

# NIGER

## Displacement in Diffa region



	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Need for international assistance				X	
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

### Crisis overview

Boko Haram attacks in Yebi and Bosso, two towns in the east of Niger's Diffa region, have displaced an estimated 50,000–75,000 people since 19 May. Most of the displaced population first sought safety in the town of Toumour, 25–30km west of Bosso town, but have since moved westwards and northwards, fearing further BH attacks.

Newly displaced populations are being reported among host communities and in spontaneous sites along the national highway that connects Diffa and N'guigmi departments. Others are heading to Kablewa, an official camp that is already nearing capacity. The new arrivals will have severe humanitarian needs after travelling up to 100km to reach safety, with little food, water or shelter. The capacity of host communities to cope with the newly displaced is low, and humanitarian agencies, while present, are already stretched to meet the needs of the 241,000 existing displaced.

Access in Bosso town is limited. Reports suggest most civilians have left, but this is yet to be confirmed and those who remain likely face high protection and humanitarian needs.

### Key findings

#### Anticipated scope and scale

The influx of up to 75,000 newly displaced from Bosso department to spontaneous sites, refugee camps, and towns in Diffa and N'guigmi departments will further strain coping mechanisms and aggravate needs. Food insecurity is already at Crisis levels for many of the host communities and existing displaced, shelter and NFIs are lacking, and health and WASH facilities are overburdened. Operations will need to be scaled up dramatically in accessible areas.

#### Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- Food and water for newly displaced arrivals.
- Shelter and NFIs, especially for those displaced who are living in the open.
- Protection for populations who face the threat of further BH attacks and military operations.

#### Humanitarian constraints

Access to Bosso department is not possible for humanitarian actors due to insecurity. People are travelling, many by foot, over 100km to reach areas where humanitarian operations are located. It is unclear, but unlikely, whether access will rapidly improve in Bosso department, due to ongoing military operations.

#### Limitations

As the population is still moving, it is currently very difficult to accurately assess needs. Information is rapidly improving in accessible areas as populations arrive and their needs are assessed. A lack of clear communication on the status of military operations and BH presence in Bosso department seriously inhibit understanding of the situation in places of origin of the displaced.

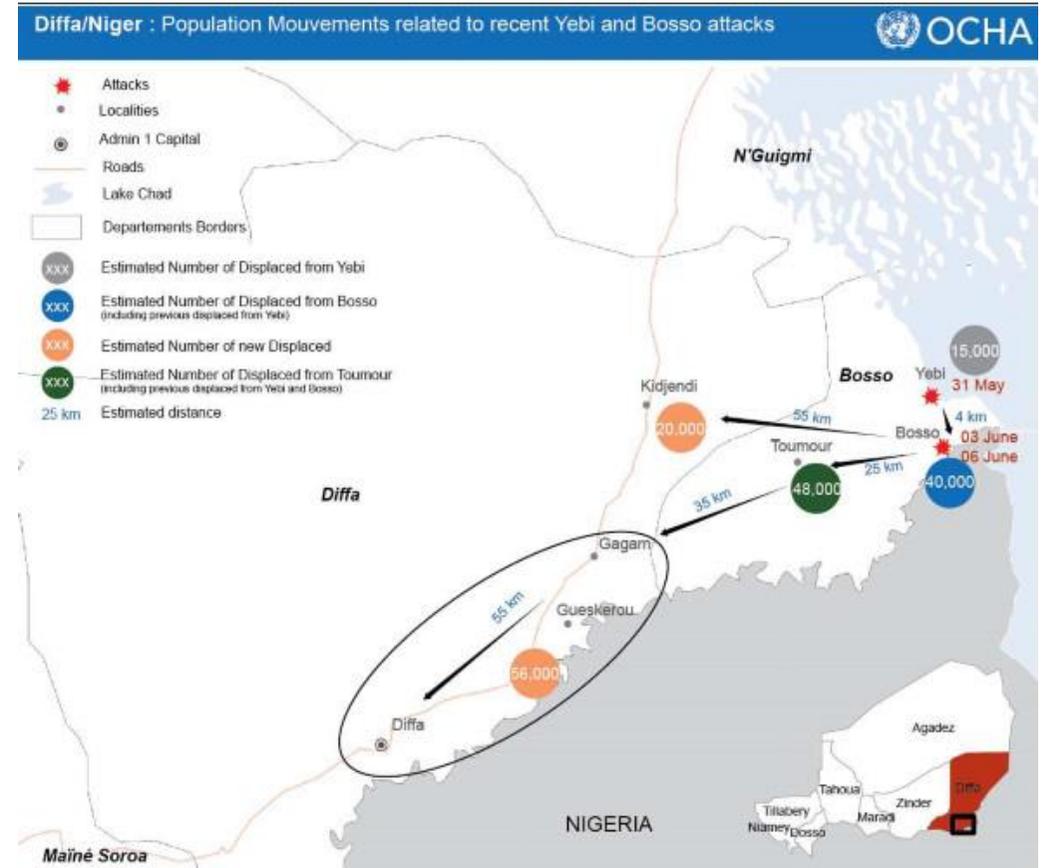
## Crisis impact

Boko Haram attacks in Yebi and Bosso, two towns in the far east of Niger's Diffa region, have displaced an estimated 50,000–75,000 people since 19 May (OCHA 07/06/2016; AFP 07/06/2016; UNHCR 07/06/2016). According to OCHA, priority needs for the displaced population are food, shelter and NFIs, WASH, and medical assistance, as well as transport and protection (OCHA 07/06/2016; AFP 07/06/2016).

Attacks on Yebi occurred on 19 and 31 May, killing nine people. Some 15,000 people from the town and surrounding areas fled to nearby Bosso town (UNHCR 07/06/2016; OCHA 05/06/2016; AFP 01/06/2016). On 3 June, BH attacked a military position near Bosso town, displacing some 50,000 people. Hundreds of BH were reportedly involved in the offensive. (OCHA 05/06/2016). Further attacks on Bosso town also occurred on 5 and 6 June, triggering more displacement (UNHCR 07/06/2016). In total, the recent clashes between government forces and Boko Haram in Bosso have left 71 dead, 55 of whom are Boko Haram, according to the government (AFP 07/06/2016).

Local sources report that BH has claimed the town of Bosso, having driven government security forces out of the area. This conflicts with government reports, which claimed to have restored total control of the town on 6 June (AFP 07/06/2016). It is unclear whether clashes are ongoing around Bosso town, but the risk of more attacks in the area remains high. Reports suggest Bosso and Yebi towns are deserted (OCHA 07/06/2016; IOM 08/06/2016).

**Displacement:** People fleeing Yebi in May sought safety in Bosso town, and then moved again when Bosso town was attacked on 3 June, along with most of Bosso town's residents. Some 50,000 people reportedly headed for the town of Toumour, 25–30km west of Bosso town (AFP 07/06/2016). However, given insecurity in Toumour and fears of further BH attacks, the displaced population and Toumour's residents have been moving to what are thought to be safer areas (OCHA 06/06/2016). New arrivals are reported in multiple sites along the national highway in Diffa region, which connects Diffa department with N'guigmi department, and runs through towns including Gueskerou, Gagam, and Kidjendi (OCHA 07/06/2016). Some 241,000 IDPs, refugees and returnees are already living in spontaneous sites and with host communities along this route, following multiple waves of displacement since February 2015. New arrivals are also heading for Kablewa camp, north of Kidjendi, which has a capacity of 10,000 and has a population of 8,000 in February (UNHCR 07/06/2016; UNHCR 29/02/2016). The massive and rapid influx of new arrivals is expected to heavily impact on existing displaced populations and host communities, whose limited resources and coping mechanisms are already stretched: some 460,000 people in Diffa region are already in need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA 03/06/2016).



Source: OCHA 07/06/2016

**Food:** People fleeing Toumour faced extremely low food availability for days (AFP 07/06/2016). The market in Yebi has reportedly been destroyed (ECHO 03/06/2016). The newly displaced need urgent food assistance on arrival in their new locations. (OCHA 07/06/2016).

Host communities and pre-existing displaced populations already faced high levels of food insecurity and lack livelihoods. The burden of new arrivals will aggravate this situation (OCHA 07/06/2016). As of 3 June, approximately 454,000 people were reported to be food insecure in Diffa region, including 399,000 facing Crisis or Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) food security (OCHA 03/06/2016).

**Health:** A mobile hospital was reportedly destroyed in Yebi (ECHO 03/06/2016). A health centre in eastern Diffa region was looted on 3 May, and humanitarian operations there have since ceased (OCHA 03/06/2016).

Measles cases have been reported in Diffa, amid a nationwide outbreak that has registered almost 2,000 cases and five deaths since March. Cholera and meningitis are threats in Niger (MSF 26/05/2016).

**Nutrition:** In April, 17.1% GAM was reported in Diffa region, among the worst rates in the county (OCHA 06/04/2016). In May, UNHCR reported an increase in malnutrition cases in Kablewa camp. It is unclear whether facilities are adequate to deal with a rapid influx of new arrivals, as the in-camp health centre was still under construction (UNHCR 31/05/2016).

**WASH:** Water and sanitation installations were reportedly destroyed in Yebi (ECHO 03/06/2016).

WASH infrastructure is lacking across the region: as of December, 60% of the population had inadequate access to drinking water and 86% lacked adequate sanitation facilities (UNHCR 07/12/2015).

**Shelter and NFIs:** Hundreds of houses were reportedly destroyed in Yebi (ECHO 03/06/2016). Shelter conditions are inadequate: the displaced are staying with host families or in open spaces and public buildings (OCHA 06/06/2016). The displaced population in Toumour did not have any shelter while there, according to UNHCR, and have likely moved one with very few belongings (AFP 07/06/2016).

In April, 18,000 households in Diffa needed shelter assistance and 11,000 needed NFIs. Humanitarian agencies will struggle to adequately shelter the newly displaced, given current shelter provision rates (OCHA 06/04/2016).

**Protection:** Protection is a major concern, with repeated attacks and uncertainty as to whether BH has the capability to launch further attacks in the coming days and weeks.

A high level of trauma and psychosocial vulnerability is reported among the newly displaced (OCHA 06/06/2016). Many are evacuees from operations against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad islands (UNHCR 07/06/2016).

The existing displaced population – many of whom have been attacked or displaced multiple times – also faces protection issues. 80% of the existing displaced population lack documentation, so registration challenges among the newly displaced population should be expected (OCHA 06/04/2016).

The Diffa–N'guigmi road is currently safer than Bosso and its surrounds, but it also has been the scene of attacks in May: three attacks took place along the road on three consecutive nights between 1 and 3 May (OCHA 03/06/2016). As recently as May, UNHCR relocated 2,000 refugees from sites along the road to Sayam Forage camp, partly because they had felt insecure so close to the border (UNHCR 31/05/2016). Authorities plan to move 8,500 people from sites between the border and the main highway to safer locations. (OCHA 03/06/2016).

## Vulnerable groups affected

Response has been imbalanced towards urban centres and towns, where access is easier. These leaves people in rural areas, who are typically poorer, even more vulnerable (NRC 20/05/2016).

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable in the context of the Boko Haram protection crisis. Across the Lake Chad region, BH has abducted some 2,000 women and girls, mostly in Nigeria but also neighbouring countries. They have been subjected to SGBV, slavery, forced marriage, and have been forced into military roles and suicide bombings (NRC 20/05/2016).

## Humanitarian constraints

Humanitarian operations in Bosso are temporarily suspended due to insecurity (OCHA 06/06/2016). UNHCR has been unable to maintain a consistent presence in Bosso since February 2015 due to insecurity, instead carrying out most of its work through local partners (AFP 07/06/2016; UNHCR 07/06/2016).

Attacks on humanitarian agencies have been minimal. However, on 3 May, a health centre operated by an international NGO in eastern Diffa region was attacked – the first attack of its kind (OCHA 03/06/2016). Joint rapid assessment missions to Diffa town and surrounding displacement sites are planned for this week (AFP 07/06/2016; UNHCR 07/06/2016; OCHA 06/06/2016).

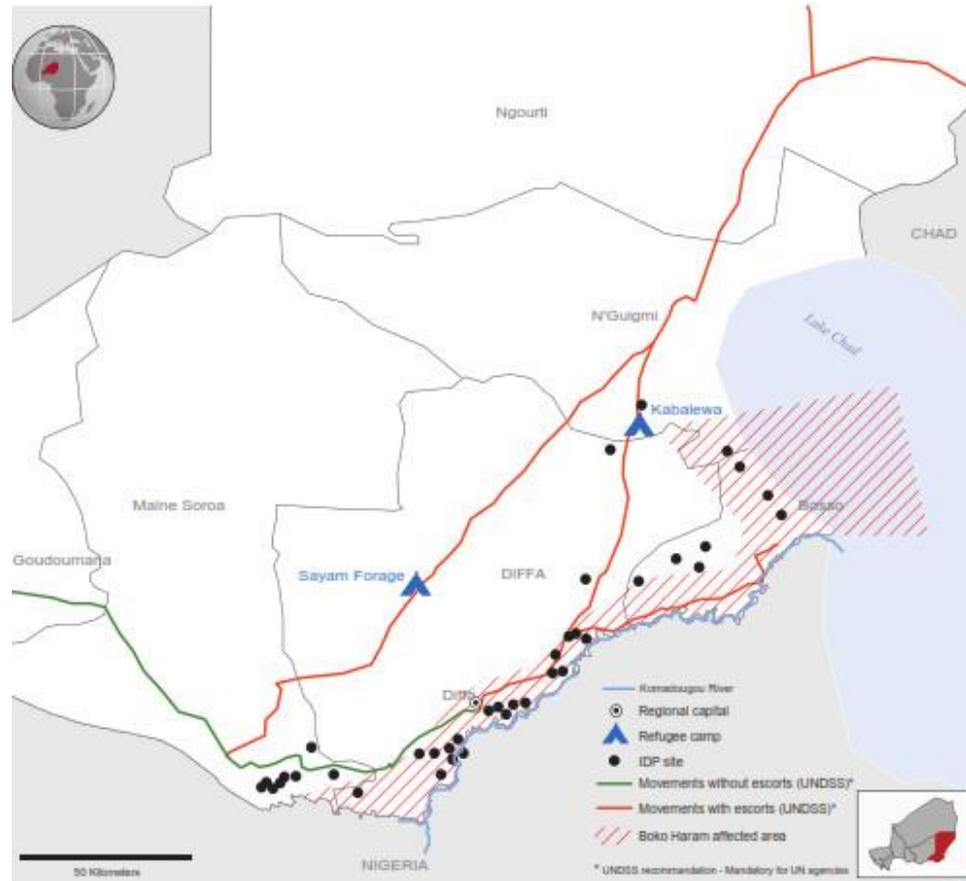
## Aggravating factors

### Seasonal information

**Floods:** Flood season is approaching in Niger, and will peak between June and September. Last year, flooding was worst along the Niger river in the south and centre of the country, and Diffa region avoided most of the bad weather. However, in August, floods affected almost 1,000 people in Maine Soroa department in the east of Diffa region (AFP 15/08/2016; OCHA 29/05/2016).

**Lean season:** Diffa region's food security crisis, driven by the ongoing insecurity since February 2015, which has disrupted agriculture and livelihoods, will be aggravated by the lean season, which coincides with the rainy season from June through August and September. (OCHA 03/06/2016; FEWSNET 31/05/2016).

## Humanitarian access constraints in Diffa region



Source: OCHA 02/06/2016

## Contextual information

### History of the current conflict

Boko Haram first attacked populations in Niger in February 2015, having crossed the border from their positions in northeast Nigeria, where they have been active since 2009. (OCHA 06/06/2016). In April, a major BH attack killed 74 people on the Lake Chad island of Karamga, including 28 civilians (OCHA 05/06/2016).

2015 saw 82 security incidents, and another 30 security incidents have been recorded so far in 2016, including attacks on military and civilian populations, mine explosions and abductions (OCHA 06/06/2016; OCHA 29/05/2016). Since 19 May, at least five BH attacks have been reported in Bosso department, including two in Yebi and three in Bosso town (OCHA 06/06/2016; AFP 07/06/2016; UNHCR 07/06/2016).

As Nigerian forces have been making progress against BH on their own territory, the group has been attacking neighbouring countries, including Cameroon, Chad, and Niger (UNHCR 06/06/2016). A multi-national joint task force, which aims to improve coordination between the various regional military efforts, has been strengthened since its Nigerian headquarters were overrun by BH in January 2015, but a lack of effective coordination at ground level continues to be reported. As of early June, the regional force was reportedly preparing a joint offensive against BH, but it is unclear when exactly the operation will be launched. (AFP 04/06/2016).

### Past displacement

As of 9 May, 241,000 people were displaced in Niger as result of conflict between BH and government security forces. Displaced populations in Diffa region including IDPs, refugees from Nigeria fleeing BH, and Niger nationals who were living in Nigeria but have returned home to seek safety from BH. Many people in the region lack documentation, making it difficult to categorise populations according to their displacement status. As of 9 May, the breakdown of the displaced population was: 127,000 IDPs; 82,000 Nigerian refugees; 31,500 returned Niger nationals (OCHA/DREC 06/06/2016; OCHA 03/06/2016)

Most of the displaced have settled in towns and host communities in Diffa and N'guigmi departments, or in spontaneous sites along a 200km stretch of the main national highway. A relocation plan is underway, affecting some 8,500 of displaced people who will be moved to safer areas in Diffa department. (OCHA 03/06/2016; OCHA 30/05/2016).

Before the most recent wave of displacement since 19 May, 43,000 displaced people were in Bosso department, many having been evacuated by the military from Lake Chad islands or displaced due to BH attacks (OCHA 07/06/2016).

## Key characteristics of Diffa region

**Demographic profile:** 593,821 population; 4.7% annual growth rate, 51:49% male:female (2012). Population by department: Bosso 76,735; Diffa 159,722; N'guigmi 73,374 (2012) (Census 2012; Government 2014).

**Food security:** 454,000 food insecure, including 399,000 severely (2016) (OCHA 03/06/2016). 34% poverty rate (2011) (Government 2014).

**Nutrition:** 17.1% GAM (2016) (OCHA 06/04/2016).

**Health:** 5.9 deaths per 1,000 people (2012 crude mortality) (Government 2012). 45% access to health facility within 5km (2010) (Government 2014).

**WASH:** 79% access to safe drinking water in Diffa region (2012) (Government 2014).

**Literacy:** 56% (2009) (Government 2009).

## Response capacity

### Response capacity

Response capacities of local government and organisations in the affected areas is low. Around 30 international humanitarian agencies are operational in Diffa region, including major UN agencies and international NGOs. While underfunded and overstretched, they are carrying out a range of programmes to assist both displaced and host communities. Operations are ongoing in both Diffa and N'guigmi departments. Some programmes have been carried out in Bosso, including the MSF hospital in Yebi, which was attacked on 19 May, but they are few and extremely limited due to access constraints. Stockpiles of essential relief supplies are kept in Diffa town and reportedly available for at least part of the newly displaced population. However, distribution is a challenge as affected populations are travelling in different directions and arriving across a wide range of locations (OCHA 06/06/2016; MSF 09/06/2016).

### Population coping mechanisms

Coping mechanisms are stretched among the displaced population, many of whom have faced multiple displacement and evacuations in the past 18 months due to BH attacks and military operations. The host community has been struggling to cope with the heavy influx of displaced populations. Although population movement was common pre-crisis due to seasonal work and cross-border trade, coping mechanisms related to this lifestyle have been eroded by curfews and restrictions of movement imposed due to an ongoing state of emergency (OCHA 06/06/2016; UNHCR 07/06/2016; Xinhua 28/04/2016).

## Information gaps and needs

As at 9 June, humanitarian partners are as yet unable to confirm the number of people displaced (OCHA 07/06/2016). Assessments are ongoing in main places of arrival, but it is difficult to assess needs of people still on the move, and in rural locations (MSF 09/06/2016; OCHA 05/06/2016).

Much of the information on the BH crisis is reported is focused heavily on Nigeria, where the largest displaced population is, or the broader Lake Chad basin region, spanning Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon as well as Niger. More consistent reporting of local level information in Niger's Diffa region would improve understanding of the crisis and population's needs.

Because of the diffuse spread of the population in need, it will be crucial to determine and communicate who is doing what and where as soon as possible, as well as what needs remain outstanding per location.

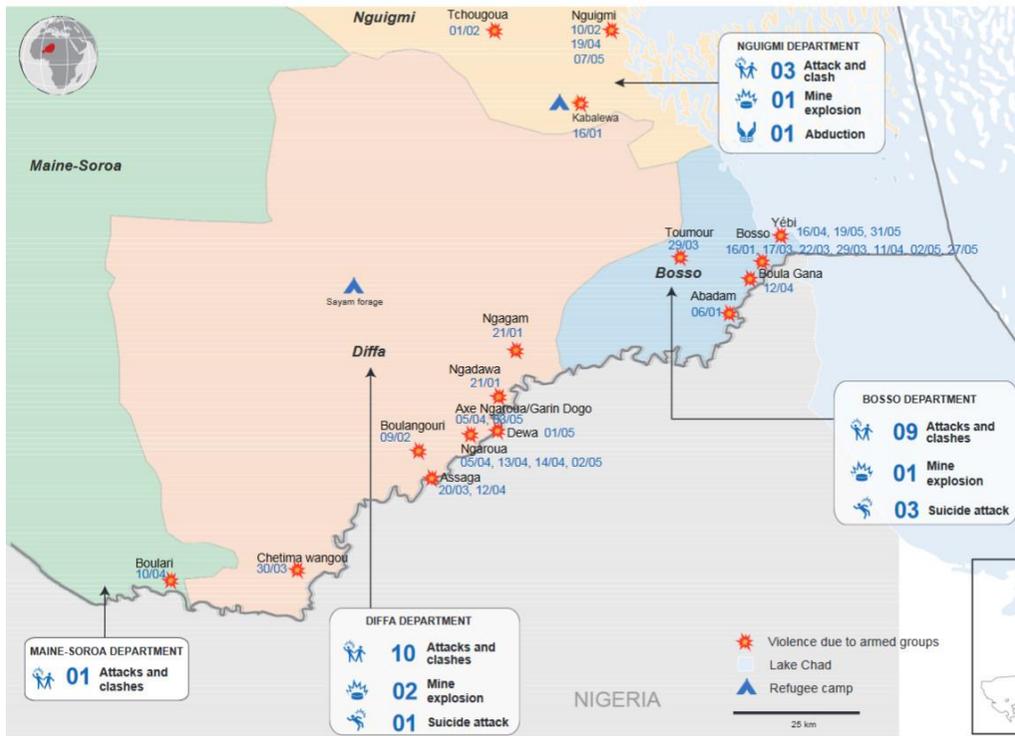
## Lessons learned

Humanitarian partners have learned since responding to the displacement crisis since 2014 that tensions between host communities and displaced populations can flow from inequitable aid distribution. Both Nigerian and Niger nationals in the area often share a common language and culture; borders were previously highly porous. As such tensions are not inherent, but have been triggered due to a sense that displaced populations receive aid but host communities do not, despite suffering under the weight of the new arrivals (DME for Peacebuilding 30/11/2015).

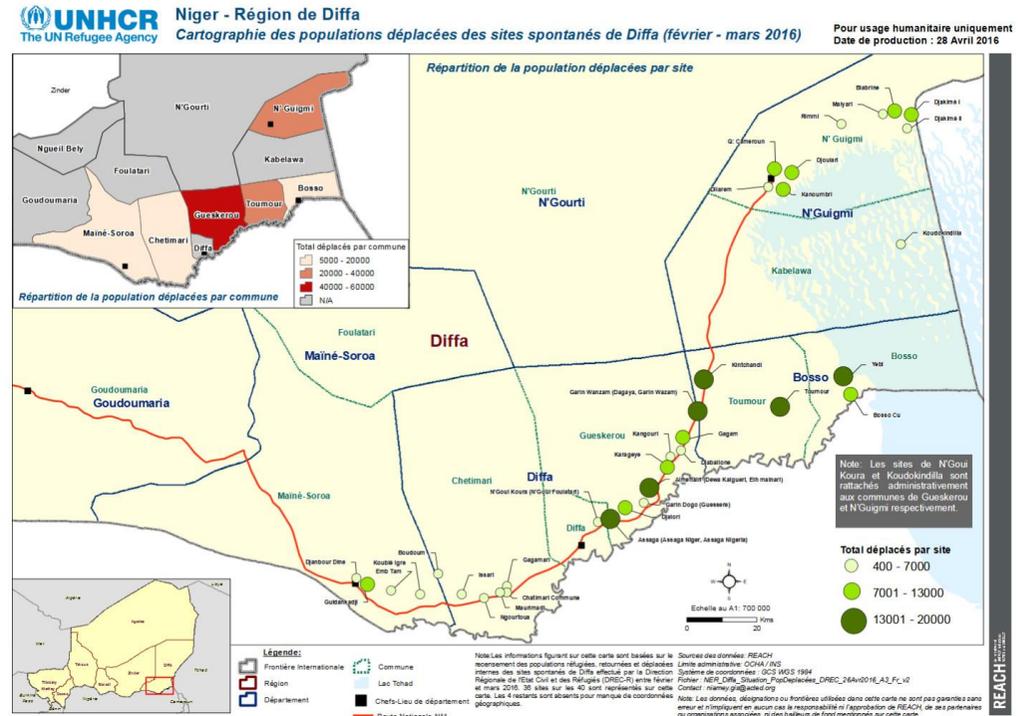
Housing, land, and property rights challenges are also likely to appear as IDPs and refugees return to their areas of origin (UNHCR 03/2005).

# Maps

## Diffa/Niger: Attacks related to Boko Haram in 2016 (as of 02 June 2016)



Source: OCHA 02/06/2016



Source: UNHCR/REACH 28/04/2016