



Case Study: Leveraging Advocacy for Strengthened Access that Protects in Nigeria

Humanitarian access in Borno State, the epicentre of the conflict in Northeast Nigeria, is very limited and continues to be restricted to major towns under government control. In a context highly influenced by counter-terrorism policies and narratives, access is so limited that even reliable data about the number of people living in extremely hard-to-reach areas remains a major challenge, with some estimates putting it as high as 1 million people who live in areas under the control of, or heavily contested by, NSAGs. Access to relief and protection for affected communities is being further compromised by the government-led camp closure process, which is forcing IDPs to leave camps in the face of limited or no humanitarian assistance and move, including to insecure areas where they are vulnerable to NSAG attacks and with limited access to basic services. There is currently a renewed effort to improve data collection and reporting on access constraints through the Access Working Group (AWG), co-led by the UN and NGOs, to support greater situational awareness, a more unified humanitarian position and advocacy. The Protection Sector in Northeast Nigeria is an active participant of the Access Working Group, aiming to bring forward an understanding of what access means for affected communities, relevant principles and how local protection actors can be further included in meaningful ways in access mechanisms. Protection actors are also actively engaging with humanitarian leadership and sector leads and taking forward related advocacy to highlight the impact of government policies on IDPs' access to basic services in areas of relocation but most importantly in IDP camps set to be closed, where some assistance has been discontinued.