Snapshot 22 - 29 April 2013

Fighting continued unabated throughout Syria, in particular in Hama, Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia and around Damascus. 6.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the country, 4.25 million people are displaced and over 1.4 million people have fled to neighbouring countries.

An earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale struck a mountainous area of southwestern Sichuan province in China on 20 April. More than 1.99 million people are estimated to be affected, of which more than 12,000 are injured and 245,000 urgently evacuated as of 23 April. Blocked roads and infrastructural damage reportedly hamper access for relief operations.

The humanitarian crisis linked to violence and the related power struggle in the Central African Republic is affecting the whole population of 4.6 million people in the country, according to UNICEF. More than 2.3 million of these are children. Throughout the country, clashes between supporters of the new authorities and people loyal to the former President Bozizé have been reported over the past week.

In Kenya, several parts of the country, in particular the Coast and Western Kenya, have been affected by floods following heavy downpour. Some 89,515 people have been affected cumulatively since the onset of the rains in
AFRICA

BURKINA FASO FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

Burkina Faso has been affected by insecurity and the on-going military intervention in Mali. As of 22 April, some 49,975 refugees were registered with UNHCR in Burkina Faso. The refugees are residing at seven sites (Mentao, Damba, Fereiro, Goudebo, Gandafabou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Ouagadougou) which are recognized as refugee camps by the Government, as well as at several spontaneous settlements. A March assessment (jointly undertaken by WFP with partners), indicates an elevated prevalence of food insecurity in Malian refugee camps as well as Burkinian host communities. An estimated 52% of the refugees and 58% of the host populations are affected by food insecurity, according to the report.

According to FEWSNet, Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity persists across the country. In general, limited household recourses to the market to purchase food have kept cereal prices stable since January 2013 and at levels close to or slightly above (by no more than 12%) compared to the five-year average. These prices are helping maintain good household food access.

Overall, the food supply situation has significantly improved in 2012-13 across the country. According to official production figures of last season's cereal production, from November to January, the total was close to 4.9 million metric tons, marking a 26.9% increase compared to the five-year average. Likewise, production of cash crops was up 16.5% and production of other food crops (cowpeas, yams, and sweet potatoes) was up 29.9% compared to the five-year average, according to FEWSNet.

Despite these indicators, the Government of Burkina Faso declared a national emergency on 1 March 2012 due to food insecurity and malnutrition affecting 2 million people (15% of the population) according to a March report by the FAO. The report states that the food insecure people are located mostly in the Sahel, North and East regions. Prolonged localized drought, high food prices, displacement, chronic poverty and the lingering effect of last year’s food crisis are the main causes of remnant food insecurity. Over the last months, civil strife in northern Mali has also contributed to increased food supply issues in parts of the country, notably in the Oudalan and Soum provinces of the northern Sahel regions, which face a high influx of refugees from Mali.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY

The new leadership of the Central African Republic agreed to a regional plan to hold elections within 18 months on 4 April, accepting therefore the roadmap set up by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) at a meeting in Chad the previous day. Following the established plan, Michael Djotodia, leader of the Seleka rebel coalition that seized the capital Bangui and other parts of the country in a coup last month, issued an order to set up a transition council to lead the country until parliamentary and presidential elections are held. On 13 April, the transition council elected him, the only candidate, President of the country by acclamation, a title he had actually already claimed in the immediate aftermath of the coup. As part of the roadmap, Michael Djotodia has, however, promised to not seek re-election at the end of the transition.

At a new meeting in Chad on 18 April, the ECCAS confirmed its support to the transition process agreeing also to the election of Michael Djotodia. After voicing its strong opposition to the military coup in late March, the international community, in the wake of the ECCAS, is thus progressively coming to terms with the country’s takeover by the Seleka as long as the latter respects the roadmap. However, on 23 April, the EU restated that it will not restore its aid program to CAR before it is certain of the credibility of the new Government and of its willingness to address the security situation. Although formally cooperation was not interrupted, the EU halted aid to CAR in December.

Following a request from Bangui, the ECCAS has also agreed to deploy a 2,000 strong military force, under the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) framework, to help the Central African Republic’s authorities in establishing security in the country. In parallel, the transition Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye, has also extended an official request to Paris asking the French leadership to increase its present 500 man strong military force dispatched to the country to participate in order enforcement operations.

The current political alignments follow a deterioration in the, the security situation in CAR in March which deteriorated when the Seleka rebel coalition, fighting against the Government, seized control of Bangui. After the offensive forced President Francois Bozizé to flee to Cameroon, Michel Djotodia, leader of the Seleka, assumed power and proclaimed himself President of the Central African Republic. He nonetheless confirmed Nicolas Tiangaye as Head of the Government, a position to which the latter had been appointed following the tentative January peace agreement.

Following the siege of the capital, the atmosphere remained tense in Bangui where hundreds of people were reported to be roaming the streets following the offensive, many in search of food, while medical facilities were already overloaded because of the large influx of injured soldiers. Utility services – including electricity and water – are still at least partially operable, but there are reports of food and fuel shortages. A WHO report indicated

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that health needs in Bangui were still critical and the security situation remained precarious as of 9 April. Various sources are still reporting ongoing lootings of houses, businesses, international organizations’ offices and healthcare facilities in the capital. On 14 April, an estimated 20 people were killed in the capital when fighting erupted between forces of the new authorities and armed youth still loyal to the former President. In separate incident on the same day, a rocket explosion killed 7 people and injured 11 others in one of the capital’s churches. Over the following week, fighting between members of the rebel coalition and men loyal to the ousted President continued in some neighbourhood of Bangui and armed skirmishes have also been reported in other districts. In other parts of the country, information in local media indicates ongoing skirmishes and clashes between different factions. On 22 April, clashes between the inhabitants of Mbres city, northeast of Bangui, and Seleka forces left some 27 people dead and 50 others injured. 480 houses were also reportedly burnt down.

Initially, the violence had erupted in CAR, when Seleka rebels took up arms against the Government in early December 2012, claiming that the authorities had failed to honour the 2001 and 2007 peace deals under which fighters who laid down their arms were to receive compensation. In January 2013, a tentative peace agreement was not able to put a lasting end to violence between the two parties. Throughout March, the Seleka rebels continued thus their advance and took control of Gambo and Bangassou, two southern towns on the border with the DRC, as well as of the towns of Batangavo and Bouca, north of Bangui. Addressing President Bozizé an ultimatum, the Seleka rebels demanded the release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of the foreign troops, brought into the country to support the Government military against the uprising. Considering the concessions made by the authorities to be insufficient, the rebel movement resumed its advance and seized Bangui.

According to UNICEF, the humanitarian crisis is now affecting the entire population of the Central African Republic, an estimated 4.6 million people of whom some 2.3 million are children. Almost 1.2 million people have now been cut from access to basic services for almost four months and 3.2 million are reported to be living without health care. The security situation is volatile in large areas and attacks on civilians have been reported in the Mboki, Zemio and Obo regions. According to UNHCR, the whole Seleka offensive has left 173,000 people internally displaced some 46,000 others seeking refuge in Chad, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo since December. The latter country alone hosts over 35,000 CAR refugees as of mid-April. On 11 April, a UN report indicated that renewed displacement was occurring in and around Bangui, as well as in the northwest of the capital, as the Seleka has expanded its presence throughout the country. This triggered a currently ongoing reassessment of the number of people displaced amidst difficulties of access for humanitarian actors. To date, it has only been confirmed that an additional 1,200 CAR refugees crossed into DRC on 15-16 April.

In addition to this, there are an estimated 17,000 mostly Congolese and Sudanese refugees in CAR. As a result of the tribal clashes that occurred in Sudan’s western Darfur during the first decade of April, some 4,000 new Sudanesan refugees crossed into northern CAR.

Since the beginning of December, humanitarian access has been limited to a third of the Seleka controlled areas. The Seleka’s advance on the southern town of Bangassou cut off humanitarian actors’ access to the southeast, affecting 300,000 people. Several UN offices and warehouses were looted during the rebel offensive in December, and the violence prompted temporary evacuations of humanitarian staff out of affected areas. Since mid-March, humanitarian access has therefore significantly decreased with the departure of many INGOs according to UNICEF. On 11 April, MSF reported that it was forced to evacuate the towns of Batangafo and Kabo due to widespread insecurity and uncontrolled armed groups spreading chaos in the area. The organization further noted that significant affected areas remain completely out of its reach because of the rampant insecurity. As of May, access will be even more challenging for humanitarian actors due to the onset of the rainy season.

In addition to conflict, CAR faces a food and nutrition crisis. In December 2012, OCHA reported an estimated 664,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance, primarily in Vakaga, Haut-Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi and Mbomou. A recent IPC seasonal analysis classified the entire country in either Phase 3 (Stressed) or Phase 2 (Crisis). In 9 out of 16 prefectures, the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition in children <5 is above the emergency threshold of 2%. Chronic poverty was identified as the general cause of food and nutrition insecurity with civil insecurity exacerbating conditions in the north and northeast. In Bangui, WFP reports that food prices have risen by 29% in January possibly due to stores and markets closing for fear of looting and food becoming scarce with the main source of staples in Kaga Bandoro Dekoa, Grimari and Bambari seized by the rebels.

Cereal prices are about 30% above the five-year average due to low market supplies according to FEWSNET. Already the annual consumer price inflation had surged from 1.5% in 2011 to 7% in 2012. According to OCHA, more than 80,000 people are estimated to be at risk of severe food shortages during the upcoming lean season, while 13,500 children under the age of 5 are at risk of Severe Acute Malnutrition.

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**CHAD FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

Chad has seen an escalating influx of migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries over the past weeks. On Chad’s eastern border, intertribal violence in the Darfur region continues to cause displacement spilling over into Chad, and in particular to the remote border town of Tissi. As of 22 April, more than 25,000 refugees and some 19,000 returnees have arrived in Tissi since January, according to OCHA. The refugee influx marks the largest from Sudan to Chad since 2005. Refugees are fleeing fresh tribal clashes in the Sudanese town of Um Dukhun, 10 kilometres from the Chadian border. Most of the latest arrivals are reportedly women and children.

On Chad’s southern border, recent political turmoil in the Central African Republic (CAR) has led to a rising number of refugees crossing the border into the country. An estimated 5,700 people have crossed the border since January, adding on to the total number of Central African refugees at 58,000, according to OCHA.

In Chad, two years of continued climatic shocks, including erratic rainfall in 2011, have caused significant food security concerns in 2012 continuing into 2013. According to a March report by the FAO, 3.6 million people (32% of the population) are food insecure in...
Chad. The nutritional situation in Chad’s Sahel belt is at critical levels with a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate surpassing the emergency threshold of 15% in 9 out of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The areas most affected are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22%), Salamat (22%), Beg (21%), and Kanem (21%).

Despite this, good 2012-13 harvests have allowed very poor and poor households to replenish their food reserves while market prices across the country remained mostly stable and were even occasionally trending downwards. According to FEWSNet, food security conditions will steadily improve with the rebuilding of the production capacity and the replenishment of livelihood assets. Nevertheless, structurally deficient regions will continue to face a shortage of grain.

According to UNICEF, despite the good harvest, an estimated 126,000 children will still suffer from severe acute malnutrition in 2013. Across the country, many households have accumulated large debts during the lean period in 2012 and poor families will be forced to sell much of their produce immediately after harvest. In 2012, 149,963 children were admitted for severe acute malnutrition (SAM), well above the 127,300 forecast.

On 18 February a yellow fever outbreak was confirmed by WHO in the town of Goz Beida, where 5,000 Sudanese refugees have arrived over the past two weeks as a result of recent tribal clashes in North Darfur. There were 139 suspected yellow fever cases and 9 deaths reported. A vaccination campaign against the disease was launched in Djabal camp for Sudanese refugees in the east of the country. Neighbouring Sudan is also experiencing a yellow fever outbreak in 35 localities in Darfur with 849 suspected cases and 171 deaths (case–fatality rate of 20.1%) as of 6 January 2013. Currently more than 288,450 Sudanese refugees reside in Chad.

Insecurity, particularly in eastern Chad and in certain areas in southern Chad, continues to limit humanitarian access.

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DEMONSTRATIVE REPUBLIC OF CONGO CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

On 28 March, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the creation of a brigade of more than 3,000 troops with a mandate to conduct “targeted offensive operations” against rebels in eastern DRC. According to a statement by a military spokesman on 7 April, South Africa is thus preparing to send troops to the DRC as part of the UN mission. However, on 12 April, a spokesman for the M23 (March 23 Movement – a rebel military group based in eastern areas of the DRC) stated that the rebel group would retaliate if attacked by the peacekeeping force. The leader of the rebel group accused the UN of promoting war while peace talks are ongoing.

In March, violence in the Katanga province was marked when nearly 250 rebels from the separatist militia group Mai-Mai Kata Katanga attacked a military camp and the Provincial Governor’s office in the country’s southern mining hub of Lubumbashi. At least 35 people were killed and 16 injured in the fighting, before the rebels forced their way into a UN compound and surrendered on 24 March, according to the UN. Some 87 fighters, including foreign fighters from Rwanda, of the M23 have surrendered to the UN peacekeeping force in April with 13 doing so last week.

Katata Katanga is one of several local militias, or Mai Mai groups, operating in the province. While the insecurity is most extreme within an area between the towns of Manono, Pweto and Mitwaba, the humanitarian effects have spread to half of Katanga’s 22 territories, according to OCHA. Over the last week, clashes between Mai-Mai groups and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) have led to new population displacement in the Katanga province, according to OCHA. Since January 2013, more than 17,000 people were displaced in the district of Kahengale in Katanga province due to protracted conflict. Overall, an estimated 353,000 people are currently displaced in Katanga province.

Internal clashes between two factions of the rebel group M23 routed out the faction led by Bosco Ntaganda to Rwanda, with its fighters disarmed and its leaders arrested. The former DRC General Ntaganda, indicted by the ICC for war crimes, turned himself in and requested to be extradited to The Hague. The defeat of the Ntaganda-affiliated faction of M23 came after weeks of infighting and could open the way for rival rebel leader Sultani Makenga to sign a peace deal with Kinshasa, bringing an end to a year-long rebellion in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Makenga reportedly seized control of the town of Kibumba, 30 km (19 miles) north of Goma, capital of North Kivu province on 16 March. Talks between the M23 rebels and the Government are scheduled to restart in April after they stalled in early February following dissensions in M23’s top leadership.

The dissension within M23 followed the ousting of the group's political chief. Old rivalries within the rebel faction have deepened since 11 countries signed an UN-brokered framework accord for peace in the east of DR Congo on 24 February, following talks in Addis Ababa.

In North Kivu Province, the conflict between the FARDC and the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) has displaced an estimated 75,000 people, according to IOM. After violence broke out on the 24-25 February, heavy fighting was reported in Kitchanga on February 27. As of 7 March, at least 85 people had been killed. On the 29 March, renewed clashes between national forces and an armed group occurred near Kitchanga killing 11 APCLS combatants and forcing the UN peacekeepers to provide protection to 1,500 civilians. In late January, the Kitchanga area hosted 80,000 internally displaced persons, more than half in camps and spontaneous settlements.

As of 25 March, the UN estimates that 920,784 people have been displaced by violence in North Kivu, an increase from 500,000 in April 2012.

In South Kivu, 52,500 new displacements were registered due to conflict since January. However, according to OCHA some IDPs began to return to their homes in early February leading to a decrease of the overall number of displaced in the area. On 21 March, widespread looting in Mambasa (Province Orientale) has led to the displacement of an estimated 3,000 people according to local sources.

As of 2 April, an estimated 2.6 million people were reportedly displaced as a result of fighting between the Congolese army and various rebel groups in the Kivus, Maniema and Katanga provinces according to OCHA. An estimated 450,000 Congolese refugees are residing in neighboring countries.
DRC is facing increasing numbers of refugees from the Central African Republic. Between February 7 and 11 March more than 22,000 refugees fled Mobaye in CAR for the DRC for fear of attacks by Seleka rebels. Mobaye is a Central African border town close to positions held by the rebel Seleka coalition. According to several sources, there are currently more than 15,000 Central African refugees in parts of North Ubang needing food and health assistance. As of late April, an estimated 35,000 CAR refugees have been registered in DRC according to UNHCR. The number of CAR refugees in DRC is likely to further increase while the Seleka tries to secure control of the country.

The renewed conflict in eastern DRC has significantly contributed to the deterioration of the food security and nutrition situation, according to WFP. The December 2012 IPC analysis reports that 6.4 million people are in acute food insecurity and livelihood crisis (IPC phases 3 and 4). With 70% of the rural population without access to clean drinking water, there is an increased risk of cholera. A cholera outbreak continues to affect 9 of 11 provinces, with around 32,000 cases during 2012. As of 26 March, a cholera outbreak is suspected in Pweto where more than 300 cases have been registered over the last two weeks, resulting in 25 deaths, according to the UN. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, the lack of social infrastructure and effects of several aggravating economic shocks.

Over the second week of April, heavy rains have affected an estimated 2,500 people in Zongo, Province Orientale, according to OCHA.

Humanitarian access has been limited due to mountainous and volcanic terrain, coupled with widespread and shifting insecurity. Tensions between the local population and international aid workers have escalated. Throughout the country, humanitarian access is also hindered by ongoing protracted localized conflict, especially in the South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema and Katanga provinces.

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MALI

On 25 April, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the creation of a 12,600-strong peacekeeping force in Mali starting 1 July. The force - to be known as MINUSMA - will take over the authority from the current UN backed African force, AFISMA. Most of the AFISMA force is likely to become part of the peacekeeping operation. The peacekeeping force will be able to request support from French troops when they are under imminent and serious threat and upon the request of the secretary-general.

The continued volatile security situation raises concerns with regards to the announced withdrawal of French troops from Mali, which is planned to be downsized to 2,000 by July this year. France has proposed to maintain a permanent limited force of 1,000 troops in Mali to continue fighting armed Islamist militants, according to diplomatic sources. The Chadian President, Déby, has announced that the country will begin to withdraw its troops, only keeping around some of its 2,000 soldiers.

French troops continued ‘Operation Gustave’, a major offensive against Islamists in the north of the country, sweeping the Iminasse Valley believed to be a logistics base for Al-Qaeda affiliated Islamists near the city of Gao. The Islamists, although dislodged from the major central and northern towns, continue to carry out reprisal attacks from peripheral areas. Over the last month, militants have carried out several attacks, using landmines, IED’s, suicide bombings, and various guerrilla methods. No major incidents have been reported since 12 April, when a suicide bomber killed three Chadian soldiers at a market in the northern Malian town of Kidal.

According to the UN, there has been a significant escalation in retaliatory violence carried out by Malian soldiers against members of different ethnic minorities who are perceived as backed by armed groups. There are reports of Malians, in particular ethnic Tuaregs being detained by the Malian army without due right to lawyers and explanations of their deprivation of liberty.

Humanitarian access continues to improve in central regions and parts of the north and aid is increasing in the accessible parts, according to OCHA. Aid activities in other parts of the north, are limited due to insecurity and ongoing military operations.

An estimated 467,000 people are estimated to have been displaced by the current conflict. According to OCHA, there are an estimated 292,648 IDPs in Mali as of 10 April, compared to 261,000 as of late January. UNHCR reports that, as of 22 April, some 174,169 Malians are registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, with 74,148 in Mauritania, some 50,000 in Niger and 49,975 refugees in Burkina Faso.

As larger areas of central and northern Mali are secured, UNHCR estimates that a significant number of displaced people will return to their homes, although considerable challenges and poor conditions remain for a large share of those returning.

Access to basic social services (water, education, health) remains limited in the north largely because of the low return of civil servants, the destruction of infrastructure and the lack of material to support basic services, according to OCHA. The education of some 700,000 Malian children has been disrupted during the crisis, but recently schools have gradually started to reopen in Gao and Timbuktu regions, with 321 of 1,030 schools in the
regions working to date.

Recent assessments warn of a looming food security crisis in northern Mali. There has been a significant deterioration of household food consumption in Timbuktu and Gao, according to WFP. The depletion of household food stocks, a decline in livestock sales (due to low demand), and the lack of income-generating opportunities for most residents of conflict-affected areas in northern Mali are severely curtailing household food access. According to FEWSNet, food security will decline in the first quarter of 2013, with Crisis levels (IPC Level 3) in large areas of the north by April. Shut down of key markets, restrictions on movements of people and food, and the beginning of the lean season are drivers behind this trend. As the lean season, from April to June approaches, conditions are expected to deteriorate further in large parts of the country, according to WFP.

In total, an estimated 4.6 million people (32% of the population) in Mali are food insecure as of March according to FAO. According to FEWSNet, food security has declined in the first quarter of 2013, reaching crisis levels (IPC Level 3) in large swathes of the north in April. An estimated 660,000 children <5 suffer from acute malnutrition in 2013, including 210,000 from severe acute malnutrition.

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**MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY**

According to FAO, close to 1 million people (30% of the overall population) are affected by food insecurity in Mauritania as of March 2013, and more than 105,000 children <5 suffer from Global Acute Malnutrition, compared to 90,000 in 2011. The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate for children <5 has been around 12% since 2008. The highest malnutrition rates have been recorded in the Hodh Ech Chargui (16% GAM), Assaba (16.4%), Brakna (17%) and Tagant (18.2%) regions in the south-east of the country.

As of late April, FEWSNET reported that the food security situation should remain stable and most of the poor households throughout the country would remain in IPC Phase 1 until September. However, poor agro-dominant households in north-western agro-pastoral areas and south-eastern rainfed agriculture zones are expected to move into Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2) between March/April and June, along with northern households impacted by the protracted drought in that area since last year. According to FEWSNET, as of 27 February an estimated 5,000 farm households (25,000 people) were already experiencing Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2). Potential threats to food security include high prices for millet, an essential dietary staple. However, sorghum prices in December 2012 were 17% below their levels of a year earlier.

The number of Malian refugees has levelled off over the past weeks. As of 21 March, the latest figures remain at 75,019, according to the UNHCR. Some 13,359 new arrivals were registered between 11 January and 22 February. 90% of Malian refugees are women and children. Hodh Ech Chargui hosts the majority of the Malian refugees fleeing armed conflict in northern Mali. According to Médecins Sans Frontières, the living conditions of Malian refugees in Mauritania remain “deplorable” while humanitarian actors have been slow to respond.

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**NIGER FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT**

Niger is coping with four concurrent disasters: the Sahel food crisis, the Malian refugee crisis, flooding and a cholera outbreak. According to a March report from FAO, 6.4 million people are food insecure (42% of the population), due to consecutive poor harvests, drought and rising food prices. There are currently some 3 million people food insecure nationwide and severe malnutrition rates already surpass emergency thresholds in several regions of the country. According to ECHO, more than one million children will require care for either severe or moderate acute malnutrition in 2013. Although the number of food insecure in Niger is expected to decrease to 2.5 million in 2013, as a result of a surplus cereal harvest, recent estimations suggest that certain areas have experienced below-average harvests. The departments of Ayorou, Tillabéri, and Torodi are most severely affected, where 700,000 people will be unable to meet their food needs without assistance, compared with the norm of 300,000 to 400,000 people in these areas.

Compared to the five-year average, the prices of dry cereals are rising on most markets, with millet (17% to 41%), sorghum (5% to 39%) and maize (2% to 21%) displaying the largest increases. In February, the average price of millet and maize showed a slight increase of 4% and 3% respectively compared to the previous month. According to OCHA, this rise of prices for all cereals, except for imported rice, was confirmed in March. Although prices followed a similar dynamic last year, the scale of the increase was smaller. As a result, many Nigeriens who are yet to recover from previous crises are unable to afford market prices. The most vulnerable families have long consumed their meager harvest while still paying off debts from 2012.

The number of Malian refugees residing in Niger has decreased from 62,000 at the end of November to around 53,841 as of 15 March, according to UNICEF. However, UNHCR reports that some 5,600 new Malian refugees have crossed into Niger during the first week of April. The refugees continue to place a large strain on the country with the large majority settling in the regions hardest hit by the nutrition and food security crisis.

In the west of the country, more than 700,000 people were affected by flooding in December 2012, of which around 175,000 are displaced. The regions of Tillaberi and Dosso were the most severely affected. A surge in malaria and cholera cases was reported in most of the affected areas. As of 9 December, around 5,000 cholera cases had been reported (CFR 2.1%). In addition, 655 cases of measles have been reported in 2013, marking a significant increase compared to 341 cases during the same period in 2012.

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**SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), an estimated 1.05 million people in Somalia are in humanitarian emergency and crisis as of March. This marks a 50% decrease from 2.1 million in August 2012. Another 1.67 million people remain in stressed food security conditions as malnutrition rates in Somalia remain among the highest in the world according to FSNAU.
According to FEWSNET, food security has recently reduced to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through most parts of Somalia thanks to ongoing humanitarian assistance, the very good Deyr harvest, estimated to be the largest cereal harvest in the past ten years, higher than average livestock prices, and improved milk availability following overall good October to December Deyr rains. However, according to FSNAU, several parts of the country are continuing to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4), notably the areas that have so far only received light rains during the March to May rainy season. According to FSNAU, the principal groups affected by higher levels of food insecurity are the pastoralists in the northwest, the sheep pastoralists in the coastal areas of the centre, the people living in the agropastoral areas of Jamame District in Lower Juba region, the destitute pastoralists throughout the country, and most of the IDP settlements.

As a result of the lack of health infrastructure, poor feeding practices and possible outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea and measles during the April to June rainy season, 236,000 children <5 are expected to remain severely malnourished. According to OCHA, a steady increase in cases of acute watery diarrhoea in Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions has been registered with 565 cases in February alone.

Conflict remains widespread in Somalia. Military operations by Somali forces, supported by African Union peacekeepers, against militants forced a large number of al-Shabaab rebels from their strongholds in the southern and central regions. However, tensions exist between the different military forces involved and the local authorities to the extent that, on 22 April, Ethiopia officially announced its wish to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Meanwhile, attacks by al-Shabaab fighters continue to plague Somali urban centres and transport axes.

On 14 April, at least 34 people were killed when two car bombs successively exploded outside the law courts in Mogadishu and 9-man suicide commando attacked the building before fighting with security forces besieging the compound erupted. In the aftermath, the attack, one the deadliest in recent months, was claimed by al-Shabaab militants affiliated to al Qaeda. This last attack came less than a month after a car bomb exploded near the Presidential palace, killing at least 10 people in a blast that appeared to target senior Government officials, according to the Somali police. Although security in Mogadishu has improved, since its lowest point in August 2011, bombings and assassinations occur often. As suggested by UNHCR in early April, the revival of al-Shabaab activity in Mogadishu and nearby regions is likely to continue while the Islamist group has threatened to conduct more attacks.

As a result of the food crisis and conflict, an estimated 1.1 million people are currently internally displaced according to UNHCR estimates. Another 1 million Somalis are living as refugees outside of the country, mostly Kenya (507, 800), Ethiopia (239,000) and Yemen (229,000) as of April. According to UNHCR, at least 4,553 people were displaced between the 15th and 22nd of March, from different areas in Puntland and South Central, mainly due to insecurity, IDP evictions in Mogadishu, lack of livelihood opportunities, drought and IDP returns. Following the Ethiopian Defence Force’s withdrawal from Xudur town, Bakool region in south-western Somalia, Al-Shabaab militants seized control of the town. As of 21 March, approximately 2,500 people were displaced to Ceel Barde.

Somali Government troops and African Union forces seized the formerly Islamist-held town of Burhakaba from the Al-Qaeda linked Shabaab fighters on 27 February. The capture of Burhakaba marked a key stage in efforts to open up the main highway from the capital Mogadishu running northwest to Baidoa. On 2 April the AU and Somali Government forces cleared the final 60 kilometres (40 miles) from Burhakaba and with it opened the key route after months of fighting, reaching the former Islamic stronghold of Baidoa by road for the first time. This will not only allow for free movement of the population, but also open up this key supply route for the provision of humanitarian aid.

In southern and central Somalia, humanitarian access has remained challenging. According to OCHA, four incidents against humanitarian personnel, or their assets, and three cases of interference of aid delivery were recorded over the last weeks. The Lower Shabelle region has been more volatile than the Middle Shabelle region, though access in both regions remains extremely complicated. The withdrawal of al-Shabaab from key towns in southern Somalia has permitted an increase in the international presence in some areas.

On 6 March, the UN Security Council decided to maintain the deployment of the African Union Mission until 28 February 2014, reshape the UN presence there, and partially lift its 20-year weapons ban for one year to boost the Government’s capacity to protect areas recovered from Al-Shabaab and stave off fresh attempts by such groups to destabilize the country. On April 8, President Barack Obama determined that Somalia was now again eligible to receive defense articles and defense services under US arms export and foreign aids laws. This may be seen as a tangible illustration of the improving relations between Washington and Mogadishu and of the help the U.S. is ready to extend to a country struggling to contain armed groups linked to al-Qaeda.

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SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

Ethnic clashes, unrest and violence continue to affect large parts of the troubled Jonglei state. The precarious security situation derives from insurgency by armed groups as well as inter-tribal violence. The conflict between the Yau Yau rebel group, one of the major insurgency groups in the region, and the South Sudanese Army (SPLA) has escalated since the beginning of March 2013, following a military operation by SPLA against the insurgents initiated on 5 March. The operation was part of a wider disarmament campaign in the region ahead of the upcoming rainy season. According to OCHA, clashes between the SPLA and Yau Yau rebels were still ongoing in Jonglei State as of April. Fighting was primarily reported from the Kalbat area of Pibor County and in Kelo in Pochalla County.

South Sudan has struggled to assert control over Jonglei State, awash with weapons after the 1983-2005 war with the north and characterized by ethnic rivalries. According to the UN, more than 1,500 people have been killed in Jonglei since the country’s independence.

Cattle raiding is a recurrent issue that continues to affect people in several regions of South Sudan. Some 23,350 people have been affected by cattle raiding and linked violence in Akobo East, Akobo West in Jonglei State and Ulang in Upper Nile since 8 February, according to inter-agency assessments and OCHA. According to local media reports, at least seven people were killed and eleven others wounded in two separate cattle raids in
In Eastern Equatoria State, at least eight people, including government soldiers were killed when security forces clashed with cattle raiders on 23 April, sparking a gun battle that threatens to set alight a worrying security situation. The clashes occurred as the state government attempted to contain reprisal attacks following an attack on Bira community in which more than 75 heads of cattle were stolen by raiders earlier in April.

Previous tensions between Sudan and South Sudan are reportedly easing following the agreements reached on border security and oil exports in March. Sudan and South Sudan have withdrawn their troops from the border and are finalising the activation of the demilitarized zone. On 23 April, Sudan and South Sudan agreed to open 10 crossings along their joint border to boost travel and trade. Earlier in April, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir visited South Sudan for the first time since the split in 2011, pledging his commitment to peace and to normal relations with the neighbouring country once again. In early April, South Sudan resumed oil production.

The recent progress between the countries follows the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 9 March and a meeting on 19 March, where Sudan and South Sudan agreed to form a new mechanism to deal with accusations of supporting or harbouring of rebel groups in the two countries. The countries signed the technical agreement establishing a safe demilitarized border zone, the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the activation of all agreed security-related mechanisms. The two states also agreed on an overall implementation plan with timelines for the coordinated implementation of all 27 September 2012 agreements.

The influx of Sudanese refugees from North Kordofan and Blue Nile state continues, with over 204,000 Sudanese refugees currently present in South Sudan, primarily in Upper Nile and Unity state. Cases of Hepatitis E are an increasing concern across refugee camps in these regions, in particular in Maban County, in Upper Nile. According to the Ministry of Health and UNHCR, 6,000 suspected cases of Hepatitis E have been reported, of which 126 people have died as of 17 February.

Although favourable rains have improved the food security situation in the western, central and eastern regions of the country, 4.6 million people will remain in need of food or livelihoods support in 2013, according to the UN. Food insecurity is caused by a series of factors including diminished cross border trade with Sudan, inter-communal clashes, increasing number of IDPs, returnees and refugees, fuel scarcity and high food prices. Inflation rates nearly doubled, from 22% in October to 41% in November 2012, according the South Sudan Bureau of Statistics. The cost of food increased by 43% in 2012 compared to 2011. Planted area has increased in all states, except in Jonglei where more than 315,000 people have been displaced either by floods or by conflict with negative impact on planted area.

Jonglei State is particularly affected by food insecurity. In parts of the state households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, driven by insecurity, high prices and restricted access to wild foods and income sources such as collection and sale of firewood, charcoal and grass. In Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity is expanding to counties previously Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to fighting and insecurity. In Abyei area, it is likely that food consumption gaps will be extensive going into the lean season. Currently, most of the poor households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity outcomes, according to FEWSNet.

Insecurity, poor infrastructure and seasonal rains continue to severely hamper humanitarian access nationwide. In Jonglei state, there have been repeated attacks against humanitarian workers. On 21 April three WFP-contracted trucks were ambushed by armed men, resulting in the death of two drivers and driver's assistant. On 9 April, five Indian peacekeepers and at least seven UN civilian workers were killed in an attack by gunmen in Jonglei State, while nine others were injured. On 4 April a relief convoy was attacked on the road between Pibor and Bor and on 12 March a UN peacekeeper was shot and wounded by gunmen. Several humanitarian organisations reportedly restricted their operations in the area in March. Following the attack on the UN peacekeeping convoy on 9 April, aid agencies have not resumed travel on the road between Bor and Pibor in Jonglei as of 21 April, according to OCHA.

In general, over the course of 2012, there was a 48% increase in access incidents compared to 2011. The overall spike in access constraints is largely attributed to increased interference in humanitarian operations, hostilities and the physical environment. Inhospitable terrain also remains extremely challenging in South Sudan, with more than 60% of the country cut off during the rainy season.

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SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

On April 12, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir visited South Sudan for the first time since the split in 2011 pledging again his commitment to peace and to normal relations with the neighbouring country.

The countries had signed a new technical agreement on the establishment of a safe demilitarized border zone, the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the activation of all agreed security-related mechanisms. The two states also agreed on an overall implementation plan with timelines for the coordinated implementation of all elements of the 27 September 2012 agreements. This includes the resumption of oil production by 24 March and the withdrawal of troops from the border areas to be completed by 5 April. Monitors are to verify the withdrawal of Sudanese and South Sudanese forces from the buffer zone, 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) on each side of the 1956 border. In early April, South Sudan re-launched crude oil production and the first oil cargo is expected to reach Sudan's Red Sea export terminal at Port Susan by the end of May.

On 4 April, Sudan released seven political prisoners, a day after President Omar Hassan al-Bashir ordered the release of all such detainees. The amnesty came under the framework agreement signed between South Sudan and Sudan in March. On 26 April, accepting to join the ongoing peace process, several thousands of South Sudanese rebels reportedly surrendered to Juba and returned home from alleged rear bases in Sudan. Since its independence, South Sudan has been struggling to contain insurgents that it claimed...
were supported by Sudan. The same day Khartoum and Juba agreed to open 10 crossings along their joint border to boost travel and trade between the two countries.

Nationwide, the Global Acute malnutrition (GAM) levels for children under-five stands at 16.4%, above the emergency threshold of 15%. The national inflation rate in March was 47.9%, a 0.9% increase since February. The food price inflation rate has increased from 43.6 to 45 from January to February and non-food inflation has increased by about 12% (57% in February). It has further slightly increased in March. The rising cereal prices are likely to reduce access to food for low-income households, but are not expected to bring significant changes to food security in relatively secure areas of Sudan.

As of 15 March, an estimated 4.3 million people are facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity in Sudan, according to OCHA. 3.7 million people face Stressed and Crisis (IPC Phase 2 and 3) levels of food insecurity and 560,000 people are experiencing Emergency (IPC 4) levels of food insecurity, compared to 4.6 million people in July 2012. Some 80% of the food insecure population is in the conflict-affected areas of Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei. The slight decrease is mostly attributed to a good harvest this year. The total area planted during the 2012-13 season is more than double the previous year’s figure, and yields are expected to be significantly higher than last year due to favourable rainfall and decreased pest infestations. A surplus of 1.4 million MT of sorghum and millet is expected. In spite of the good harvest, Stressed and Crisis levels of food insecurity persist in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Darfur, and Abyei due to the impacts of conflict on production, market access, and livelihood options.

In Abyei, a contested border area between South Sudan and Sudan where a self-determination referendum is to take place in October 2013, most of the households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity according to FEWSNET. Due to high food prices because of restricted cross-border trade with South Sudan and the decrease of the cultivation areas, local communities in Abyei have already expanded their livelihoods strategies, switching to coping mechanisms employed in times of severe food insecurity. As more and more people are returning to the area where tensions eased in the wake of the signing of the agreement between Juba and Khartoum, it is likely that the humanitarian assistance will have to increase to keep up with rising needs as the returnees are expected to heavily rely on the host community for food.

On 29 October 2012, Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Health declared a yellow fever outbreak in seven localities in Central and South Darfur. As of 6 January, the total number of suspected cases had reached 849, including 171 deaths (CFR 20.1%). The majority of cases are reported from Central Darfur, North Darfur and West Darfur. An emergency mass vaccination campaign targeting 3.4 million people is currently being implemented. In addition, on 12 December, the Ministry of Health of West Darfur announced the outbreak of Hepatitis D in the state.

Nationwide, an estimated 2.5 million people are currently displaced due to food insecurity and conflict.

**Darfur**

Clashes between the rebel group, Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are ongoing in different parts of Darfur. After fighting between the two groups had already claimed casualties and caused displacement in Southern Darfur in March, renewed clashes were reported in parts of Eastern Darfur on 6 April. According to OCHA, the ongoing military operations are putting civilians at great risk with an estimated 40,000 people being displaced in the vicinity of the towns of Muhajeria and Labado over the past two weeks. To a large extent, the populations that fled the area are currently sheltering near the UNAMID Team sites located near the two cities. As of 18 April, the humanitarian organizations do not have access to these areas where an estimated 18,000 people remain concentrated. On 19 April, one peacekeeper was killed and two others injured in attack at the UNAMID Team site in Muhajeria.

In the region, armed fighting between SAF and SLM-MM is still ongoing with both groups reporting casualties. On 17 April, after heavy infighting and airstrikes, the Government forces managed to retake control of the towns of Muhajeria and Labado while the SLM-MM confirmed its withdrawal from the area. According to reports from local sources, pro-Government militia killed some 18 civilians following the recapture of the two towns while grave human rights infringements were also reported. In mid-April, heavy clashes between SAF and SLM-MM were also reported in parts of Southern Darfur. Separately, the Government forces area also facing attacks from the dissident faction of the SLM led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur in Northern Darfur.

The Government forces are currently also conducting military operations in other parts of Darfur. Although information remains extremely scarce due to limited access of international media to the area, local reports indicated that SAF has conducted airstrikes in Southern Darfur allegedly completely burning down a village south of Nyala on 29 April. According to local sources, this area was a relocation place for people displaced from Muhajeria and Labado. To date, the number of casualties remains unknown. In East Darfur, pro-Government forces have engaged into clashes with a group led by a former security services commander who defected and founded his one rebel movement.

In Central Darfur, near the city of Umm Dukhun, violence resumed between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes despite the signing of ceasefire agreement, on 11 April. The fighting between the two tribes has further spread to Southern Darfur when members of the Misseriya tribe attacked the town of Rehaid El Birdi that is inhabited by members of the Taisha tribe, a traditional ally of the Misseriya tribe. After an estimated 10,000 people were displaced at the beginning of April, these tribal clashes led to the displacement of another 50,000, mostly women and children, to the town of Tissi in neighbouring Chad, in the following week according to the UNHCR.

Over the past two months, violence in Central Darfur has displaced an estimated 74,000 people into Chad including Sudanese and Chadians – who lived as refugees in the conflict zone. The UNHCR is currently concerned that the number of refugees will increase as clashes continue in Central Darfur. It is already the largest influx of refugees from Sudan into Chad since 2005.

In Southern Darfur, disputes over land ownership and tribal fighting are still ongoing. In April, some 2,000 people were thus displaced from Edd El Fursan to Al Safia as a result of fighting between the Gimir and Beri Halba tribes according to the UN. In addition, some 37,500 reported Umbararo nomads in South Darfur are unable to cross into South Sudan because the border between the two countries is closed. These nomads have settled in 13
In Northern Darfur, the situation in the Jebel Amir Gold Mining area has stabilised after tribal fighting was curtailed. On 2 March, the Beni Hussein and Northern Rezeigat tribes reportedly agreed to end fighting following a reconciliation meeting in Saraf Omra. In addition, leaders of the two tribes have agreed to open all roads to El Sireaf in the Jebel Amir Gold Mining area. The parties have also agreed that the mining area should be under Government control and all mining activities should be suspended pending the outcome of a peace conference scheduled to take place on 15 April. Following the reconciliation, access for humanitarian agencies has improved and, as of 29 March, assistance to over 100,000 conflict displaced people in Serief Saraf Omra and Kebkabiya localities has been delivered. However, as of 4 April, 34,000 people are still in need of humanitarian assistance in Saraf Omra according to the ICRC.

According to OCHA, there are currently an estimated 1,43 million IDPs in camps in Darfur as of 31 March.

Blue Nile and South Kordofan States

In late April, the rebel group SPLM-North (SPLM-N), that has been fighting for almost two years in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, are scheduled to start talks to agree on a ceasefire with Khartoum and find a political solution to the conflict. On 24 April, negotiation teams from both groups held separate meetings with the African Union mediation to prepare the agenda for the negotiations. On 27 April, according to reports from both sides, the talks stalled over the issue of the opening of humanitarian access corridors to the area. An agreement on this particular issue had in fact already been reached last year by the two parties, but it has never been implemented.

Meanwhile, the situation in the area remains volatile and the local population is in a precarious situation while humanitarian access is limited at best.

On 16 April, despite the preparation for the talks, the SPLM-N reported that it managed to seize a military garrison, located at Ghandur next to the South Kordofan capital Kadugli. The Sudanese army did not issue any comment on the incident. On 12 April, the SPLM-N had already conducted a shelling attack against Kadugli killing three people and injuring 10 others.

Fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and SPLM-N forces in parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan has been ongoing since June 2011 and has affected an estimated 908,000 people since it started. There is no humanitarian access to 420,000 people affected in rebel held areas in the two states. According to UNHCR, an estimated 300 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan cross the border to South Sudan daily.

An estimated 158,000 IDPs remain in Blue Nile, according to OCHA as of 31 March. In South Kordofan, an estimated 907,000 IDPs are also in need of humanitarian assistance as of 31 March. On 4 April, the UN WFP reported a breakthrough as it managed to deliver food aid to the state for the first time since conflict began there 18 months ago. According to reports, the malnutrition rates among children under five in the region are 30%, double the emergency threshold. According to FEWNET, the majority of internally displaced people are likely to face crisis levels of food security by the time the rainy season starts in the next few weeks.

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ANGOLA FOOD INSECURITY

At the beginning of November 2012, OCHA reported that more than 1.8 million people in Angola are in a food security crisis, caused by prolonged drought. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture reported a 60% decrease of average rainfall during the planting season which resulted in a 30% drop in crop production. Ten coastal and central highland provinces have been affected. In some areas, families are sharing limited water sources with livestock, leading to contamination of these sources. The risk of outbreak of water related diseases is heightened. There have been media reports of a cholera outbreak in the south, but these have been refuted by WHO. In addition, an estimated 533,000 children suffer from varying levels of malnutrition in a country that is still recovering from decades of civil war that lasted until 2002.

Some 75 people have died of malaria in eastern Lunda Sul province in the first quarter of 2013, and more than 15,000 cases have been registered, according to Angolan official sources.

According to reports from local media, torrential rains left nine people dead and flooded hundreds of homes in the Angolan capital Luanda on April 7. Some 170 families are estimated to remain displaced as of 16 April.

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DJIBOUTI FOOD INSECURITY

Several consecutive years of drought have led to a critical food security situation in Djibouti. Currently, some 70,000 vulnerable people are at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. The northwest, southwest and south-eastern Pastoral Border livelihood zones are the worst affected. Rainfall levels in coastal areas as at the end of the Heys-Dadaa rainy season (October through March) were 50% to 75% below-normal. Poor households in the rural areas near Obock town in the northeast, situated in the Central Pastoral Lowland livelihood zone, are experiencing severe water shortages and critical malnutrition levels. In the southeast, water access will become increasingly limited, particularly in the areas of Sankal and Kabah-Kabah. With the lean season starting up in May, households in south-eastern pastoral border areas will continue to face Crisis food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) through June, according to FEWSNet. According to the April WFP report, food insecurity in Djibouti has increased since November 2012 while households’ own food production has decreased from 14.6% to 5.1% due principally to delayed rainfall and persisting cold.

Conditions for urban poor households are expected to remain critical during the coming months due to on-going increases in food prices. High unemployment rates (48%) and high staple prices are causing urban to peri-urban migration to areas such as Balbala. Wholesale prices of wheat flour, which had been stable at low levels since the beginning of 2012, increased from November to December 2012 by 17%. However, prices
The number of Somali refugees in Ethiopia as of late April stood at 239,000 according to UNHCR. Overall, Ethiopia is hosting close to 390,000 refugees. Apart from Somalia, refugees primarily originate from Eritrea and Sudan. The increasing rate of new arrivals is expected to place additional pressure on the already limited refugee food pipeline.

UNHCR is preparing to relocate thousands of South Sudanese refugees currently settled in the border Wanthowa district to the existing Pugnio camp in Ethiopia’s Gambella region. Although 16,000 South Sudanese are estimated to currently reside at the border with host communities, their exact figures are unknown as refugees in the area remain unregistered.

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KENYA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY

At the end of March, several parts of the country were affected by floods following heavy downpours countrywide. The Coast and Western Kenya are the most affected, where a combination of heavy rains and inadequate flood mitigation measures have destroyed homes, infrastructure and educational facilities. According to the Kenya Red Cross Society, some 89,515 people have been affected cumulatively since the onset of the rains in March. Some 63,000 of these remain displaced. To date, 62 deaths have been reported. The affected population is at heightened risk of contracting water borne diseases.

The food insecure population declined to 1.1 million in February 2013 from 2.1 million in August 2012 according to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) 2013 short rains assessment. This was attributed to near average short rains crop production and improved grazing conditions compared to the 2012 August to September lean season.

However, there is a remaining risk that the number of food insecure could increase from the current level due to the poor performance of the October-December Short Rains in parts of the southeastern and coastal marginal mixed farming zones.

The influx of Somali refugees into Kenya continues, with 277 new arrivals since the beginning of January as of 11 April. According to the UNHCR, the total number of Somali refugees in the country amounts to 507,540. A large part of these – 425,000 – reside in Dadaab camps and have limited access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, water and sanitation. Moreover, since the beginning of December, heavy rains have caused floods in the camps. According to the UNHCR, eleven epidemic outbreaks were reported in 2012. The situation is expected to deteriorate due to an influx of new arrivals following the Government’s decision to transfer Somali refugees from urban areas to camps around Dadaab.

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LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY

Lesotho’s food security deteriorated significantly for the second year in a row. As a result of the impact of consecutive droughts and late rains in the cropping season 2011-12, about 725,500 people are food insecure (40% of the population) in Lesotho as of the beginning of March 2013. Last year, the agricultural production dropped 70%, resulting in
Lesotho’s worst harvest in ten years. This situation is compounded by maize prices increasing 60% since the beginning of the year. On 9 August 2012, the Government declared a food crisis situation and called on development partners to assist.

The 2012-13 harvest is also likely to be below average, though better than last year. In early January 2013, the area planted was 40% below the five-year average. Poor rainfall performance in December delayed planting. Other reasons that have negatively impacted on production include the late start of the season, the early frost in the mountains, a mid-season dry spell and severe armypom infestations that have affected 25% of the estimated cropped area. Many poor households experienced Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security levels until the delayed green harvest starts in April. According to FEWSNET, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes are projected during the April to June period because many households are expected to harvest enough food to take them through the first three months of the 2013-14 consumption period, and some poor households plagued by food insecurity will be receiving humanitarian assistance during this period.

Lesotho’s population is extremely vulnerable – the country has the world’s third highest prevalence of HIV (23.5%) and 39% of children <5 are stunted. Lesotho suffers from widespread poverty with the proportion of households living below the poverty line exceeding 55%, out of which about 40% are extremely poor.

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MALAWI FOOD INSECURITY

An estimated 2 million people are classified as food insecure in Malawi, marking a significant increase since June 2012. Some areas have experienced four consecutive poor harvests, indicating a deteriorating situation. As many as 15 out of 28 districts are affected by the food crisis, with the southern (Mulanje and Chikwawa Districts) and central parts (Balaka District) of the country being the most severely affected. Even before the current crisis, 40% of the population was living below the poverty line.

The situation is compounded by the devaluation of the local currency and the increasing price of maize, the staple food, which already far exceeds the purchasing power of most rural households. As harvests begin countrywide in April, prices are expected to stabilize and decrease, but are likely to remain above last year’s levels. The reported resumption of informal maize imports from Mozambique and the start of harvests have dampened maize price increases in the affected districts in the south.

According to OCHA, as of 15 February the flooding had displaced some 33,000 people in southern Malawi. In total, 86,000 people have been affected by floods and storms since the onset of the rainy season. The hardest-hit areas are Mangochi, Phalombe and Nsanje districts, all in the south of the country and in the same region that was previously suffering from rain shortages and drought.

In addition, according to the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa (IRLC-CSA), armyworm outbreaks infesting maize crops and pasture have been reported in Ntcheu, Dedza, Kasungu and Mchinji districts of Kasungu and in Rumphi district of Muzuzu. This could further affect maize prices and availability.

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ZIMBABWE FOOD INSECURITY, UNREST

The food security situation in Zimbabwe has temporarily improved, after reaching a peak period during the lean season with an estimated 1.6 million people in need of food assistance in the period leading up to the April 2013 harvest, according to the UN. According to FEWSNET, food insecurity in most of the country is Minimal (IPC Phase 1) because of the steady food imports and of the continued distribution of humanitarian assistance. This level is expected to persist as poor households start to consume green foods and harvests between April and June. Significant problems with food supplies remain, however, in the southern, south-eastern and south-western parts of the country, notably in the Matebeleland South and Masvingo Provinces, where dry spells have resulted in moisture deficits which have compromised crop yields, further diminishing harvest expectations in affected districts.

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SENEGAL FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Nationwide, an estimated 739,000 people (6% of the population) are affected by food insecurity, according to FAO. Preliminary results from a joint mission (Government/ActionAid/Senegalese Red Cross/FAO/WFP) carried out in late December 2012 showed critical levels of food insecurity in areas of Bakel (65%), Matam (64%), Medina Yoro Foula (63%) and Linguere (55%). Food insecurity is low in all areas of the regions of Fatick and Kaffrine where it is less than 15%, while it is moderate in the departments of Dagana and Podor. The results indicate that food insecurity currently affects more than 230,000 people in some villages and rural communities in St. Louis, Louga, Matam, Kolda and Sedhiou, and in the regions of Fatick, Kaolack and Kaffrine. According to UNICEF, in 2013, four out of fourteen regions are estimated to surpass the emergency threshold of 10% of Global Acute Malnutrition: Tambacounda, Kaffrine, Matam, Saint Louis.

According to UNICEF, the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) caseload for children under five more than doubled the expectations of 2012. For 2013, the SAM burden is estimated at 63,323 children under five, and the Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is estimated at 255,675 cases.

Although the 2012 harvest was generally good, the agricultural production was affected by the floods in August and September 2012 in the Senegal River Valley and western regions of the country. As a result, it is likely that a food crisis in 2013 will persist among vulnerable families which have depleted their livelihoods and do not have the means to restore them.

According to WFP, as of 3 April, the prices of cereals remained high in Senegal, demonstrating, depending on the region and local speculation, up to a 30% increase when compared to the five-year average.

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The acute food crisis in Zimbabwe up until April occurred after late and erratic rains, poor agricultural practices, limited access to agricultural inputs, and a reduction in planted area contributed to a 33% decrease in last year’s harvest if compared to 2011. In the most affected areas, maize prices were reported to be between 12% and 47% higher compared to prices in maize surplus areas. In the remaining affected parts of the country, prices of cereal and flour are likely to remain high making food accessibility difficult for poor households.

Ongoing drought in the southern part of the country has increased food security needs. Large numbers of labour-constrained individuals and decreased purchasing power have significantly contributed to the number of people who require seasonal targeted food assistance. A large percentage of vulnerable rural farmers depend on NGO and Government-subsidized agricultural inputs. In light of this, food insecurity in Zimbabwe in 2013 is still projected to be comparably worse than any period over the past three years. Almost one in five people living in rural areas will be unable to meet basic food requirements on their own.

In Zimbabwe 3.7 million (29% of the population) people are chronically food insecure. Chronic and acute child malnutrition stands at 32% and 3%, respectively. Masvingo, Matabeleland North and South, and parts of Mashonaland, Midlands and Manicaland provinces are the worst affected areas.

The food security crisis is also aggravated by the high HIV-prevalence rate, which is 14% compared to 5% for the rest of the southern Africa region.

On 16 March, Zimbabweans voted on a new constitution, which would introduce presidential term limits, abolish presidential immunity after leaving office, bolster the power of the courts, strengthen parliament’s powers and set elections to decide whether President Mugabe will remain in power. Almost 95% of Zimbabweans voted in favour of the new constitution. Zimbabwe is expected to hold elections, which will be funded by South Africa, by October of this year.

Although the run-up to the referendum remained peaceful, the UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights have received an increasing number of reports about acts of intimidation and harassment, physical violence and arrests against civil society actors, mostly working on human rights issues. In April, reports also indicated that the police have been confiscating radios that pick up foreign stations to limit Zimbabweans’ access to alternative information while the local state-run media generally support Mugabe.

In recent weeks, the police have also reportedly conducted a crackdown on NGOs and human rights groups, raiding offices, confiscating files and arresting employees. Although President Mugabe has called for peaceful conduct during and after the referendum and national elections, violence continues to be reported across the country.

Heavy rains in January caused extensive flooding affecting some 8,490 people as of 15 February, according to OCHA. The worst affected provinces were Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Masvingo and Midlands. During the first week of April, an additional 900 people have been affected by heavy rains in the Midlands province.

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CAMEROON FOOD INSECURITY

According to the Global Information and Early Earning System (GIEWS) and FAO – although official production estimates are not yet available as of mid-April – the countrywide cereal output in 2012 is tentatively put at average levels. However, some parts of the country, notably in the north, will still remain food insecure due to localized poor harvests.

Following the findings of a joint Government/FAO/WFP Food Security Assessment Mission visiting Northern Cameroon in January-February 2013, the 2012 cereal output in the North province was estimated to be 16% lower than the previous year, while in the Far North region, despite an increase in cereal production, localized production shortfalls occurred for the second consecutive year.

The Logone and Chari department (Far North region) has reportedly suffered in 2012 from the lingering effects of a severe cereal production shortfall caused by the drought conditions which prevailed in 2011. In addition, both Far North and North regions were struck by flooding in September 2012, which affected 60,000 individuals, causing damage to crops and population displacement.

According to GIEWS and FAO, the Food Security Assessment Mission also established that cereal stocks were already depleted as early as March 2013 in 21 districts out of a total of 47 in the Far North region, where 1.78 million people (about 46% of the region’s total population) reside. Furthermore, based on preliminary data from the 2012 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, jointly carried out by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, in northern Cameroon the chronic malnutrition rates (44.8% in the Far North Region, 43.3% in the North region) exceed the “critical” threshold of 40% set by the World Health Organization. Similarly, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 6.3% in the Far North and 5.5% in the North are higher than the “precarious” threshold of 5 percent.

In addition, as of March 31, a total of 1,140 refugees from the Central African Republic have arrived in East region.

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MOZAMBIQUE FLOODS, EPIDEMIC

An outbreak of violence in mid-April suggests a worrying possibility that the country may face sustained political violence before next year’s elections. On 4 April, the Mozambique police raided the headquarters of the opposition Renamo party, arresting at least 12 people and fuelling tensions. The following day, opposition militiamen from the Renamo party carried out an attack on a provincial police station to try to free the people arrested during the raid on their headquarters, killing four policemen in the process. On 6 April, armed men attacked a bus and a truck in central Mozambique, near the opposition stronghold of Muxungue, killing three people in the process. Renamo denied being behind the assault that was the first such attack on a civilian vehicle in Mozambique in a decade. Following on, Mozambique’s President Armando Guebuza stated that he would respond firmly to the
deadly attacks against civilian vehicles blamed on armed members of the former rebel group Renamo. The latter opposition group has seats in the country’s parliament, but is effectively excluded from power.

Despite flooding at the beginning of March this season’s national crop production prospects are reported to be good, with substantial contributions expected from the central and northern regions and the food security of most rural households across the country and outside the flood affected areas is expected to be favourable through June. According to FEWSNET, the food situation has recently improved and the current food insecurity outcomes are Minimal (IPC Phase 1) for the majority of the rural households since food is more readily available through harvests and targeted food assistance in mid-April.

The floods in Mozambique displaced some 186,238 people and cumulatively affected 478,892 people as of 11 March, according to OCHA. An estimated 117 people died in the floods, including cases due to secondary causes such as electrocution. Thousands of households have been damaged; road infrastructure, electricity, and drainage systems have been interrupted. The southern Gaza Province was the worst hit with around 175,700 people affected and 172,600 temporarily displaced followed by Inhambane and Maputo provinces, and the central province of Zambezia where 33,956 people were affected and 10,522 temporarily displaced.

A cumulative total of 1,352 cholera cases and 5 deaths were reported between 28 January and 10 March, of which 482 cases and 2 deaths were reported in Nampula City, the most recently affected province. As of 21 February, 413 cases and two deaths were reported in Cabo Delgado Province, northern Mozambique.

An UN-led assessment of the agriculture sector at the end of March indicated that an estimated 267,000 ha of agricultural land were affected by floods of which approximately 211,000 ha with diverse cultures (maize, rice, beans and vegetables) were lost, representing about 4% of the total area sown in the country. The Gaza province was the worst affected with 30% of crop area lost, followed by Inhambane (9%) and Maputo (4%). It is estimated that some 128,000 producers were affected in the 10 provinces (39 districts), according to OCHA.

However, despite this, limited access to food due to 2011-12 production shortfalls of almost 19%, high food prices and the restricted movement of goods due to heavy rainfall and flooding has Stressed (IPC phase 2) the food security situation for households in areas including parts of Cahora Bassa, Mutarara, Macossa, Machanga districts in the central zone, and Chigubo, Chókwe and Funhalouro in the south.

Overall, the country suffers from high chronic food insecurity, affecting nine million people (39% of the population).

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ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY

On 21 January, dissident Eritrean soldiers with tanks laid siege to the Information Ministry and forced state media to call for the release of high-profile political prisoners and demanded the implementation of the constitution which was never enacted by Parliament. However, calm reportedly returned to the capital Asmara on 22 January. No further information is available on the events.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 political prisoners are being held in the country of about 6 million people. The United Nations Human Rights chief has accused Eritrea of torture and summary executions.

An estimated six million people in Eritrea are food insecure (98% of the population). Local food and fuel prices are likely to remain high, putting severe pressure on vulnerable groups’ coping mechanisms. The Government of Eritrea officially denies any food shortages within its borders and refuses food aid. There is a lack of updated and reliable data on the humanitarian situation due to the limited humanitarian access and a ban on humanitarian organisations assessing needs. No confirmed data on the food security situation or food price levels is available. Therefore, Eritrea is not included within the Global Overview prioritisation.

Updated: 29/04/2013

AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

A powerful 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, near the Pakistani border on 24 April. The epicentre was located some 24 kilometres northwest of the city of Jalalabad, the capital of the Nangarhar Province. According to local reports, some 27 people were killed and 150 others injured while the earthquake also damaged an estimated 350 houses. Meanwhile, in the northern province of Balkh, an estimated 20 people were killed because of ongoing flash floods that also damaged some 1,900 houses.

As the impact of the cold winter recedes, Afghanistan is now witnessing a surge in violence with the arrival of spring and the start of the so-called “fighting season”. Humanitarian access has therefore been increasingly compromised due to ongoing hostilities in the majority of provinces. The issue is particularly acute in Badakhshan province where a protracted ground offensive of the Government forces, supported by international air power, against the insurgents is hampering humanitarian access. The offensive, started in late March, has already led to the displacement of some 1,500 people and is likely to continue until late April.
In parallel, local sources quoted by OCHA have also registered during the first three months of 2013 a substantial increase of 62% in attacks on aid workers, excluding UN staff, over the same period in 2012 in the country. Against this background, the ICRC reported that a mobile health unit of the Afghan Red Crescent Society was attacked in northern Afghanistan on 16 April. As a result of the assault, two staff members were killed and two others wounded.

Meanwhile, military operations are ongoing throughout the country. On 12 April, 13 Afghan soldiers from the Army’s Third Battalion were killed when 200 Taliban combatants assaulted an outpost in the eastern province of Kunar. This particular Taliban attack had a strong symbolic significance since the Third Battalion is one of only a small number of Afghan units rated as fully self-sufficient by the US military. The attack stressed again the difficulty for local forces, which are suffering disproportionately high causalities compared to international troops, to face the insurgents without international backing. In Maidan Wardak Province, in central-eastern Afghanistan, military operations have led to the displacement of an estimated 4,500 people as of the beginning of April. On 22 April, Taliban fighters have seized a group of 11 foreigners on board of a helicopter that came down in Logar province in eastern Afghanistan. Official sources within the international military confirmed the incident. To date, the fate of the captured people, most of whom are allegedly civilians, remains unknown.

On 27 April, the Taliban vowed to start a new campaign of mass suicide attacks on foreign military bases and diplomatic areas, as well as foster their “insider attacks” in spring. In the meantime, deadly attacks on the civilian population, as well as on national and international authorities continue to plague the country. On 17 April, seven civilians were killed and four others injured in a roadside bomb blast in Zabul province. On 8 April, another roadside bomb had already exploded under a bus in the Wardak Province, southwest of Kabul, killing nine people and injuring 22 others. On 3 April an attack against a Government compound in the south-western province of Farah resulted in 44 deaths and 100 injuries. Most of the victims were civilian Government workers. The attack was the deadliest for Afghan civilians since December 2011. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that they intended to target civilian Government employees, in particular workers in the courts and prosecutors’ offices. In addition, six people, including a US diplomat – the first State diplomat killed in Afghanistan since the 1970s, died on 6 April in a car bomb attack in Zabul province.

On April 4, gunfire from a helicopter operated by NATO forces killed four Afghan police officers in the eastern province of Ghazni. On April 7, eleven children and a woman were killed in an airstrike during a NATO operation targeting Taliban commanders in eastern Afghanistan. These incidents have put even more strain on the already complicated relationship between Kabul and its international backers.

Around 85,000 international troops are currently supporting the Government in its fight against the Taliban. However, all international combat troops are preparing to withdraw by the end of 2014 and with over 75% of the country expected to be under national security control by July 2013.

Overall, 5.4 million people are affected by the on-going conflict and an estimated 450,000 people are currently internally displaced in Afghanistan. Since 2001, UNHCR has supported the return of 4.7 million Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries. However, nearly three million registered Afghan refugees remain in exile in Pakistan and Iran.

According to FAO, more than nine million people (34% of the total population) are food insecure in Afghanistan, of whom 2.1 million people are severely food insecure. Although most households entered the lean season more food secure than last year, those in northern Badakhshan and the Wakhan corridor are currently in Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2). As reported by the WFP, the prices of wheat flour and rice continued to increase last month after having already been at higher than average levels in February. In March, the wheat flour prices were thus 35% higher in comparison to the same month last year and 32% higher if compared to the same month average over the last five years. Similarly, the average prices for low quality rice were higher by 47% in comparison to the same month last year and by 50% if compared to the same month average over the last five years.

Households in the extreme northeast, central highlands and low income households across the country remain vulnerable to food insecurity due to inflation, loss of livestock and reduced remittances from Iran. Some 18% of children <5 nationwide suffer from malnutrition, while acute malnutrition rates in the south are as high as 29.5% for children <5.

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SYRIA CIVIL WAR

The UK, US and Israel have indicated on separate occasions that there is growing evidence on the use of chemical weapons in the Syria conflict. A UN mission established to investigate the use of these weapons is still denied access to the country, with the Syrian Government limiting the investigation to an incident in Aleppo.

The Syrian National Coalition (SNC) named George Sabra as caretaker leader of the opposition group on 22 April, following the resignation of Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib.

Fighting continues unabated throughout the country. The Government forces appeared to have made gains across Syria in recent weeks, with advances around Damascus and the border with Lebanon. Heavy clashes erupted for the first time in six months in the city of Hama on 25 April, as anti-Government forces reignited clashes to relieve pressure on fronts in other parts of the country. In addition, heavy clashes were reported this week in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs, Idlib, Lattakia and around the city of Damascus.

The UN estimates that over 6.8 million people are in need of humanitarian aid as a result of the heavy fighting and subsequent lack of access to livelihoods and services. 4.25 million people are internally displaced. While all of Syria’s governorates are affected, the humanitarian situation is particularly precarious in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa, Homs, Rural Damascus, Hama, Idlib, Dar’a. Aleppo governorate counts the largest number of people in need - an estimated 2.4 million. ECWOS reported that 1 in 3 Syrian houses have been damaged by the conflict, with over 400,000 houses completely destroyed. If the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate, more than half the around 24 million Syrians are reportedly likely to be in need of humanitarian assistance by the end of the
The influx of Syrian refugees into neighbouring countries continues at a high pace. The number of Syrians registered and awaiting registration currently exceeds 1.4 million, only two months after the one million mark was reached at the start of March. Over 448,000 Syrians are registered or awaiting registration in Jordan (Government estimates 470,000 Syrian in total), 445,000 in Lebanon (Government estimates 1 million Syrians in total, including a large number of Syrian migrants), over 314,000 in Turkey (Government estimates 400,000), around 138,000 in Iraq and more than 60,000 in Egypt and other countries in North Africa. The actual number of Syrians residing in neighbouring countries is believed to be much higher as an unknown number of Syrians are unable or unwilling to register. The capacity of host countries to cope with this influx is stretched and tensions between refugees and host communities are increasing.

The conflict increasingly spills over to neighbouring countries. Both the Syrian Army and opposition forces have targeted areas in the border region of Lebanon, and the SNC called on Hezbollah to withdraw its fighters from Syria, as activist claim that regime troops are supported by Lebanese Hezbollah fighters for control of a string of villages near the Lebanon-Syria border. The situation in the military sensitive area of the Golan Heights remains volatile, with a number of States considering withdrawing their peacekeepers from the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. The Government of Jordan indicated that the Syrian crisis and its impact on Jordan are becoming a threat to national security.

The needs across the country far outweigh the support provided. The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, recently urged the UN Security Council to grant aid agencies cross-border access to Syria without permission from the Syrian Government. Accessibility into and around Damascus is becoming increasingly difficult and reaching certain areas of Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idlib remains particularly challenging. In the past few weeks, several UN agencies have separately warned that their resources are running low, and added that without additional funds they will be forced to scale back relief efforts across the region.

**Yemen Conflict, Food Insecurity**

Unrest in Yemen’s south continued on 8 April as seven people were killed in clashes between army deserters and tribesmen. In a separate incident, two Yemeni Government soldiers were killed and two others injured in fighting with tribesmen who had blown up the main Ma‘rib oil pipeline in south Yemen only two weeks after it was repaired, according to reports from Government sources. Two days prior, clashes between the army and southern separatists in the town of al-Hawat, in al-Lahej Province, resulted in one Yemeni soldier killed and four people wounded after separatists tried to close the marketplace. Yemen remains a strategic spot for the U.S. and its Gulf allies who need to contain threats from al-Qaeda affiliated militants and separatist tribes to Saudi Arabia and to nearby sea lanes where oil tankers pass. On 17 April, 4 al-Qaeda militants were killed in a US drone strike southern of the capital Sana’a.

On 23 March, gunmen in the capital killed three guards of a leader of the Huthi Shiite rebels. The violence was reportedly linked to the country’s troubled national dialogue, in which the leader was participating. Related clashes between Yemeni police and southern separatists killed two civilians and wounded six people on 13 March. The clashes erupted in Aden’s Mansura district, a stronghold of the pro-independence movement. Police opened fire on Southern Movement activists who had blocked roads with rocks and burning tyres as part of a campaign of civil disobedience they began less than a month ago. Some 12 people have been killed since the protests began on 23 February.

National Dialogue sessions started on 18 March, after numerous delays since November 2012, in order to start drafting a new Yemeni constitution, agree on other reforms, and begin paving the way for elections. The constitution is expected to set out the groundwork for presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2014.

An estimated 13 million people (55% of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, according to OCHA. Violence and insecurity continues with inter-tribal fighting in the north, fighting between the Government and armed groups in the southern governorates and civil unrest in urban centres of the west and central governorates. As a result, some 385,000 people remain internally displaced. In the meantime, in the south, more than 100,000 internally displaced people have returned to their areas of origin in Abyan governorate and further returns are on-going, according to UNHCR.

Yemen currently hosts more than 242,000 refugees, virtually all of Somali and Ethiopian origin, according to UNHCR. The number increased significantly during 2012, which saw record high levels of new arrivals, amounting to 107,500 people in 2012. In January, 7,518 new arrivals were reported, the majority (6,231 people) of whom were Ethiopian. In February, another 10,145 people crossed into Yemen while the flow slowed last month with 1,806 new refugees arriving to the county in March.

Approximately 10.5 million people in Yemen are food insecure, according to OCHA. 970,000 people suffer from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). The emergency threshold for GAM >15% is exceeded in six Governorates: Hajjah, Al-Jawf, Al Hudaydah, Taiz, Aden and Lahj. The situation is serious (GAM 10-14%) in six other Governorates (Raymah, Ibb, Abyan, Amran, Al-Mahwit, and Al Dhale’e). According to OCHA, 255,000 children <5 are severely acutely malnourished.

According to WFP, the food security outlook for 2013 is slightly worse than in 2012, when an estimated 10.5 million people were considered food insecure. The causes of food insecurity will likely persist and be aggravated by poor prospects for the local agricultural production, estimated to be roughly 8% lower than in 2012.

A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 has severely disrupted access to health services, clean water and basic sanitation. As of January 28, an estimated 13.1 million people lack access to safe water and sanitation. Epidemics are occurring, with 170 children having died from measles in 2012.

Information about humanitarian needs throughout the country remains difficult to ascertain due to insecurity. Humanitarian access in Yemen is hampered by insecurity across the country. Kidnappings and attacks against humanitarian actors persist.

*Updated 29/04/2013*
Three days of violent riots and clashes between Muslims and Buddhists erupted in the town of Meikhtila in central Myanmar on 20 March. As a result, an estimated 12,846 people were displaced, according to a rapid interagency assessment. 10,834 people still remain displaced in 11 locations as of the beginning of April. According to the Government, as of 2 April, the death toll stood at 43 people with 61 more being injured. The Government declared a state of emergency and deployed military to the riot-hit town on March 22, and calm was reportedly restored on 23 March.

According to Government officials, the violence had also spread to other townships in the region by the end of March, in particular to the Yamethin Township where 40 houses and the mosque were destroyed. Sporadic acts of arson also spread from Meikhtila to Okpho and Gyobingauk in Bago Region and minor disturbances were reported in Yangon. According to the UN, attacks on religious buildings and shops in the townships of Nattalin, Thegon, and Zigon were reported on 27-29 March.

The violence between Buddhists and Muslims marks the deadliest inter-communal unrest since the violence between the ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Muslim Rohingya shook western Rakhine state last year, killing hundreds of people and displacing more than 100,000 people. As of late December, between 115,000-138,000 people were still displaced, mostly across eight Rakhine townships (Kyaukpyu, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Ramree and Rathedaung). According to UNHCR, several IDP settlements, especially the ones in Sittwe, Myebon and Pauktaw, are seriously at risk of flooding during the monsoon season from May to September. This represents an estimated 69,000 people potentially affected.

A second round of peace negotiations between Myanmar’s Government and the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and its armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), started on Monday 11 March in Ruili, China. On 12 March, the Government of Myanmar and Kachin rebels opened discussions on establishing a new frontline between their armies. Kachin leaders rejected calls from the Government for an immediate ceasefire during the negotiations saying they needed more assurances from the Government. Talks between the KIO and the Myanmar Government are scheduled to resume by mid-April.

Fighting between the Government and KIA had re-ignited in June 2011, when a 17-year ceasefire with the KIA rebels broke down. KIA is seeking greater autonomy for the one million Kachin people residing in Myanmar. As a result of the fighting, an estimated 100,000 people have been displaced. Around 20,000 residents and 15,000 displaced people are thought to be in Laiza. According to the UN, nearly 2,000 people were newly displaced from Northern Shan State, as a result of the latest fighting.

Access has improved as major highways in Kachin state – closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the Government army and KIA in 2011 – were reopened on 17 March, following the renewal of talks between the two sides. However, access to the affected population in Rakhine state remains difficult as campaigns have taken place based on claims of favouritism by international aid agencies towards the non-Rakhine Muslim minorities. According to OCHA, as of mid-April, access to IDPs is still seriously hampered by ongoing intimidation of aid workers.

The rice harvest in 2013 is expected to be significantly affected by heavy flooding at the beginning of September 2012 as the rains inundated around 250,000 hectares of crops. In addition, according to WFP, rainfall deficiencies in the early and late monsoon seasons have impacted key crop harvests and resulted in water shortages in various parts of the Dry Zone in central Myanmar. The food security situation in the area is already of serious concern and will further deteriorate as the summer progresses.

On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly voted to grant Palestine a non-member observer State status at the United Nations, while expressing the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians towards a permanent two-State solution. Direct negotiations between the two sides have been on hold since September 2010, with the Palestinians insisting on a settlement freeze before returning to the negotiating table and the Israelis insisting on no preconditions.

A major 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southeast Iran, near the border with Pakistan, on 16 April. Tremors were felt as far away as India and the Gulf Arab states. The epicentre was in an area of mountains and desert, some 86 kilometres from the Iranian city of Khash and 78 kilometres from the border with Pakistan. In Pakistan, according to official reports, at least 40 people were killed and 150-200 injured in the town of Mashkeel in the south-
western province of Baluchistan, which borders Iran. 3,200 houses are reported to have been damaged in the area. Overall, more than 12,000 are reported to have been affected by the earthquake.

Government operations against non-state armed groups, as well as sectarian violence, have caused significant population movement in Pakistan since July 2008. According to OCHA, as of mid-April, an estimated 992,562 people remain displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) due to protracted conflict. Since mid-March, intensifying Government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militants groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency (FATA) have led to additional massive population movements.

According to the Government’s FATA Disaster Management Authority, over 48,000 people, including 22,000 children, were displaced from Khyber Agency to safer grounds in Peshawar, Kohat, and towards the camps of New Durrani in Kurram Agency and Jalozai camp in Nowshera District as of late April. According to OCHA, the number of displaced may double in the upcoming weeks as the security situation in the area is worsening. Overall, up to 60,000 people have already been affected by the protracted conflict in the Tirah Valley. In the area, deliveries of humanitarian aid have recently been hampered by attacks on aid workers and administrative delays.

Meanwhile, continued attacks by insurgency groups are fostering an increasing trend of violence in Pakistan since December 2012. While general elections are scheduled for the 11 May, the continuing series of attacks emphasizes the enduring security concerns in Pakistan and the rising sectarian violence. As the date of the elections approaches, more attacks against politicians and officials are also to be expected.

A suicide bomber attack targeting a senior official in the city administration thus killed at least 8 people and injured 45 others in Peshawar on 29 April. On 23 April, a suicide attack in Quetta targeted a prominent leader of Pakistan’s ethnic Hazara minority killing six people, but leaving the politician unharmed. The attack stressed once again the rising threat posed by sectarian strife to secular candidates participating in the polls. On 16 April, at least 9 people were killed and 50 others wounded when a suicide bomber attacked an election rally for the Awami National Party in Peshawar in northwestern Pakistan. In a separate incident on the same day, a roadside bomb struck an election convoy of the Pakistan Muslim League-N and killed four people in southwestern Baluchistan province. Meanwhile, the former Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf, who returned from exile last month and managed to register as a candidate for the upcoming elections, was eventually barred from running for the national assembly by the authorities. Officially, Musharraf was prevented in participating in the elections because of court cases pending against him according to a local source. Dozens of suspected militants attacked an electricity plant on 2 April near the northwestern city of Peshawar, killing seven people in the process. The high profile assault destroyed the biggest power station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, suspending electricity supply to at least 100,000 people overnight. The city is especially vulnerable to bomb blasts and Taliban attacks as it runs into the semi-autonomous tribal belt, considered a safe haven for Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other insurgents fighting both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. On 9 March, a bomb blast inside a Sunni Muslim mosque had already killed five people and wounded 28 others in Peshawar.

Some 17 soldiers were killed and dozens wounded when, a car packed with explosives exploded next to a pair of fuel tankers at an army check post in north-western Pakistan on 23 March. A car bomb also hit Jalozai refugee camp, killing 15 people and wounding another 40 on 21 March. Jalozai is home to tens of thousands of people displaced from violence in the tribal belt on the Afghan border.

Karachi was also affected by the latest wave of violence. On 3 March, a car bomb killed 50 people in a mainly Shiite Muslim neighbourhood of the city, the fourth in a series of major attacks on the minority Shiite community since January 10 that has killed more than 250 people. These recent attacks follow in addition, a bomb attack on 16 February in Quetta in the Baluchistan Province in southwest Pakistan that left at least 64 people dead and some 200 injured. Baluchistan has increasingly become a flashpoint for sectarian violence between Sunni Muslim and Shi’ites.

Flash floods triggered by heavy rains in September 2012 caused destruction across Pakistan. According to the Government, the flooding was still affecting around 4.8 million people in Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh provinces as of 31 January, with around 142,000 people residing in camps. Many of the affected districts, particularly in Baluchistan and Sindh, were already struggling to recover from the 2010 and 2011 flooding. Areas still inundated may remain under water for several more months due to lack of drainage and slower evaporation during the winter months.

Malnutrition rates in some flood affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the recurrent floods in 2012 and were predicted to worsen. In addition, 60% of the population in Pakistan is food insecure and inflation, with rising fuel prices and stagnating domestic productivity, pushing up food prices. Seven districts are classified as facing IPC phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). In Pakistan, prices of wheat and wheat flour have been steadily increasing since June 2012 reaching record levels in most markets in February 2013, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

Measles cases in 2012 surged by almost five times compared to 2011, leading to the deaths of more than 485 children, up from 64 deaths in 2011. Some 175 deaths have been reported since the beginning of 2013 alone. Sindh province, the area hardest hit by the measles outbreak, is also most affected by the current floods. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported 141 measles outbreaks throughout the country since the beginning of the year. The HO has described the situation in Pakistan as alarming due to a steady increase in measles cases and deaths.

Assessments and humanitarian operations are hampered by difficult access due to insecurity, standing flood waters, and visa delays. Attacks against aid workers in Pakistan continue to threaten the provision of life-saving assistance. According to OCHA in January alone, 20 aid workers were attacked, which is nearly 50% of last year’s total figure of 42. More than 15 polio vaccinators were killed in targeted attacks in December and January.

Update: 29/04/2013

TAJIKISTAN FOOD INSECURITY

Since the beginning of January 2013, over 3 million people (32% of the population) in Tajikistan are estimated by WFP to be at risk of food insecurity due to a prolonged lean
season and depleted winter stocks. According to WFP, around 870,300 people in 12 livelihood zones are classified as being in Crisis food security conditions (IPC Phase 3). Another 2.4 million people are classified as being in Stressed conditions (IPC Phase 2). Overall however, the food security status of the analysed zones has relatively improved in the reporting months compared to the previous year thanks to increased remittances received, good rainfall and good cereal production reaching 1.2 million tons at the end of 2012, 12% higher than during the last season. Spring rainfall in March has been temporarily well distributed and it is expected to continue at its current regular pace.

In Tajikistan, which heavily depends on imports, the price of wheat flour prices remain at or close to historic highs in the main and regional markets of the country. High prices are likely to continue and place pressure on vulnerable families to meet food needs. During 2012, an increase in food prices was recorded on other staple food products such as potatoes (by 19 %), beef (by 15%), and bread. Transportation and fuel prices have contributed to the surge of food prices. However, when accounting for exchange rates, the current prices are not at as high the 2008 peak prices.

High prices are likely to continue and place pressure on vulnerable families to meet food needs due to high and increasing prices in Kazakhstan and as households deplete their own stocks and rely more on market purchases.

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**BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE**

The collapse on 24 April of an eight-story garment factory in Savar, 25 kilometres northeast of the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka, left at least 350 people dead according to reports and local media. Whereas some 2,000 people were rescued, an unspecified number of victims remain trapped under the rubble. Some 1,000 people were injured according to the Disaster Management Information Centre.

The collapse of the building sparked widespread and violent protests in and around Dhaka. Reports indicate clashes between protestors and police, with tear gas and rubber bullets being fired to disperse the protesters. There are no reports of casualties and the number of injured remain uncertain. The strong reaction from garment workers followed reports of ignored warnings about developing cracks in the walls of the collapsed factory building only a day before the accident. Protestors accuse the factory management for ignoring the risks and causing the death of the some 350 workers.

The series of protests, or hartals, continued over the past week, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) carrying out a new countrywide two-day hartal 22-23 April. Although stray incidents of violence were reported across the country, no major incidents have been reported from the latest hartal to date. On 9 April, protestors supporting the 18-party alliance led by the BNP enforced a nationwide hartal during 36 hours, resulting in clashes with police in several locations across the country. The clashes reportedly left one dead and dozens injured. The strike came only a day after some 20 people were injured in south-western Bangladesh as another general strike was enforced. The demonstrations followed a long series of protests and counter-protests that have occurred in the country since the beginning of 2013.

The recent wave of demonstrations started in January over the trial and sentencing of senior political leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party, the country’s largest Islamic party, including the party’s leader and deputy leader over their role in the 1971 independence war. The clashes that broke out following the sentencing to death of a senior Islamist leader on 28 February marked the bloodiest period of violence since the country’s independence four decades ago. The Islamic Alliance is also protesting to pressure the Government to restore a constitutional provision that requires a neutral caretaker administration to supervise the next general election expected in early 2014. To date, at least 96 people have died during protests, although local media reports suggest a higher number of at least 150 killed.

In addition, violent attacks against Bangladesh’s minority Hindu community have continued since the sentencing of the Islamist leader. Around 50 Hindu temples and at least 700 Hindu houses have been attacked since late February.

The recurrent hartals called by the JI or the main opposition political party BNP are reportedly causing significant disruption to business and commerce and the current losses to the economy are vast.

On 22 March, a tornado swept through 15 villages in the Brahmanbaria Naogaon, and Natore districts, more than 100 km southeast of the capital, Dhaka, affecting an estimated 31,600 people, according to the Government. At least 38 people were killed and another 414 injured. The tornado caused material damages, tearing roofs off houses and uprooting trees and power pylons. More than 500 houses suffered damage.

Some 40% of the population is food insecure and this is aggravated by rising food prices and disasters destroying infrastructure and inundating land. Bangladesh is considered one of the world’s most hazard prone countries and is often subject to floods. In 2012, the affected north-western region was hit by floods three times.

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**IRAQ DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY**

Over the last weeks, Iraq has continued to witness a significant surge in sectarian violence, and sectarian tensions are reportedly at their highest since U.S. troops left Iraq more than a year ago. In the past week alone, more than 180 people have been reported dead in clashes. The most recent escalation in violence occurred after Iraqi troops ostensibly stormed a Sunni protest camp in the town of Hawija near Kirkuk on 23 April. The ensuing violence spread to other areas and left at least 50 people dead on 23 April. Continued clashes between Sunni militants and Iraqi forces on 24 April left at least 30 people dead, in the fiercest clashes in more than a year. On 24 April, a tornado swept through 15 villages in the Brahmanbaria Naogaon, and Natore districts, more than 100 km southeast of the capital, Dhaka, affecting an estimated 31,600 people, according to the Government. At least 38 people were killed and another 414 injured. The tornado caused material damages, tearing roofs off houses and uprooting trees and power pylons. More than 500 houses suffered damage.

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Some 40% of the population is food insecure and this is aggravated by rising food prices and disasters destroying infrastructure and inundating land. Bangladesh is considered one of the world’s most hazard prone countries and is often subject to floods. In 2012, the affected north-western region was hit by floods three times.

Updated: 29/04/2013

**BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE**

The collapse on 24 April of an eight-story garment factory in Savar, 25 kilometres northeast of the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka, left at least 350 people dead according to reports and local media. Whereas some 2,000 people were rescued, an unspecified number of victims remain trapped under the rubble. Some 1,000 people were injured according to the Disaster Management Information Centre.

The collapse of the building sparked widespread and violent protests in and around Dhaka. Reports indicate clashes between protestors and police, with tear gas and rubber bullets being fired to disperse the protesters. There are no reports of casualties and the number of injured remain uncertain. The strong reaction from garment workers followed reports of ignored warnings about developing cracks in the walls of the collapsed factory building only a day before the accident. Protestors accuse the factory management for ignoring the risks and causing the death of the some 350 workers.

The series of protests, or hartals, continued over the past week, with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) carrying out a new countrywide two-day hartal 22-23 April. Although stray incidents of violence were reported across the country, no major incidents have been reported from the latest hartal to date. On 9 April, protestors supporting the 18-party alliance led by the BNP enforced a nationwide hartal during 36 hours, resulting in clashes with police in several locations across the country. The clashes reportedly left one dead and dozens injured. The strike came only a day after some 20 people were injured in south-western Bangladesh as another general strike was enforced. The demonstrations followed a long series of protests and counter-protests that have occurred in the country since the beginning of 2013.

The recent wave of demonstrations started in January over the trial and sentencing of senior political leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party, the country’s largest Islamic party, including the party’s leader and deputy leader over their role in the 1971 independence war. The clashes that broke out following the sentencing to death of a senior Islamist leader on 28 February marked the bloodiest period of violence since the country’s independence four decades ago. The Islamic Alliance is also protesting to pressure the Government to restore a constitutional provision that requires a neutral caretaker administration to supervise the next general election expected in early 2014. To date, at least 96 people have died during protests, although local media reports suggest a higher number of at least 150 killed.

In addition, violent attacks against Bangladesh’s minority Hindu community have continued since the sentencing of the Islamist leader. Around 50 Hindu temples and at least 700 Hindu houses have been attacked since late February.

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Updated: 29/04/2013

**IRAQ DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY**

Over the last weeks, Iraq has continued to witness a significant surge in sectarian violence, and sectarian tensions are reportedly at their highest since U.S. troops left Iraq more than a year ago. In the past week alone, more than 180 people have been reported dead in clashes. The most recent escalation in violence occurred after Iraqi troops ostensibly stormed a Sunni protest camp in the town of Hawija near Kirkuk on 23 April. The ensuing violence spread to other areas and left at least 50 people dead on 23 April. Continued clashes between Sunni militants and Iraqi forces on 24 April left at least 30 people dead, in the fiercest clashes in more than a year. In the latest event, at least 11 people were killed and dozens wounded when three car bombs tore through public markets in Shi'ite provinces in southern Iraq early on 29 April, according to local police.

On 20 April, Iraq held its first provincial elections since the departure of U.S. troops. Although only 50% of eligible Iraqi voters participated in the polls, the election is still considered to be an important test of the country’s political stability ahead of next year’s parliamentary elections. The initial results indicate that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s State of Law coalition won a slight majority over its rivals. The three oil-rich Kurdish
provinces in Northern Iraq are scheduled, as usual, to vote at a later date, with polls being organized there for September.

The on-going violence forced authorities to postpone the elections in the two Sunni dominated provinces of Anbar and Nineveh. Election Day also witnessed several violent incidents with a dozen of small bombs exploding near polling centres throughout the country and wounding at least 4 people. Further illustrating the trend of escalating violence, multiple attacks hit the country in the week prior to the polls. On 19 April, seven Sunni worshippers were killed and a dozen more injured in a mortar attack against a mosque in Dyala province. The previous day a suicide bomber attack killed at least 27 people while wounding dozens more in a youth Internet café in Baghdad. Multiple bomb attacks across the country had already killed four people and injured 18 more on 17 April.

April saw a deadly series of attacks in the country, featuring successive car bombs and attacks in cities, resulting in 33 people dead and more than 200 wounded on 15 April. The previous day two moderate Sunni Muslim candidates had been killed. On 12 April, bomb attacks targeting a Sunni Mosque and Sunni worshippers in Baghdad and in the town of Dyala, north of the capital, had killed 12 people and injured 30 others.

On 8 April, UNAMI released figures estimating the number of causalities in Iraq for March with at least 229 civilians killed and 853 injured in acts of terrorism and armed violence in the country. An estimated 207 members of the Iraqi forces have also been killed with another 300 having been injured. The areas most affected by attacks from terrorist groups remain Baghdad, the governorates of Anbar, Salahuddin and the disputed areas of Ninewa and Kirkuk according to UNAMI. The unrest and attacks are linked to the country’s long-running political dispute, with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki facing hardening opposition against his rule and demanding an end to allegedly sectarian policies of the Shia-led Government. The current violence is a continuation of the surge in unrest that left 246 people dead in January, the highest number since September 2012.

As of 24 April, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq reached 137,657, with the autonomous region of Kurdistan hosting 90% of the refugees where daily arrivals have reached 800-900 people – double the rate of just three months ago.

The situation at Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq’s Dohuk Governorate, is especially worrying. The Domiz camp is currently housing more than 35,000 Syrian refugees and is critically overcrowded. Thousands of families are sharing tents with newly arrived refugees as almost 3,500 families do not have their own shelter.

The overcrowding is in turn having an impact on sanitation, which is already below humanitarian standards. Congestion and warmer temperatures are increasing vulnerability to outbreaks of diseases as well as to tension between camp residents.

Measles cases have been reported amongst new arrivals in Domiz refugee camp. In addition, a large number of Iraqis residing in Syria have returned to Iraq. As of 22 January, the total number of Iraqi returnees from Syria since mid-July 2012 was 68,122, according to UNHCR. Baghdad continues to receive the largest number of Iraqi returnees, followed by Anbar and Ninewa.

On 3 March, Iraq shut a border crossing with Syria after Syrian rebels seized the other side of the frontier post from the Syrian army. On 11 March, Al-Qaida’s branch in Iraq claimed responsibility for the killing of 48 Syrian soldiers and nine Iraqi guards in western Anbar province, who sought refuge in Iraq after the attack on the border post. The attack suggests possible coordination between the terror network’s Iraq affiliate and its ideological allies in Syria who are fighting on the side of the rebels against President Bashar Assad’s regime.

An estimated 1.2 million were displaced inside Iraq by 11 June 2012; updated displacement figures remain lacking. Although humanitarian access has become less restricted, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, north/central governorates and the Disputed Territories.

Updated: 29/04/2012

JORDAN DISPLACEMENT

The number of Syrian refugees crossing the border to Jordan continues to increase. As of 25 April, 393,370 Syrian refugees have been registered by UNHCR in Jordan, and an additional 55,000 await registration.

These figures do not include Syrians that have not registered or await registration, and the Government of Jordan estimates that there are, in total, some 500,000 Syrian refugees in the country. As a result of the refugee influx, Jordan’s economy, water and energy resources remain strained. The prices of commodities are higher in Jordan if compared to Syria and the purchasing power of the refugees to cover basic needs is rapidly decreasing. Furthermore, food prices in Jordan have increased by nearly 50% due to the reduction of food imports and increased demand from new arrivals from Syria. In addition, recent reports warn of potential signs of rising tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees, in particular in regions that host large number of displaced Syrians.

Updated: 29/04/2013

KYRGYZSTAN FOOD INSECURITY

In September 2012, an estimated 25% of the population of Kyrgyzstan – about 1.3 million people – were considered food insecure according to WFP’s Household Food Security Assessment.

The highest levels of food insecurity were found in Jalalabad (48%), Osh (38%) and Batken (38%) regions. The situation of currently food-insecure and vulnerable households is likely to further deteriorate during spring when stocks of food from the previous harvest will be depleted and additional inputs are required for the spring planting campaign. The WFP assessment also revealed that another 13% of households – some 547,000 people – are at risk of becoming food insecure should they be affected by an additional shock, such as further rises in food prices.

In March 2013, the retail price of wheat flour did not change on a month-on-month basis and remained at high levels. Since June 2012, the price has increased by 56% in rural and 47% in urban areas, and by an average of 52% across the country. The domestic retail
price of wheat flour in March was 42% higher than in the same month of last year and only 4% lower than the peak level of early 2011.

The 2012 wheat production was affected by delayed planting due to a long cold winter, followed by a hot summer. The latest estimate puts cereal production at about 1.3 million tonnes, which is some 19% lower than last year’s level.

In 2010, 34% of the population was living below the national poverty line.

*Updated: 29/04/2013*

**PHILIPPINES**  **CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOON**

Continuous rains caused floods in Agusan del Sur in the Province of Pampanga in late February. Some 49,073 people were affected as of 27 February, according to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. The Municipality of San Luis has the highest number of affected, amounting to 19,577 across 11 barangays (villages), followed by the municipality of Veruela with 12,125 persons affected across 12 barangays. Several municipalities have suffered damages on large agricultural stretches.

Previously, on 19 February, Tropical Depression “Crising” made landfall on the southern tip of Davao del Sur and moved northwest towards southern Palawan before moving away from the country on 21 February. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Control (NDRRMC), some 52,325 households, or 262,880 persons, were affected in 137 barangays of seven regions. 39,406 of these were previously affected by Typhoon Bopha. As of 25 February, 223,134 receive assistance inside and outside of evacuation centres.

Four consecutive days of rain combined with the tail-end of a cold front led to rising water levels in Mindanao in January. As of 26 January, there were more than 507,700 people affected, the majority of them, 369,000, in Davao Region.

The Philippines frequently experiences natural disasters, particularly tropical storms and cyclones. Typhoon Bopha (Pablo) struck the Philippines on 4 December 2012, causing extensive damage across the island of Mindanao. As of 17 April, 6.2 million people are still affected by Bopha. 918,298 people are displaced outside evacuation centres and 15,064 are displaced inside evacuation centres. A total of 158,741 households are totally or partially damaged.

Tropical storm Wukong (Quinta) made landfall over the island of Leyte on 26 December, resulting in the displacement of estimated 60,000 people. As of 31 December, more than 240,000 people were affected by the tropical storm. Flood-affected towns in Capiz were placed under state of calamity on December 28.

According to the Department of Health, 1,528 dengue cases have been reported in the first quarter of 2013 in the Soccsksargen region. Some 669 or 41% of the victims are children 10 years old and below.

The Malaysian Government continues to facilitate peace talks for the Island of Mindanao in southern Philippines, with the 37th formal exploratory talks between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) concluding in Kuala Lumpur on 11 April 2013. The talks continued to work on the architecture for a normalization process. There was agreement for a terms of reference signed for Sajahatra Bansmoro, the development programme jointly undertaken by MILF and GPH to deliver socio-economic services to target communities in Mindanao. The panels agree to hold the next meeting after the 13 May Philippines elections.

On 3 April, Government representatives and Philippines’ largest Muslim separatist group began talks aiming to finalize the four annexes to the peace deal signed with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in October. The landmark agreement should put an end to 40 years of conflict and set up an autonomous structure to run the poor, but resource-rich, south. By 2014, the Transition Commission will need to devise a framework for Bangsamoro, the Muslim-dominated region made up of five provinces. The new envisioned autonomous area is to have a larger territory, expanded jurisdiction and greater powers to generate taxes, with an administration extending beyond the main southern island of Mindanao.

*Updated: 29/04/2013*

**CHINA**  **EARTHQUAKE**

A 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck a mountainous area of southwestern China’s Sichuan province, near the city of Ya’an in Lushan county, on 20 April. It is the worst earthquake to hit the country in three years.

According to the UN as of 23 April, 193 people are reported dead and 12,211 injured, including 968 in serious condition. Some 25 people are still missing and more than 245,000 people have been urgently evacuated. In total, more than 1.99 million people are affected across 115 counties, according to the Civil Affairs Department of Sichuan.

The earthquake has caused significant infrastructural damage in large stretches of the affected areas. While response and rescue teams are gradually reaching the most affected areas, there are areas still difficult to access due to damaged or obstructed roadways, according to the Red Cross Society of China. It is expected that the damage and loss figures and thereby needs will increase once more information is available.

There have been more than 4,000 aftershocks since 20 April, of which four measured between magnitudes 5.0 and 5.9, 21 between magnitudes 4.0 and 4.9, and 78 between magnitudes 3.0 and 3.9, according to the China Earthquake Administration.

On 25 April, two successive earthquakes measuring 4.8 and 4.2 magnitude jolted Yibin City, southwest China’s Sichuan Province, leaving 24 people injured and thousands of houses damaged.

*Updated: 29/04/2013*

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**  **FLOODS, FOOD, INSECURITY**
Tensions have continued to mount over the past weeks on the Korean Peninsula. At present, the international community is looking toward China to push Pyongyang toward a less bellicose stance. The (re)appointment of Pak Pong-ju, an economic reformer and allegedly a pragmatist, as Prime Minister has also created some hope within the international community that the DPRK will show more restrain.

The increase of tensions began after the DPRK conducted its third successful nuclear test in February the first since 2006 and 2009. In response, on 7 March, the UN Security Council, benefiting from quick Chinese support on the matter, voted to tighten financial restrictions on DPRK and crack down on its attempts to ship and receive banned cargo in breach of UN sanctions. The sanctions came as an international diplomatic effort after the European Union Governments had already agreed on 18 February to tighten sanctions against North Korea, restricting the country's ability to trade following the recent nuclear test. The EU sanctions expanded those approved by the UN Security Council in January, adding measures preventing trading in North Korean Government bonds, gold, precious metals, and diamonds.

In December 2012, the UN Security Council had previously unanimously approved a resolution condemning DPRK's long-range rocket launch. The announcement was met by DPRK with vows of strengthening military capacities and nuclear deterrence in January.

According to a recent report by GIEWS and FAO, the acute malnutrition rates have improved this year due to better food rations and a consistent food assistance pipeline. According to the report, some 2.8 million people are estimated to face severe food insecurity in the northeast provinces of the country.

The chronic under-nutrition remains a public health problem. Some 57% of households have 'borderline' food consumption. Chronic food insecurity in DPRK continues to affect two-thirds of the country’s 24 million people. According to the UN, the main 2012 harvests and 2013 early season crops will see a 10% increase compared to a year earlier and the production is expected to reach 5.8 million metric tons.

DPRK still requires international humanitarian assistance. Flooding and a subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012 affected an estimated 700,000 people, damaged health facilities and reduced access to primary and secondary health care. The floods further aggravated the impact of a severe dry spell in southwest and central provinces: a 30% decline in soybean production due to the dry spells in the first half of 2012 has been reported.

Humanitarian access is limited. No current data on child mortality, the food security situation, food price levels and general magnitude of humanitarian needs is available. Therefore, DPRK is not included within the Global Overview prioritisation.

Updated: 29/04/2013
Torrential rain and floods caused damage across Bolivia. Eight of the country’s nine departments have been affected. As of 10 April, the current rainy season has affected more than 32,000 families (some 160,000 people) in 80 municipalities (more than 25% of Bolivia’s municipalities), according to OCHA. The department of Cochabamba is one of the worst hit with 40,000 (8,000 families) affected in between 18 and 25 March.

According to Civil Defense reports, the rainy season has caused 24 casualties and destroyed 12,000 hectares of crops. To date, an estimated 25,000 peoples are in urgent need of food assistance.

The southern departments are the most affected, especially Chuquisaca, Potosi, Tarija and Cochabamba. The department of Cochabamba was declared a state of emergency on 20 March. In total, 36,500 people have reportedly been affected since December 2012 by the current rain season and floods. In La Paz, more than 4,120 families are affected in 26 municipalities, some 1,160 hectares of crops are damaged and several roads are blocked.

Bolivia experiences floods every year during the January-March rainy season. Heavy rains typically flood major rivers and cause mudslides and devastation of roads and infrastructure in the Andean region, and the Amazon lowland plains consistently suffer from floods every year during the rainy season.

Updated: 29/04/2013
Introduction to the Global Overview Update

The Global Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global Overview collates information from a wide range of sources, including Reliefweb and media sources, and displays this information in a manner that allows for quick comparison of different humanitarian crises. The primary objective of the Global Overview is to rapidly inform humanitarian decision makers by presenting a summary of major humanitarian crises, both recent and protracted. It is designed to provide answers to four questions:

1. Which humanitarian crises currently exist? (World map)
2. What has happened in the last seven days? (Highlights and snapshot)
3. What is the situation in the country affected by a crisis? (Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Overview consists of three main sections:

Firstly, the **world map** provides an overview of how the countries are prioritised, indicated by different shades of blue. The countries are subdivided by four **priority levels**: "on watch", "situation of concern", "humanitarian crisis", and "severe humanitarian crisis".

The priority levels are assigned on the basis of:
- the number of people affected by recent disasters
- the level of access to the affected population
- the <5 mortality rate
- the level of development of the country
- the number of protracted IDPs and refugees.

If a country experienced a disaster in the seven days prior to an update, or witnessed an escalation of an ongoing crisis, a country is **highlighted** by a yellow dot on the map.

Secondly, the **snapshot** briefly describes what has happened in the last seven days from the date of publication, by outlining the crises that have occurred in the different highlighted countries.

Thirdly, **narratives** for each country included in the Global Overview reflect recent major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country. Narratives are written based on secondary data.

**The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.**

To download the mobile application for Android phones, click here.


**Update**

The Global Overview will be updated once a week and the results will be available every Monday before midday (Central European Time/Central European Summer Time). In case of major new humanitarian events or an escalation of an ongoing crisis which triggers a change of prioritisation, the Global Overview will be updated on an ad-hoc basis.

**Disclaimer**

While ACAPS has defined a methodology striving to ensure accuracy, the information provided is indicative and should not be used in isolation from alternate sources of information for any decision making. ACAPS is not responsible for any damage or loss resulting from the use of the information presented on this website.

More information on the Global Overview Methodology can be found in the Global Overview Methodology Brief and the Frequently Asked Questions.