

Malnutrition Kills Hundreds in Borno Camp

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Shettima orders 61 malnourished children hospitalised

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri

Malnutrition has hit hard at internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp in Borno State, it was gathered on Tuesday.

THISDAY learnt that between May 23 and 31, 2016, 137 persons died as a result of acute malnutrition in Bama camp alone.

Bama camp has a population of over 25,000 persons who live under harsh conditions.

When our correspondent paid a visit to the office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the staff were mobilising to go to Bama to combat the rise in malnutrition.

Some of the officials who spoke on condition of anonymity revealed that due to the outbreak of

acute malnutrition in the camp, they were moving in to checkmate the situation.

They explained that many IDPs in towns of Bama, Mafa, Dikwa and Marte were being relocated to Maiduguri to stop the death.

One of the staff of the organisation said two persons who were moved from Mafa, Dikwa and Marte due to malnutrition outbreak in those towns died at the point of screening in Maiduguri.

He said "two persons from Mafa, Dikwa and Marte died at Muna Garage where they were being screened."

He lamented that many of the IDPs who can barely stand are further stressed could under were harsh weather during the screening exercise.

He disclosed that also on Monday, two persons died during their transportation from Bama to Maiduguri.

On the death of 137 IDPs at the Bama camp over a week ago, the source said, "when we paid a visit to Bama on May 31 for rapid assessment of IDPs and child protection, we found out that 137 persons died between 23rd and 31st of acute malnutrition."

He further disclosed that in the team to Bama was the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and "we had to immediately move in with nutritional foods, recreational kits for children and flow mats for children."

Meanwhile, Governor Kashim Shettima has ordered the hospitalisation of 61 critically malnourished infants in Maiduguri.

The children, according to a press statement by the governor's spokesman, Mallam Isa Gusau were recently liberated from some areas which were under the insurgents' captivity.

The statement read that "61 critically malnourished children have been hospitalised on the orders of Shettima after he relocated 478 children and 219 adults, all of them malnourished due to two years captivity in the hands of Boko Haram insurgents before they were rescued by the Nigerian military."

The statement further said: "The victims were moved from Bama to a special care unit in Maiduguri on Monday. Dozens of buses conveyed them to a newly opened special care unit in Maiduguri.

It added that: "The 61 infants now hospitalized at Umaru Shehu Specialist Hospital, owned by the State Government in Maiduguri, are undergoing medical care arising from extreme deprivation of food. They were part of the 478 children moved from Bama alongside 219 adults

also malnourished. The adults consist of 196 women, some of whom gave birth to part of the 478 children. The rest of the adults are 23 men, looking emaciated.”