The border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger is the epicentre of a fast-growing crisis with unprecedented levels of armed violence. The number of internally displaced people has increased four-fold in one year to more than 1.1 million, in addition to 110,000 refugees. The crisis is affecting vulnerable families, compounding the impact of food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics. The number of people facing a critical lack of food has spiked due to rising insecurity and climatic shocks. Around 3.7 million people are expected to face food insecurity at “crisis” and “emergency” levels during the lean season of 2020, a 110 per cent increase compared to last year. Armed assailants are directly targeting schools and forcing health centres to close, jeopardising the future of children and depriving violence-affected communities of critical services. In total, more than 3,600 schools and 241 health centres are closed or non-operational. In 2020, 7.5 million people in the affected regions need urgent assistance. In support of national and local authorities, humanitarian partners are scaling up operations to save lives and alleviate human suffering. However, in 2019, only 50 per cent of the US$ 717 million needed for the response was received. Beyond urgent humanitarian action, a coordinated approach integrating cross-border dynamics is required to reverse the spread of conflict and bring meaningful improvement in the lives of millions of affected people.