The humanitarian crisis in the border area of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger is experiencing an unprecedented deterioration— with more than 3 million people severely food insecure due to rising insecurity and climatic shocks, at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is spreading rapidly through the region. Central Sahel is home to some of the most fragile health systems in the world. Meanwhile, the unprecedented rise in armed violence is forcing people to flee their homes, and further deprives vulnerable communities’ critical services— including health care— as armed assailants directly target schools and health centres. In total, more than 4,000 schools and 241 health centres stopped functioning due to violence and insecurity. The number of internally displaced people has increased more than four-fold in one year to 1.2 million, in addition to 107,000 refugees. In densely populated areas such as displacement sites lacking adequate access to shelter, clean water, hygiene and basic sanitation, transmission risks are heightened. In highly vulnerable communities, the compounded impact of deteriorating conflict, peaking food insecurity and COVID-19 will be devastating. In support of national and local authorities, humanitarian partners are scaling up operations to save lives and alleviate human suffering while adapting their programmes to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. However, urgent further resources are needed. As of late April 2020, only 12 per cent of the US$ 988 million required for the response was received.

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As of April 2020 (Burkina Faso), March 2020 (Niger) and February 2020 (Mali).