



Expanding Humanitarian Access in Northeastern Nigeria

Since 2013, Boko Haram militants have escalated attacks in northeastern Nigeria's Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states, generating significant population displacement and humanitarian needs. Conflict-related violence has contributed to acute food insecurity, the unavailability of health care and other basic services, and widespread malnutrition in Boko Haram-affected areas. The UN estimates that 8.5 million people across the country's three northeastern states require humanitarian assistance due to the ongoing violence.

Amid this humanitarian crisis, persistent insecurity has disrupted overland transportation routes and hindered efforts by relief agencies to reach populations caught in the conflict. Access constraints are particularly severe in Borno, where approximately 4.4 million people are in need

of assistance. The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), through \$4 million in USAID support, commenced operations in mid-2015 to mitigate road access challenges and facilitate the expansion of emergency response activities in the northeast. Since then, UNHAS aircraft have regularly transported humanitarian personnel and cargo—including urgently needed food, medicine, and shelter supplies—to hard-to-reach areas of Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe.

USAID funding has also enabled UNHAS to contract rotary wing aircraft, further expanding the reach of relief agencies to otherwise inaccessible outlying and remote areas of the states. Between August 2015 and January 2017, UNHAS transported nearly 170,000 pounds of humanitarian assistance and 18,800 response personnel.

Although the Nigerian military has expelled Boko Haram from many areas of the northeast, conflict-related insecurity and related humanitarian access challenges are unlikely to abate in the near future. USAID's support for UNHAS operations is vital to humanitarian response efforts in Nigeria, allowing relief workers to provide life-saving aid to populations in hard-to-reach locations. As the Nigerian military regains more territory from Boko Haram, UNHAS flights will continue enabling humanitarian organizations to quickly and safely assist those most in need.

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