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SUCCESS STORY

USAID Assists Boko Haram-Affected Families in Cameroon

USAID's emergency response in northern Cameroon helped provide relief commodities to 2,000 people affected by Boko Haram attacks



IOM distributes relief kits to displaced families in need of basic assistance

Courtesy of IOM

Since October 2014, Boko Haram has gradually expanded its attacks on civilians from northeastern Nigeria to neighboring countries. Cameroon's Far North and North regions have weathered particularly brutal violence, which internally displaced almost 81,700 people as of mid-May 2015. Nearly 36,000 Cameroonian migrants returned home to escape insecurity in Nigeria, only to find themselves again engulfed in Boko Haram-related violence. Host community resources were straining under the influx of the 12,500 Nigerian refugees seeking safety. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, and host families increasingly lacked basic supplies to meet minimum household needs.

In coordination with the U.S. Department of State, USAID leapt to action in northern Cameroon by supporting the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to respond to acute needs of affected families in and around the town of Mokolo, in the Far North's Mayo Tsanaga Department. IOM distributed household items to 250 of the most vulnerable IDP, returnee, and host community households. The relief commodity kits included blankets, cooking sets, sleeping mats, and hygiene supplies, among other items. Each component of the kit was carefully selected by IOM to ensure their appropriateness for the hot Sahelian climate of the Far North.

To make sure the right households received assistance, IOM engaged its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)—a population movement database supported by USAID in multiple crises worldwide. DTM data determined numbers and locations of IDPs, gaps in emergency service provision, vulnerabilities of specific groups, and priority needs among affected populations.

The regional crisis generated by Boko Haram's attacks—both in terms of direct threats to civilians and tertiary consequences to agricultural production, income-earning, and education for children—requires nimble humanitarian action. Through experienced, well-positioned partners like IOM, USAID is committed to meeting the urgent humanitarian needs of populations affected by Boko Haram.