darajamal village in Bama Local Government Area by Boko Haram left more than 50 civilians dead, destroyed over 28 houses, and triggered renewed displacement among the community, where about 3,000 displaced persons had previously been resettled.¹⁰⁷ Later that same month, a large-scale assault on Kirawa, a border town in Gwoza LGA, forced residents to flee across the border to Kerewa in Cameroon. The attack resulted in the destruction of over 50 houses, several vehicles, and heavy-duty equipment,¹⁰⁸ notably, more than 2,500 displaced families were resettled there in 2022.¹⁰⁹

While ISWAP may at times seek to distinguish itself from Boko Haram by adopting a different approach toward civilians, it still poses a threat to civilians, particularly to areas hosting both military forces and CJTF units. If the current tempo of high-intensity attacks on security bases continues, it could render some military positions untenable, forcing withdrawals and creating openings for ISWAP to exploit resettled populations while reasserting freedom of movement and territorial control. The group's consolidation of power in the Sambisa area following its defeat of Boko Haram has further altered regional security dynamics, enabling ISWAP to project attacks deep into southern Borno while maintaining strongholds in the Timbuktu Triangle and around the Lake Chad region.



FIGURE 18: Garden eggs from an orchard farm in Jere, Borno [Photo: OSPRE]

¹⁰⁶ <https://fmino.gov.ng/zulum-begs-fg-not-to-allow-marte-lga-fall/>

¹⁰⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/rapid-need-assessment-report-attack-darajamal-bama-local-government-area-borno-state-nigeria-september-2025>

¹⁰⁸ <https://punchng.com/displaced-borno-residents-recount-boko-haram-invasion/>

¹⁰⁹ <https://ndarason.com/en/kirawa-almost-a-rags-to-riches-tale-as-nowhere-town-starts-over-again/>

7.0 Recommendations



If we have soldiers on the islands we talked about, there would be peace, everyone will be able to farm, get education and fish.

Fish Trader in Maiduguri

The resettlement in Borno State has progressed in parallel with persistent security threats in many of the communities, limited livelihood opportunities, insufficient public services and mounting ecological stress, which threatens the viability of the policy. At the same time, the impacts of climate variability manifested in erratic rainfall, rising temperatures and flooding, have exacerbated vulnerabilities and constrained adaptation. The sustainability of resettlement programmes in the broader Lake Chad region hinges on managing the intersection of security, livelihoods, and environmental resilience.

7.1 Resettlement

The government's ability to achieve its objectives and provide stability for returnees will require a multidimensional approach, including boosting funding through domestic resource mobilisation. In the medium to long term, authorities can consolidate existing resources and raise additional financing domestically, while prioritising investments in low to medium-risk areas. They could also expand current practices that involve the establishment of new settlement clusters for communities from remote and insecure areas.

Scaling up this form of population re-engineering can help redistribute settlements in ways that improve access to services and enhance safety. By establishing multiple settlement clusters positioned to allow government forces to dominate surrounding terrain, the spaces between them can become safer for agricultural activities and civilian movement. The provision of essential humanitarian and social services including water, education, healthcare, and electricity within these clusters would be more efficient. The government can also support the military in expanding technological enablers such as cameras, drones, and command-and-control infrastructure. Such an approach would allow settlements to share and maximise security capabilities. In the long term, this strategy could enable the state to address the governance gaps that previously characterised remote areas, which insurgents exploited for recruitment, control, and sustenance.

7.1.1 Military-Counterinsurgency

Short-Medium Term

There is an urgent need to prevent and stop the recurring attacks on security bases and communities through strengthened early warning and rapid response mechanisms. This should include improved intelligence gathering, proactive patrols, and enhanced operational capabilities to counter the evolving tactics, including drone and night attacks and terrain related challenges within the area of operations.

Security also depends on shifting the concept of establishing resettlement from isolated communities fortified by trench systems and having limited safe zones to open and secure environments that enable returnees to engage freely in socioeconomic activities. Achieving this will require efforts to strengthen clearance operations and establish mechanisms to hold and secure liberated territories and prevent the return of insurgents. Establishing a highly mobile and versatile Quick Reaction Force (QRF) capable of continuous engagement, disruption of insurgent logistics, and relief of static defensive positions will further enhance operational effectiveness.

Long-Term

The capturing and securing of key insurgent strongholds, particularly the Timbuktu Triangle, Sambisa and Mandara mountains, is essential for ensuring the safety of surrounding communities and maintaining secure supply routes. Dominating the Lake Chad wetlands and taking control of strategic islands for civilian and security use, including serving military and intelligence hubs to strengthen regional MNJTF security operations.

The international community will play an important role in supporting the MNJTF to significantly build up counterinsurgency and counterterrorism capabilities, including airborne, land, amphibious and riverine assets needed to enhance safety for communities along the lake, on the islands, and forest areas. This will also help secure waterways, land corridors, and unlock significant economic potential through agriculture, fishing, and cross-border trade within the region and the Sahel.

7.1.2 Law Enforcement

Short-Medium Term

Beyond the role of the military in maintaining security, the participation of civilian law enforcement agencies, including the Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria Customs Service, Nigeria Immigration Service, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, is essential for ensuring law and order in both urban and rural contexts. The degree of their involvement varies according to the risk profile of each area: in high-risk zones, the military remains the lead actor, supported by the Civilian Joint Task Force, while in moderate and low-risk areas, civilian law enforcement agencies play the primary role.

Equally important is the psychological impact on communities. The visible presence of police and other civilian security actors reinforces public confidence, supports the sense of normalcy, and strengthens trust between citizens and the state, key ingredients for post-conflict recovery.

Authorities must address the future of the CJTF and other volunteer security formations through a systematic and transparent process. Options include integrating qualified members into federal security agencies, incorporating them into local or community policing frameworks, and transforming some of them into Rangers tasked with securing biodiversity sanctuaries and providing community-based security services.

Long-Term

There is a pressing need for broader institutional and operational reforms that allow for a more active role for law enforcement agencies and a clear framework for enhancing the transfer of responsibilities from the military. Such a framework should include measures for capacity building and rapid support mechanisms in the event of breaches, infiltration, or large-scale attacks. Expanding the role of law enforcement agencies will free the military to focus on strategic operations while increasing overall security manpower. These agencies possess specialised capabilities, such as intelligence gathering, border surveillance and protection, and riverine patrols, that are force multipliers and essential for maintaining stability.

Establishing a strong and functional criminal justice and judiciary system is a critical component of long-term stability. It serves as a vital mechanism for resolving disputes, ensuring justice, and reinforcing the authority and legitimacy of the state. A credible justice system will also be central to transitional and restorative justice processes, which are essential for community healing, reconciliation, and the effective management of reintegrated former Boko Haram members. The continuous monitoring of reintegrated individuals to ensure compliance with conditions and behavioural standards will help sustain community trust and manage recidivism.

7.1.3 Civil Society

Civil society, including local NGOs, community leaders, women's groups, youth organisations, and religious institutions, will play a crucial role in non-kinetic security initiatives that consolidate the gains made by the military and law enforcement. These actors are essential building blocks for resilience and peacebuilding efforts that support long-term stability. Their involvement is a vital interface between resettled communities and security forces, thereby helping to build trust and winning the people's hearts and minds.

Their close proximity to local populations enables them to identify grievances, social tensions and sources of vulnerability that are often overlooked by formal security institutions. This positioning also makes them valuable components of early warning mechanisms to mitigate resource conflicts and key actors in preventing and countering violent extremism, among returnees.

They are also essential partners in the deradicalisation, rehabilitation, and reintegration process, helping to facilitate community acceptance and the reintegration of former Boko Haram members and their families. Their close engagement with communities positions them to monitor behavioural changes, identify risks, and detect early signs of relapse or renewed radicalisation. They will play key roles in programmes aimed at trauma healing, community-based justice, and reconciliation, critical components for the success of the Borno Model.



FIGURE 19: Focus Group Discussion in Monguno, Borno [Photo: OSPRE]

7.2 Governance, Natural Resources and Resilience

Governance and natural resource management are deeply intertwined pathways toward building economic and social resilience, while mitigating the stresses associated with climate change and environmental degradation. They interface to create the enabling conditions for enduring stability and peace. Strengthening governance structures is essential for restoring dignity and supporting livelihoods in communities. These efforts are also central to preventing and countering violent extremism by addressing one of the insurgents' key sources of influence, the exploitation of local populations and livelihood resources. It will be valuable for harnessing the region's water, land and vegetation resources to support sustainable livelihoods and enhance climate resilience. This includes assisting farmers in adapting to seasonal fluctuations and taking advantage of opportunities for cultivation in areas where water recedes. With proper planning and support, the region can become a major source of fish and fish by-products, meat and dairy products, as well as grains such as wheat and rice. Realising this will require a combination of coordinated initiatives and the strengthening of existing programs led by government institutions, non-governmental actors, and the private sector.

7.2.1 Government

Short-Medium Term

There is a need to provide adequate local governance, social amenities and basic services across resettled communities, while addressing the disparities that exist between locations, particularly those in more remote areas. These gaps are especially evident in northern Borno near Lake Chad, where communities experience weaker governance presence, limited service and greater security vulnerabilities compared to more accessible areas. Furthermore, the government will need to strengthen measures to manage land ownership to secure people's rights to land and mitigate conflicts.

The government should seek a balanced approach and strengthen collaboration with humanitarian and development actors in the implementation of reconstruction, rehabilitation, and resettlement. This includes coordinating the provision of humanitarian assistance while simultaneously investing in development projects and infrastructure. Such concurrent efforts are essential to ensure access to healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, markets, and energy, as well as accessible high-quality, vocational, technical, and adult education.

Long-Term

The Federal Government and its key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) play a central role in rebuilding communities and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The involvement of the Rural Electrification Agency and the Federal Ministry of Power is particularly vital in ensuring access to reliable and renewable energy sources for small and medium-scale agro-entrepreneurs, thereby enhancing productivity and economic activities. Similarly, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and the Chad Basin Development Authority (CBDA) are critical for effective water resource management to support farming, irrigation, and fishing activities. The revival of the School of Fisheries in Baga can build the local capacity and promote sustainable fishing practices that contribute to food security and employment generation. Beyond fisheries and grain production, the region could also take advantage of economic potential in gum arabic production and the harvesting and processing of blue-green algae (spirulina), a sustainable, nutrient-rich dietary supplement with growing global demand for both human and animal consumption.

The mobilisation of resources and increased provision of infrastructure by the Federal Government in coordination with the state are important for RRR efforts. Institutions such as the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, the North East Development Commission (NEDC), and the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will be valuable partners for rebuilding and reviving affected communities.

There is a strong need for increased capacity to mitigate climate change related stresses and environmental degradation works in parallel with the efforts of the Federal Ministry of Environment and the Great Green Wall Agency, which are leading the implementation of national climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies. These initiatives include enhancing land restoration, and community-based environmental management programs. The government's efforts should also extend to strengthening systems to reduce the impact of extreme flooding, such as localised early warning and response mechanisms, implemented not only at the state level but also within local governments and communities. Additional measures include developing resilient infrastructure and supporting community adaptation using strategic resources such as the Ecological Fund and other financing sources. Solutions such as rainwater harvesting, river desilting, and improved drainage should also be prioritised. Moreover, integrating climatic and environmental variables into resettlement planning is vital for long-term risk reduction.



FIGURE 20: A focused group discussion session in Marte, Borno [Photo: OSPRE]

Non-Governmental Actors

Non-governmental actors, including local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups are vital partners to the government in addressing humanitarian needs and strengthening public institutions in remote areas. Their roles are vital in ensuring that resettlement processes are implemented in ways that prioritise the dignity and well-being of returnees while securing a viable and sustainable future for their communities. Strengthening collaboration between these actors and government institutions is critical to delivering coordinated assistance, addressing fragility, and laying the foundation for inclusive and resilient development.

They are indispensable partners in promoting governance and the sustainable management of natural resources. Their efforts can promote the conservation of wildlife, mitigate human conflict, promote rehabilitation of degraded land, and support the demining of civilian areas to enable safe resettlement and productive land use.

These actors are also important for promoting agricultural education, advancing climate-smart agricultural practices, and improving access to quality inputs such as climate-resilient seeds. They can further strengthen aquaculture and build the capacity of fishing communities to operate sustainably, leveraging Nigeria's fish supply deficit to boost productivity, household income and food security. These contributions will have a greater impact when implemented collaboratively with government agencies and local authorities.

Non-governmental actors can encourage the development of social enterprises powered by renewable energy to support the processing and storage of agricultural products, an essential intervention given the high cost and limited availability of fuel in many interior areas. They can also help strengthen the capacity of local government institutions and officials through training, technical assistance, and policy guidance. This includes improving regulatory frameworks, planning, decision-making, and monitoring processes to enhance service delivery and promote sustainable resource management.

International Actors

The international community remains a key partner in harmonising humanitarian and development plans to create a coherent and viable framework for the rebuilding, rehabilitation, and resettlement in the Lake Chad region. Their role is vital in ensuring that short-term humanitarian interventions are aligned with long-term development goals that strengthen resilience and self-reliance. International actors are also central to mobilising finance and technical support to mitigate climate change-related risks, including through mechanisms for loss and damage compensation and adaptation funding.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission is in the best position as the regional institution to facilitate cooperation that enhances security, trade, and development, in addition to championing regional infrastructure projects to encourage transboundary cooperation in water management for transport and agriculture, and strengthening land corridors to enhance regional trade, community interaction, and economic recovery, generating positive spillover effects across the Lake Chad region.



FIGURE 21: A water point at the RUGA settlement in Mafa, Borno State, provides livestock with access to drinking water, supporting pastoral livelihoods and community resettlement efforts. [Photo: OSPRE]







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