

Rapid Assessment in Pulka, Gwoza LGA, Borno State 29th January 2019

Key Highlights

- The critical needs of new arrivals are food, clothes and shelter.
- Significant food gap exists amongst new arrivals in the IDP camps in Pulka, as the households are heavily dependent on food assistance and support from relative/friend.
- Men are engaged in some form of casual labor such as the clearing of bushes and road. Men and women are also engaged in the collection of fire wood, which is sold to other households living in the camps.
- The exchange of dry food rations amongst new arrivals and their relatives and friends is common practice. Dry food rations are exchanged for wet prepared food. This attributed to no or limited access to cooking fuel.
- A concern raised amongst most households is the difficulty encountered by women in processing the food, attributed to lack of cooking kits and firewood.

Background

Pulka is a town located in Gwoza LGA of Borno state and it is about 18km from Gwoza and about 35km from Bama LGA. Pulka shares a border with neighboring Cameroon and has become a common destination for displaced people. Amongst the IDPs, new arrivals are received on a daily and weekly basis. Pulka has seen its population increase considerably since the beginning of the year. At the moment more than 60,000 people live in Pulka town, and water shortages and insufficient shelter have become major concerns for humanitarian organizations. The raising of livestock (cattle, sheep and goats), poultry (local chickens and ducks) is practiced at small scale amongst members of the host community.



The recent counter military operation in Pulka and its surrounding LGA has led to the rapid influx of internally displaced persons to Pulka central area. Living conditions and access to food are highly precarious in IDP camps as the affected population have no/limited access to income/livelihoods.

Objectives of the Assessments

- Verifying the presence and number of new arrivals. Assess the food security situation and general living condition of the IDPs.
- Verify the access of IDPs to humanitarian assistance.

Methodology

The assessment was conducted on 29th January 2019. It was done through focus group discussions with internally displaced men and women, holding key informant interviews (KII) with IOM camp manager and the staff of SWNI.

A group of 12 men formed the panel for the FGDs, while women in the FGD were about 20. Discussions centered on access to food, livelihood activities, coping strategies adopted by households, functionality of markets, daily wages for laborers and humanitarian assistance.

Findings

The situation remains fluid as Pulka continues to witness influx of new arrivals on a daily/weekly basis. About 1,900 individuals are said to have arrived in Pulka from the 1st of January to 25th January 2019. The ratio of women is higher in number when compared with men which is about 5:1 ratio.

The new arrivals were displaced mainly from villages surrounding Pulka, such as Ashegashe, Miyanti, Agapawa, Kirawa, Chikide, Duwa and Chinene. About 98% of these new arrivals came from Kirawa which is considered safer than other surrounding villages, primarily due to risk of insecurity/conflict. Hence, the communities refer to the village as a 'safe haven' and a catchment area. Due to the pull factors in Kirawa (8KM away from Pulk), some households from the host community who are not benefiting from any program, move to Kirawa posing as displaced persons in order to be brought in as new arrivals into IDP camps to be entitled to food assistance. Measures are applied by IOM/SWNI in detecting such individuals and as a result 300 individuals were identified/verified.



Once the displaced persons have been confirmed as new arrivals, they are registered by IOM-ETT/SWNI and given a red token which is an indication of their stay in the transit camp where SWNI gives a food token alongside the IOM cards. During the IOM registration, MUAC measurements are taken concurrently with IOM registration. Two (2) SAM cases were reported and have been referred to MSF-clinic, while children with MAM cases were provided with WFP-blanket supplementary feeding. Amongst the new arrivals, many complained that they have fled their villages leaving behind their valuables, productive assets and clothing.

As at the time of this assessment, the new arrivals had already received their food ration for the first 30 days and are awaiting the ration for the month of February. According to the IDPs, the food assistance has been very timely, considering the dire food security situation amongst new arrivals. Households are heavily reliant on food assistance, while a few are supported by relatives and camps within the camp. A concern raised amongst most households is the difficulty encountered by women in processing the food due to lack of cooking utensils/firewood.



However, on the 28th Jan 2019 KABHUDA (Kanem Borno Human Development Association) started wet feeding for the new arrivals. This is intended to last for just 3 days. Their main aim was to ensure that the new arrivals (NAs) have access to food for the first three days of their arrival before SWNI distribute dry food.

The humanitarian partners on ground intervening include:

NFI-UNHCR, IOM and DRC

Shelter- IOM, UNHCR

Health- MSF, WHO, UNICEF

Education- UNICEF, PLAN,

It worth mentioning that, UNHCR in partnership with JISCOR has distributed fuel efficient stoves and charcoals.

Coping Strategies

- New arrivals are heavily dependent on food assistance from their relatives and friends living in IDP camps, in the first two to three days of their arrival before dry food are provided to them by SWNI.

- The men engage in some form of work such as the clearing of bushes and road. Men and women engage in the collection of fire wood, which is sold to other households living in the camps.
- Exchange of dry food rations amongst new arrivals and their relatives and friends is common practice with dry food rations being exchanged for wet prepared food. This attributed to no or limited access to cooking fuel.
- New arrivals are also engaged in begging.

Market Functionality

The market in Pulka is operational, although significantly below pre-crisis level. Key staples are available in the markets, with transporters and traders commuting from Pulka to other locations. Official market day is on Tuesdays and the market is busy with buyers and sellers from neighboring villages and Cameroun. Traders and residents also visit Kirawa market (a business hub at the border between Nigeria and Cameroun). Military escort is required on markets days due to fear of attacks.

Conclusion/Recommendation

- ✓ There is need to monitor the situation closely amongst the new arrivals to ensure they access food assistance on time.
- ✓ SWNI is encouraged to foster coordination with other partners like KABHUDA, as this would complement the effective transition from wet feeding to dry feeding amongst the newly arrived households.
- ✓ The markets in Pulka should be monitored to determine if in depth assessment is required to evaluate the feasibility of food-vouchers.
- ✓ Livelihood interventions such as poultry and back yard/vegetable gardening interventions are recommended to be implemented in the host community, as this would further contribute to households' access to food and income.