

A Famine likely occurred in Bama LGA and may be ongoing in inaccessible areas of Borno State

A Famine likely occurred in Bama and Banki towns during 2016, and in surrounding rural areas where conditions are likely to have been similar, or worse. Although this conclusion cannot be fully verified, a preponderance of the available evidence, including a representative mortality survey, suggests that Famine (IPC Phase 5) occurred in Bama Local Government Area (LGA) during 2016, when the vast majority of the LGA's remaining population was concentrated in Bama Town and Banki Town. Analysis indicates that at least 2,000 Famine-related deaths may have occurred in Bama LGA between January and September, many of them young children. Famine may have also occurred in other parts of Borno State that were inaccessible during 2016, but not enough data is available to make this determination.

While assistance has improved conditions in accessible areas of Borno State, a Famine may be ongoing in inaccessible areas where conditions could be similar to those observed in Bama LGA earlier this year. Significant assistance in Bama Town (since July) and in Banki Town (since August/September) has contributed to a reduction in mortality and the prevalence of acute malnutrition, though these improvements are tenuous and depend on the continued delivery of assistance. Food assistance may also be preventing Famine in other Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) concentrations. However, given that large areas of Borno State remain inaccessible to all civilian actors, including humanitarian partners, and given the severity of food insecurity observed in those adjacent areas that humanitarians can reach, it is possible that Famine (IPC Phase 5) is ongoing in inaccessible parts of Borno State (Figure 1). However, without additional information, this cannot be confirmed or disproven.

The risk of Famine in inaccessible areas of Borno State will remain high over the coming year. Given current levels of food insecurity, significantly below-average crop production, disrupted livelihoods, and very high staple food prices, millions of people are likely to remain severely food insecure over the October 2016-September 2017 consumption year. Food security outcomes are likely to be especially severe in inaccessible areas where livelihoods are disrupted and populations are cut-off from markets, health care, and assistance. In these areas, levels of malnutrition and mortality are likely to remain elevated given the combination of this food insecurity, a high probability of disease outbreaks, and inadequate humanitarian response.

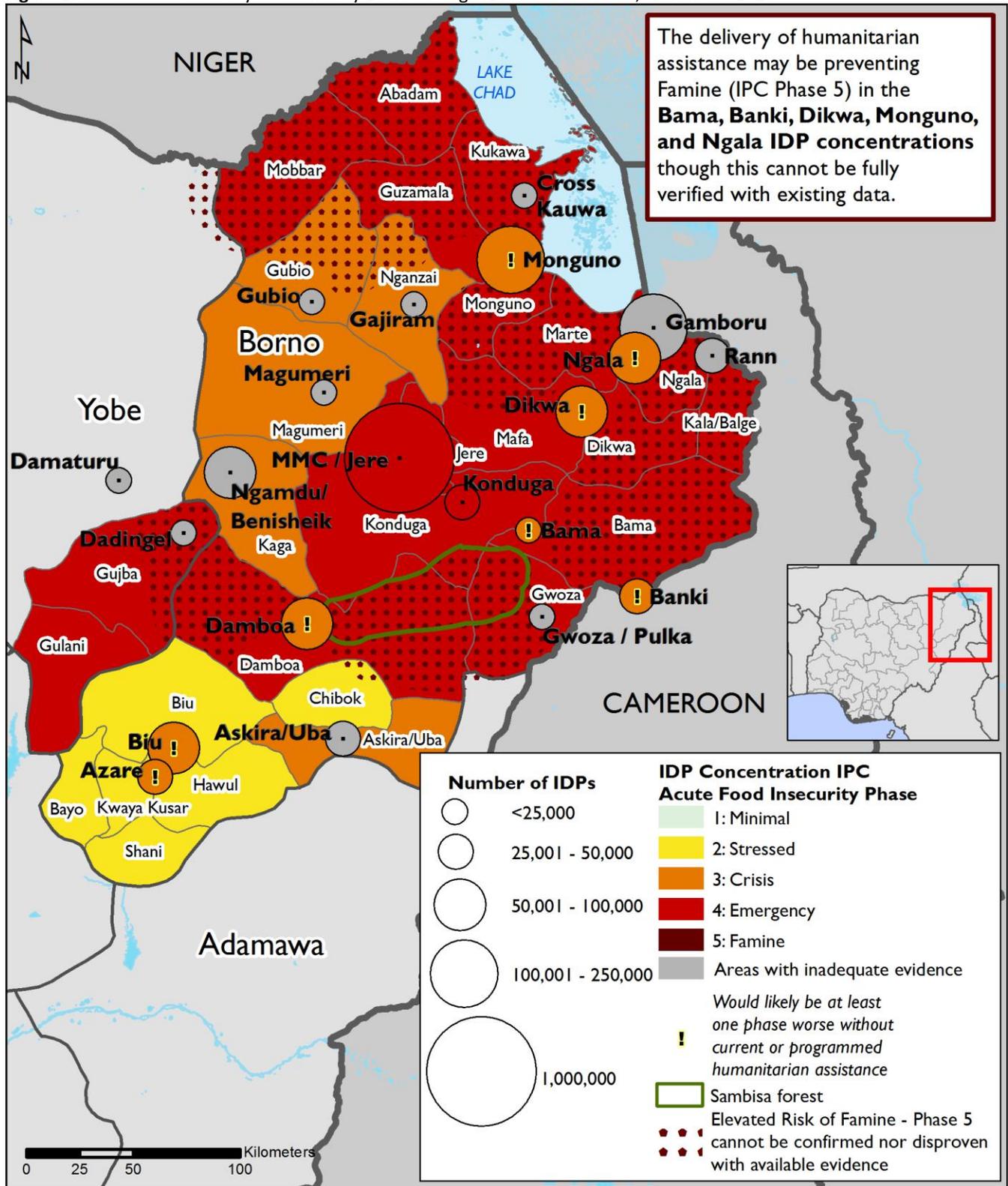
Assistance is likely to continue preventing Famine in many IDP concentrations, but sustained humanitarian access is critical. In a worst-case scenario, where conflict cuts off areas that are currently accessible and dependent on assistance, the likelihood of Famine in these areas would be high.

The current response is insufficient to meet the very large emergency assistance needs in Borno State. Regardless of whether a Famine is occurring, the severity of current food insecurity is extreme and the size of the food insecure population is very large. Large areas of the state are classified as Emergency (IPC Phase 4), meaning that at least one in five households faces large food consumption gaps, the prevalence of acute malnutrition is very high, and excess mortality is likely, especially among young children. The October 2016 Cadre Harmonisé estimates that 4.7 million people are in need of emergency food assistance in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe states of northeast Nigeria, 3 million of them in Borno State alone. While large-scale emergency operations are ongoing in the northeast, only about 1 million people have received food assistance in 2016. Displaced people and those trapped in inaccessible areas face the worst food security outcomes.

How is Famine classified? According to the IPC, a Famine (IPC Phase 5) has occurred when the following three criteria are met: 1. At least 20 percent of households in the area of concern (e.g. admin unit, camp) are classified in Catastrophe, meaning that households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even with full employment of coping strategies; 2. The prevalence of acute malnutrition is very high, above 30 percent if measured using weight-for-height or above 17 percent if measured using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC); and, 3. Excess mortality has occurred, as evidenced by a Crude Death Rate (CDR) greater than 2/10,000/day.

For the full report, please go to <http://www.fews.net/west-africa/nigeria/special-report/december-13-2016>.

Figure 1. Current food security outcomes by LGA and large IDP concentrations, November 2016



*MMC = Maiduguri Metropolitan Council

Source: FEWS NET