

# URGENT ACTION

## DISPLACED WOMEN, CHILDREN DENIED RIGHT TO FOOD

**Approximately 230 internally displaced women (known as the Knifar movement) and their children have not had food delivered to the internally displaced (IDP) camp since 18 April. Their food supply has run out. This denial of food to the women and their children is seen as an attempt by the authorities to force them to go back to their former homes where they would risk facing various human rights violations.**

A group of approximately **230 internally displaced women (known as the Knifar movement) and their children** risk starvation as authorities have stopped supplying food to the IDP camp they have been living in since 2017. Food was last delivered to the camp on 18 April and it did not even last one week. There has been no communication from camp authorities on why the supply stopped. Women and their children have been left with no alternative means of getting food.

Earlier that day, officials of the State Emergency Management Agency in Borno state (BOSEMA), North east Nigeria told the women that they would no longer receive food assistance. The BOSEMA officials had also told the women and their children that they would have to return to their former homes in Bama. The women expressed their desire to remain at the IDP camp in the state capital of Maiduguri as it is relatively safer than Bama and it also allows them the chance to continue their fight for justice. The officials have allowed them to stay at the IDP camp.

However, Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the government's decision to discontinue food supply to the internally displaced women and their children is a strategy to silence the women as a first step in the plan to return the women and their children back home and to also keep the women from continuing to seek justice for their husbands. Since 2017, when the women moved to the camp, they have been calling for the release of their husbands who are unlawfully detained by the Nigerian military in the context of the government operations against the Boko Haram. The men were detained in mass arrests as they fled their homes during attacks by Boko Haram. The authorities have yet to provide any proof that the men are involved with Boko Haram or even where they are detained.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Urging the government to respect the right to food and halt any plans to cut off food aid to the hundreds of internally displaced women known as the Knifar movement and their children;
- Calling on them, in line with international human rights and humanitarian law, to stop any plans to forcibly return the internally displaced women and their children to Bama area where they would face insecurity and risk human rights violations including restrictions on their right to movement.

### Contact these two officials by 29 June, 2018:

Vice President of Nigeria  
 Prof. Yemi Osinbajo  
 Office of the Vice President  
 Nigerian Presidential Complex  
 Aso Rock Presidential Villa  
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory  
 Nigeria  
 Twitter: @ProfOsinbajo  
**Salutation: Dear Vice President**

Ambassador Sylvanus Adiewere Nsofor,  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria  
 3519 International Court, NW  
 Washington, DC 20008  
 Tel: (202) 516 4277 | Fax: (202) 775-1385  
 Email: [info@nigeriaembassyusa.org](mailto:info@nigeriaembassyusa.org) -OR-  
[ambassadoronsofor@nigeriaembassyusa.org](mailto:ambassadoronsofor@nigeriaembassyusa.org)  
 Contact Form:  
<http://www.nigeriaembassyusa.org/index.php?page=contact-us>  
**Salutation: Dear Ambassador**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 102.18*

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**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2014, more than two million men, women and children have been displaced by the armed conflict in north-east Nigeria. A group of internally displaced women known as the Knifar movement, have since 2017 consistently called for justice for the unlawful arrest and detention of their husbands.

Most of the internally displaced women are from towns and villages in Bama region that fell under the control of Boko Haram during violent attacks in 2014. Many of the women suffered terribly under Boko Haram, and were prohibited by the armed group from leaving their homes to farm or otherwise carry out their livelihoods, and being lashed if they disobeyed. They said they were beaten and tortured as they tried to protect themselves or their daughters from forced marriages to Boko Haram members, and some said they witnessed executions of people who tried to escape Boko Haram areas.

Any attempts by authorities to forcibly return the women to Bama would be against international law, which requires Nigeria to provide protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, and refrain from forced returns.

In the IDP camps, they have been active in fighting for their rights despite the difficulties they face in displacement and their ongoing struggle to obtain bare minimum levels of food and others basic necessities.

Collectively, the women have developed a list of almost 1300 people from their villages who have been detained by the military – mostly while arriving in the remote Bama camp for IDPs seeking the military's protection in late 2015 and early 2016. The group have also collected a list of names of hundreds of people from their villages who died while at the IDP camp in the months after their arrival from hunger and sickness, and have reported sexual violence involving the military and the civilian militias present in this camp. This is the same camp they risk being returned to.

The Knifar movement women have raised these concerns with the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission, the National Assembly, and with the Presidential Investigation Panel set up by the President in August 2017 to investigate the conduct of the military, including in the course of the conflict with Boko Haram. They have also been active in gaining domestic media attention to their concerns.

Name: Hundreds of internally displaced women (known as the Knifar movement) and their children

Gender m/f: both

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