

Beat: Health

UNHCR chief launches U\$241 million appeal for conflict-displaced in Lake Chad

Lake Chad Basin in crisis

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USPA NEWS - UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi today in Cameroon launched a multi-million dollar inter-agency appeal to help almost half-a-million people in Niger, Chad and Cameroon affected by the Boko Haram insurgency, including more than 183,000 Nigerian refugees.

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The 36 partners (UN agencies and NGOs) of the 2017 Nigeria Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) are asking for US\$241 million for next year to help some 460,000 people "" Nigerian refugees, internally displaced people and host community members in the three countries. More than half (US\$154.29 million) is required for Niger, with the response in Cameroon requiring \$67.25 million and US\$19.61 million for operations in Chad.-----

The appeal for next year is a US\$43 million increase over that of 2016, which is only 43 per cent funded. With today's launch of the appeal, UNHCR and the other agencies making the appeal are urging donors to respond with greater generosity to help people in urgent need of help. "This is one of Africa's largest displacement crises and the world cannot afford to brush it under the carpet," said Grandi before launching the Nigeria RRRP at a ceremony in Yaounde. "The suffering and desperate conditions in the Lake Chad region are among the harshest I have seen. Refugees, returnees and host communities who have survived violence and trauma by the Boko Haram insurgency urgently need help," added Grandi, who this week has visited refugees and internally displaced people in Niger, Chad and Cameroon and plans to visit Nigeria in the coming days.

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Despite increased security, people still face tough conditions and insecurity in all three host countries. The main daily challenges include insufficient protection, durable shelter and lack of food, health care, malnutrition, education and livelihoods. Environmental damage is also a concern and the need for water, sanitation and hygiene.

With the situation unpredictable and no immediate prospects of a resolution or significant return, stepped-up funding support from the international community is vital. Humanitarian needs must be urgently addressed and UNHCR and partners need the funding to build on progress made in 2016. In addition to this, it is critical that the international community immediately invest in development programmes for both refugees and host communities. During his field visits, the High Commissioner witnessed innovative development oriented activities that benefit both displaced people and host communities, including gas distribution projects in Diffa, Niger, and boats for fishing communities in Baga Sola, Chad. -----

The High Commissioner committed to advocate with development agencies and donor countries to invest in programmes in the Lake Chad basin so that this crisis can be tackled with creativity and innovation. After another year of continued conflict, displacement and suffering in an area of extreme poverty, harsh climatic conditions, disrupted economic activity, and limited or destroyed infrastructure, the need for continued protection and assistance is more compelling than ever before. Humanitarian aid agencies must be resourced to work with governments to reach more people in need, and development money must be urgently invested to take advantage of the new opportunities to provide services and improve lives. Aid groups are also, in a separate appeal, seeking over US\$1 billion from donors to help some 1.8 million displaced people within Nigeria, up considerably from the amount sought in 2016. Source : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

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