

Beat: Politics

Nigerian government tries to downplay humanitarian crisis.

Humanitarian crisis.

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USPA NEWS - Controversial about hunger aid for victims of Boko-Haram.

According to UN figures, about 484 million US dollars will be needed to provide comprehensive humanitarian aid. Especially victims of Boko Haram are in need of hunger aid.

The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP) accuses Nigeria's government of trying to downplay the humanitarian crisis in the north-east of the country and of denigrating international aid organizations. "It will not help the distressed victims of Boko Haram if Nigeria's authorities don't take the crisis seriously and "" for political reasons "" accuse the aid organizations of exaggerating the need. For months, we have been waiting for the Nigerian government to finally give priority to the people's precarious humanitarian situation "" but in vain," [?] explained Ulrich Delius, the STP's Africa-consultant, in Göttingen on Tuesday.

In order to be able to provide humanitarian aid to the victims of Boko-Haram, the human rights organization proposed to use funds the Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha deposited on accounts in western states and which are now blocked. The money should be used for a special fund to finance disaster relief and for measures to rebuild the north-east of Nigeria. According to estimates, about 17 billion US dollars were embezzled and invested in foreign countries during Abacha's reign from 1993 to 1998. Following lengthy negotiations, Switzerland is planning to transfer 321 million US dollars back to Nigeria.

So far, only 51 percent of the necessary funds for aid work in 2016, mainly in Borno, have been covered by foreign donors. The United Nations warned that up to 5.2 million people could suffer from a shortage of food in the coming months. According to UN figures, about 484 million US dollars will be needed to provide comprehensive humanitarian aid. Since June 2016, when Nigeria's government admitted that the humanitarian situation in the country was problematic, the donor countries seem to be more willing to cover the costs "" but, due to the numerous other humanitarian crises all over the world and a lack of confidence in Nigeria's efforts to resolve the crisis, more than 200 million US dollars are still missing.

With 64.9 million US dollars, Germany has provided the third largest amount of money for humanitarian aid in Nigeria.

On Monday, State President Muhammadu Buhari had accused volunteer aid workers of exaggerating the extent of the hunger crisis in the north-east of the country in order to damages Nigeria's reputation. "In Borno state, malnutrition and hunger are quite real. This is more than an image problem," [?] said Delius. "If the Nigerian media misrepresent the helpers' warnings and publish figures of five million people who are threatened with starvation, this is not the fault of the aid organizations." [?]

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