



## Preventing Escalation and Reinforcing Protection of Forcibly Displaced Persons and Affected Communities in 2026: Spotlight on Logone-et-Chari and Donga-Mantung

Advocacy Note | February 2026

For National Authorities, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), and International Partners

**Background:** Cameroon's protection environment remains protracted and structurally fragile. The developments observed in early 2026 in Logone-et-Chari (Far North) and Donga-Mantung (North-West) do not represent a fundamentally new crisis dynamic. However, they reflect patterns that, if insufficiently addressed, risk consolidating into more entrenched insecurity and social fragmentation.

At the start of 2026, the Protection Cluster is intentionally spotlighting these two areas to reinforce preventive engagement, strengthen coordination, and consolidate national and international protection commitments. The objective is not to signal alarm, but to prevent escalation and avoid the normalization of harmful trends that could further the vulnerability of civilians, particularly forcibly displaced persons.

### Far North - Logone-et-Chari: Organized Abductions and Rising Displacement Risks

In February 2026, Logone-et-Chari Division in the Lake Chad Basin has experienced renewed armed incursions and a series of documented abductions affecting internally displaced persons, refugees, and host community members. These incidents follow patterns already observed in previous years. These dynamics must be understood within broader seasonal and regional patterns observed across the Lake Chad Basin, including cyclical pressure on agricultural and fishing zones, mobility patterns of armed actors, and shifting security configurations. Recent reporting nevertheless suggests that ransom-based abductions are becoming more organized and systematic, with significant payments (reportedly reaching up to XAF 15 million per individual) demanded in exchange for release, often through negotiated arrangements.

Such practices disproportionately affect displaced populations with limited economic resilience. The cumulative effects are severe: households incur debt to secure the release of relatives; agricultural and fishing activities are disrupted; fear-driven secondary displacement increases; and community confidence in protective systems erodes. Movements toward Makary following insecurity along the Doré Liman–Darak axis illustrate how localized incidents can quickly generate additional displacement pressures.

The risk in Logone-et-Chari is not sudden systemic collapse, but rather the gradual normalization of coercive extraction practices that undermine the resilience of displaced households and surrounding host communities. Preventing this pattern from becoming further normalized requires sustained attention, visible preventive measures and reinforcement of protective systems at both community and institutional levels.

### North-West - Donga-Mantung: Managing Identity Sensitivities and Escalation Risks

The violent incidents of 13–14 February 2026 in Mbat, Manang and Jui (Nwa sub-division, Donga-Mantung) resulted in the displacement of **1,860 individuals (370 households)**, according to IOM



Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT #276, 19 February 2026). Approximately 60% of the displaced are women and girls, with the majority currently sheltering in open grounds within bush areas due to the destruction and burning of homes. Priority needs include shelter, food and health services.

While displacement incidents in the North-West are not unprecedented, they occur within a protracted conflict environment where multiple armed actors operate. Localized violence may intersect with broader conflict narratives and identity-based perceptions without necessarily constituting structured inter-communal confrontation. Tensions involving Mbororo pastoralist communities and local farming communities have become increasingly intertwined with broader conflict narratives. Reports of inflammatory messaging and attribution of collective responsibility risk amplifying polarization.

Importantly, the situation does not currently constitute structured inter-communal conflict. However, indicators of early-stage polarization are present. In protracted conflict settings, localized violence, if left unaddressed, can evolve into identity-framed confrontation.

At the same time, developments in Donga-Mantung and other parts of the NWSW remains comparatively under-represented at the national level. This visibility gap risks delaying preventive engagement precisely when early action is most effective.

As in Logone-et-Chari, the concern is not the novelty of incidents, but the progressive structuring of localized violence into recurring and identity-sensitive patterns.

### **A critical window to prevent escalation**

The coming quarter represents a critical window to prevent further deterioration and escalation of ongoing protection risks.

In Logone-et-Chari, continued ransom-based abductions risk reinforcing coercive economic systems that undermine livelihoods, weaken resilience, and increase secondary displacements toward urban centers.

In Donga-Mantung, unmanaged polarization may transform localized incidents into retaliatory cycles that could deepen communal divisions.

Across both contexts, shrinking humanitarian access and cumulative displacement pressures may contribute to secondary displacement and the progressive erosion of community resilience by straining host communities and weakening social cohesion.

### **Normative and Legal Framework**

Cameroon's response is grounded in obligations under International Humanitarian Law, which requires the protection of civilians and civilian objects; International Human Rights Law, which safeguards the right to life, security, and protection from arbitrary detention; and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala Convention), to which Cameroon is a State Party.

The Kampala Convention explicitly obliges the prevention of arbitrary displacement, the protection of IDPs from violence and exploitation, and the promotion of accountability. Strengthened engagement in



Logone-et-Chari and Donga-Mantung is therefore not only operationally prudent but fully aligned with Cameroon's existing commitments.

### **Call to Action**

At this early stage of 2026, coordinated and visible engagement is essential to prevent the harmful trends from becoming further normalized in Logone-et-Chari and Donga-Mantung.

The Humanitarian Country Team, Government authorities, and international partners are encouraged to take the following actions:

#### **1. Reinforce protection responsibilities and preventive engagement**

Engage in strengthened dialogue with national and local authorities to recall their primary responsibility to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian objects, in line with International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law.

Support reinforced administrative and protective presence in high-risk areas through measures that enhance civilian protection and public confidence.

#### **2. Ensure transparent and timely follow-up on reported incidents**

Investigations and administrative responses to abductions, destruction of civilian property, and reported reprisals should be accompanied by clear public communication. Where incidents are documented, visible follow-up measures within defined timeframes are critical to reinforcing accountability, countering perceptions of impunity, and sustaining public trust.

#### **3. Systematically integrate a protection pillar in all rapid (FLASH) responses in the NWSW**

All rapid response mechanisms should include protection risk analysis and mitigation measures from the outset, ensuring that life-saving assistance is accompanied by safeguards against retaliation, exploitation, and secondary harm.

#### **4. Act early on identity-sensitive dynamics**

Support inclusive mediation efforts, community dialogue, and public messaging that avoids stigmatization and reinforces peaceful coexistence.

#### **5. Sustain and strengthen protection monitoring and risk analysis capacities**

Maintain and strengthen protection monitoring in high-severity and hard-to-reach areas, ensuring that timely data and joint analysis detect escalation risks earlier and inform proactive engagement rather than reactive response.

#### **6. Reinforce community-based protection mechanisms**

Support community-based protection including community alert systems, safe reporting pathways, and inclusive protection committees capable of mitigating retaliatory dynamics and facilitating early de-escalation of intercommunal tensions.



## **7. Integrate conflict sensitivity across humanitarian action**

Ensure that humanitarian and stabilization interventions across sectors systematically integrate conflict sensitive approaches to avoid reinforcing identity divisions or competition over scarce resources.

Preventive action now will significantly reduce the likelihood of deeper instability and higher humanitarian and political costs in the months ahead.

### **Strategic Priorities for 2026**

Reinforcing civilian protection in 2026 requires targeted engagement in both Logone-et-Chari (Far North) and Donga-Mantung (North-West), where early 2026 developments reveal patterns that risk becoming more deeply embedded if not addressed early.

In Logone-et-Chari, priority must be given to preventing the normalization of ransom-based coercion and reinforcing administrative and protective presence in affected corridors, particularly along the Doré Liman–Darak axis and displacement areas such as Makary.

In Donga-Mantung, strategic engagement should focus on mitigating identity-sensitive polarization, reinforcing protection visibility in the NWSW, and ensuring that rapid response mechanisms systematically integrate protection safeguards. Early mediation and visible accountability measures are essential to prevent localized violence from evolving into retaliatory cycles.

Across both contexts, maintaining anticipatory protection monitoring, strengthening community-based protection mechanisms, and ensuring conflict-sensitive programming are essential to preventing secondary displacement and further weakening of community resilience.

### **Conclusion**

The developments in Logone-et-Chari and Donga-Mantung do not represent new crises, but rather ongoing conflict dynamics that continue to generate protection risks for forcibly displaced persons and affected communities. They reflect persistent structural vulnerabilities that, if not addressed decisively, may lead to further deterioration of protection conditions.

This note intentionally places a spotlight on these two areas at the outset of 2026 to reinforce coordinated engagement, strengthen protection visibility, and support informed decision-making at the HCT level. This focus does not diminish the broader geographic spread, complexity, or severity of humanitarian needs across Cameroon. Rather, it highlights specific patterns that mirror wider dynamics affecting multiple regions.

While violence and insecurity are ongoing, the current period offers an opportunity to contain escalation, reinforce protective systems, and mitigate risks before conditions worsen further. Coordinated and visible action — combining strengthened monitoring, institutional engagement, and community-level protection measures — remains essential to safeguarding forcibly displaced persons and sustaining social cohesion in affected areas.