Findings and Recommendations
InterAction Protection Mission – Northeast Nigeria
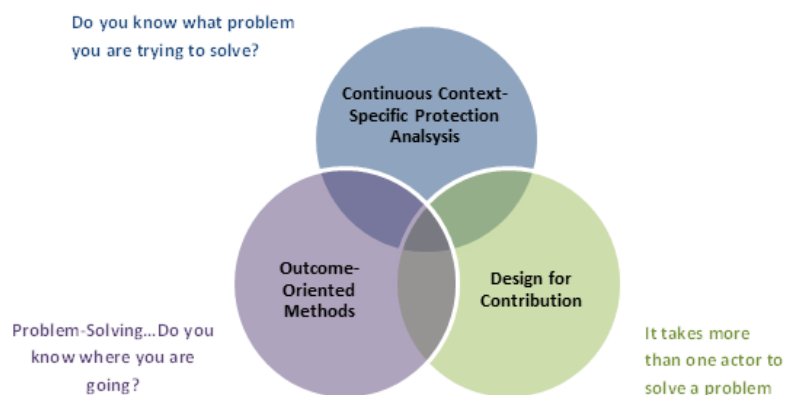### *July/August 2018*

I.   *Executive Summary*

The Nigeria INGO Forum requested that InterAction visit Nigeria with a view to supporting NGO efforts to (1) enhance protection analysis to inform response planning and advocacy efforts in a continuous, focused, and coordinated manner; and (2) provide observations, reflections, and recommendations for improving relations between NGOs and the Nigerian Government in pursuit of protection outcomes.

Specifically, InterAction sought to:[1] [2]

- Examine means and methods for information collection, analysis, and use for operational and strategic decision-making on protection, including grounding analysis in the perspective of the affected population. The mission aimed to focus on protection issues highlighted during stakeholder consultations (for example restricted freedom of movement, gender-based violence, and IDP returns) and support actors in efforts to deepen the analysis in an iterative way and use it for evidence-informed programmatic decision-making and advocacy;

- Examine and make recommendations on the implementation of the recently endorsed *HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy* and complementary Action Plan, with particular focus on the NGO role in this process, including strengthening the role of existing fora and mechanisms in the humanitarian system, opportunities to cultivate the contributions of a range of actors to achieve protection outcomes, and engage with the relevant authorities with regard to the humanitarian consequences of conflict and related policy issues;

- Provide other recommendations to strengthen the use of the key elements of results-based protection to enhance sub-national and national protection strategies and their implementation to achieve collective protection outcomes.

Do you know what problem you are trying to solve?

Continuous Context-Specific Protection Analsyis

Outcome-Oriented Methods

Design for Contribution

Problem-Solving...Do you know where you are going?

It takes more than one actor to solve a problem

Key Elements of Results-Based Protection

This visit also served as an opportunity to reflect on implementation of the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action and the contributions various actors can make in this regard. Although this report speaks primarily to international NGOs, some findings concern the broader humanitarian community and it is hoped that the observations and recommendations prove useful for all actors concerned with protection in northeast Nigeria.

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[1] The InterAction visit was carried out by Jenny McAvoy and Katie Grant on 19 July – 3 August 2018. Over 35 meetings were held in Maiduguri and Abuja with a range of stakeholders, including IDPs, local and international NGOs, UN entities, the Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator, and donor government representatives.

[2] There are several issues which warrant close attention that were not possible to examine thoroughly during this two-week visit, notably: protection concerns in currently "inaccessible" areas; the conduct of military operations and their impact on civilians; counter-terrorism laws, policies, and restrictions and their implications for the civilian population and the humanitarian response.

General findings and recommendations

To a great extent, InterAction found individual personnel and organizations across the Nigeria humanitarian response in the northeast to be very knowledgeable about the context and the critical challenges faced in the response. We also found people to be very concerned about the overall scale and ambition of the humanitarian response and acutely aware that numerous protection concerns in particular were not being purposefully addressed. Several individuals commented on a proliferation of strategy documents and frameworks which lacked shared ownership and meaningful implementation plans – or even capacity to give effect to strategies envisaged.

In the face of a large number of severe and prevalent ongoing threats of gross human rights abuses and failure to spare civilian lives and property from the effects of conflict, there appears to be little consensus among humanitarian organizations about which critical problems should be prioritized, how to go about addressing them, and what some potential strategies and remedies might be. While some individuals had very practical insight into potential solutions to ongoing problems, there appears to be a common tendency to expect someone else to take action – usually someone in a UN leadership position – and relatively little impetus to initiate collective action to address big and complex problems. There are some exceptions to this, particularly regarding some positive steps to mobilize humanitarian actors around the *GBV Call to Action Nigeria Road Map* as well as a coordinated approach to the question of IDP return and relocation.

However, InterAction recommends that the overall humanitarian response should shift gears for a much more ambitious and impactful strategy which is focused and collaborative, grounded in purposeful analysis, and engaged in multi-sectoral problem-solving. In particular, with the range of NGO expertise and capacity present in northeast Nigeria, it should be possible for NGOs to initiate such efforts and to use their analysis and experience to call for collaboration of other humanitarian actors.

It is recommended that NGOs seek to collectively deepen their analysis on complex problems, develop strategies and be propositional. In doing so, it will be important to ensure purposeful analysis in support of practical problem-solving and adopt results-based approaches for comprehensive risk reduction, including continuous, context-specific protection analysis; iterative and adaptive methods; and multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral strategies. For most of the protection risks addressed in this report, it will take years for widespread and sustained impact to be achieved and as such, they should be approached with medium- to long-term investments in mind. Even so, it should still be possible to yield significant risk reduction, and appreciably enhanced protection of the civilian population, by initiating some concrete new steps now.

NGOs present in-country have the organizational expertise needed to take action along the lines described in the recommendations below and should seek to ensure additional in-country capacity where needed to address the protection issues of shared concern. The multi-disciplinary character of the problems that need to be addressed, and their potential solutions, necessitates a high level of coordinated effort. The Nigeria INGO Forum is uniquely positioned to convene and facilitate NGO collaboration on some "big ticket" items – i.e. complex problems which necessitate multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, and multi-level interventions, ensuring that the unique capacities of individual NGOs are brought to bear on collaborative efforts. This effort should additionally be pursued with a view to ensuring that the analysis and experience resulting from NGOs also serve to inform the overall UN-led humanitarian response.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Strengthen multi-sectoral data collection and sharing, and continuous context-specific analysis, as a basis for collective problem-solving. In particular, it is recommended that humanitarian actors establish a common framework for camp level protection monitoring, use existing information from a range of sectors for protection analysis, and collectively conduct foresight and scenario development.

Recommendation 2: Expand safe freedom of movement of civilians around garrison towns. It is recommended that humanitarian actors undertake area-based protection analysis, develop the causal logic of strategies to expand freedom of movement and mitigate the effect of ongoing restrictions, and undertake iterative problem-solving.

Recommendation 3: Invest in the prevention of gender-based violence. It is recommended that humanitarian actors disaggregate the specific risk patterns of GBV, specify the desired outcome and causal logic for strategies to address each risk pattern, develop context-specific indicators for each risk pattern to be tracked, and be iterative and seek to learn from experience.

Recommendation 4: Invest in a coordinated strategy to ensure that IDPs make free and informed decisions regarding their return, relocation or local integration, and that their return, relocation and/or local integration options are safe, viable and undertaken voluntarily. To succeed in this, it is recommended that humanitarian actors invest in two-way dialogue with IDPs to help establish the conditions for free and informed decision-making on their return, relocation, and local integration, and to help ensure that IDP's options are viable ones.

Recommendation 5: Put in place competencies and mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment by and of humanitarian personnel. Specifically, the HCT should establish a regular agenda item to discuss measures to prevent and respond to sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment by and of humanitarian personnel and an experienced and senior level PSEA Advisor position should urgently be created under the Humanitarian Coordinator. NGOs should consider adopting a common pledge and all humanitarian organizations working in northeast Nigeria should audit their Nigeria offices for compliance with existing PSEA Code of Conduct and other internal policies.

Recommendation 6: Continue to build strategic engagement with key stakeholders in alignment with desired protection outcomes. It is recommended that humanitarian actors plan for and build up engagement with the Civilian Joint Task Force, invest in the capacities and planning necessary for securing access to "inaccessible" areas, strengthen civil-military coordination capacity for substantive dialogue on humanitarian concerns, and pro-actively counter disinformation.

Recommendation 7: Invest in coordination and collaboration for protection outcomes. To accomplish this, it is recommended that humanitarian actors invest in the role of the Nigerian INGO Forum for protection outcomes, adopt greater strategic focus for an enhanced role of the Humanitarian Country Team in support of protection outcomes, and clarify PSWG co-leadership and create mechanisms for collaboration.

The Women of the *Knifar* Movement

Six women of the Knifar Movement ("success" in Hausa) relayed their experience of this conflict with us. We are sharing it in full here as it is illustrative of how civilians have experienced – and continue to experience -- the conflict in northeast Nigeria.

Their story begins in 2015 in the villages surrounding the town of Banki in the Bama LGA of Borno state. Their experience represents a microcosm of the story of the impact of conflict on civilians in northeast Nigeria and of the humanitarian response. Founded by a small group of women in Bama Hospital Camp, the *Knifar* Movement now includes over 1,300 women IDPs.

These women were living with their husbands and families in small farming communities outside of Banki. When they started hearing of Boko Haram attacks in nearby villages, their families decided to relocate to the town of Banki where it was thought to be safer. As the security situation worsened and Boko Haram controlled more territory in the Northeast, Banki was eventually overrun, and Boko Haram affiliated insurgents proceeded to fence in their town, impose strict laws on its residents and treat those living within Banki as hostages, especially the women. (To listen to a representative of the Knifar movement describe her life as a hostage under Boko Haram, find the recording here.)

> *"If you went outside your house as a woman, you would receive 50 lashes; if you wanted to escape, they would kill you."*

Some months later, rumors began circulating that the Nigerian Armed Forces were positioned to launch an attack to retake Banki, which prompted Boko Haram to leave and allowed the *Knifar* women and their families the opportunity to escape in the middle of the night. As Banki was ransacked, the *Knifar* women fled toward the Cameroonian border: some encountered the military *en route* and were trucked back to Banki to await further instruction from the Nigerian Armed Forces; others continued on to Cameroon where they were met by Cameroonian military officials who stripped them naked, confiscated their valuables, and trucked them back to the Nigerian military officials in Banki. After four days without food and water in military detention in Banki, their husbands and sons "of fighting age" were

Six representatives of the Knifar Movement (interviewed July 2018). Their faces are not shown to protect their identities.

separated from them, blindfolded, and put on buses by the Nigerian military. They were first taken to Bama Prison and a few days later to another location, which the women assume to be Giwa Barracks detention facility. The women and children were bused to the prison camp, where food was scare, and subsequently to Bama Hospital camp.

Upon arrival in the camps, the Nigerian military did not ask many questions of the women other than where they were from and why they had taken so long to come to the camp, implying suspected affiliation with non-State armed groups. The women tried to explain that their families had been held hostage in Banki under Boko Haram, and they had just managed to escape. When they enquired repeatedly after their husbands and sons, they were told that they were taken to Maiduguri to prepare for the women to join them. They later discovered that this would not be the case. In the

> *"The military dumped us there [Bama Hospital Camp] where there were thousands of people who didn't have food or water – they were all malnourished. We spoke to the women there who said that they had been there for 2 weeks, and now that you join us, you are also here to suffer."*

> *"Any time a woman came out to get food in a queue, they [military, CJTF, security forces] pull them aside; after having sex with a woman they give her food for 1-2 days. After 3 or 4 times of sexual abuse, the women should know what is supposed to happen [if they want to receive food]. [...] In Bama Hospital, one lady died as a result of continuous sexual abuse. She was not even buried appropriately but was left naked in open place for 3 days."*

meantime, while separated from their husbands, the women faced repeated cycles of displacement, malnutrition, exploitation, and abuse.

In Bama Hospital Camp, provision of food assistance was unpredictable and inconsistent, alternating between different humanitarian service providers and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), with several month-long gaps resulting in high rates of malnourishment, sickness, and death among IDPs. The *Knifar* women described being treated for malnutrition upon arrival by one humanitarian organization. After a few months, this treatment was discontinued and another organization began distributing food for a few cycles and then stopped. After several months, the first humanitarian organization returned and began treating the women for malnutrition again and distributed food assistance before SEMA assumed responsibility for food security in the camp and conducted one distribution with a limited food basket. The women described not receiving food assistance again for several months before relocating to another camp. During this time, the *Knifar* women also experienced sexual abuse in Bama Hospital Camp related to access to food, water, or means to cook.

Another woman remarked that when humanitarian assistance (NFIs) is delayed, or there is no water in the camp, if they manage to leave the camp, they are usually stalked and abused on their way to the borehole or to collect firewood. When asked about how they would try to protect themselves from sexual harassment and abuse, the women mentioned that they would often travel in groups and bar their doors when inside their living spaces; however, this was largely ineffectual, as perpetrators would break down doors, climb over walls, and physically separate "their targets" from groups in public. Since their relocation to Dalori 2 IDP camp in Maiduguri, the women reported that intensity of abuse has reduced, and sexual exploitation is now "more of a power play" as security forces try to convince the ladies to like them because of the privileges that they might receive.

Drawing from their shared experiences in Bama, the women formed the *Knifar* movement and have sparked several initiatives to "achieve justice" for their husbands and sons who have been detained and advocate for their own safety, dignity, and needs. They have brought national and international attention and outrage to these issues, through petitions to a judicial commission on human rights abuses and a letter to the National Assembly on the pervasive sexual abuse and exploitation perpetrated by the military and CJTF in Bama camp, prompting the Chief of Army staff to commission an investigation into these issues.[3] But they have also described the backlash that has at times accompanied their activism, including threats from government authorities to deny assistance and be bused back to Bama because they speak out.[4] Nevertheless, they remain undeterred in their objective: they plan to remain in Maiduguri until they "achieve success" and their husbands are released.

> "*If you tell me to go home, I say what would I go back to? My husband is detained, my children are dead, I have no livelihood -- what am I to do? If I could get my husband right now I would go back.*"

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[3] See also, *They Betrayed Us* (Amnesty International, May 2018) and *Nigeria: Peace in Northeastern Nigeria Requires Justice for Military Crimes Not Just Boko Haram Atrocities* (All Africa, February 2018)

[4] See *Displaced women, children receive food supply* (Amnesty International, July 2018)

II.   *Specific Issues and Recommendations*

Recommendation 1: Strengthen multi-sectoral data collection and sharing, and continuous context-specific analysis, as a basis for collective problem-solving

Throughout conversations with protection actors in Nigeria, while there was general consensus around the most pressing protection issues requiring the attention of the humanitarian community and recognition of abuses occurring daily at a camp level, no actor was able to point to a comprehensive analysis of the key risks people face or to analysis being done in a continuous and reflective manner.

While there is some community-level incident data being regularly collected related to organizations' protection programming at camp level,[5] the data which is currently being continuously tracked is heavily oriented toward individual case management rather than a comprehensive understanding of the full dynamics of risks people experience. Many actors pointed to the multi-sectoral nature of protection issues (such as the link between gender-based violence and livelihoods); however, there is minimal inter-sectoral data analysis to break down the specific risk patterns which can then be used to pinpoint risk reduction strategies.

In addition, with the emphasis on case management, there are few examples of ongoing analysis of trends in risk patterns. Some NGOs do track protection concerns in a continuous way and use the information for their own trend analysis, but they remarked that they do not share this information with others, except on an occasional and generally bi-lateral basis, as there is no inter-agency platform to do so. Noted exceptions referenced by several key informants were the monthly trend reports compiled through the Child Protection and GBV Sub-sectors (through the CP and GBV IMS); however, actors mentioned that this is a relatively nascent endeavor and there is a need to deepen this analysis and the use of data.[6]

Most information-gathering focuses on people's vulnerabilities and neglects to examine the threats people are exposed to, thus preventing a full understanding of the dynamics and limiting the potential to identify effective solutions and remedies. Although there is rich contextual and anecdotal knowledge, particularly held by local and national staff, there appears to be limited additional information gathering, validation, and actual analysis related to the threats, including the behavior and attitudes of responsible actors. There is also little analysis of the capacities of affected populations as they relate to specific threats. One notable exception is the "Conflict Analysis of Northeast Nigeria",[7] supported by Feed the Future, which contains a great deal of context-specific information on the threats people are exposed to, who is vulnerable to these threats and why, and people's capacities relevant to these threats. It is unclear, however, whether and how this rich analysis is being used for practical decision-making on strategies to reduce these risks.

Finally, there are few examples of investment in context analysis, scenario development, and strategic foresight. While a handful of actors have conducted an analysis of potential future scenarios (for example related to the upcoming 2019 elections or impact of the rainy season on humanitarian programming), this information was only shared on an *ad hoc* basis, and at the request of other actors. Furthermore, this analysis did not always feed into decision-making – for example, one organization spoke to the inability to make use of the analysis due to pre-defined corporate objectives and priorities.

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[5] *Inter alia*: intentions regarding return; perceptions of safety environment; GBV cases and other incidents; coverage rates of civil documentation; population movement tracking; information on new arrivals and returnees; IDPs' expressed needs and preconditions for return; IDPs' perceptions of safety and security vis-a-vis security actors; IDPs' most trusted source of information; channels IDPs use for airing grievances, receiving information, and seeking redress

[6] The GBV sub-sector recently began producing monthly reports. Currently, the GBV sub-sector does not share the monthly statistical reports beyond the Data Gathering Organizations. The Information Sharing Cooperative agreement was initially limited to 8 actors, but was recently expanded to include 23 data-gathering organizations. Trends are discussed in monthly sub-sector Working Group meetings.

[7] *Conflict Analysis of Northeast Nigeria* (Feed the Future, September 2017)

For example, one INGO [REACH], in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), conducted an assessment among IDPs residing in and out of camps in 12 Local Government Agencies (LGAs) in Borno State in relation to their displacement profiles and intentions. REACH used a mixed-methods approach, beginning with a household level survey of IDPs, disaggregated by population groups based on primary housing location types (i.e., IDPs in formal camps, IDPs in informal camps, IDPs in host communities) across 12 LGA capital areas, including IDP sites within and in the vicinities of the capital. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection were carried out in all IDP sites (formal and informal camps, as well as host communities where IDPs live) listed in the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Data Tracking Matrix (DTM), Round XVI, and accessible in the capital areas. The final report presented both an overview of the trends across sites, as well as a separate factsheet with more location-specific findings per site which could inform targeted programming and advocacy. While this was an isolated exercise, the assessment introduces a good practice in disaggregating analysis in a location-specific way and sharing amongst actors that can inform efforts to build on this in a more continuous and systematic way. However, in order to address the reasons why it is not safe for travel, it will be necessary to disaggregate the specific risks factors underlying this risk pattern.

Table 9: % of IDPs reporting not to be safe to travel, disaggregated by gender and age groups, per LGA

	Not entire household safe to travel	For girls	For boys	For women	For men	For women aged 60 or above	For men aged 60 and above
Bama	54%	26%	30%	64%	41%	3%	22%
Biu	37%	78%	79%	11%	17%	0%	0%
Damboa	43%	60%	72%	31%	46%	4%	9%
Dikwa	44%	92%	87%	54%	43%	28%	28%
Gwoza	34%	21%	31%	27%	61%	24%	22%
Hawul	32%	67%	74%	31%	34%	0%	0%
Kaga	49%	85%	63%	51%	21%	43%	26%
Kala/Balge	29%	36%	32%	7%	43%	25%	11%
Mafa	54%	82%	71%	59%	42%	52%	36%
Monguno	41%	95%	39%	19%	11%	13%	7%
Ngala	55%	63%	77%	38%	39%	42%	38%
Nganzai	45%	84%	66%	53%	32%	30%	23%
Total	**44%**	**72%**	**60%**	**35%**	**33%**	**24%**	**21%**

Source: Not Ready to Return: IDP Movement Intentions in Borno State (REACH and NRC, September 2017)

To ensure that protection analysis meets critical decision-making needs, aligned with the IASC Protection Policy, it will be important for humanitarian actors to determine some priorities for analysis. In a complex and evolving environment, like northeast Nigeria, strengthening continuous, context-specific protection analysis will maximize existing local knowledge and capacity and catalyze more responsive intervention design, as well as dynamic and adaptive implementation, to address risks people are experiencing and work towards concrete protection outcomes. A few points worth keeping in mind:

- **Analysis should be purposeful** in order to understand and address specific problems and inform decision-making in this regard. It is important to avoid information collection simply for the sake of it.

Threats: are the actions, behaviors, and policies entailing violence, coercion or deliberate deprivation and resulting in harm.

Vulnerabilities: the factors that make someone susceptible to these actions, behaviors and policies, taking into account time, location, gender, age, disability, and other factors that may mean that an individual or group of individuals is deliberately targeted or otherwise vulnerable to abuse.

Capacities: the knowledge, resources, social networks, or other capacities that people use or can use to minimize their vulnerability or their exposure to harmful actions, behaviors, and policies.

THREAT X VULNERABILITY + CAPACITY = RISK

REDUCE THE THREAT | REDUCE VULNERABILITY RELATED TO THE THREAT | INCREASE CAPACITIES RELATED TO THE THREAT | REDUCE PREVALENCE / REDUCE SEVERITY OF IMPACT

- The key ingredients of potential strategies to address protection concerns is **protection risk analysis**.[8] We need to know:
  - what the specific threats are and who is responsible for them
  - who is vulnerable to these specific threats and why
  - what capacities people have related to these specific threats

The threats, vulnerabilities to these threats, and capacities (or lack of capacities) related to these threats combine to create the risk patterns we seek to address. In order to figure out how to reduce risk, we must start by breaking down all the risk factors. This detailed and disaggregated information is the basis for practical problem-solving and actionable strategies. By breaking down the risk factors, we can then work to reduce specific threats, reduce specific vulnerabilities to the threats, and enhance specific capacities relevant to these threats, and thereby reduce the overall risk.

These three risk factors (threats, vulnerabilities and capacities - or lack thereof) fluctuate frequently, interact dynamically, and together result in the risk we seek to reduce. Once we have a more precise understanding of the specific factors producing risk, we can more practically target specific risk factors and reduce the overall level of risk.

- **Methods for information collection** should help to ensure that – as far as is safely possible – an understanding of the risk patterns is grounded in people's own assessment of their threat environment, and their vulnerabilities and capacities in relation to the threats they experience, as well as ensure that they actively contribute to determining priorities and drive potential solutions. In addition to affected people's own experiences and perspectives, there is extensive existing knowledge of relevant dynamics among local, national, and international staff. Together this knowledge and these perspectives should establish an initial disaggregated risk analysis and to identify specific areas where additional information collection may be helpful.

The methodologies for data collection should be iteratively evaluated to determine whether they are appropriately suited to the context, grounded in the perspective of affected populations, and working

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[8] Risk = (threats x vulnerability)/capacity. See *Results-Based Protection Key Element: Continuous Context-Specific Analysis*; Chapter 2 of the *Professional Standards for Protection Work* (ICRC, 2018); *ECHO Humanitarian Protection Policy Document* (2016)

toward the intended purpose. Participatory methods may be especially helpful for both developing a robust understanding of individuals' own understanding of their risk environment and in strengthening genuine engagement and communication with communities.

Organizations can purposefully adapt tools that they may already have (for assessment or other information-gathering initiatives) or learn from others (within and outside of the humanitarian sector) to promote ongoing monitoring and analysis of the risk environment. For example, two INGOs mentioned using participatory community mapping exercises as a component of periodic GBV safety audit assessments. This method and tools could foreseeably be adapted to routinely reassess specific threats and vulnerabilities to be addressed, and relevant capacities and self-protective mechanisms already being used.

In evaluating the selection of methods, it is additionally important to recognize the limitations of a single analysis tool and promote the use of complementary tools and mixed methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding throughout the response.[9]

- A fundamental piece to quality analysis is obtaining accurate data; being able to **communicate effectively with affected individuals**, in a language they can understand, is fundamental to that process. Actors such as Translators without Borders are working to address the communication gaps and have developed some resources, such as their *Glossary for protection, housing, land and property rights*, which may be useful for organizations in establishing two-way information exchange about the risk environment with different linguistic populations in northeast Nigeria. Furthermore, there is a need to support data collectors with language and terminology, including translating the survey and preparing enumerators in the language in which it will be conducted, to ensure that information gathering assessments are administered reliably.

For more guidance on developing continuous context specific analysis and using analysis to track and achieve results, see the chapter "Managing Protection Strategies" of the revised *Professional Standards for Protection Work* (ICRC, 2018).

Recommendations:

Given the breadth and complexity of protection concerns in northeast Nigeria, it will not be possible to tackle all analysis needs at once. Individual organizations working on protection, and the PSWG, could take the initial steps listed below to **strengthen protection analysis**.

- *Establish a common framework for camp level protection monitoring.* In light of existing camp level information collection on protection concerns being carried out by NGOs, this is a logical place to start. This could be initiated by NGOs already working on protection at camp level and PSWG protection monitors, potentially as a Task Team under the PSWG, and with a view to ultimately being taken up by a broader group of actors. Camp level monitoring should include a complete cycle of sharing information with other responders, data analysis to detect trends, sharing trend reports with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG), and reporting back to affected people on the action taken.

- *Use existing information from a range of sectors for protection analysis.* IMMAP is working to establish information management systems and deploy a dedicated team of Information Management Officers to enhance the information management capacity of the humanitarian response, maintaining platforms for regular information flow and trend analysis in support of inter-sector coordination mechanisms. IMMAP staff currently support 10 sectors, including the child protection and GBV sub-sectors (through the CP and GBV IMS, respectively), and in the coming year are planning to develop tools and processes suited to cross-sectoral issues. There is an opportunity to define some key indicators for continuous tracking related to

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[9] For more examples of participatory methods for continuous protection analysis, see InterAction's *Results-Based Protection Resource Repository*.

protection which can inform cross-sectoral strategies (e.g. for freedom of movement, GBV prevention, etc.)[10]

- ***Collectively conduct foresight and scenario development*** to identify emerging challenges and opportunities and position humanitarian actors toward more anticipatory, strategic action. This might be initiated by sharing existing contextual and forward-looking analysis with a view to focusing scenario development in a practical way.

The dynamic nature of the conflict in the northeast signals a need to identify emerging challenges and opportunities for the humanitarian community, which may support a shift from reactive, ad hoc, and siloed approaches to more strategic anticipatory action. Continuous contextual analysis can help identify the important variables in the system to be monitored, visualize connections and points of influence within the system, and understanding the trajectories of various dynamics, and project how they will evolve in the short and medium term. By seeking opportunities for joint analysis of possible futures and incorporating scenario development exercises based on findings, actors may find it easier to identify opportunities for practical application of the findings and build interorganizational and multi-sectoral problem solving.

> **Example of participatory methods for scenario planning on a local level**
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> Through their work with communities in one LGA in Bama, one national NGO has worked with communities to map the strategies that they use if they observe violence in the areas where they live based on past experience, discuss what actions they might take if they observe any of the triggers or warning signs in the future, and develop action plans to this end. This exercise also identifies influential figures in their community and articulates their responsibilities which are captured in the Action Plans. The community can then approach local civil authorities and traditional leaders with these plans to support their strategies.

While there are several methods for foresight analysis and strategic planning based on certain scenarios,[11] articulating the desired timeframe is important in selecting the method and defining the scope for the exercise. While some methods of foresight analysis have strategic value in shaping strategies and processes with a long-term vision in mind, for the purposes of achieving results toward the protection outcomes touched on in this report, limiting the scope to within 3 years may be most useful.

In addition, other recommendations on prioritized protection concerns also require some steps to initiate deeper and continuous analysis. See Recommendations 2, 3, and 4.

Recommendation 2: Expand safe freedom of movement of civilians around garrison towns

One of the biggest protection concerns raised by humanitarian actors in northeast Nigeria is the restrictions imposed on the freedom of movement of IDPs and other residents of garrison towns in LGAs such as Bama, Gwoza, Damasak, Banki, Dikwa, and Ngala. The Nigerian military purportedly assumes that anyone outside a garrison town or IDP camp is affiliated with a non-state armed group and entry into garrison towns or IDP sites therefore entails a screening procedure during which families may be separated, individuals may be detained, or otherwise experience harassment and abuse at the hands of security forces. For the same reason, and due to ongoing attacks by NSAGs in some areas, these towns are heavily fortified by military forces and freedom to move in and out of the towns is severely restricted. There are, of course, real risks to civilians outside of the garrison towns, including risk of attack by non-state armed groups or getting caught in crossfire as well as

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[10] For more information on how information management systems can support continuous analysis and establish information sharing protocols for the achievement of protection outcomes, see the PIM initiative. A global PIM Framework and key principles have been developed to guide principled, systematized, and collaborative processes to collect, process, analyze, store, share, and use data and information to enable evidence-informed action for quality protection outcomes. For more information, see http://pim.guide/. Other guidance for information management for protection can be found in Annex III of the IASC Policy on Protection,

[11] For example, IARAN's strategic foresight, and ACAPS Scenario Building in Preparation for or During Humanitarian Crises

explosive remnants of war (ERWs).[12] Restrictions inhibit IDP self-sufficiency through farming, trade, and social networks. Conditions in camps are congested, with new arrivals continually increasing pressure on scarce services and resources. Predatory and exploitative behavior by military forces and the CJTF in certain camps means that women and girls are often forced to trade sex for permission to move beyond town perimeters or the security cordon to collect firewood or carry out other activities.

Although restricted freedom of movement – and a range of abuses and consequences associated with these restrictions – is cited as one of the most severe and prevalent risks facing the civilian population in the northeast, and is one specific issue identified as a priority in the HCT's CoP Strategy, there has yet to be any detailed analysis. The HCT's CoP strategy includes an eloquent description of the problem and starts to outline the multi-dimensional character of the range of risks involved, however it is not sufficiently detailed and disaggregated to serve as a basis for practical problem-solving. Actions addressing freedom of movement restrictions in the HCT's CoP Strategy are quite general, are output- rather than outcome-oriented, and are not targeted at solving specific problems and reducing specific risk factors. While some individuals have mentioned possible measures that would help to address either the restrictions on freedom of movement or the impact of the restrictions, no concrete or comprehensive proposals are being discussed or collectively pursued.

Recommendations:

- ***Conduct area-based analysis***

  To start, NGOs should initiate area-based risks analyses in prioritized locations. This is essential to determine the context-specific risk factors that need to be addressed and, subsequently, to identify a series of measures that can help to reduce these risk factors and to develop area-based proposals to both expand freedom of movement and mitigate the effects of any ongoing restrictions.

  This area-based protection analysis should disaggregate risk factors – i.e. identify the threats, vulnerabilities to threats, capacities relevant to the threats – and particularly examine:

  - How, where, and when movement is restricted, the actors responsible for the restrictions and their implementation, and their attitudes, motivations, policies, and practices which create or underpin the restrictions;
  - The direct and specific consequences of lack of freedom of movement in terms of people's inability to reach farm land, resources, services, family and social network, home areas, etc;
  - The indirect consequences in terms of food security, health, family links, informed decisions regarding return to home areas, aid dependency, vulnerability to exploitation, etc as well as who precisely is experiencing which consequences and why;
  - The risks beyond town perimeters which would be encountered with greater freedom of movement.

  This analysis therefore necessitates a multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach and should be undertaken jointly by NGOs with knowledge of the local context and with the relevant sectoral and technical capacities (e.g. food security, GBV prevention and response, mine action, civil documentation, community organizing, information management, translation and communications, negotiation with the local authorities, etc). The joint analysis should start with determining the extent of existing relevant data as well as existing knowledge of local staff and affected people, seek to triangulate, and identify key issues and gaps in knowledge. Further information collection can then seek to validate and expand on this initial analysis.

  Even if different groupings of NGOs are involved in each locality, the overall exercise should be jointly planned and carried out by the broader community of concerned actors with a view to ensuring common

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[12] See *Out of Sight: Landmines and the Crisis in Northeast Nigeria* (Mines Advisory Group, September 2018)

understanding of approach: a shared analytical framework; collection and organization of information; and shared analysis. Much of the knowledge may already be held by NGOs and their staff and the initial analysis may simply need to be collaboratively organized in a purposeful way. The knowledge of additional actors, such as academics or traditional rulers, may additionally need to be tapped to deepen understanding on specific issues relevant to analysis and potential remedies (e.g. regarding land use policies and traditions, etc).

It may not be possible to undertake analysis and pursue comprehensive strategies in all localities at once. It makes sense to prioritize by, for example, starting with three localities and then incrementally expanding to others. This incremental approach would also allow for the analysis framework and methods to be tested and validated as well as for the habits of shared analysis and planning among the contributing organizations to be formed.

While detailed disaggregation of specific risk patterns in each locality is essential, it is very important to avoid "*analysis paralysis*". Analysis does not have to be perfect before taking steps to address a problem. Rather analysis should be approached as an ongoing process. In the first instance, it should be sufficient to allow for some initial steps to address the problem as well as to start regular tracking of the relevant risk factors related to the problems being addressed. The first few steps in addressing the problem will yield new information and allow for deeper understanding of the dynamics and inform the next steps.

- *Develop the causal logic of strategies to expand freedom of movement*

Drawing on the area-based analysis, a series of prioritized actions should be developed with a view to:

- Getting certain restrictions lifted or modified;
- Ensuring that the removal or modification of restrictions are relevant and adequate to the risk being addressed;
- Targeting activities to help ensure that the expected benefits of increased freedom of movement are realized.

Given the multi-dimensional nature of the problem, no single action can comprehensively result in expanded freedom of movement and ensure that the measures taken have positive effects on people's lives. Comprehensive and meaningful impact depends on a purposeful combination of a range of actions. Some actions may be initiated directly by or with affected people themselves and they should additionally be informed of the full range of steps being taken to expand freedom of movement. In part, this will likely entail taking specific proposals, with clear articulation of the proposed modalities and expected benefits, to the relevant authorities as a basis for dialogue and with a view to persuading them to adopt certain measures. Persuasion to adopt these measures will need to be complemented by practical interventions – such as increasing access to civil documentation, farming inputs, or modes of transportation, demarcating and clearing mines/IEDs, local security patrols – that help ensure that the expected benefits of expanded freedom of movement are realized.

> "*Comprehensive and meaningful impact depends on a purposeful combination of a range of actions.*"

The area-based protection analysis should enable the articulation of specific and measurable area-based objectives working towards the desired outcome of expanded freedom of movement. For example, if the strategy entails persuading the Nigerian military forces to expand the perimeter of garrison towns to enable people to undertake farming activities, one objective in the freedom of movement strategy should be expressed in terms of increased food self-sufficiency / reduced food aid dependency. Specific measurable results would include milestones such as extent of safe, predictable, and continuous access to adequate farmland, farming outputs, positive indicators of enhanced food security, decreased instances of trading sex

for food, and so on. Given the importance of IDPs own assessment of their threat environment in relation to this objective, it is critical that the desired results (and corresponding monitoring) be framed in terms of their experiences and perspectives and it is thus important that they play a role in defining the problem and the expected results.

The strategy should be articulated by describing the causal logic (or "theory of change") of the intervention. This causal logic should put the key activities to reduce risk and ensure that benefits of expanded freedom of movement realized along a pathway of key milestones towards the desired outcome of expanded freedom of movement. In mapping out these key activities and milestones, the role of different actors and their contribution along the way should also be specified. The assumptions being made about the intervention should also be articulated. Articulating the causal logic (or depicting it in a diagram) can serve as a tool to clarify strategies, expectations, and assumptions among key actors and serve as a point of reference in coordination.

Based on the area-based analysis, it may prove necessary for each locality to have its own strategy. It is probable, however, that some changes in military forces policy and practice will be relevant across localities and it may be necessary to seek these changes at a state or Theatre Command level. As such, even with area-based strategies, it will be important for NGOs to work within a broader causal logic and coordinated strategy working at multiple levels.

- *Mitigate the effect of ongoing restrictions*

  Recognizing that restrictions on movement are likely to remain even if some restrictions are relaxed, it will be important to also articulate the desired outcomes related to reducing vulnerability to ongoing restrictions. Again, these are likely to entail action by a variety of sectors. The protection analysis and the strategy to seek expanded freedom of movement should also address this aspect of the problem.

- *Undertake iterative problem-solving*

  Given the complexity and multiple dimensions of this issue, intervening organizations should be prepared to iterate their interventions rapidly. This means trying different ideas and approaches, and continually evaluating their results and learning from this experience, until some gain traction.

  The area-based protection analysis should also be used to identify key risk factors which can then be

> **Two heightened risks associated with efforts to expand freedom of movement**
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> - The process of obtaining and implementing changes to the status quo could entail asking authorities to articulate more relaxed procedures in writing and ensuring that these procedures are communicated through their chain of command. This may result in inadvertently formalizing and normalizing some restrictions on freedom of movement. In order to mitigate this scenario, recommendations and written materials should be carefully framed, for example, by reminding government authorities of relevant obligations with respect to the issues being addressed and framing recommendations in terms of a positive step towards fulfillment of these obligations.
>
> - There may be heightened risks to civilians beyond the perimeters of garrison towns, for example, ongoing NSAG violent attacks on civilians and/or on military forces while they are in proximity to civilians, or abuses by military forces against civilians carrying out farming or other activities. These risks require context-specific analysis and their own problem-solving exercise. Care should be taken to track the relevant risk factors and ensure that IDPs are able to make informed choices about their movements.

monitored on an ongoing basis. Tracking these risk factors will indicate whether the strategy is yielding the desired results. It is important to ensure that protection analysis is not approached as a one-off exercise resulting in rigid and unchangeable intervention design but, rather, should be undertaken continuously to enable ongoing decision-making in support of the overall causal logic of an intervention. Tracking whether risks are decreasing or continuing will help to determine whether the causal logic is the right approach to solve the problem, and the strategy is effective, or whether adjustments need to be made.

In support of an iterative and problem-solving approach to this intervention, this monitoring should also serve as a basis for the collaborating organizations to periodically pause and jointly reflect on the

intervention being undertaken and the results emerging from their efforts. This reflection, in combination with the monitoring results, should also serve to inform regular and ongoing dialogue with the relevant authorities about whether and how their actions support or impede the desired results and to encourage the necessary changes in policy and practice in an ongoing way.

Recommendation 3: Invest in the prevention of gender-based violence

The severity and pervasiveness of gender-based violence in the context of northeast Nigeria highlighted in protection strategy materials, programmatic documents and other reporting and news articles, was reaffirmed throughout our consultations with a diverse range of actors in Abuja and Maiduguri. Critically, GBV is connected to the abusive conduct of both State and non-State armed actors; screening processes; restrictions on freedom of movement; stigma attached to individuals believed to be affiliated with non-state armed groups; food insecurity and livelihoods; power relationships within and outside of IDP camps and garrison towns; gendered labor roles; family separation; and disruption of family and community units.[13] Implementing organizations emphasized a need to improve referral pathways and ensure comprehensive coverage of service provision for GBV survivors.

In addition, however, the severity of ongoing risks of GBV demands an investment in prevention. While the GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) was mentioned by several key informants as being a useful tool for both service mapping and looking at trends in survivor profiles, case contexts, and incidents of GBV across the northeast, the analysis generated by protection actors is not sufficiently disaggregated or detailed to inform targeted strategies to reduce the risks of GBV, including the desired changes in behavior, attitudes, knowledge, practices, and policies which could lead to comprehensive risk reduction.

For example, data on survivors reporting rape is only disaggregated by displacement status, but not by geographical location (camp, LGA, or even state) and, as such, cannot support targeted problem-solving. Similarly, analysis lacks a detailed disaggregation of the range of types of GBV being perpetrated, the circumstances in which it occurs, and the characteristics of the perpetrator. Furthermore, the GBV IMS data and analysis is currently restricted to data gathering organizations party to the information sharing protocol, and GBV sub-sector actors have noted that inconsistent reporting of data to the platform throughout 2017 limited the depth and reliability of the trend analysis.

The newly adopted Northeast Nigeria Road Map for the *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies*[14] features significant preventive components within the range of objectives adopted and there is a clear desire on the part of the actors involved to approach this Road Map in an outcome-oriented manner. This includes Outcome 5, "The capacity of security actors (including police, civilian joint task force, Nigerian security and civil defense corps, military forces) to prevent and respond to GBV is improved." This presents a unique opportunity and a welcome platform for multi-sectoral collaboration among a unique group of stakeholders towards GBV prevention outcomes.

A challenge, however, relates to the fact that the Road Map covers a short time frame (2018-2019) which does not allow sufficient time to conduct a detailed analysis of risk patterns, establish baselines, carry out meaningful preventive work, *and* document observable outcomes. Meaningful changes in behavior, attitudes, practices and/or policies of perpetrators, and that of duty-bearers, is entails considerable investment and is long-term endeavor. The prevention objectives of the Road Map should be approached with this longer-term outlook in mind, using the first year of the Road Map as an opportunity to lay a foundation for this purpose, including

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[13] For more information on the specific risk patterns in the northeast Nigeria context, see *Adolescent Girls in Crisis: Voices in the Lake Chad Basin* (Plan International, August 2018)

[14]   The Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies A Road Map for Action in Northeast Nigeria

through detailed discussion among the key stakeholders about practical strategies to help prevent GBV and how the outcome of reduced risk of GBV can be effectively monitored and evaluated.

The suggested steps below can help ensure an outcome-oriented approach to GBV prevention and may be relevant not only for Road Map implementation, as approaches that can and should be taken by its individual organizations and the GBV sub-working group. In this regard, it will be important for the Road Map to avoid duplicating the work of the GBV sub-Working Group. The distinct roles of responsibilities of the GBV sub-Working Group in relation to the Road Map should be clearly understood by all stakeholders.

Recommendations:

- *Disaggregate the specific risk patterns of GBV*.

  In fleshing out the strategies and implementation plans the prevention of GBV, it is important to articulate the vast diversity of the GBV risk patterns being addressed, ranging from intimate partner violence to systematic assaults by security forces. Each risk pattern will necessitate a different combination of interventions in order to effectively reduce risk ranging, for example, from investing in community-level capacities and safeguards, building assets to bolster capacities and reduce individual and household exposure to GBV threats, campaigns to shape and influence social norms, and influencing the policies, practices, and behavior of state and non-state parties to conflict with regard to GBV.

  The risk factors of each type of GBV must be disaggregated in order to identify the potential means of reducing the threats, reducing vulnerabilities to these threats, and enhancing capacities relevant to the threats. This analysis is the essential starting point for developing targeted prevention strategies, including the necessary roles and contributions from various actors in order to achieve the desired results.

- *Specify the desired outcome and causal logic* for strategies to address each risk pattern.[15] Each risk pattern will necessitate different preventive strategies involving a different combination of activities and implementing organizations. The Road Map has outlined several proposed activities (conducted by several actors) under this outcome, targeted at various levels of results.[16] However, it will be important to match the activities to the intended change in risk factors along a pathway towards the desired results and outcome. This will likely entail responsive action, remedial action, and environment-building[17] and entail expected results targeted in the short, medium and longer term. Furthermore, it will be important for the forthcoming monitoring and evaluation plan and its implementation to **establish a baseline and benchmarks for measuring progress to demonstrate a change in risk patterns**.

- *Using the disaggregated analysis, develop context-specific indicators* for the threats, vulnerabilities and capacities related with each risk pattern and monitor these in order to track whether the strategies are yielding the desired results. In addition to progress indicators which track implementation, insight gained from monitoring risk indicators in an ongoing way can deepen analysis of the issues and enable real-time

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[15] Causal logic refers to the strategic exercise carried out before and during protection activities, to set out the pathways and milestones for the way a particular outcome is expected to be achieved, to identify the sequence of actions to be undertaken (and the assumptions inherent in them), including the various sectors and disciplines that may need to be mobilized to contribute to the desired outcome, and to identify the roles of different actors. This analysis should underlie all actions taken to achieve the outcome in question. It is sometimes also referred to as the "theory of change'. For more on causal logic, see Annex 2 "Establishing the causal logic to achieve protection outcomes" of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy Provisional Guidance Note.

[16] For example: **Behavior:** engagement with state armed actors/ security forces through advocacy and a peer-to-peer sensitization program (under action 5.3); **Policy:** Develop a compendium of laws and policies relevant for addressing GBV in Borno, Adamawa, Yobe. (under action 5.2**); Practice:** Strengthen community structures for protection -- incorporate the "fatua model" on religious teachings programme. (under action 5.3)

[17] More information on responsive, remedial actions, and environment-building can be found in Annex IV of the IASC Protection Policy

adaptation of strategies throughout implementation. The fact that the Call to Action roadmap is viewed as a "living document" is helpful to facilitate iterative reflection and a shift in approach, when necessary.

- ***Be iterative and seek to learn from experience.***

  The Nigeria Road Map is in very early stages and its stakeholders foresee ongoing work to flesh it out and figure out how to ensure that it is genuinely pursued with a view to measurable outcomes. Given the very diverse scope of GBV concerns in the northeast, this inevitably must be pursued in an iterative manner whereby the means and methods of achieving the Road Map outcomes can be explored and built up over time. If the Road Map stakeholders adopt a medium/long term outlook, the first couple of years of Road Map implementation present a unique opportunity to develop the underlying analysis, the causal logic, outcome indicators, and the methods that can support the achievement of the desired outcomes articulated in the Road Map. It will be extremely valuable for the Road Map stakeholders to discuss how they envision this iterative process and agree on key areas for learning and development of outcome-oriented methods.

By breaking down the risk, and adopting nuanced and granular approaches, actors can identify and leverage existing platforms for information management, collaboration, and coordination in pursuit of GBV prevention outcomes.

Recommendation 4: Invest in a coordinated strategy to ensure that IDPs make free and informed decisions regarding their return, relocation or local integration, and that their return, relocation and/or local integration options are safe, viable, and undertaken voluntarily.

In the context of national elections, the government has repeatedly claimed that its fight against non-State armed groups is in its final stages and has made clear its intention that IDPs should return home. However, it is also clear that conditions in IDP's home areas are far from conducive for their safe return. Villages and towns have been abandoned for many years, with many structures destroyed. There is, as yet, no civilian government presence or services in home areas, and there remains significant threat to civilians posed by non-State armed groups as well as by ongoing military and CJTF operations against non-State armed groups.

Despite this, up to 6,200 IDPs have been "returned". There are conflicting reports of how coercive the government approach has been. On one hand, the government has reportedly withheld assistance and informed IDPs that the camp will be closed, and informed people just one or two days ahead of time that they are to be returned. On the other hand, on the day of return, IDPs have clearly welcomed the opportunity to leave IDP camps and return home – however, in the case of Bama, those that did return to their home villages and towns quickly returned to IDP camps due to the lack of shelter, food, and services.[18] To date, it is not known how many actually made it to their home villages.

In addition, it appears that many people are actually being relocated to garrison towns in their home states rather than actually returning home. While government intentions are not entirely clear, it appears that the future returns will largely entail relocations to these garrison towns, contributing to already intense congestion and exposing people to the threats prevalent in these locations. In future strategies, humanitarians must make a clear distinction between return and relocation as different considerations and planning will apply.

It is only in the wake of the failed Bama returns that the government appears amenable to a planned approach with humanitarian actors. The current process to jointly develop and adopt a returns strategy presents an important opportunity to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach, with the government to put in place the

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[18] *Political Pressure to Return: Putting Nigeria's Displaced Citizens at Risk* (Refugees International, March 2018)

basic requirements of safe, voluntary, and viable return by IDPs. Such a strategy can simultaneously and implicitly also help to mitigate coercion.

Ironically, while humanitarian actors have repeatedly stated that returns must be voluntary, the missing component in the internal discussions among humanitarian actors, as well as with the government, has thus far been IDPs themselves. The bulk of debate has focused on what the government's decisions about returns would be and what humanitarian organization's decisions about assistance would be in response.

Recommendations:

- ***Create conditions for IDP's free and informed decision-making on return, relocation, and local integration***

> *"Staying where they are, integrating locally, relocating elsewhere, or returning home are decisions that rest with individual IDPs, not with the government or with humanitarian actors."*

Staying where they are, integrating locally, relocating elsewhere, or returning home are decisions that rest with individual IDPs, not with the government or with humanitarian actors. While the government and humanitarian actors can help create conditions conducive to safe and viable choices, the standard of voluntary population movements rests on individuals being able to make their own decisions freely and in an informed manner. Thus far there has been no systematic examination or articulation of the conditions necessary[19] to ensure "voluntariness" and how to practically ensure that IDPs have access to information and are able to make decisions freely and without coercion. Ideally, government authorities would engage in a regular and direct dialogue with IDPs, ensure that people were able to make their choices freely, and have the information they need to do so, but there is a clear lack of experience, know-how, and inclination on the part of the government in this regard. In order to mitigate coercive population movements, and help create conditions conducive for IDP's onward movements to be safe, voluntary, and viable, humanitarian actors therefore need to make a considerable investment in support of information flow and community level decision-making while encouraging government respect and support for this process.

In doing so, it is critical to recognize, learn from, work with, and build on IDP's existing mechanisms for accessing information and decision-making considerations in all their variety. Some IDPs are eager to return home and have effectively begun the decision-making process themselves and, indeed, some may see temporary relocation to a garrison town in their home state as a viable step towards return. InterAction spoke with one IDP who joined other community members to visit their home village in the Guzamala LGA to assess conditions. They found their home village destroyed, with no viable shelter or services. However, the military had reopened the market in the area, which they took as a positive sign. They therefore chose to leave some community members behind to observe what would happen on market day while other community members returned to the Bakasi camp in Maiduguri with a view to deciding their next step based on developments with the local market and whether there would be assistance to rebuild. Meanwhile, other IDPs may wait for clear information, assistance packages and encouragement to return, while others say that they will never return to their home village. Women of the *Knifar* Movement have, in fact, stated categorically that as long as their husbands were being detained in Maiduguri, they would stay there and would refuse to relocate or return home.

- ***Help ensure that IDP's options are viable ones***

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[19] However, in 2015, a local NGO – Gender Equality, Peace and Development Centre (GEPaDC) -- facilitated an extensive consultation with IDPs and published a "*Charter of Needs of Target IDPs Communities both in IDP Camps & Local Government Areas (Post-Insurgency) in Borno State*" which articulates a number of pre-requisites for safe return from the perspective of IDPs broken down by geographical area. This Charter may serve as a useful reference going forward.

Critical to the questions of return, relocation, and local integration is the recognition that the conflict in the northeast is not nearing an end and is likely to continue in some form for the foreseeable future. There are several important implications arising from this. One, it is critical that a genuine assessment of the conflict dynamics, and their implications for the protection of the civilian population in the areas of ongoing violence and military activity, underpins analysis of the prospects for and requirements of safe return. The security requirements of IDPs, from their perspective, must be clearly and explicitly established in a way that informs ongoing dialogue with the government about humanitarian, development, rule of law, social cohesion, and other issues.

Second, humanitarians typically approach the facilitation of voluntary return or relocation in the context of comprehensive post-conflict durable solutions. With ongoing armed conflict likely, the likelihood of comprehensive durable solutions across the northeast are low. The question, then, is whether some parts of northeast Nigeria may be become sufficiently *viable* for return or relocation even as the conflict continues to affect some areas. IDPs may well choose to relocate or return in the interest of leaving IDP camps and working to meet their own needs. It makes sense to be prepared for a patchwork of different scenarios and a more incremental and area-based approach. Working with a combination of different scenarios again speaks to the importance of deepening continuous dialogue with IDPs and ensuring their needs and expectations are brought to bear in engagement with the government.

"NGOs which receive both humanitarian and development funding in the northeast are arguably in a unique position to consolidate strategies which are impartial, neutral, and independent, shape engagement with the government on its policies towards IDPs, and ensure that resources are not used inappropriately or in a way that exacerbates vulnerable people's exposure to threats."

Finally, there is recognition of the importance of bringing state and international development resources to bear on viable scenarios for IDPs in terms of civilian government administration, access to services, livelihoods, and so on. However, there are thus far no concrete steps towards articulating key requirements or coordinating such resources accordingly. Simultaneously, NGOs have expressed concerns that an influx of funding for stabilization will be directed in support of expected political dividends thus reinforcing manipulative and coercive dynamics, positioning humanitarian actors as aligned with one side in the conflict, and undermining free and informed decisions by IDPs. However, NGOs which receive both humanitarian and development funding in the northeast – as well as those working on social cohesion and peacebuilding – are arguably in a unique position to consolidate strategies which are impartial, neutral, and independent, shape engagement with the government on its policies towards IDPs and ensure that resources are not used inappropriately or in a way that exacerbates vulnerable people's exposure to threats.

Regardless of whether IDPs will return to their home communities in the near future or whether this process will take longer, this is a worthwhile investment for NGOs to begin now, particularly in light of the risk of an election-driven return or relocation push. Some analysis will be needed to develop a concrete strategy to help mitigate coercion now by creating a structured and empowering process with government buy-in, and to be better prepared for future scenarios.

Before doing so, it is important to have the framework of key requirements and conditions in mind. Areas for analysis can then be plotted out with a view to assessing the current state of play. Some key requirements and a few areas for information gathering and analysis are presented in the table below.

With additional funding the Nigerian INGO Forum could be especially and uniquely positioned to convene a diversity of NGOs and to facilitate a collaborative effort to flesh out and implement a strategy along these lines while ensuring that information resulting from community engagement serves to inform and shape ongoing

dialogue with the Nigerian government authorities and other actors. The multi-sectoral character of ensuring the viability of return, relocation, and local integration inevitably necessitates intensive NGO collaboration and joined-up strategies to maximize the expertise and geographical presence of NGOs. In addition to NGOs with strong field presence and ongoing community level work, the contributions of some NGOs with unique capacities should be actively sought in support of two-way information flow, for example, IMMAP on data management and TWB on translation.

Voluntariness depends on free and informed decisions. Options available to IDPs must be viable ones.

Key requirements	Key issues to start analysis and planning	Potential activities
Free means that decisions should not be the result of physical coercion or manipulation (such as by withholding assistance so as to create unviable living conditions in IDP camps thereby forcing people to move). The right and opportunity to make one's own informed decisions should be recognized and respected by all other actors.	• Is the community and its traditional decision-making processes intact or dispersed across IDP locations? How are decisions currently made? Who is involved and who exercises influence over decision-making? • How does the community represent itself and its decisions externally? Is the community representative genuinely representing community needs and views? • Who needs greater voice in decision-making and representation? How can the needs of the especially vulnerable (e.g. unaccompanied children, disabled, elderly, etc) be accommodated? • What external and internal pressures work against a process of free and informed decision-making? How can these pressures or barriers be overcome? • Are IDPs aware of their entitlements with respect to freedom to staying, locally integrating, relocating or returning? Do IDPs feel well-informed enough to make decisions or is a lack of information making them vulnerable to pressure? • Is there deliberate pressure on IDPs to move by authorities? Have authorities indicated recognition and respect for IDPs decision-making processes or are they dismissive of it? • Is there unintentional pressure on IDPs to move, for example, due to poor conditions or aid coverage in their current situation? • Are there particular population sub-groups especially vulnerable to the above pressures (these might be individuals from certain geographical areas targeted for return, individuals who lack access to assistance, etc)?	• Mapping of community decision-making practices and community level organization and representation • Tracking key pressures on IDPs regarding their movements • Targeted engagement with government authorities on problematic behavior and practices as well as ensuring coverage of assistance activities to close critical gaps • Cultivating government awareness of the process of free and informed decision-making, securing their buy-in, involvement and support for such processes
For decisions to be **informed**, people need to receive information about the status of their various options which is timely and relevant to their needs as well as accurate and unbiased.	• What information is needed; who needs what information? This might range from reasons for evacuation, destination, conditions in home villages (family, property, land, security, etc), conditions in resettlement areas, etc. • What languages do people understand (spoken, written) and use to communicate? • Where does information come from? Who is responsible for generating and disseminating it? Is it in a language people understand? • How should the information be disseminated (format) and how do people who need it most access the information (channel)? What sources of information do people trust? How can equitable access be ensured?	• Determine people's expectations, and needs regarding their options • Determine what questions people have and information they need with regard to these options, taking into account the unique needs of specific population sub-groups • Determine people's communications and language support needs to develop evidence-based communication strategies • Regular tracking of people's key questions and information needs, making this available to relevant stakeholders on a periodic basis

Key requirements	Key issues to start analysis and planning	Potential activities
	• Are people able to share their concerns and do they know who to direct their questions to? • How can the relevance and accuracy of information be safeguarded and rumors and manipulation of information be countered?	• Regular and targeted information collection in response to people's information needs (e.g. assessing shelter, water, farmland conditions in home areas) and making this information available to IDPs -- via community meetings/FGDs, radio, community theatre, etc – in appropriate languages • Go and see visits • Tracking disinformation and addressing rumors • Regularly monitor IDPs perspectives regarding whether their information needs are being met and adjust two-way information flow to ensure gaps are addressed
Viable options must include: • Staying where they are for now • Locally integrating • Relocating • Returning home	• What pre-conditions do people specify as a basis for deciding whether an option is viable? • What pre-conditions do humanitarian actors see as critical in order to determine viability? (While IDP's views must be central, this does not mean that humanitarians have no role to help determine viability – for example, IDPs may be unaware of congestion in areas of potential relocation or unaware of the risk of water-borne disease in their home areas.) • Unpacking IDPs expectations and needs should serve as the basis for outlining scenarios, dialogue with government authorities, preparation of future scenarios in collaboration with other actors. • "Viability" should encompass a diversity of factors including security and means to mitigate security risks, the role of local government, social cohesion, family unity, etc.	• IDP perception surveys • Community level discussions/FGDs • Community-based scenario planning and forecasting • As prospects for return, relocation or local integration grow more viable, develop area-specific plans which meet pre-conditions • Community level information used as a basis for larger forecasting and planning by humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, human rights, and other actors • Monitor conditions in areas of return/relocation/local integration to help ensure ongoing viability.

Recommendation 5: Put in place competencies and mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment by and of humanitarian personnel

Although not an issue we were asked to focus on during our visit, it is painfully clear that the risk of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment by *and* of humanitarian personnel urgently requires attention. The current prevailing conditions indicate significant cause for alarm, not only with respect to the likely incidence of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, but also with regard to the lack of readiness of the humanitarian community to prevent and respond to allegations.

While InterAction did not assess assistance activities directly, many actors repeatedly noted that the humanitarian response is below minimum standards in several sites with respect to the coverage and quality of basic services and assistance. The lack of consistency IDPs experience in access to food, water, and other assistance was frequently cited as exacerbating women and girls' vulnerability to and regular experience of sexual and gender-based violence by military and CJTF forces. Humanitarian personnel and sub-contractors could also exploit this vulnerability. Although some NGOs are conducting regular camp level information collection on protection concerns, it does not appear that community-based complaints mechanisms have been established, and efforts to inform IDPs of their assistance entitlements seem to be rather *ad hoc*.

> *"The current prevailing conditions indicate significant cause for alarm, not only with respect to the likely incidence of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment, but also with regard to the lack of readiness of the humanitarian community to prevent and respond to allegations."*

Language barriers and low literacy levels, particularly among women, further compound communication challenges. Confidentiality or the opportunity to hear from members of linguistic minority groups might be lost when a neutral interpreter is unavailable. In addition, the use of complex terminology that is not readily conveyed in local languages can cause confusion and misunderstanding. TWB's research found that concepts such as "safe space" and "food security" were being misinterpreted in the context of conflict, which may lead to underreporting of threats people face.

Simultaneously, the government now makes a regular practice of accusing humanitarians of a range of indiscretions – from pre-arranging for humanitarian aid to be stolen by Boko Haram, to infecting local Nigerian staff with HIV. This disinformation has helped to foment anti-NGO rhetoric in the public discourse in the northeast. In addition to the presence of risk factors for actual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries by humanitarian personnel, and of harassment and abuse of humanitarians in the workplace, individual humanitarians are thus also extremely vulnerable to malicious allegations.

If this were not alarming enough, there appears to be extremely low awareness among humanitarians, including some with sector leadership responsibilities, of long-standing inter-agency zero tolerance policies and codes of conduct as well as the body of good practice for community-based complaints mechanisms, and handling and investigating allegations that should be in place in every humanitarian response. When a malicious allegation of sexual misconduct by humanitarian organizations in Ngala was made by a government official with a known track record of spreading disinformation and rumors, rather than confidentially alerting the affected organizations and supporting their steps to address the allegations, the accuser was invited to take the floor at a PSWG meeting, and with no warning to the organizations concerned.

There are some humanitarian personnel in northeast Nigeria with knowledge of the relevant inter-agency policies and mechanisms and they share the concerns outlined above. A PSEA Task Force was convened some time ago but appears to have little momentum. Given the very low starting point, and very precarious

situation in the northeast, it is recommended that dedicated and experienced personnel be deployed as soon as possible to undertake these steps.

Recommendations:

- The HCT should establish a regular agenda item to discuss measures to prevent and respond to sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment by *and* of humanitarian personnel. The action items or summary should be disseminated to promote transparency and facilitate accountability.

- NGOs should consider adopting a common pledge, perhaps facilitated by the Nigeria INGO Forum, to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation by and of humanitarian personnel along the lines of the InterAction-led CEO Pledge.

- ***Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of beneficiaries by humanitarian staff***

  - An experienced and senior level PSEA Advisor position should urgently be created under the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). This individual should be based in Maiduguri, be fully resourced for at least two years, and given full authority to put in place inter-agency capacities and mechanisms to prevent and respond to SEA. Their role should not simply be one of drafting policies and documents. It is critical that this individual play a very hands-on role, with the full support of the HC, to ensure that humanitarian organizations implement the relevant steps and that affected people are aware of their rights and able to report concerns and incidents.

  - The HQs of all humanitarian organizations working in northeast Nigeria should audit their Nigeria offices for compliance with existing PSEA Code of Conduct and other internal policies, develop action plans to close any gaps in compliance, and ensure that their Country Directors receive full support for their efforts to establish good practice.

- ***Prevention of sexual harassment and abuse (SHA) of humanitarian staff in the workplace:***

  - NGOs should establish organizational mechanisms for reporting incidents of workplace sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse if they currently do not exist. They should also conduct awareness and sensitization trainings to ensure all staff are familiar with reporting mechanisms with particular emphasis placed on ensuring national staff have culturally appropriate reporting options available to them.

  - UN agencies and NGOs should familiarize themselves with evolving donor requirements related to incidents of misconduct to include SEA and SHA. In particular those being developed by UK Department for International Development and USAID.

Recommendation 6: Continue to build strategic engagement with key stakeholders in alignment with desired protection outcomes

It was not possible during this mission to undertake detailed stakeholder mapping or actor analysis to comprehensively examine adherence to legal obligations in the context of the current conflict or identify specific policies and practices affecting the civilian population. However, as illustrated in the above recommendations, achieving protection outcomes depends a great deal on effective relationships with certain critical stakeholders.

Ongoing relationship-building and regular informal dialogue with key stakeholders is critical to developing an analysis of protection issues. For example, understanding the attitudes and beliefs of security forces which drives their behavior towards civilian populations is critical to inform strategies to change the attitudes and behavior which put civilians at risk. These relationships are also essential to implementing strategies to reduce risk – ranging from securing stakeholder acceptance and support for the activities to be undertaken to persuading certain actors to change their policies and practices to minimize civilian harm.

The Nigeria INGO Forum is very conscientious and deliberate in its efforts to cultivate relationships with prioritized actors including the Theater Commander of the Nigerian Armed Forces in the northeast, State government authorities, the national legislature, and traditional rulers. The HC, Deputy HC, and other individuals in leadership positions similarly play a critical role in shaping relationships, particularly at the sub-national and state levels. These efforts should be sustained and even expanded in support of more continuous dialogue on humanitarian concerns and in support of specific objectives in line with the above recommendations. In order to ensure maximum value for analysis and protection strategies, NIF should additionally continue to help to ensure information-sharing and coordinated approaches to relationship-building among its individual NGO members at all levels.

Recommendations:

- *Plan for and build up engagement with the Civilian Joint Task Force*

  NIF and all humanitarian actors should urgently invest some effort in analyzing and building channels for dialogue with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). The CJTF is an amalgamation of local level militia that are currently operating as an auxiliary security force to the Nigerian Armed Forces, including offensive operations against NSAGs and security presence in garrison towns and IDP camps. Interestingly, no one we spoke with was able to confirm where the CJTF sits structurally in relation to the Nigerian government, who the CJTF reports to (with speculation ranging from the Ministry of Interior and the Attorney General to the Nigerian Armed Forces), or what their command structure is. With CJTF's considerable role in offensive operations and static security, and the frequency of their interaction with IDPs across the northeast, it is essential for humanitarian actors to engage in regular dialogue with them. UNICEF has had some success; for example, to support CJTF's adoption of a plan to end the recruitment of children.[20]

- *Invest in the capacities and planning necessary for securing access to "inaccessible" areas*

  There is also the outstanding and, as yet, unaddressed question of how to gain access to the 823,000 people in areas considered "inaccessible" due to a lack of channels to negotiate for access with non-state armed groups (NSAGs) who control the territory and government restrictions on operating in these areas. With nutritional assessments of children newly arriving in towns and IDP sites from these inaccessible areas indicate nutrition levels significant worse than that of children in areas receiving assistance,[21] the need to develop a means of accessing this population only grows more urgent with time.

  It is important to recognize that establishing access to affected people in many of the currently inaccessible areas depends not only on engagement with government authorities but also with the relevant NSAGs. Focusing exclusively on the role of the government to permit access will impede independent and impartial humanitarian response and create a barrier to humanitarian actors' engagement with the NSAGs. Engagement with all parties to conflict, and striving consistently for a neutral posture, is a cornerstone of humanitarian action. It is essential to establishing and maintaining effective access to all conflict-affected people, no matter where they are found, and ensuring the impartiality of the humanitarian response. This is acknowledged in the Access Strategy adopted by the HCT earlier this year although little action has been taken to this end and several humanitarian actors indicated a belief that the government will never permit access to areas it does not control.

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[20] *Civilian Joint Task Force in Northeast Nigeria Signs Action Plan to End Recruitment of Children* (UNICEF, September 2017)

[21] For example, from August to mid-September 2018, 55% of the children from hard-to-reach areas are considered acutely malnourished and 34% are considered severely malnourished. This compares to only 13% from areas considered as accessible. Proxy data from hard-to-reach areas in Bama, Gwoza, Dikwa and Ngala Local Government Areas (LGAs) are extremely concerning. (Source: Private correspondence based on IOM DTM ETT data collected weekly with nutrition partners, and records wards of origin of malnourished children. This represents proxy analysis.)

Cultivating the Nigerian government's acceptance of humanitarian actors' direct engagement with NSAGs will, of course, take considerable work but it is a necessary step which urgently requires attention by and extensive discussion among the NGO Country Directors, the Humanitarian Coordinator, and UN agency heads. Dialogue around requirements for humanitarian access should also include the CJTF to whom the Nigerian armed forces have apparently delegated many frontline operations against NSAGs (while many of the Nigerian armed forces maintain largely static positions in garrison towns). CJTF may in fact prove to be one of the more consequential actors in relation to establishing and maintaining humanitarian access to conflict-affected people and should not be neglected as NGOs and UN agencies consider their access strategies going forward.

In-country capacity should also be established to develop contacts and undertake dialogue with the NSAGs. It should be noted that, currently, the two NSAGs often collectively referred to as "Boko Haram" reportedly behave quite differently towards civilian populations; one NSAG focusing their attacks on military forces and locations, and actively avoiding civilian harm, while the other continues to perpetrate attacks on civilians as well as military targets. Although it will not likely be feasible to establish dialogue and obtain security assurances with both of the armed groups, some progress should be possible in some areas currently under NSAG control. Over time, humanitarian actors should become increasingly well-positioned to seek access to affected people as the situation, and the attitudes and behavior of the State armed forces and of the non-state armed groups, evolve.

Regulatory restrictions are inherently problematic to humanitarian operations and confer significant risks to implementing organizations and their local partners.[22] A critical factor in exploring the extent of potential humanitarian activities in areas under NSAG control will be the application of counter-terrorism laws, policies, and restrictions not only by the Nigerian government but by donor governments.[23] It will be essential to have detailed conversations with donor governments regarding the means of avoiding the diversion of humanitarian resources in the course of humanitarian activities under NSAG control as well as to ensure that counter-terrorism restrictions do not impede neutral, impartial, independent, and timely humanitarian action. It may be useful to commission a comprehensive expert review of the range of counter-terrorism laws, policies, restrictions and their implications to help inform this dialogue and approaches to operations undertaken in areas where NSAGs are present.

INGOs and the ISWG should be encouraged to fully articulate in-country capacity requirements to effectively undertake humanitarian operations in the currently inaccessible areas. The establishment of regional hubs is one important and very welcome accomplishment, however, additional capacity needs are likely to come into play – for example for ongoing conflict and context analysis, security management, air and ground logistics, as well as experienced personnel who can sensitively manage regular dialogue on challenging topics with the Nigerian armed forces and the NSAGs. Some NGOs and UN agencies have significant in-house experience and capacity and should be encouraged to deploy personnel to northeast Nigeria who can play a role in this regard.

- ***Strengthen civil-military coordination capacity for substantive dialogue on humanitarian concerns***

  OCHA's role for civil-military coordination will be essential to play a facilitative role in access-related dialogue with the relevant parties as well as to create a foundation for substantive dialogue on other

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[22] Recognizing this challenge InterAction is currently conducting a study that examines these and other risk categories, and the implications of risk transfer to local partners, in complex conflict driven emergencies. The results of the study are forthcoming in 2019.

[23] Boko Haram has been on the U.S. Specially Designated Nationals List since 2013. The UN Security Council al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee added Boko Haram to the list of sanctioned entities in May 2014 and soon followed by the European Union. USAID recently established some restrictions in grant agreements on the provision of assistance to individuals who have been held under Boko Haram control.

protection concerns that need to be addressed. In this regard, OCHA's in-country CMCoord capacity should be developed to ensure more regularized and substantive civil-military engagement and relationship-building beyond routine CMCoord training and coordination of aid activities.

- **Pro-actively counter disinformation**

  As noted in the previous section, humanitarian actors – and NGOs in particular – have been targeted by government officials with malicious rumors. While NGO, UN, and donor government representatives have sought to counter the most egregious and harmful statements, there is a broader public discourse in which humanitarian actors are viewed with suspicion. Pro-active steps to counter disinformation and educate key stakeholders about the role of humanitarian actors in situations of armed conflict should be considered. InterAction's *Disinformation Toolkit* contains some useful guidance for assessing the risk of disinformation and identifying potential strategies to address it, including *inter alia* identifying the source of the disinformation and assessing its threat level; communications strategies that make clear the mission, work and impact of your organization; creating staff security protocols including the monitoring of media information about your organization, as well as plans to mitigate risks for all staff, especially those who are most vulnerable; and using coalitions to increase the ability to defend against threats, and to amplify the voice of individual organizations.

Recommendation 7: Invest in coordination and collaboration for protection outcomes

Responses to protection concerns seem to be primarily reactive, disconnected from one another, and lacking investment in measures to reduce risk in northeast Nigeria. While humanitarian actors across the humanitarian community in Nigeria consistently and articulately spoke to the complex and dynamic nature of the severe and ongoing threats to civilians in northeast Nigeria, there is no apparent unified voice or strategy – whether in the protection sector or at ISWG or HCT level – regarding the desired outcomes and the humanitarian community's collective role to achieve them. Although an HCT CoP Strategy has been adopted on paper, the scope of issues being addressed is extremely broad and there is no clear sense of what to prioritize and how to bring about meaningful and measurable outcomes for affected people. An emerging exception to this is relates to forced return whereby responses to the government's returns initiative are increasingly shaped through joint UN and NGO analysis and contributions.

Recommendations:

- **Invest in the role of the Nigerian INGO Forum for protection outcomes**

  The Nigeria INGO Forum has a potentially critical role in relation to many of the recommendations made in this report, particularly to convene Forum members to deepen analysis and develop multi-disciplinary strategies addressing freedom of movement and safe, voluntary, and viable relocation, return and local integration. This analysis and these strategies can then feed into other inter-agency operational and strategic decision-making fora, including the HCT and ISWG. Throughout interviews, key informants affirmed the critical role of the Nigeria INGO Forum as an interlocutor, convener, and representational body. Given the diversity of experience and expertise in the NGO community related to community engagement, information management, relationships with key stakeholders – such as traditional leaders, the Nigerian media, government counterparts at national and sub-national levels – the Forum is uniquely positioned to act as a convener and facilitator for collective problem-solving on priority issues.

  A few key success factors should be taken into account. First, the active contributions of individuals NGOs will be indispensable. In this regard, a number of different areas of specialist and sectoral expertise have been identified in relation to the various recommendations. Second, while maximizing and amplifying the expertise of its members, the Nigeria INGO Forum should – in consultation with Forum members -- determine its staffing needs to coordinate joint NGO strategies. This might entail adding a dedicated

protection advisor to the NIF team, and/or project coordination capacity, and/or the use of external specialists through consultancies.

Finally, the support of donors will be essential to ensure that NGO efforts are well-resourced. In particular, donors have a critical role to encourage the ways of working outlined in this report by ensuring that appropriate and sustained resources are allocated. NGOs and donors should regularly discuss the implications of investing in analysis and using iterative and adaptive methods in their efforts to reduce risk and work towards protection outcomes.

- *Adopt greater strategic focus for an enhanced role of the Humanitarian Country Team in support of protection outcomes*

A dedicated protection strategy, initiated and promoted by the Humanitarian Coordinator through the Humanitarian Country Team, can be a tool for the humanitarian community to define and achieve collective protection outcomes, as described in the IASC Protection Policy. Complementing protection cluster strategies, and other relevant strategies, the HCT protection strategy can help ensure a comprehensive response to protection risks "beyond what protection actors can achieve on their own".[24] Indeed, given the multi-dimensional character of most protection concerns, it is inevitable that the comprehensive reduction of risk depends on the collaboration of actors involving multiple sectors, mandates, and expertise. In addition to mobilizing relevant humanitarian capacities, an HCT protection strategy can serve as a basis for identifying the relevant contributions of other actors, including development, peacebuilding, human rights and diplomatic actors, to achieve the desired results.

Nigeria's HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy does aim to build a common sense of purpose in uniting humanitarian actors to recognize and address complex protection problems, and it quite eloquently describes those problems. However, the strategy includes progress indicators which are very broad and focused on outputs (e.g. "# of government organs held accountable for the protection of civilians" and "# of times protection issues are raised by the parties to the conflict and the HC in key events") rather than the reduction of the specific risks. Several actors have commented on its weak ownership and accountability for its implementation. Many actors who are expected to report through the PSWG on implementation of activities indicated that they had never seen the document before.

It should be noted that the IASC Protection Policy identifies the potential to adopt HCT protection strategies as *one* possibility to mobilize relevant capacities and collaborative effort to address critical protection concerns. More importantly, the IASC PP emphasizes several ways of working essential to collective and collaborative action to achieve protection outcomes. These include data and information sharing, integrated analysis, agreeing protection priorities and collective actions, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress towards these priorities.[25] Investing in these practices and habits of collaboration for protection outcomes are essential pre-cursors to effective and shared protection strategies, including at HCT level. It will be helpful for the HC and the DHC, the HCT, and the ISWG, as well as the Protection Sector and technical assistance sectors, to work towards the full implementation of these ways of working in the first instance.

To ensure that it serves to mobilize actors towards concrete and measurable protection outcomes, the following steps should be taken:

- The HC and HCT should **send a clear demand signal for the information and analysis on protection concerns they wish to receive and the frequency with which it should be provided**. This would

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[24] IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action
[25] Ibid.

inform and encourage, *inter alia*, a common framework for area-specific monitoring and information-sharing, and potentially stimulate joint efforts where deeper protection analysis is needed.

▪ Avoid paralysis and ensure actionability of HCT efforts to enhance protection by **tightening the focus on a specific protection issue**. By concentrating collaborative efforts on one specific protection issue, for example expanding freedom of movement, the HCT can also help establish ways of working which facilitate enhanced collaboration, and reinforce positive habits of coordination, which can subsequently benefit future efforts to tackle other problems and feed into system-wide changes in how protection issues are analyzed and addressed.

▪ When taking on a specific protection concern, **identify and promote the roles, the specific actors, and capacities needed** for comprehensive and impactful strategies. A whole-of-system approach to protection recognizes that reduction of risk typically requires more than one sector or discipline to achieve protection outcomes. In addition to aligning the contributions of different sectors, capacities, and mandates of humanitarian actors, this may entail actively cultivating complementarity with, and contributions from, actors beyond the humanitarian community to achieve the desired outcomes; for example, development actors, peacebuilding organizations, local civil society, academics, and the diplomatic community. In doing so, protection strategies should go beyond "advocacy" to articulate the different modalities for reduction of risk, and often need to work at multiple levels concurrently, ranging from individual and community level to sub-national, national, regional and international levels, in order to effect the desired changes in critical risk factors.

▪ **Operationalize the strategy towards outcomes** and establish benchmarks for measuring progress in the short, medium, and long-terms. As noted above, the current draft Action Plan of the HCT CoP Strategy sets out progress indicators for key activities that are output-focused and there is no articulated pathway towards the desired outcome of overall risk reduction. By shifting the framing towards desired outcomes, developing a causal logic which orients a range of activities towards the reduction of specific risk factors, protection strategies can be designed around measurable results in the form of changes in the risk factors which need to be addressed. Disaggregated protection analysis allows for the identification of indicators which should be tracked on a continuous basis, thereby deepening analysis in an ongoing way, and allowing for iterative development of strategies and real-time adaptation to achieve the desired outcome.

▪ Real-time adaptation of interventions is greatly aided by **a culture of periodic and collaborative reflection and iteration of information about the issues being addressed.** By adopting protection as a standing agenda item in the HCT, progress in collaborative problem-solving as well as new information – for example, resulting from continuous monitoring – can be brought forward to information strategic decision-making and engagement with key interlocuters**.**

• *Clarify PSWG co-leadership and create mechanisms for collaboration*

Currently, there is a lack of an effective platform for protection actors to come together to discuss issues, share and refine analysis on complex problems, and propose strategies for collective problem-solving in a genuine and meaningful way. Although only one Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG) meeting was observed, much of the time was spent on reviewing past action points – for which there was little participation by meeting attendees – which focused on questions about the status of NFI deliveries, WASH programming, and concerns about the quality of donated clothing.

> *"Meetings are a shell – a place where you greet one another; gaps are not discussed; concerns are not addressed."*
>
> *-NGO staff member*

Protection staff across organizations indicated that this was representative of most PSWG meetings and noted that the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) co-chair serves as a *de facto* gatekeeper for the issues which are discussed, curtailing discussion on any issues which are deemed sensitive by the Nigerian government. Frustration at the lack of an effective forum where humanitarian actors can collaborate on protection is high and no one knew of any steps being taken to address this. In addition, there appears to be much confusion about whether there is an NGO co-lead for the PSWG. Steps have been taken to develop a terms of reference and discuss co-leadership with UNHCR, however, in practice there have been no concrete steps towards co-leadership beyond calling on the role of prominent NGOs in an *ad hoc* manner.

In support of strengthening the PSWG as a mechanism for information sharing, integrated analysis, and platform for collective problem-solving:

▪ UNHCR should seek to **clarify the NGO co-leadership role**, in consultation with concerned actors, and reach a decisive conclusion about future arrangements and expectations for the future direction of the PSWG. If there is agreement to move ahead with NGO co-leadership, the terms of reference should explicitly spell out roles and responsibilities. Effective and open communication between the sector leads will be essential for setting priorities and ensuring follow-through on tasks. The Lead and co-lead should ensure harmonized and coordinated efforts that complement the protection sub-sectors in the different field locations.

▪ It would be helpful to **create small working groups or task teams** where humanitarian actors can speak freely and be defined by time-bound tasks to address specific problems. This would generate some much-needed momentum and offer a platform for collaboration. These task teams could be led or co-led by interested local and international organizations. In addition, the task team co-leads could together form a strategic advisory group convened by the Sector Lead Agency, or by an NGO co-lead, to ensure overall coherence and coordination of collaborative efforts and enable the shared analysis to be channeled to the broader PSWG, ISWG, or HCT as appropriate.

In light of the need to strengthen and streamline existing camp-based data collection, and with a view to strengthening the role of the protection sector in alignment with the IASC Protection Policy (see Recommendation 1), one of these task teams could be requested to establish **a common framework for area-based monitoring and information management**. This would help avoid duplication in data collection, inform and harness information collected by other sectors, and lay the groundwork for systematic and continuous camp-based protection analysis.[26]

A design-based approach seems well-suited to such an initiative, whereby the PSWG and operational organizations start small, test the framework in one or two camps, seek the perspective of IDPs in defining the indicators most relevant to their protection concerns, continuously track those indicators, and define points in time for collective reflection and adaptation.[27] Once actors have established those feedback loops and habits to continuously identify obstacles and necessary tweaks, they may find it easier to expand to additional camps and take such a framework to scale.

Using this approach, task teams would have high connectivity to camp-level mechanisms designed around the role of IDPs to determine priorities and help to ensure that PSWG priorities and analysis are increasingly driven by the perspective of affected people.

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[26] The PIM initiative provides useful guidance for how information management systems can support continuous analysis and establish information sharing protocols for the achievement of protection outcomes.

[27] For more on design-based approaches, see InterAction's Results-Based Protection resource repository.

Annex

InterAction Missions to Nigeria
July/August 2018
Terms of Reference

Context

Northeast Nigeria has been affected by violent conflict for nearly a decade. The multi-party conflict has culminated in widespread violence, displacement, and abuse of human rights and humanitarian law. This has included reports and documentation of extra-judicial killings; use of torture and cruel treatment; forced disappearances; rape and other forms of sexual violence/abuse; arbitrary arrests and detention; the use of civilians, predominately women and children, as PBIEDs[28]; and the destruction of critical infrastructure and assets.[29] The 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) highlights 5.8 million people specifically in need of protection support, with the greatest need in the states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.[30] In response to the dramatic scale of violence and deprivation, there has been corresponding high levels of displacement within northeast Nigeria. Over 1.6 million people have been displaced by the conflict since 2015**,** with 40% of the IDP population living in often overcrowded camps or camp-like sites, where protection and security measures are inadequate to ensure the safety, dignity, and protection of the affected population. Furthermore, new population influxes from areas inaccessible to humanitarian actors and within the vicinity of Local Government Area (LGA) capitals, cycles of secondary and tertiary displacements, as well as forced and spontaneous movements of refugees from Cameroon have placed additional burdens on existing overstretched services and capacities and are conducive to maladaptive mechanisms to self-protect. [31]

The *Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Centrality of Protection Strategy* (developed in December 2017) states the commitment of all humanitarian partners to "create and sustain a protective environment; to enhance protection through freedom of movement and enhanced access; and ensure protection mainstreaming into the humanitarian response and decision-making." As part of creating and sustaining a protective environment, the Strategy affirms its commitment to programming and service provision in support of this, as well as increasing advocacy efforts with all parties to conflict and actors of influence and facilitating increased protection analysis and monitoring to better inform response planning and advocacy efforts.

InterAction Field Support for Protection

InterAction protection missions seek to examine critical protection issues and trends, and how they are being addressed by humanitarian actors, to highlight key issues and recommend possible strategies and measures to address them to practitioners, policymakers, donor governments, and humanitarian leaders. InterAction seeks to support the increased emphasis throughout the humanitarian community on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, and outcome-oriented and results-based approaches to protection, including collective outcomes.[32]

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[28] Personal Borne Incendiary Explosive Device (PBIED). 57% of suicide attacks perpetrated between January and July 2017 recorded as using children.

[29] HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy (December 2017)

[30] Humanitarian Response Plan (December 2017 – 2018)

[31] HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy (December 2017)

[32] InterAction's work on results-based protection has resulted in the identification of three key elements that support the achievement of measurable results and protection outcomes manifested as reduced risk: Continuous context-specific protection analysis; Designing for the contributions of multiple actors, at multiple levels, and through multiple

Awareness, system-wide policies, and supporting standards and guidance increasingly underscore outcome-oriented approaches to protection, notably in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (October 2016) and the subsequent Global Protection Cluster Guidance Note on HCT Protection Strategies. The third edition of the Professional Standards for Protection Work (March 2018) elaborates on a results-based approach to protection in the chapter on 'Managing Protection Strategies', including an emphasis on context-specific analysis and the active role of affected individuals in achieving protection outcomes.

Purpose
Based on the request of and consultations with the Nigeria INGO Forum, InterAction's mission will focus on supporting NGO efforts to 1) enhance protection analysis to inform response planning and advocacy efforts in a continuous, focused, and coordinated manner (aligned with Objective 1 of Nigeria's HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy); and 2) provide observations, reflections and recommendations for improving relations between NGOs and Nigerian Government in the pursuit of protection outcomes. Specifically, InterAction will:

- Examine means and methods for information collection, analysis, and use for operational and strategic decision-making on protection, including grounding analysis in the perspective of the affected population. The mission will focus on protection issues highlighted during stakeholder consultations (for example restricted freedom of movement, gender-based violence, and IDP returns) and support actors in efforts to deepen the analysis in an iterative way and use it for evidence-informed programmatic decision-making and advocacy;
- Examine and make recommendations on the implementation of the recently endorsed *HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy* and complementary Action Plan, with particular focus on the NGO role in this process, including strengthening the role of existing fora and mechanisms in the humanitarian system, opportunities to cultivate the contributions of a range of actors to achieve protection outcomes, and engage with the relevant authorities with regard to the humanitarian consequences of conflict and related policy issues;
- Provide other recommendations to strengthen the use of the key elements of results-based protection to enhance sub-national and national protection strategies and their implementation to achieve collective protection outcomes.

Methodology & Outputs
The following methods will be used to document how the elements of a results-based approach to protection have been applied in practice:

1. **Pre-trip desk review and outreach:** Prior to the trip, InterAction will reach out to key actors to obtain and review relevant protection strategy materials, humanitarian coordination architecture, and program materials. Additional, more general background materials will be reviewed that include historical and context-specific analysis of the protection issues within Northeastern Nigeria.

2. **Key stakeholder bi-lateral consultations and focus group discussions:** Meetings will take place with a range of actors in Abuja and Maiduguri to explore multiple perspectives on key protection challenges, how protection analysis is being conducted and used in practice, and opportunities for results-based approaches to be strengthened and applied to achieve protection outcomes:

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sectors and disciplines; and Outcome-oriented methods. Further information on the key elements that support a results-based approach to protection can be found on http://protection.interaction.org

- Potential stakeholders to include key representatives (in Abuja and Maiduguri) from: NGOs (senior management and protection staff); Protection Cluster Coordinator; Humanitarian Coordinator; OCHA Head of Office; UN Agencies; local organizations and civil society; government actors, donor governments and key members of the diplomatic community.

3. **End of trip meetings with key stakeholders:** Debriefings will be held with various stakeholders in-country (Abuja) to share key findings on positive steps already being taken to achieve protection outcomes and identify potential areas where analysis and other measures could be strengthened, while receiving feedback from stakeholders on initial findings.

   The end of trip meeting will be done in conjunction with a one-day workshop on protection analysis with INGO Forum representatives. The workshop will focus on protection issues highlighted during stakeholder consultations and use initial findings to discuss strengthening protection analysis and strategies for reducing risk and supporting better protection outcomes.

4. The **expected outputs** of the mission include:
   - A written report highlighting recommendations for strengthening and incorporating the key elements of results-based protection to strengthen analysis and its use to inform more responsive strategies, interventions, and advocacy, including the role of NIF in relation to the HCT protection strategy. Consulted NGOs will have an opportunity to feed into the drafting of this report and subsequent recommendations;
   - 1 day workshop with INGO Forum on protection analysis;
   - Specific recommendations on protection issues, challenges, and opportunities to be communicated, as relevant, to government policy-makers;
   - Several documented examples, utilizing different media (including voice recordings, video and photographs) to illustrate the practical application of key elements of a results-based approach to protection.

Tentative schedule

* Depart Washington, DC for Abuja
* (19 July) Arrive in Abuja
* (20 July) Consultations with Key Stakeholders (preselected)
* (23 July): Depart Abuja for Maiduguri
* (23-27 July) Consultations with stakeholders
* (28 July) Depart Maiduguri for Abuja
* (30 July) Debrief INGO Forum and other stakeholders
* (31 July) Presentation to CD Plenary (last Tuesday of every month)
* (1-2 August) Follow up meetings/last stakeholder debriefs (including donors)
* (3 August) Depart Abuja for Washington, DC
Please note this may be subject to change depending on flight availability