

A MODIFIED EMERGENCY MARKET MAPPING ANALYSIS (EMMA) AND PROTECTION ANALYSIS

Smoked fish and dried red pepper income market systems
Diffa Region, Eastern Niger

Executive Summary, December 2016



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OXFAM

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Almost seven years of violent conflict involving Boko Haram and military operations to counter them has led to a devastating humanitarian and displacement crisis in the Lake Chad Basin countries of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. In Niger's easternmost region, Diffa, which borders north east Nigeria, over 250,000 people have been displaced by the Boko Haram attacks¹ and the military operations to counter them, fleeing their homes and farmlands. Niger is one of the world's poorest countries² and Diffa the most deprived of its regions, so the arrival of large numbers of IDPs and refugees is causing a huge strain on already scarce resources. This part of Niger is also heavily reliant on cross-border trade to sustain its economy, given its close proximity to Chad and Nigeria.

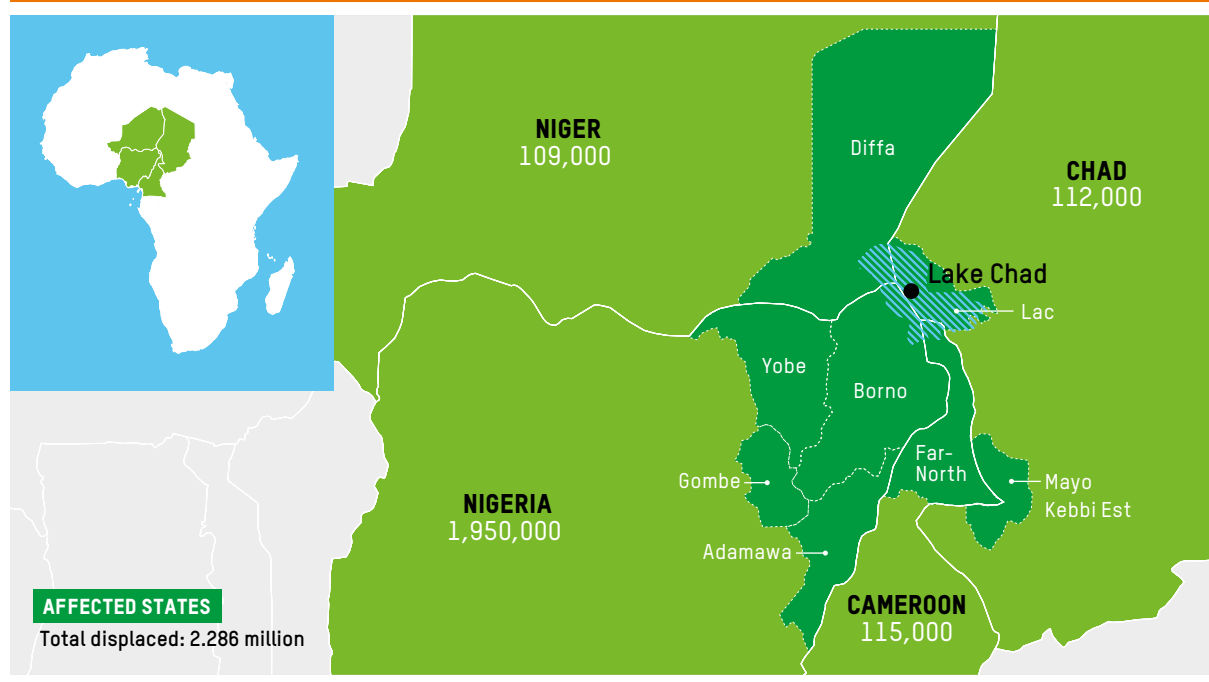
The Government of Niger declared a state of emergency in the Diffa region in February 2015, as part of its stated aim of responding to Boko Haram. In November 2016 this was further extended for three months. This restricted livelihoods activities such as catching or selling fish, and purchasing fuel and fertiliser vital for agricultural production.

The government has stated that these restrictions are meant to prevent Boko Haram from accessing food, money and supplies. But with borders closed and military operations in these areas, cross-border trade has also been severely affected.

The government measures are having a negative impact on populations and further exacerbating the humanitarian situation, since people in the Diffa region are heavily reliant on fishing and cash crop production (such as dried red peppers) as key sources of income. The combination of Boko Haram violence, military operations to counter Boko Haram and government restrictions are therefore exposing affected populations to multiple protection risks as they try to make a living.

As part of its emergency response in Niger's Diffa region, Oxfam in Niger undertook a modified EMMA (Emergency Market Mapping Analysis). The broad aim was to understand the effects of Boko Haram violence and the military operations to counter them, on the critical livelihood activities of affected populations. However, protection risk analysis was also included, to allow for an understanding of how shifts in income-earning ability during the crisis has left men, women, girls and boys facing new or increased protection threats. Undertaking a modified EMMA study has enabled teams to analyse the past and current dynamics of critical livelihood markets in the Diffa region, in terms of providing income to affected communities. Simultaneously, it outlines the threats and vulnerabilities people are exposed to in the current, ongoing crisis.

MAP 1 LAKE CHAD BASIN REGION, NOVEMBER 2016



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Caught fish, shores of Lake Chad. Photo: Maxime Foissy/Oxfam

We can further see how such income market disruption might increase exposure to protection risks and impact the population's ability to cope. This sort of analysis is critical for helping to shape market-based livelihoods programme design, and to understand how to implement 'direct' and 'indirect' protection and livelihoods programmes in ways that do no harm.

METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this analysis, Oxfam modified the established EMMA process³ to include specific elements of protection risk analysis. A 10-step EMMA process was followed, including desk review, selecting markets for analysis, preliminary mapping of market systems and protection risks, fieldwork, analysis of markets, needs and gaps, as well as analysis of risks, vulnerabilities and power.

For each critical market, a field team (based in Oxfam's Diffa office and remotely managed by Niamey-based staff for security reasons) conducted data collection in late October 2016. Data was collected by interviewing different actors in each market chain (e.g. farmers, traders, transporters), as well as trying to better understand the key environmental factors and infrastructure for each market. The added value of this modified EMMA was the ability to understand the protection risks and threats at each stage. For both the smoked fish and dried red pepper markets, the key analytical questions that framed the fieldwork focused upon:

- 1. How have the ongoing Boko Haram conflict and the military operations to counter them affected the market system and exposed actors to protection risks?*
- 2. What strategies are people who relied on these income markets now adopting, and what are the associated protection risks?*
- 3. What appropriate and safe response options could support livelihoods and reduce the protection risks of poor households who have lost revenue as a result of the market shocks?*

TARGET POPULATION, SCENARIO AND CRITICAL MARKET SYSTEMS

Target population

The target population for this modified EMMA study are those vulnerable, conflict-affected IDP/refugee/returnee and host community households who earned an income as small pepper farmers or fishermen⁴ prior to the current crisis. According to different sources around 15,000 fishermen were involved in this market before February 2015, as well as many more daily workers employed during high season. However, Oxfam data suggests this figure could be higher, at around 14 percent of the population (35,000).⁵ Officially, there are between 5,000–6,000 pepper producers in the region, but it is widely accepted that many more people rely on this market for income. It is thought that around two-thirds of people in the Diffa region rely on agriculture as their main source of income, with irrigated crops (primarily pepper) engaging most people.⁶

Scenarios

Crisis: For the purposes of the study, the current emergency situation takes into consideration the myriad factors and continuing shocks which continue to affect the population in the Diffa region. This includes the devaluation of the Nigerian naira, seasonal food insecurity, and flooding. However, the Boko Haram conflict, military operations to counter them and recent population movements were deemed the most critical current factors in terms of income market disruption and protection issues. The Government of Niger declared a state of emergency on 11 February 2015 for the entire Diffa region, in what it stated was a response to counter Boko Haram. This and the subsequent reinstatement of the state of emergency in November 2016 has led to an increase in military presence, arrests and detention of men, restrictions on movement and trade within the region, access to farmland and across borders for trade. Many market centres to the east of Diffa have been closed, with limitations imposed on certain livelihood activities and their necessary tools and inputs – in particular, fishing on the shores of Lake Chad, and cultivating crops and vegetables in productive zones irrigated by the Koumadougou river, close to the Nigerian border. The ability of people to generate income as normal has been affected, and household purchasing power reduced. Due to the disruption of income markets as well as the lack of livelihood opportunities, the vulnerable population is now left to choose between a range of risky coping strategies to survive – such as clandestine fishing, firewood collection in areas of displacement, or sex in exchange for food or money.

Baseline: The study used a reference point of February 2015 against which to compare the current market situation. February 2015 is considered the last time the markets were close to 'normal', just before the government state of emergency was imposed in February 2015 as part of its stated aim of responding to Boko Haram. Since this time, the Boko Haram conflict and military operations to counter them has noticeably intensified, leading to more than 121⁷ security incidents recorded in the Diffa region, and the displacement of more than 250,000 people by October 2016.⁸

CRITICAL MARKET SYSTEMS

Oxfam, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors and the UN, chose to analyse the smoked fish and dried red pepper markets. Together, these systems contributed 28 billion CFA francs (\$48m)⁹ to the Nigerian economy prior to the onset of Boko Haram conflict. The vast majority of this revenue came from exports to Nigeria. The key livelihood zones for the Koumadougou area were irrigated red peppers (known locally as 'red gold' due to their high market value) and Lake Chad fishing, covering 306,746 people.¹⁰ A high percentage of the population in the far east of the Diffa region, by the shores of Lake Chad, relied on the fish market as their main source of income. The majority of the population in the Koumadougou area rely on agricultural livelihoods and the sale of cash crops, in particular red pepper. Fishing was an activity mostly associated with the poorest households in the livelihood zone bordering Lake Chad. Household Economic Approach (HEA) data shows that 76 percent of those living in the Koumadougou river area where red pepper is cultivated are either 'poor' or 'very poor'.¹¹ The food security of the Diffa region can therefore be said to be directly related to the ability of the population to engage in the cultivation of red peppers and their sale in dried form.¹² Both markets are therefore critical to the economy in this part of Niger and the livelihoods of the Diffa population.

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KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS PER MARKET SYSTEM

While insecurity and fear of Boko Haram attacks represent a major source of threats for the affected population, for the two critical markets selected, the overwhelming prohibitive factor is the restrictions resulting from the state of emergency in the Diffa region. Specific measures implemented as part of this declaration have had damaging and far-reaching effects on both the smoked fish and dried red pepper markets and the various strata of society who rely on them for income, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable households. The restrictions have also exposed the affected population to further protection risks should they attempt to continue to engage in them (particularly the smoked fish market). So the state of emergency has pushed people towards adopting new, riskier coping strategies.



The EMMA team interview a trader, Diffa central market
Photo: Corrie Sissons/Oxfam



Dried red pepper in sacks in Diffa central market
Photo: Corrie Sissons/Oxfam

1. The smoked fish market system

The smoked fish market plays a major role as a source of income for the Diffa population, especially in the department of Bosso, N'Guigmi and along the Koumadougou River. In addition to the numerous fishing communities, seasonal workers from the Diffa region and neighbouring countries migrate to participate in the fishing trade during the high season of March to May. Fishing mostly involves poor households – men carry out fishing while women and young girls are involved in the smoking process.¹³ The fish market also benefits other strata of society, from middle income and better-off households to large fishing enterprises: smoking, collection, transportation, stocking and selling. In addition, daily labourers are employed at various different stages of the market chain (men for fishing and loading and women for the smoking process) thus making it a major income source in the region with many poor households relying either directly or indirectly on the fish market for income and food. Mostly an informal market, it not only has the capacity to provide vital income to households but also is a key source of protein.

Since February 2015, the smoked fish market has been significantly affected in the Diffa region by the Boko Haram conflict and military operations to counter them; affecting freedom of movement and access to the fishing areas (primarily the shores of Lake Chad but also some areas of the Koumadougou River), where restrictions and the military presence has become stronger. However, by far the most critical factor impacting the smoked fish market in Diffa has been the ban on fishing and fish selling declared by the government in the entire region of Diffa as part of the emergency measures. This action was justified by allegations that a large part of the Boko Haram income was coming from the fish trade in Nigeria; but it means the potential for the smoked fish market to provide an income to the population in the Diffa region has been almost entirely destroyed. The ban on fishing and selling fish has heavily impacted the smoked fish market as all activities related to it are now illegal. It exposes the few remaining vulnerable market actors (mostly poor fishing households and transporters etc.) to very high protection risks. For households which continue to fish, production has fallen by 94 percent, from 10 cartons per month to less than one, and income gained has fallen by 88 percent. Fishermen fear Boko Haram violence and extortion in the fishing areas, because trying to hide from the military exposes them to further encounters with the armed group. They also fear capture by the security forces, who would at best arrest and detain them and confiscate their catch. While the lack of assistance and livelihood opportunities is forcing some poor fishing households to continue fishing at high risk to themselves, other households are now engaging in coping strategies which expose them to further protection risks, for example, wood cutting, sex in exchange for money or food and early marriage. In October 2016, 20 percent of former fishing households interviewed in Oxfam's multi-sectoral assessment reported resorting to marrying their young daughters earlier than they wanted to in order to reduce pressure over resources.



Smoked fish, Diffa central market. Photo: Corrie Sissons/Oxfam

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Key recommendations for the smoked fish market are:

To the Government of Niger

- Re-evaluate measures brought in under the state of emergency which are impacting people's livelihoods related to fish production and increasing their exposure to threats, including:
 - in discussion with communities, looking at how people can have gradual and safe access to parts of the lake to renew fishing;
 - ending the ban on fishing and selling smoked fish in the markets;
 - reviewing measures which restrict people's freedom of movement and ability to trade (e.g. the curfew and motorbike ban).
- Prioritize the safety and protection of civilians, their dignity and human rights under national laws, as well as regional frameworks such as the Kampala Convention and the OAU Convention on Refugees, international human rights and humanitarian law and standards.
- Develop effective strategies to identify and minimize protection risks resulting from the state of emergency to protect poor fishing households and other vulnerable actors in the chain, including: reinforcing training of security forces and civilian government personnel on their obligations and people's rights under human rights and humanitarian law standards, and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

To donors, governments and the UN

Beyond funding the response to critical emergency needs, donors and governments should fund livelihoods restoration and development programmes for poor conflict-affected fishing households in the Diffa region.

- Ensure greater coordination between humanitarian, development and private sector actors to strengthen linkages and implement humanitarian and early recovery programmes that support the recovery of people's livelihoods, provide them with alternative livelihoods options and build their resilience.
- Lobby the Government of Niger to re-evaluate measures brought in under the state of emergency which are affecting people's livelihoods and increasing risks related to fishing including:
 - in discussion with communities, looking at how people can have gradual and safe access to parts of the lake to renew fishing;
 - ending the ban on fishing and selling smoked fish in the markets;
 - reviewing measures which restrict people's freedom of movement and ability to trade (e.g. the curfew and motorbike ban).
- Lobby the government to develop effective strategies to identify and minimize protection risks resulting from the state of emergency to protect poor fishing households and other vulnerable actors including: reinforcing training of security forces and civilian government personnel on their obligations and people's rights under human rights and humanitarian law standards and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

To the Government of Niger, donors, the UN, humanitarian and development agencies

- Support fishing households to organize themselves into fishing co-operatives to facilitate sharing of knowledge and skills, community-based protection and to strengthen buying and selling power.
- Support new alternative income generation activities or temporary employment opportunities for poor fishing households in the interim while emergency measures last.
- Ensure people have access to new fishing inputs (hooks, nets etc.) by providing cash, goods in-kind or vouchers that they can exchange with local traders.
- Facilitate access to credit (either cash or goods given on credit) for poor fishing households to restart fishing.
- Reinforce and support the training of the military forces and other security forces on international humanitarian law and human rights.
- Support fishing communities to develop their own risk analysis and protection measures, potentially including a protection alert mechanism (for example, via fishing cooperatives) to monitor protection cases and to respond to them in an appropriate and timely manner.

2. Dried red pepper market system

Koumadougou irrigated peppers, known locally as ‘red gold’ because of their high market value, are one of the key cash crops in the Diffa region. In fact, although Diffa is one of the most deprived areas of Niger agriculturally, it has been considered as a ‘flagship’ area regionally, thanks to its normally high production of peppers.¹⁴ Whether involved in picking, harvesting, drying, stocking, transporting or selling – the poor, middle-income and wealthy in the region have all historically benefited from the harvest of this key cash crop. Oxfam assessments revealed approximately 80 percent of rural households in the Koumadougou area – 100 percent in some villages – having historically engaged either directly or indirectly in some small red pepper production. More than 50 percent of household income used to come from this market for the poor or very poor households, either from daily labour, sharecropping (*métayer* work) or small pepper production.

Since February 2015, the value and volume of the dried red pepper market in the Diffa region has reduced significantly. The Koumadougou zone has become heavily militarized, and saw huge numbers of refugees and IDPs arriving in 2015 and 2016. Many pepper farmers have themselves become displaced and separated from their productive land. Most of those who can still access their lands have only limited access and do so at high risk as reported by the farmers interviewed by Oxfam. Oxfam data shows a 96 percent decrease in the number of people reporting gaining an income from pepper since the onset of the conflict, and those who continue to work as small pepper farmers can earn only 64 percent of the revenue they used to earn before onset of the Boko Haram conflict; their production has fallen from 50–100 sacks per pepper harvest to 10–50. There is a high level of fear of Boko Haram attacks, looting and extortion in the field, on the road and in their villages, especially at night. In addition, due to the high military presence some farmers, mostly women, do not feel safe to access their field. Under the current state of emergency, pepper producers are required to have authorization for purchasing agricultural inputs, in particular fertilizer and fuel, which the government states can be used for the production of explosives. These authorizations mean that limited amounts of fertilizer are available to producers; as a result they are unable to fertilize the same area of land as before. These restrictive measures also tend to force people to turn to illegal trade to access necessary inputs, thus increasing the risks taken to continue their activities. Income for small pepper farmers has plummeted as prices are low and capacity to produce pepper has decreased – primarily due to access constraints for productive land. Furthermore, traders who used to sell more than 80 percent of the peppers to Nigeria have to take new, longer routes at considerable expense and risk to themselves and their cargo to cross the border via Zinder rather than the old route via Damasak.¹⁵ Many actors involved in the dried pepper market have had to resort to additional coping strategies due to the lack of income, and report facing additional protection risks. Forty-one percent of the former pepper farmer’s households interviewed in Oxfam’s multi-sectoral assessment reported splitting up their families in order to access more humanitarian assistance or to find work.

Key recommendations for the dried red pepper market are:

To the Government of Niger

- Re-evaluate measures brought in under the state of emergency which are impacting people’s livelihoods related to pepper production and increasing their exposure to threats including:
 - improving people’s access to fuel and fertilizer;
 - reviewing measures which restrict people’s freedom of movement and ability to trade (e.g. the curfew and motorbike ban).
- Prioritize the safety and protection of civilians, their dignity and human rights under national laws and regional frameworks such as the Kampala Convention and the OAU Convention on Refugees, international human rights and humanitarian law and standards.
- Develop effective strategies to identify and minimize protection risks resulting from the state of emergency to protect poor farmer households and other vulnerable actors in the chain including: reinforcing security forces and civilian government personnel training on their obligations and people’s rights under human rights and humanitarian law standards, and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

To donor governments and the UN

- Beyond funding critical emergency needs, donors should fund livelihoods restoration and development programmes for poor conflict-affected pepper farmer households in the Diffa region (see below).
- Ensure greater coordination between humanitarian, development and private sector actors to strengthen linkages and implement humanitarian and early recovery programmes that support the recovery of people’s livelihoods, provide them with alternative livelihood options and build their resilience.



Powdered red pepper on sale, Diffa central market. Photo: Corrie Sissons/Oxfam

- Lobby the Government of Niger to re-evaluate measures related to pepper production brought in under the state of emergency which are impacting people's livelihoods including:
 - Improving people's access to fuel and fertilizer;
 - reviewing measures which restrict people's freedom of movement and ability to trade (e.g. the curfew and motorbike ban).
- Lobby the government to develop effective strategies to identify and minimize protection risks resulting from the state of emergency, to protect poor farmer households and other vulnerable actors in the chain including: reinforcing training of security forces and civilian government personnel on their obligations and people's rights under human rights and humanitarian law standards, and strengthen accountability mechanisms.

To Government of Niger, donors, humanitarian and development agencies

- Provide market-appropriate support (restricted cash, in-kind or vouchers) for poor pepper producers/sharecroppers to meet livelihood needs.
- Support small pepper farmers with improved irrigation for productive land (e.g. boreholes, micro irrigation systems) and improved agricultural techniques (better seed varieties, diversifying crops, composting etc.).
- Support small pepper farmers with access to credit (either cash credit or goods given on credit).
- Facilitate the organization of pepper farmers into cooperatives to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills, community-based protection and to strengthen buying and selling power.
- Facilitate market information sharing for pepper farmers (e.g. by providing telephones, credit and contacts).
- Reinforce and support the training of military forces and other security forces on international humanitarian law, human rights.
- Support farmer communities to develop their own risk analysis and protection measures, potentially including a protection alert mechanism (e.g. via cooperatives) to monitor protection cases and to respond to them in an appropriate and timely manner.

CONCLUSION

The expansion and intensification of the Boko Haram conflict and the military operations to counter them have had a devastating impact on the Lake Chad Basin and the population of Niger's Diffa region in recent years. However, as the conflict becomes increasingly protracted it is important to explore opportunities for communities to earn income themselves, to increase their own resilience and protection capacities and reduce their reliance on humanitarian assistance. The markets for smoked fish and dried red pepper are two of the most crucial markets in the Diffa region and offer opportunities to engage all strata of society either directly or indirectly in income generation. They have also historically played a significant role in the local, regional and national economies. Support to these markets would not only benefit poor pepper farmers and fishing households, but has the potential to have multiplier effects for other vulnerable conflict-affected communities in the Diffa region and the local economies they rely on.

Although Boko Haram violence is a key deterrent for many wishing to restart their livelihoods, the overwhelming prohibitive factor for both of these markets in the current context is the state of emergency across the Diffa region. The limitations and restrictions decreed under the emergency measures taken by the government are not only hindering people from making a safe living from smoked fish and dried red pepper, but are pushing people towards new, more risky ways of making an income to support their families. As fishing is now illegal, most fishing households have completely stopped all fishing activities and send their young girls to sell food, putting them at greater risks of sexual violence. This is further exacerbating the humanitarian situation and pushing people to rely on humanitarian aid as these are already poor and vulnerable populations, experiencing high levels of food insecurity. Oxfam data revealed a staggering 91 percent average fall in monthly income since February 2015 across all households interviewed – which were on average only earning 4500 XOF/ \$7.5.

Oxfam calls on the Government of Niger, the UN, donors and humanitarian community in Niger to offer life-saving humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected populations in the Diffa region, and to consider supporting safe livelihood opportunities for the people most affected by this crisis, either through supporting current livelihood strategies or promoting new ones. This should include working with the government and the communities themselves to re-evaluate measures brought in under the state of emergency which are stifling and destroying people's livelihoods and income generating activities related to the fishing and pepper markets in particular. Poor pepper producers and fishing households are paying too high a price for these measures. They must be able to safely resume fishing and increase pepper production as these markets are not just a lifeline to them but are also vital for the functioning of the local and regional economies. In the longer term, these measures may also be counterproductive, as previous research has shown that people, in particular youth, may be incentivised to join Boko Haram for financial reasons and a lack of opportunities.¹⁶ It is extremely important to pay particular attention to the impact of the measures taken under the state of emergency in terms of protection. Without a longer term vision for the people of the Diffa region, we risk damaging livelihoods, prolonging people's exposure to protection risks, and doing harm to local economies, systems and communities.

AUTHORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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NOTES

- ¹ Oxfam multi-sectoral assessments revealed that more than 18 percent of those interviewed reported that one of their family members had been killed during a Boko Haram attack on civilians, and that a majority continue to see Boko Haram attacks as the biggest threat they are exposed to.
- ² Rapport Sur La Développement Humain en Afrique, UNDP, Septembre 2016.
- ³ www.emma-toolkit.org
- ⁴ The activity of fishing is carried out predominantly by men, but the whole family are involved in the drying process.
- ⁵ Evaluation des stocks de poissons, Direction régionale de Diffa de l'environnement de la salubrité urbaine et du développement durable, 5 May 2015; **La Chambre Régionale d'Agriculture de Diffa se préoccupe de la pêche**, Note d'information / Filière pêche n°1, 5 septembre 2010
- ⁶ HEA Sahel, Feb 2014 p. 3
- ⁷ Niger-Diffa: Access, Insecurity and Internal displacements (as of 25 Nov 2016), OCHA
- ⁸ DREC Figures, October 2016
- ⁹ 20 billion XOF for fish and 8 billion XOF for dried red pepper
- ¹⁰ *Livelihoods Zoning 'Plus' Activity in Niger*, FEWS Net and USAID, August 2011, p. 53.
- ¹⁰ Profil de référence de l'économie des ménages ruraux de la zone de Cultures de poivron de la Koumadougou à Diffa/ Niger, HEA Sahel, February 2014 p. 2.
- ¹² *Livelihoods Zoning Plus Niger*, Fews Net, February 2011 p. 44.
- ¹³ *Livelihood Zoning "plus" activity in Niger*, Fews Net, 2011.
- ¹⁴ WFP Market Assessment , Diffa, December 2014.
- ¹⁵ The old Damasak route is 125km one way, the road to Zinder –Matameye–Kano–Maiduguri is 1283km one way.
- ¹⁶ *Motivations and Empty Promises: Voices of former Boko Haram combatant and Nigeria youth*, Mercy Corps, April 2016.

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