Snapshot 22 – 29 April

**Syria:** The security situation had deteriorated with escalating violence in the West of the country resulting in population displacement and hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Large numbers of newly displaced are heading to the calmer regions of Idleb governorate, which hosts over 500,000 IDPs. In the East, Iraqi helicopters hit an opposition convoy in the first strike claimed by Iraq inside Syria since the conflict began.

**CAR:** Seleka activism intensified, with the armed group capturing the town of Bouca, in Ouham prefecture. In the north, a suspected Seleka attack on a hospital cost 22 lives, including three NGO workers. In the west, 100 people died during clashes between militias and civilians in one village. Seven people died in Bangui after a clash between armed men and peacekeepers, and 1,300 Muslims were evacuated from the city.

**Sudan:** Peace talks between the Government and the armed group the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) have stalled again as the parties failed to agree to a solution to the conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. In North Darfur, air raids killed three people, while tribal violence killed ten and displaced 7,000.

**Afghanistan:** Ten provinces in the northwest were affected by torrential rains and flash floods, which killed 132 people, displaced around 16,000 people and affected another 39,000 people. Jawzjan province was the most...
affected. The preliminary results of the presidential election indicate there will be a runoff between Abdullah and Ahmadzai on 7 June.

Updated: 29/04/2014, Next Update: 06/05/2014.
AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

27 April: According to international media, 22 people died in an attack on a hospital in the area of Nanga Boguila, Ouham prefecture. Three NGO workers were killed. The attack was attributed to Seleka and Peul armed men. This was the latest incident in renewed Seleka activism in the north, especially in Ouham and Ouham-Pende, over the past week.

27 April: According to international media, 1,300 Muslims were evacuated from the PK12 district of Bangui, where they had been trapped for five months, and escorted north by AU peacekeepers.

26 April: According to international media, a MISCA convoy was attacked by armed men in Paoua, Ouham Pende prefecture, leaving one soldier dead and two unaccounted for. MISCA said that this attack brought the MISCA troops death toll to 25.

25 April: A clash between unidentified gunmen and French peacekeepers in the PK5 district of Bangui left seven people dead, according to MISCA.

24 April: OCHA reported that 100 people were killed during clashes between militias and civilians in the town of Sagani, Nana Mambere prefecture. Violence was also reported in Bamata, Botokon, Nana Gribizi prefecture.

22–23 April: According to international media reports, Seleka captured the town of Bouca, Ouham prefecture.

KEY CONCERNS

- The humanitarian situation has deteriorated since the political crisis erupted in March 2013. Violence peaked in Bossangoa in September 2013 and Bangui in December 2013. Communal violence has surged across the country in 2014, with outbreaks reported in nearly all provinces.

- 2.5 million people require immediate humanitarian assistance, and 1.6 million people are food insecure (WFP, April 2014). The entire CAR population of 4.6 million people, half of whom are children, has been affected by the conflict (UNICEF, March 2014).

- An estimated 603,000 people are internally displaced, 178,000 of whom are located in the capital Bangui (UNHCR, April 2014). 348,000 mostly long-term CAR refugees are registered in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, April 2014).

Politics and Security

The emergency in CAR is affecting the entire population and most of the country. Fighting between anti-balaka militias and Seleka fighters, and civilian mob violence, have caused mass displacement, targeted killings along communal lines, and widespread human rights abuses since December 2013. The Government has little control over the country beyond Bangui, and new warlords have established dominance in a number of territories.

A coalition of armed militia from the northeast, known as Seleka, which is majority Muslim, started fighting in December 2012, advancing across the country and seizing power in Bangui on 24 March 2013. President Bozize fled to Cameroon. Seleka leader Michael Djotodia was installed as interim President. In September, as fighting persisted and international pressure mounted, Djotodia disbanded Seleka. Fighting only intensified as ex-Seleka members began attacking the mostly non-Muslim civilian population, and ‘self-defence’ Christian and animist militias, known as anti-balaka, mobilised. International peacekeepers were deployed in December 2013, as violence in the capital left 1,000 people dead. In early 2014, Djotodia was forced to resign, and Catherine Samba-Panza was elected in his place.

UN Peacekeeping Mission

On 10 April, the UN Security Council voted a resolution allowing the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), for one year. The transfer of authority from the AU-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) to MINUSCA is scheduled to take place on 15 September. The resolution allows an initial deployment of up to 10,000 military and 1,800 police.

Interim President Samba-Panza, CAR’s religious leaders, and the Government of France have all called for a UN peacekeeping force. In March, the UN Secretary General delivered a report regarding the possible transformation of MISCA into a full UN peacekeeping mission to the Security Council.

AU and French Peacekeeping Forces

The UN Security Council authorised the continued deployment of French peacekeeping mission Sangaris on 10 April. On 20 February, the Secretary General had outlined a six-point plan to ensure adequate peacekeeping prior to the potential deployment of a full-fledged UN peacekeeping operation. It called for the reinforcement of French- and AU-led
peacekeeping operations with 3,000 additional troops. On 14 February, France said that it would add 400 soldiers to its 1,600-strong force. President Catherine Samba-Panza had asked France to extend its military presence until the CAR presidential election, which should take place in February 2015 at the latest.

As of 5 March, an estimated 8,000 French and AU peacekeeping troops were deployed in CAR. In mid-February, half the French troops were deployed in Bangui, while the other half were in the regions. According to latest reports, international troops are deployed in the northwestern districts of Paoua, Bozoum, Baoro, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bouca, and Kaga Bandoro as well as in Bangui, Yakole, Boali, Bambari, Ndele and Bangassou. According to media reports on 24 April, French Sangaris police were present in Bria, the capital of Haute-Kotto province and the diamond trade centre of the country, which remained under Seleka control.

As of mid-March, French troops were focusing activity on the road linking Bangui to Cameroon, in an effort to improve the economic and trade situation. According to observers, a limited stream of commercial transport had resumed along the route in mid-March.

MISCA had been mandated to restore security and ensure the protection of civilians, alongside French troops, through UN Security Council resolution 2127 of 5 December 2013. Official sources estimated that in mid-February over 5,300 AU troops from countries including Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, and Rwanda had been deployed, out of an expected total of 6,000. French troops and AU peacekeepers stationed in CAR receive logistical support from the US and UK. Washington is already providing logistical support and advisers to African troops operating against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in eastern and southeastern CAR.

On 9 March, a demonstration against the French peacekeeping operation, Sangaris, took place in Ndele, in the northern prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran.

Demonstrations against French involvement in CAR also took place in Khartoum, Sudan, illustrating evolving cross-border political and conflict dynamics.

**Chadian Troop Withdrawal**

On 16 April, a Chadian official declared that the withdrawal of the entire Chadian MISCA contingent had been completed, the media reported. According to OCHA, MISCA troops had been redeployed to cover areas previously secured by Chadian MISCA soldiers. Chad announced the withdrawal of its troops on 3 April. A statement by the MISCA command on 26 March, following the killing of a Chadian MISCA soldier, suggested rising antagonism between MISCA and anti-balaka. On 24 March, according to the AU, a clash between MISCA peacekeepers and armed men presumed to be associated with anti-balaka in Boali, north of Bangui, resulted in the death of one MISCA soldier and 12 attackers.

On 29 March, around 30 civilians were killed when Chadian soldiers escorting a convoy of Muslims in Bangui fired on a civilian crowd after reportedly being attacked by a Christian militia, OHCHR reported. UN officials said that the soldiers were not part of MISCA.

**EU Military Intervention**

On 9 April, international media reported that French police had been deployed to CAR and started patrolling in Bangui as part of the EU Force in CAR (Eufor-RCA). Officials said that three-quarters of the troops will be deployed by the end of May. The maximum troop strength will be 1,000 soldiers, who will be based in Bangui. Eufor-RCA represents the biggest EU military operation in six years.

**Non-military International Response**

On 11 March, an inquiry commission, mandated by a Security Council resolution to investigate abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law, arrived in CAR. It is due to report to the Security Council within six months. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights paid a three-day visit to CAR over 18–20 March. On 7 February, the International Criminal Court announced the opening of a preliminary inquiry into potential war crimes and crimes against humanity in CAR.

On 28 January, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution inviting the interim CAR Government to speed up transition and impose sanctions against those responsible for violent incidents. Targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes were added to existing sanctions, comprising an arms embargo requiring all countries to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer of arms and related matériel to CAR. The Security Council also requested that presidential and parliamentary elections be organised as soon as possible, and no later than February 2015.

**National Political Context**

On 21 March, according to the international media, anti-balaka leaders met with a government minister and said they were willing to surrender their weapons and engage in a reconciliation process with Muslims. On 5 March, the CAR Prime Minister held an unprecedented meeting with leaders of ex-Seleka and anti-balaka. The next day, the Prime Minister organised peace talks with rival militia groups. However, violence continued in Bamingui-Bangoran.

In late February, Nigeria-based Islamist militants Boko Haram threatened to avenge the killings of Muslims in CAR. This raised concerns that Boko Haram and other armed Islamist groups may become active in the crisis. However, according to observers, the spread of Islamic groups to CAR is unlikely due to logistical and operational difficulties.

A senior UNHCR official reiterated on 28 February that “ethno-religious cleansing” was ongoing in CAR, a warning that had already been voiced by human rights NGOs in mid-February. President Samba-Panza had denied such cleansing but, warned that criminal anti-balaka would be “hunted”.

In mid-February, local sources reported that several ex-Seleka commanders have openly mooted the idea of dividing the country. Muslim residents of Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, have reportedly made frequent demands for partition in late April, according to international media on 25 April. Various sources have cited mass departures of Muslims to the north as an additional argument for partition. Information remains difficult to obtain, but local reports in early February indicated the formation of a new armed organisation called the Independence Movement of Northern Central African Republic, whose stated objective is to protect northern interests. The UN Secretary General has indicated a “distinct risk” that
the CAR could end up divided. The French Defence minister has announced that France would not recognise any partition of CAR.

Political Transition Process

On 14 March, the press reported that the CAR National Transitional Council had started working on a new constitution, which is expected to be ready by May.

On 25 January, interim President Samba-Panza appointed Andre Nzapayeke, former Secretary General of the African Development Bank and Vice President of the Development Bank of Central African States, as her new Prime Minister. Nzapayeke's Government reportedly includes both supporters of Christian militias and supporters of the mainly Muslim Seleka rebellion, among whom are former members of President Djotodia’s administration.

Samba-Panza, previously mayor of Bangui, was elected by members of the National Transitional Council on 20 January, just after Djotodia resigned. President Samba-Panza, whose appointment was welcomed throughout CAR and by the international community, pledged to meet with armed groups and immediately called for the disarmament of warring factions.

Security Operations and Incidents

A UN death toll in early February indicated that at least 2,000 people have been killed in CAR since the start of the crisis, including 1,118 in Bangui since early December 2013.

Conflict patterns

As of late March, observers have noted an increase in both Seleka and anti-balaka activism, and the increased targeting of international peacekeepers by armed groups.

In mid-March, reports indicated that ex-Seleka fighters were regrouping and establishing strongholds in the northeast after having largely deserted Bangui under pressure from the international peacekeeping force. Local sources reported that foreign fighters belonging to Darfur militia, including Janjaweed, Misseriya and Rizeigat, were arriving in the far northern prefecture of Vakaga to support Seleka. However, unspecified diplomatic sources report that the ex-Seleka are more fragmented than ever. Seleka fighters were said to be attempting to take back areas of northern CAR, especially in Bamingui-Bangoran: the town of Ndele was attacked in March. A month later, on 22–23 April, according to international media, Seleka fighters were said to be attempting to take back areas of northern CAR, especially in Bamingui-Bangoran: the town of Ndele was attacked in March.

In mid-February, French military sources reported that anti-balaka have emerged as the main threat to peace in the country. By early March, anti-balaka armed groups, retaliating for widespread abuses committed mostly against Christians by Seleka fighters, were massively targeting Muslim populations and committing various abuses.

By mid-February, humanitarian actors had reported a decrease in armed clashes, allegedly due to the decreasing number of Muslim people; however this trend appeared to be short-lived.

Militia Incidents

On 27 April, according to international media, 1,300 Muslims were evacuated from the PK12 district of Bangui, where they had been trapped for five months, and escorted to the north of the country by African peacekeepers. Sangaris had escorted the evacuation of 93 Muslims from PK-12 to the town of Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, a week earlier, in an operation facilitated by UNHCR, local officials said.

On 26 April, according to international media, a MISCA convoy was attacked by armed men in Paoua, Ouham Pende prefecture, leaving one soldier dead and two unaccounted for. MISCA said that this attack brought the MISCA troops death toll to 25.

OCHA reported on 23 April that 100 people were killed during clashes between militias and civilians in the town of Sagani, Nana Mambere prefecture. According to WHO on 10 April, clashes between Sangaris peacekeepers and anti-balaka occurred in Bouar, Nana Mambere. At 23 April, violence was also reported in Bamataara and Botokon, Nana Gribizi prefecture. On 18 April, according to international observers, a Christian religious leader was killed near the town of Paoua, Ouham-Pende. Two days earlier, four Christian religious leaders were abducted by Seleka in Bossangoa, capital of Ouham prefecture, according to international observers.

At 16 April, OCHA reported violence in the prefectures of Ouham-Pende, Kemo, Nana-Gribizi and Ombella Mpoko.

Since 15 April, according to media reports, clashes between anti-balaka and Seleka fighters have been ongoing in Grimari, Ouaka prefecture. Sangaris was reportedly deployed in an attempt to end the fighting. At 17 April, a provisional and unconfirmed death toll was established at 30. Over 4,000 Christian civilians have reportedly taken refuge in a local church.

According to press reports on 12 April, 14,000 Muslims living in the city of Boda in Lobaye are surrounded by anti-balaka militia and unable to leave.

On 11 April, UNHCR had reported that anti-balaka attacks have compelled people fleeing to Cameroon to use alternative routes to the main Garoua Boulai and Kenzou entry points. A convoy of 540 Muslim civilians, being escorted from Bossangoa to Chad by Chadian peacekeepers leaving CAR, was attacked in the city of Boguila on 11 April. The 7,000 Muslim residents of Boguila fled to the bush. All Muslims are now thought to have left Bossangoa, according to international media. Clashes took place between Chadian MISCA soldiers and anti-balaka in Kaga Bandoro, Nana Grebizi, on 10 April. On 8 April, according to international media, 30 people were killed in clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Seleka militias in Dekoa, Kemo prefecture.

On 3 April, according to OCHA, armed attacks in the area of Paoua, Ouham-Pende prefecture, caused the renewed displacement of 2,500 people.

UNHCR reported in early March that 15,000 Muslims were still at risk of attack. Anti-balaka were reported to have gathered in cities along axes used to evacuate convoys of Muslims, namely Yaloke and Boali in Ombella Mpoko. According to OCHA, by early March, the entire Muslim population had fled or been evacuated from Yaloke (previously
home to 10,000 Muslims), Baoro in Nana Mambere (4,000 evacuees), and Mbaiki in Lobaye. Most Muslim inhabitants of Boali, and of Bossemptele, Ouham Pende, had also left. On 7 March, Human Rights Watch reported that the country had been virtually emptied of its Muslim communities, while on 5 March OCHA estimated that 80%–85% of Bangui’s minority population had fled. Médecins Sans Frontières stated that up to 100,000 Muslims have fled north.

In early March, 20 Muslim men were reportedly killed near Sibut, a gateway to the northeast of the country, some 150km to the northeast of Bangui, while trying to escape to Chad. On 2 February, Sangaris and MISCA troops had peacefully taken control of Sibut from ex-Seleka fighters.

In February, INGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that 6,000 people were trapped in Bouar, a town on the road to Cameroon. On 26 February, eight people were killed in an attack against Muslims in the village of Bowai, northwest of Bossangoa.

During February, acts of violence had been reported in: Cantonnier near the Cameroon border; Berberati in Mambere Kadei; Mbaiki in Lobaye; Bossembele, Nana-Bassaka, and Yaoko, in Ombella Mpoko; Bozoum in Ouham Pende, Bossangoa in Ouham; and Sibut in Kemo. In early February, 75 people were killed in an attack in Boda, in Lobaye.

**Violence in Bangui**

On 5 March OCHA estimated that 80%–85% of Bangui’s minority population had fled. UNHCR reported in early March that Muslims were still at risk of attack, especially in the PK12 district of Bangui: on 7 March, 1,800 people were reportedly trapped in PK12.

Media reports on 10 April indicated that five people had been killed in Bangui since 5 April. OCHA then reported violence on 16 April in PK5 district.

Renewed violence has torn Bangui since 21 March: the death toll of recent attacks in the capital is over 69, with reported hotspots including district PK5, PK12, Kango, and the third and eight districts. On 18 March, the Government called for all fighters to surrender illegally possessed arms. The security context had improved slightly in mid-March, and the curfew of 1800–0600 declared on Bangui on 5 December was revised to 2300–0500 on 13 March. In February and March, acts of violence had been mostly reported in the third, fifth, eighth, PK5, PK12 and Combattants districts of Bangui. In January, according to various sources, violence in Bangui left at least 50 dead and over 60 wounded.

As of 11 December, according to French official sources, there were an estimated 3,000–8,000 armed fighters in Bangui: ex-Seleka members, anti-balaka group members, former members of the armed forces and various militias.

**LRA Attacks**

On 22 April, the Ugandan army announced that it had captured a Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) officer and freed ten hostages in an operation in the southeast of the Central African Republic.

The LRA has been active in the eastern part of CAR since before the latest crisis. In February 2014, an NGO monitoring report asserted that LRA attacks in CAR had increased in 2013, due to the vacuum left by the political crisis and the absence of military forces in that part of the country.

**Dissolution of Seleka and Disarmament Operations**

Seleka, officially dissolved in September 2013, numbered an estimated 25,000 fighters, composed roughly of 5,000 core fighters from the largely Muslim northeast, 5,000 foreigners, mainly Sudanese and Chadian, and 15,000 people recruited during Seleka’s advance. According to local sources, only some Seleka fighters will be officially integrated in the regular CAR forces (FACA); most of the group is to be disarmed.

Disarmament operations have been handled by French and MISCA troops, as well as by national military forces, after a period of voluntary disarmament ended without much result in mid-September. Disarmament has triggered widespread violence and looting, and has been heavily criticised for resulting in indiscriminate attacks against civilians, according to international observers.

In late February, disarmament operations by international peacekeeping forces focused on the anti-balaka, and were ongoing in Bangui, especially in PK13 and Boy Rabe districts, which have been home to forces loyal to former President Bozize and to anti-balaka armed groups since the beginning of the CAR crisis.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

Since the March coup, CAR has struggled to cope with a severe humanitarian crisis. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation is due both to widespread violence and displacement, which has triggered the flight of employees and restricted user access to still-functioning services, and to the extensive looting of premises and equipment. Basic services in CAR were already almost non-existent or covered only a limited part of the territory prior to the crisis.

Looting of health facilities and other public buildings has largely deprived the population of still-functioning services, and to the extentive looting of premises and equipment. Basic services in CAR were already almost non-existent or covered only a limited part of the territory prior to the crisis.

**MIRA findings indicated that in affected regions outside the capital, health is a priority need, followed by protection, food, and WASH. Key informants noted health as their main concern, followed by protection and food: five of the six top health concerns are WASH-related.**

In Bangui and surrounding areas, MIRA reported that the priorities as reported by the population are food, WASH, health, and protection. The MIRA report indicated that the two major differences between Bangui and the suburban areas were the comparative priority of protection for outlying areas, and the lesser importance of food, most likely due to better access to stocks and fields. Shelter is a problem for one-third of key informants within Bangui city, but is not cited as a problem by any key informants in urban sites around the city.
Access

OCHA reported that the surge in violence since early December has had serious consequences for humanitarian assessment and response. In the countryside, the security of humanitarian workers remains dependent on the willingness of local strongmen who control particular areas, while insecurity affects transport routes. The onset of the rainy season in May will aggravate access problems.

As of mid-February, WFP began airdropping food assistance from Cameroon for distribution to IDPs in CAR. Food stocks are to be pre-positioned across CAR before the start of the rainy season, when many roads will become impassable. Airlifting is necessary because insecurity makes the road between Cameroon and Bangui unreliable.

Humanitarian actors have also reported that recurrent administrative problems at the Cameroon border affect relief convoys. On 23 January, MISCA sent troops to the border with Cameroon to escort convoys loaded with humanitarian aid towards the capital Bangui.

Targeting of Humanitarian Workers

Over 11–13 April, according to OCHA, two UN agencies and an INGO had their offices attacked and looted.

As of early March, NGOs reported increased targeting of international NGO staff by anti-balaka, who reportedly accused them of “helping” Muslims through assistance programmes. On 8 and 9 March, one aid worker was killed in Ndele and one in Bangui, bringing the death toll of aid workers since September 2013 to nine. Two violent incidents against humanitarian staff were reported between 31 March and 1 April, OCHA reported on 2 April. Staff abduction, vehicle theft, death threats and physical attacks have all been reported.

Displacement

IDPs

At 23 April, OCHA reported an estimated 603,000 IDPs in the country, including 178,000 in 45 sites in Bangui. The new wave of violence since 21 March has resulted in a new increase in IDPs. According to OCHA at 31 March, numbers had begun slowly decreasing in January.

On 6 April, OCHA reported that the 70,000 IDPS still living in the Bangui airport camps were exposed to a risk of flooding with the rainy season due to start in May. On 26 March, UNHCR had expressed concern over the vulnerability to flooding of IDPs across the country.

In early February, OCHA had reported that half of the displaced were reportedly children. New displacement had been recorded in mid-February as attacks against Muslim communities became increasingly systematic. As of mid-February, according to MSF, up to 100,000 Muslims have fled north, leaving Christian-dominated areas.

As reported in the MIRA, the dynamics of displacement within CAR vary considerably: rural inhabitants flee their villages and seek refuge in the surrounding countryside, while urban inhabitants seek safety in different districts. IDP sites are often characterised by the presence of armed elements, according to the MIRA.

CAR Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

At 17 April, UNHCR reported that there were 348,000 CAR refugees in neighbouring countries, 105,000 having arrived since December 2013. This is an increase from the 312,000 figure reported by UNHCR on 19 March. At 17 April, according to UNHCR, there were 179,000 CAR refugees in Cameroon, 92,000 in Chad, 59,000 in DRC, and 15,000 in Congo. In mid-February, MSF had reported that escalating violence had triggered a surge in the number of people crossing into neighbouring countries in past weeks.

At 16 April, OCHA reported that an average 10,000 Central Africans were arriving in Cameroon every week. They reportedly arrived mostly from Boda, Lobaye prefecture, and Bozoum, Ouham-Pendé prefecture.

UNHCR figures showed a decrease in the number of CAR refugees in DRC from 63,000 at 19 March to 59,000, at 17 April.

Refugees in CAR

At 17 April, UNHCR indicated that there are an estimated 15,000 long-term refugees in CAR, mostly from DRC and Sudan. According to UNHCR, as of 31 March, there were an estimated 1,700 South Sudanese refugees in CAR. In April and May 2013, an estimated 5,000 people crossed into CAR from Sudan’s Darfur region following tribal clashes. According to local media, 2,200 Sudanese refugees from camp Bambari, Ouaka prefecture, demanded to be moved from the camp due to deteriorating security and the dire humanitarian and health situation. At 18 April, international observers reported that the 2,100 Sudanese refugees living in Bambari feared anti-balaka attacks.

On 10 April, UNHCR reported that 6,000 refugees from Equateur province, DRC, and who lived in the camp of Batalimo, Lobaye prefecture, had expressed a wish to be repatriated. At 24 April, UNHCR stated that 3,000 people had returned from Batalimo camp to the Equateur and Oriental provinces of DRC since the start of a repatriation operation 10 days earlier.

Third-country Nationals Fleeing CAR

As reported by OCHA on 30 March, an estimated 92,000 returnees, refugees and third-country nationals have been registered by IOM in Chad upon arrival from CAR since 21 December 2013, both by air and land. On 20 February, the Chad Government announced the end of its air evacuation programme, declaring that 99% of its citizens who had wished to had been repatriated. IOM reports had indicated that three people had died in an evacuation cargo flight in January, although the circumstances of these deaths are unclear.

On 10 February OCHA reported that over 65,000 people had been evacuated from CAR — more than twice the figure recorded on 31 January. Meanwhile, a human rights NGO has stated that about 50,000 mostly Central African Muslims have been evacuated from Bangui by air.
The large-scale evacuation of foreign nationals, which started in December, was facilitated by foreign embassies in Bangui and by the International Office for Migration (IOM). Humanitarian organisations have reported that the evacuees included citizens from neighbouring countries, but also Central Africans of foreign descent fleeing the conflict. Many of them had reportedly never been to the neighbouring countries before, according to various UN and NGO reports.

Food Security

The exact number of food insecure people in CAR remains difficult to establish, but the crisis has disrupted the livelihoods of the majority of the population.

According to WFP in April, 1.6 million people remain in immediate need of food assistance. This figure constitutes a significant increase compared to earlier estimations by WFP and FAO of around 1.3 million. FAO reported in late January that of these 1.3 million people, approximately 60% are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 40% are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency).

The most affected areas were the prefectures of Ouham, Nana-Gribizi, and Mbomou. Following fighting in December, the situation is also likely to have deteriorated to IPC Phase 4 in the prefectures of Lobaye, Ouham-Pendé, and Ombella Mpooko. WFP assessments in November also indicated significant food insecurity in the northern Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures. Most IDPs are facing at least IPC Phase 3 food insecurity.

On 31 March, FEWSNET reported that due to the continuing effects of conflict and displacement in CAR, Bangui, the northwestern and central-western areas of CAR would remain in IDP Phase 3 (Crisis) through June. At 20 February, with the lean season having reportedly started in parts of the most severely conflict-affected parts of the country – Bangui and the northwest – humanitarian NGOs have warned that food insecurity is likely to increase further in the coming months.

Humanitarian organisations, including FAO, WFP and the Food Security Cluster, indicate that CAR will most likely experience rising food insecurity in 2014, mainly due to reduced harvest yields. In late January, FAO reported that the main reason for poor harvest, despite generally favourable rainfall, was the lack of access to fields, shortages of seeds due to looting, the adoption of irreversible coping mechanisms, and delays in harvesting due to the conflict. As of mid-January, seed-distribution assistance was a key concern ahead of the maize-planting season in early March in the central and southern regions, and the sorghum and millet-planting seasons in May in the northern region.

According to MIRA findings in January, food reserves are almost non-existent. Some 60% of interviewed households reported having completely exhausted their food stocks, while the remaining households declared that their food reserves could cover their requirements for up to two weeks in urban areas and one month in rural areas.

Food availability has decreased, because insecurity has caused frequent market closures and prevented access to markets. In February, NGO reports warned that the flight of traders, most of whom are Muslim, has increased the risk of a food crisis, compounding an already critical situation. Moreover, the refusal of transporters, most of whom are Muslim, to take to the road with their goods, for fear of targeted attacks, has also hampered food availability and led to price hikes. The crisis has also reduced the access of the population to income-generating activities and to markets, thereby triggering an economic slowdown and food price hikes. In December, FAO had reported that, in particular, maize prices in Bangui rose by 31% between January and November 2013, while millet prices increased by 70% between March and October in Ouham prefecture, an important sorghum and millet producing area in the northwest. As reported by FAO in November, the average inflation rate, which surged from 1.3% in 2011 to 5% in 2012, is forecast to rise further to 8% in 2013. At 24 April, FAO reported that prices had doubled in Bangui.

Health and Nutrition

The situation in CAR’s health sector was critical even before the current crisis, with MSF documenting mortality rates well above the emergency threshold in several regions. In June 2013, the INGO Merlin reported that 3.2 million people were living without access to basic healthcare.

On 25 October, OCHA stated that 60% of health facilities had been vandalised, looted or destroyed, and over 80% of the local medical doctors had moved to Bangui from the countryside, a situation that still prevailed according to the MIRA in January 2014.

CAR’s healthcare system has entirely collapsed. Health structures are almost exclusively supported by international NGOs and religious organisations, and cover only 10 to 20% of the population. The incidence of malaria, the first cause of morbidity, is reportedly on the rise, a situation compounded by the systemic shortage of medicine. The epidemic risk (acute diarrhoea, measles, meningitis) is high.

At 11 April, WHO reported that according to data provided by early warning systems in Bangui and Ombella Mpooko prefecture, the first three causes of morbidity since the beginning of the crisis are malaria, diarrhoea, and acute respiratory infections.

According to aid worker testimonies published on 24 April, 60% of parents whose children were admitted to Bangui’s paediatric hospital for SAM treatment presented symptoms that suggested post-traumatic stress disorder.

Meningitis

As of 2 March, WHO reported 42 cases of cerebrospinal meningitis in CAR in 2014.

Measles

In early January, OCHA reported that following the confirmation of five cases of measles in two IDP sites, Health Cluster partners launched an emergency vaccination campaign on 3 January. The campaign targeted 60,000 children aged between six months and 15 years in areas with high numbers of IDPs.

According to OCHA, outbreaks of measles had been reported almost everywhere, with at least 600 confirmed cases as of 25 October 2013. The Health Cluster reported cholera outbreaks in 15 of 22 health districts.

Malaria
According to the Health Cluster in late January 2014, malaria was the cause of 40% of medical consultations for children under five in Bangui. In October 2013, earlier NGO reports had suggested that malaria accounted for up to 60% of overall consultations. In the first six months of 2013, MSF had recorded 36,910 cases of malaria in Boguila, 50km from the Chadian border, compared with 19,498 cases during the same period the previous year.

Malaria has been on the rise since December 2012, and is likely to increase further with the start of the rainy season in May 2014. In early January 2014, it was estimated that malaria constituted the first cause of morbidity in CAR, a situation compounded by the shortage of anti-malarial drugs in most of the still-functioning health structures.

**HIV/AIDS**

As of mid-August, over 13,000 people living with HIV/AIDS had their antiretroviral treatment interrupted as a result of instability since December 2012.

**Malnutrition**

At 25 April, according to UNICEF, the number of children treated for SAM was three times as high as the same period in 2013.

According to the Nutrition Cluster in late January, malnutrition rates were high. An estimated 28,000 children under five are expected to suffer from SAM in 2014, and 75,000 to be affected by MAM. A recent exploratory mission in southwest CAR – Nola, Boda, Berberati, Gamboula, and Gadzi – revealed increased levels of GAM, ranging from 6% to 10.3%. In May 2013, as reported by an IPC seasonal analysis, the prevalence of SAM in children under five was above the WHO emergency threshold by 2% in nine of 16 prefectures.

**Protection**

The protection of civilians remains a key issue of concern. In February, UN officials and Human Rights groups warned that “ethnic cleansing” was ongoing against the Muslim population – although this has been disputed by some NGOs and within the international community. In late October, Amnesty International published a report expressing deep concern about serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the conflict. Documented violations included attacks, executions and torture of civilians, indiscriminate shelling, sexual and gender based violence, and forceful recruitment of children. Since March, several international organisations have expressed similar accusations. Armed violence has increasingly targeted Muslim civilians since late January, raising the alarm among humanitarian actors about the potential for large-scale killings in the country.

As of mid-February, OCHA reported that the number of child soldiers coerced into joining the ranks of various armed groups amounted to an estimated 6,000. In November, UNICEF reported that the increase in the number of children being recruited into armed groups was due to the rise of self-defence militias created to counter waves of attacks by former rebels.

Humanitarian partners, including UNICEF, have indicated that children, notably among IDPs, are exceptionally vulnerable. In particular, the re-recruitment of children by armed groups, some of whom had been recently demobilised, remains an issue.

**Education**

According to a February Education Cluster report, 65% of schools remained closed across the country. All schools are closed in Kemo, Ouham and Sangha-Mbaere, which are the most affected prefectures. Two-thirds of school students registered in 2012/2013 had reportedly dropped out in 2013/2014, representing 278,000 children.

A UNICEF report in late 2013 indicated that seven of ten children had not returned to primary school since the conflict started in December 2012. 65% of the 165 schools visited by UNICEF had been looted, occupied, or damaged by bullets or shells.

In September, OCHA reported that many schools, which had recently re-opened, had had to close again because of ongoing insecurity, notably in the prefectures of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, and Ouaka.

**WASH**

As of 19 March, according to OCHA, 2.6 million people in CAR were experiencing emergency needs in WASH. According to the January MIRA, significant WASH concerns remain in the majority of displacement sites where the concentration of IDPs surpasses the number of WASH facilities available.

*Updated: 28/04/2014*

**CHAD FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late April:** In the first quarter of 2014, over 1,200 more cases of measles were registered than in all of 2013, according to WHO. Despite a mass vaccination campaign against measles in 15 districts, covering 700,000 children in total and 15,000 in transit sites in the south, an additional 13 districts have reported over 520 new cases as of 30 March.

**Late April:** As reported by UNICEF, the number of admissions in therapeutic centres in the Sahel Belt has increased since the beginning of 2014. Between January and February, 20,680 children with SAM were treated, representing an increase of 26% compared to the same period in 2013.

**Mid-April:** According to the CAR Regional Response Plan for January-December 2014, urgent needs for refugees, returnees and third-country nationals from CAR include protection, shelter, NFIs and WASH.

**Late March:** The cumulative number of malaria cases reported so far in 2014 is 191,630, compared to 144,640 in 2013. National authorities indicate an increase of malaria cases in six districts, mainly in N’Djamena. This situation could worsen with the
beginning of the rainy season that has started in the south, and will move towards the north into the Sahel region.

KEY CONCERNS
- Chad remains at the junction of four major crises in the region: CAR, Libya, Nigeria, and Sudan. An estimated 467,000 refugees currently live in Chad (OCHA, January 2014).
- Over 102,440 CAR refugees, Chadian returnees and third-country nationals have arrived in Chad since December 2013. The majority are women and children, many children separated from their parents, in urgent need of humanitarian assistance upon their arrival at camps and informal settlements (IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF, April 2014).
- 2.4 million people are food insecure, including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity (OCHA, November 2013 and January 2014).
- High prevalence of malaria: deaths nearly doubled in 2013, with over 2,000 deaths registered and 780,000 cases diagnosed (OCHA, November 2013). There has been a significant increase in the number of malaria cases in endemic areas (Logone, Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, and Chari Baguirmi).

Politics and Security

Central African Republic crisis

On 16 April, officers from the African Union peacekeeping force in CAR (MISCA) confirmed that Chad had completed its withdrawal from the force and that the African Union mission, and French soldiers had replaced Chadian troops. On 3 April, the Chadian Government announced the withdrawal of its 850 soldiers from the MISCA after being accused of violence against civilians. On 29 March, at least 30 people were killed and another 300 injured by Chadian soldiers in the CAR capital Bangui, after reportedly being attacked by a Christian militia. The soldiers were not part of the official African Union peacekeeping force, but were present to help Chadian nationals leave the country. According to an initial investigation carried out by a UN human rights team, the convoy reached the market area in district PK12 and reportedly opened fire on the population without any provocation. CAR’s interim President Catherine Samba Panza has announced the opening of an investigation.

Chadian soldiers were the largest contingent of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) deployed in December 2013 to contain violent unrest in CAR. Since arriving in the country, they have been involved in several controversial incidents, mostly clashes with Christian militias. On 24 February, Chadian peacekeepers shot dead three civilians in a Christian neighbourhood of Bangui. In another incident, MISCA reported that two Chadian peacekeepers were shot and killed and another wounded. Soldiers from mainly Muslim Chad have been repeatedly accused of siding with the ex-Seleka rebels (some of whom came from Chad), which held power from March 2013 to January 2014, and of showing passivity towards abuses that ex-Seleka have carried out against the population.

In January, a UN human rights team travelled to CAR to gather evidence and testimonies relating to allegations that Chadian citizens, including peacekeepers, carried out mass killings during the violence in CAR. Chad has always denied the charges.

On 18 February, Chad’s President Deby met with CAR interim President Samba-Panza and called for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission to contain violence in CAR. Deby’s comments marked the first time the region’s military heavyweight had publicly called for UN intervention. On 10 April, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the creation of a UN peacekeeping force in the country.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

According to OCHA, humanitarian organisations in the southeastern Tissi area and in the landmine-affected northern region of Tibesti have limited access due to proximity to conflict-affected border areas, heavy rains, and general insecurity.

Displacement

Refugees, Returnees, and Third-Country Nationals from CAR

Chad is the largest recipient of CAR evacuees and refugees, with an estimated 102,440 new arrivals since December 2013, including 8,000 CAR refugees and 94,440 Chadian returnees and third-country nationals. According to the CAR Regional Response Plan for January-December 2014 released by OCHA in late April, urgent needs include protection, shelter, NFIs and WASH.

On 11 April, Chadian troops escorted more than 1,000 Muslim civilians escaping attacks by Christian militias in Bossanga, northern CAR, to Gore in southern Chad. Militia attacked the convoy transporting the last 540 Muslim residents as it passed through Boguila at night.

While some people have continued their journey to final destinations in Chad, 62,000 are in the transit sites of Sido, Doyaba, Goré, Doba, Mbitoye, and Moundou in the south, and in the capital N’Djamena. Sido camp had only 20 latrines and four water points for more than 10,000 people, and refugees had only received one WFP food distribution in five weeks (on 20 January). The situation may deteriorate further with the approaching rainy season.

However, efforts are being undertaken to relocate people into a smaller number of sites. The Government of Chad has closed six transit centres in N’Djamena, requiring returnees either to return to their areas of origin, or to move with refugees and third-country nationals to Gaou transit centre, northeast of the capital. Two other transit centres remain operational in N’Djamena, and two new sites have been prepared in the south: the Government has identified a site in Logone Orientale, known as Danamadjia, where those in Doba, Goré, Moundou and Mbitoye can move. Danamaja has also begun hosting new displacements from CAR, including the 500 people who arrived from Bossangoa. The population from the Doyaba and Sido transit centres will also move to a new site, although...
its specific location has not yet been identified.

IOM profiling indicates that most of the first arrivals were women and children, their numbers later being equalled by men. Chadian returnees represent 60%, while 36% are CAR refugees and 1% third-country nationals. UNICEF has also registered the arrival of 1,060 unaccompanied or separated minors in Chad since December 2013.

On 17 March, IOM repatriated 1,500 Chadians and third-country nationals, including Malians and Sudanese, who had fled from CAR to Cameroon. Some 10,000 who fled from CAR to Cameroon have been stranded, with no shelter and little or no assistance, since the beginning of the year.

Since March 2013, 30,000 refugees and 22,000 returnees have been registered in and around the eastern remote border town of Tissi. The region has been characterized by chronic instability since 2004. Thus, basic social services are non-existent, with most of them destroyed or damaged during the 2004-2006 civil war and ethnic tension in the Sila region.

**Chadian Returnees**

Chad stepped up the evacuation of its citizens from CAR as violence intensified. Many Chadians were reportedly being targeted by Christian militia, who accused them of having links to Seleka. The evacuation operations, both on emergency flights and in land convoys, stopped in mid-February. However, more people continue to arrive, and the living conditions of returnees are deteriorating.

The Government has increased the maximum stay in transit centres from ten days to one year to allow the restoration of family links and better prepare relocations.

Many returnees are entering Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship, which may lead to concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee). Second- and third-generation Chadians from CAR have been recognised as de facto nationals by the Government. UNHCR is working with authorities to formalise this recognition and avoid statelessness. According to government figures, over 300,000 Chadian nationals lived in CAR prior to the current crisis.

As of late November 2013, 150,000 Chadians had returned from Libya since the start of the Libya crisis in 2011, according to OCHA. Sporadic arrivals continue in Faya-Largeau and areas of northern Tibesti region.

Clashes between Nigerian military and armed groups in northern Nigeria have brought about 3,500 returnees and 533 Nigerian refugees to the west, near Lake Chad. Returnees from Nigeria hosted in Ngouboua are mostly unaccompanied children from fishing villages in Bagakawa. According to OCHA, returnees are dispersed across two other locations in Bol and Mao.

**Refugees in Chad**

Being at the junction of four major regional crises has resulted in significant population movements. According to OCHA in January 2014, Chad was host to 467,000 refugees. More than 87,000 new arrivals (refugees and returnees) from CAR, Libya, Nigeria, and from Sudan’s Darfur region were recorded in the first half of 2013. These new arrivals have placed additional burdens on host communities.

According to UNHCR on 14 April, escalating violence in CAR has brought 8,000 refugees to Chad since December 2013. The total population of CAR refugees is over 90,000, of whom 76,200 are in camps and host villages in the south.

Fleeing clashes between Maaliya and Rizeigat ethnic groups in Darfur, 30,000 Sudanese refugees and 22,000 Chadian returnees have arrived at the border town of Tissi in the southeast. A new camp has been set up in Abgadam, a remote area of eastern Chad. Another wave later crossed into Chad fleeing inter-communal violence between Salamat and Misseriya in Central Darfur. In February, the total Sudanese refugees in Chad exceeded 352,900.

Humanitarian needs of incoming refugees are primarily access to clean drinking water, hygiene, shelter, and health and nutrition care for children and women. UNICEF reported in late April 2013 that basic social services are non-existent in Tissi, having been destroyed or damaged during the 2004–2006 civil war and following ethnic tension in the Sila region.

**IDPs**

According to OCHA on 19 November, an estimated 90,000 IDPs are living in protracted displacement in the east. As reported by IDMC, they were forced to flee their homes six years ago as a result of armed conflict between government forces and armed opposition groups, inter-communal violence, and attacks by criminal groups known as coupeurs de route. The preferred option of most IDPs is local integration in their place of refuge or resettlement. However, conditions have not yet allowed them to achieve a durable solution. Another 91,000 IDPs have returned to their homes, integrated locally, or settled somewhere else in the country. Limited information is available on their current situation.

**Food Security**

Chad has been struck by successive severe food crises in recent years, which have had adverse, long-term impacts on household assets and savings. In January 2014, OCHA reported that 2.4 million people were food insecure, including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity. The Government, WFP, and FAO conducted a food security assessment between October and November 2013, which showed that the Sahel region (central Chad) is twice as affected than the Sudan region in the south. The worst affected region is Wadi Fira (eastern Chad), where 61% of the population is reportedly food insecure. The recent arrival of over 94,000 vulnerable people from CAR puts additional pressure on local resources.

As of late March, FEWSNET reported that below-average and poorly distributed rainfall during the 2013 rainy season caused significant deficits in agricultural production in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazel. Pastoral conditions were below average, and food stocks and agricultural income were reduced. An atypically fast increase in cereal prices combined with lower household food stocks and unfavourable livestock-to-cereal terms of trade for pastoralists will limit household food access in the coming months.

The lean season is therefore expected to start early: in April rather than June. Since
October 2013, poor households have been engaging in lean season strategies not normally observed during harvest and post-harvest periods. Households also started migrating in October, compared to February/March in a normal year, in search of labour opportunities in large regional centres, such as N'Djamena and Abéché, and zones with more intensive off-season agriculture, such as Am Timan and Sarh.

Currently, poor households in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazel are having difficulty meeting their food needs without reducing essential non-food expenditure and are experiencing Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2). However, the ability of these households to significantly expand their coping strategies beyond currently observed levels will be limited. Food consumption gaps are likely between April and the end of the lean season in September, driving Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity.

During the peak of the lean season, households in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazel will face some of the most severe food security outcomes in West Africa's Sahel this year.

Health and Nutrition

**Measles, Polio, and Meningitis**

In late January, UNICEF reported that the CAR–Chad border region is prone to recurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, and meningitis. Immunisation rates among refugee and returnee children are unknown but believed to be low.

In the first quarter of 2014, over 1,200 more cases of measles were registered than in all of 2013, according to WHO. From January to March, 3,000 measles cases were registered, including five deaths. In 2013, some 2,222 cases were recorded, including 33 deaths. This outbreak mainly affects N'Djamena. Despite a mass vaccination campaign against measles in 15 districts, covering 700,000 children in total and 15,000 in transit sites, an additional 13 districts have reported over 520 new cases of measles as of 30 March. The country is seeking additional funding for another campaign to cover the 13 districts.

**Malaria**

Malaria is a major health problem with a prevalence rate of nearly 30% across all age groups and about 36% among children under five, according to UNICEF. As of week 13 of 2014, the cumulative number of malaria cases reported is 191,630 compared to 144,640 in 2013. National authorities indicate an increase of cases in six districts, mainly in N’Djamena. From January to March, 163,000 cases of malaria were recorded, of which 250 patients died. This situation could worsen with the beginning of the rainy season that has started in the south, and will move towards the north into the Sahel region. Last year, Chad was hit by a massive malaria outbreak with 991,840 cases including 2,610 deaths compared to 616,720 cases and 1,160 deaths in 2012.

In late November 2013, OCHA reported that malaria cases increased in endemic area (Logone Moyen, Chari, Tandjile, Batha, and Chari Baguirmi).

**Malnutrition**

The nutritional situation in Chad’s Sahel belt is at critical levels with a GAM surpassing the emergency threshold of 15% in nine of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The most affected areas are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22% GAM), Salamat (22% GAM), Beg (21% GAM), and Kanem (21% GAM). According to UNICEF, the latest post-harvest SMART survey conducted in April indicated a SAM prevalence exceeding the emergency threshold in the region of Batha (3.9%) and Beg (2.4%).

At 30 March, assessments conducted by UNICEF at the transit sites in the south of Chad indicate levels of malnutrition above 15%, requiring emergency humanitarian interventions.

UNICEF forecast that an estimated 500,000 children under five are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2014, including 126,000 from SAM. Across the Sahel region, an estimated five million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition.

The number of admissions in Nutrition rehabilitation Units in the Sahel Belt has increased since the beginning of 2014. Between January and February, 20,684 children with SAM were treated, representing an increase of 26% compared to the same period in 2013.

*Updated: 25/04/2014*

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

**CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late April:** OCHA reported more than 35 Mayi-Mayi attacks from January to March 2014, in the Triangle of Death, as well as in Kalemie, Kipushi, Malemba-Nkulu and Moba territories. More than 1,500 homes were burned down, 875 of them in Pweto territory. Basic facilities such as schools and health centres were targeted. Besides the Mayi-Mayi, other ‘self-defence forces’ and inter-communal conflicts have increased the prevailing insecurity.

**22 April:** Following FARDC operations on 7–8 April against a faction of Raiya Mutomboki in eastern Shabunda, South Kivu, 22,000 residents remain displaced in the forest, as reported by OCHA. Houses were burned down.

**22 April:** UNHCR reported that 12,400 CAR refugees have entered DRC since December 2013, bringing the total number of CAR refugees to 59,000.

**22 April:** As reported by local media, more than 3,600 people have been affected by heavy rain in Tshikapa area, Kasai-Occidental.

**19 April:** The head of the delegation that represented the M23 rebel group in the peace talks with Kinshasa was granted amnesty, along with a dozen others.

**15 April:** According to OCHA, an estimated 20,000 IDPs have been living in the bush for two months following the burning of their houses by militias in the area of Opinge in Bafwasende territory (Tshopo district). Despite the deployment of FARDC in the area, they still fear to return home. A rapid assessment in the area over 24–28 February reported urgent needs in almost all sectors.
Late March: One out of two newly displaced households reported poor food consumption during a rapid assessment of food security and nutrition in February 2014 in the territory of Mitwaba, Katanga.

Late March: In Orientale province, 13 INGOs have withdrawn from the districts of Haut Uele and Bas Uele since mid-2013 due to lack of funding, leaving thousands of people without assistance.

KEY CONCERNS

- Ongoing internal conflict and a fragile security situation in the eastern provinces, mostly North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Orientale.

- Large-scale displacement due to fighting. An estimated 2.9 million people are internally displaced (Commission on Population Movements, December 2013).

- Katanga province is of particular concern, with 500,000 people displaced across the province in March 2014. (OCHA, March 2014).

- DRC is host to over 260,800 refugees. The crisis in CAR has caused 59,000 CAR refugees to cross into DRC (UNHCR, April 2014).

- At least 6.7 million people are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity (WFP, January 2014).

Politics and Security

Decades of political violence and inter-communal strife have repeatedly disrupted the stability and security of DRC and triggered mass population displacement. Despite increased counter-insurgency efforts by the army, the country remains highly unstable and is the theatre of sustained military operations and infighting between armed groups and non-state actors, mainly in eastern regions. DRC is also affected by the ongoing crises in CAR and South Sudan and is embroiled in longstanding tensions with its eastern neighbours.

Political Context

On 24 February 2013, 11 states signed a Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and Region in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A year on, the peace and security situation in eastern DRC has improved considerably, owing to a number of concerted national, regional, and international efforts. Since the Framework was agreed, a Regional Oversight Mechanism has been established to monitor progress and implement recommendations. The UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region visited DRC on 14 February and called on national authorities to fulfil their commitments to the PSC Framework.

In January 2014, at the last Summit of the African Union, the Framework members adopted a plan of action, and Kenya and Sudan also agreed to join the Framework process.

There are concerns about DRC’s commitments to the PSC Framework, which include accelerating reforms within the security sector, setting up a thorough disarmament and demobilisation process to repatriate M23 combatants in Uganda and Rwanda, as well as social and economic reforms. The National Oversight Mechanism lacks operational capacity, the implementation of national dialogue recommendations is delayed, and there is no single harmonised road map for the implementation of national reforms.

On 4 February, as UN forces prepared to target the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), its interim leader indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kigali. UN peacekeepers said they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet. The FDLR was officially set up in 2000 by mainly Hutu Rwandan fighters operating in eastern DRC, where the remnants of the extremist Hutu militia fled after the defeat by the Tutsi-led army that ended Rwanda’s genocide. Kigali has previously refused talks with the rebels, accusing them of still wanting to exterminate Tutsis. Tanzania’s call on Rwanda to hold talks with its rebels was angrily rejected by Kigali.

On 23 January, in a briefing to the UN Security Council, the Group of Experts on the DRC released its final report confirming that M23 – although officially defeated in November 2013 - is still receiving support from Rwanda, including recruitment, troop reinforcement, ammunition deliveries, and fire support. The Group of Experts indicated that sanctioned M23 leaders were moving freely in Uganda. Both Uganda and Rwanda have repeatedly been accused of backing the armed groups active in DRC, but have always denied these accusations.

On 8 January, the UN expressed concern about the potential destabilising effect of the neighbouring CAR conflict on DRC. In March 2013, when Seleka rebels raided Bangui, soldiers of the former CAR army (FACA) started to seek refuge in DRC. MONUSCO continues to report armed infiltrations of ex-FACA members in Equateur and ex-Seleka rebels in Orientale which has triggered significant displacements in these areas.

Security Context

Despite the end of fighting between FARDC and the M23 in November 2013 and the subsequent launch of a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process, other conflicts drag on in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Equateur provinces, where fighting between armed groups and FARDC have triggered mass displacement. Several counter-insurgency campaigns are ongoing.

National Context

On 28 March, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) and its intervention brigade charged with “neutralising” foreign and domestic armed groups until 31 March 2015. MONUSCO also said on 2 April it is preparing a gradual withdrawal from the country.

On 2 January 2014, a senior military officer, Colonel Ndala, and three other FARDC soldiers were killed in an ambush. The Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU) was first accused by the Government, but some observers suggested it could have been linked to internal strife within the DRC armed forces.

On 30 December 2013, Congolese security forces repelled coordinated attacks in the
capital Kinshasa, the second city Lubumbashi, and the eastern town of Kindu in fierce gun battles. Armed youths believed to be loyal to religious leader Mukungubila, who challenged President Kabila in elections in 2006, stormed the state television station, the international airport, and the military headquarters with the purported aim of ousting the president. Mukungubila has been an outspoken critic of the peace deal signed with the Tutsi-led M23 rebel group in eastern Congo, accusing Kabila's Government of bowing to Tutsi interests and pressure from Rwanda. According to authorities, the clashes left 103 people dead. On 7 January, the Military Justice of Katanga arrested 57 suspects in Lubumbashi accused of carrying out the attacks in Kinshasa.

Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration

The DRC Government and M23 signed a peace deal on 12 December 2013, which included the dissolution of M23 as an armed group and the intention of the DRC Government to work for the DDR of former combatants and the drafting of an amnesty law.

Approved by parliament on 4 February 2014, the law grants amnesty for acts of insurgency, acts of war and political offences dating back to 2006. International envoys welcomed the law’s approval and commended it for excluding amnesty for crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, terrorism, torture, sexual violence, child conscription, and embezzlement and looting.

The amnesty law is seen as key to encouraging the return of M23 members who fled to Uganda after defeat. Close to 1,300 have been in a camp in Uganda since the end of the fighting. Former rebels have six months to approach the Government and vow, in writing, not to commit any acts that come under the present amnesty. On 19 April, the head of the delegation that represented M23 in the peace talks was granted amnesty, along with a dozen others.

On 30 January, stressing that M23 must be stopped from regrouping in DRC and expressing concern at DRC soldiers aiding Rwandan Hutu militia, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution that renewed an arms embargo and targeted sanctions, including travel and financial measures, on individuals or entities acting in violation of applicable international law.

On 13 January, Martin Kobler, Head of MONUSCO, told the UN Security Council that there was evidence to suggest that the M23 rebel group is still recruiting combatants and resuming activities, notably in Ituri. He called on the Government to speed up DDR and urged Uganda and Rwanda to prevent M23 elements from sheltering troops. In a public statement to Kobler, M23 rebels denied the UN’s accusations. M23 once made up the strongest army in Kivu, and was involved in heavy fighting with government troops between May and October 2013. An estimated 900 people, including 700 rebels, died. By end October, M23 rebels had suffered a series of severe military defeats that precipitated the effective end of the insurgency. With the support of the UN Force Intervention Brigade, established within the MONUSCO, this victory marked the army’s first over a significant rebel group.

The end of the M23 uprising has been followed by several waves of surrender in the east, including militants from the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura, the Hunde-dominated Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo, and the Nduma Defence of Congo. Since late January, 100 rebels from the Coalition of Ituri Armed Groups (Cogai), the Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI) and the Congolese People’s Liberation Army (ALPC) have surrendered in Ituri district of Orientale province, according to officials.

On 14 April, Paul Sadala, the Mayi Mayi Simba militia leader known as “Morgan” who operated in Ituri, Orientale province, was killed alongside four others. He attacked soldiers who were escorting him to Bunia, after he had surrendered with 40 of his militia.

The start of the reintegration process has led Raiya Mukombozi and Raiya Mutomboki to announce the end of their rebellion on the condition that their fighters can join government forces. However, renewed acts of violence allegedly committed by surrendered rebels were ongoing in early 2014. A DDR process was initiated in Shabunda territory, South Kivu but, in the absence of guidance and support, security has not improved and renewed attacks by Rayia Mutomboki rebels were reported by UNICEF late January.

Counter-insurgency Campaign in the East

According to MONUSCO as of mid-January, ADF-NALU and FDLR still pose a serious threat to DRC civilians.

On 13 April, government officials said the FARDC had recaptured the last ADF-NALU military base in North Kivu following fierce fighting, which killed 100 militiamen. As of 11 March, FARDC had regained the localities of Nadui, Makayoba – the last bastion of the rebel group in Beni territory – and Semiiliki bridge. FARDC, backed by the UN, launched its offensive, dubbed Sokola (‘clean-out’ in Lingala) on 16 January in the Beni region of North Kivu. The operation followed the successful routing of the M23 militia. According to MONUSCO on 3 March, six UN peacekeepers were injured when ADF-NALU militia attacked their vehicle with a grenade near Mavivi airport in Beni. This attack immediately followed comments from a DRC army spokesman that FARDC had destroyed ADF-NALU bases in Mbau, North Kivu.

ADF-NALU, believed to number up to 1,400 fighters, is an alliance of groups opposed to the Ugandan Government. It has operated from bases in eastern Congo since the mid-2000s, undermining Kinshasa's control in the area. Kampala has said it would share intelligence and capture fleeing rebels but would not intervene directly in operations on the ground in the DRC.

On 3 April, FARDC also launched a joint offensive with MONUSCO in Nyasumbe plains, Ituri, Orientale province, against the FRPI, which caused preventive displacement. On 18 February, OCHA said that intensified raids and looting, allegedly committed by the FRPI, have been reported in South Irumu, in the absence of the national army.

On 17 February, FARDC launched a military operation in Masisi territory, North Kivu, against the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), triggering small-scale displacements to neighbouring villages.

On 11 December, MONUSCO announced the launch of a military operation against FDLR. Ongoing operations to neutralise armed groups in the east also plan to target the Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FLPC). On 13 March, local media reported that the FARDC had regained the city of Kahumo in North Kivu without resistance, after two years of
occupation by FDLR.

The UN announced that an additional 100 soldiers would be deployed to support MONUSCO in the town of Pweto, northern Katanga province, where militia violence is worsening. Mayi Mayi militias calling for Katanga’s secession have torched scores of villages and clashed with Government forces, forcing 400,000 people to flee their homes. So far, the FARDC has deployed only one battalion to Katanga province and the 22,000-strong UN mission only 450 soldiers.

In line with MONUSCO’s new offensives on those rebel groups still active, the UN deployed unarmed surveillance drones early December to monitor rebel activities on the Rwandan and Ugandan borders.

Security Incidents Involving Insurgent Groups

North Kivu

On 13 February, MONUSCO reported human rights violations including a summary execution of over 70 men and women in Nyamaboko villages I and II, Masisi territory, northeast of Goma. The executions were allegedly committed by armed groups to spread terror among the population.

On 17–18 January, local sources reported armed clashes between Government forces and APCLS in Masisi territory. Violence reportedly caused population displacement in the town of Kitchanga.

On 14 January, Mayi Mayi Sheka, an armed group operating from bases in Walikale territory, attacked the village of Pinga, leading to a gunfight with FARDC. MONUSCO said four DRC soldiers were killed.

In December 2013, MONUSCO discovered the bodies of 21 civilians killed in attack by suspected ADF-NALU in the area of Beni, North Kivu. ADF-NALU has been blamed for a spate of attacks and kidnappings around Beni, which killed at least 60 civilians in December.

South Kivu

Violent clashes erupted on 8 April between FARDC and Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba rebels in South Uvira. The death toll is disputed: according to the army, six people died, including two soldiers, whereas the rebel group reported 13 deaths including four militiamen.

As of end January, UNHCR reported a 37.5% increase in protection-related incidents recorded in South Kivu (from 17,260 in 2012 to 23,450 in 2013). Shabunda territory has recorded an increase of almost 51% (2,900 in 2013 against 1,900 in 2012), illustrating the deterioration of the situation.

Humanitarian actors have raised concerns regarding a potential security vacuum following military redeployment from South Kivu to other provinces, which may lead armed groups to renew activities. In 2013, according to OCHA, armed groups were responsible for 38% of protection violations, against 20% in 2012. National forces (FARDC, the police, and the national intelligence agency) were allegedly responsible for 34% of protection incidents in 2013 against 54% in 2012.

Katanga

OCHA has reported more than 35 Mayi-Mayi attacks from January to March 2014 in the Triangle of Death, as well as in Kalemie, Kipushi, Malemba-Nkulu and Moba territories. More than 1,500 homes were burned down, 875 of them in Pweto territory. Schools and health centres are also being targeted. Besides the Mayi-Mayi, other ‘self-defence forces’ and inter-communal conflicts have increased the prevailing insecurity.

According to ECHO on 25 March, ethnic conflict between pygmy and Bantu is intensifying with the creation of self-defence groups on the axis Moba–Kalemie. Several Bantu chiefs have been suspended by the authorities after expressing hate messages about the pygmy population.

According to OCHA, insecurity has spread since the end of December 2013. Population movement is fluid, with OCHA reporting a total of over 500,000 IDPs in the province, of whom almost 70% are in the Triangle of Death between Pweto, Manono and Mwamba territories, and Malemba Nkulu. MONUSCO has started to deploy peacekeepers in Pweto territory. Increasingly, the secessionist Kata Katanga (Swahili for ‘cut off Katanga’) and other Mayi Mayi rebels have fragmented into smaller groups, without a common leadership or agenda. This complicated situation has severely affected civilian communities, who have been victims of ‘punishment’ raids by Mayi Mayi and are caught in fighting between FARDC and these groups.

Orientale

The near absence of any effective policing in the district of Ituri is fuelling mob violence, according to local civil society groups, with 100 people killed and 1,500 houses torched in 2013. As reported by local media on 17 March, a voluntary disarmament campaign for civilians launched in Ituri district in early March has been extended to the districts of Haut Uele, Bas Uele and Tshopo. The inhabitants are invited to hand in their weapons voluntarily and receive motorcycles, bicycles and grain mills to engage in new income-generating activities. The provincial Ministry of the Interior is responsible for organising and executing this three-month operation.

On 1 February, OCHA reported that the FARDC offensive against ADF-NALU rebels, ongoing since mid-January in Beni area, North Kivu, is starting to affect Ituri district. Some ADF-NALU militia have retreated into Mambasa forest and Irumu territory. Observers fear the deterioration of security in this region, where the Mayi-Mayi Morgan remain active.

According to OCHA in April 2014, the first quarter of 2014 saw a decrease in Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) incidents, with 41 attacks, two deaths and 48 abductions (10% of the abductees being children) representing a decline of 21%, 86%, and 58%, respectively, compared to the last quarter of 2013. The majority of the attacks (88%) and abductions (58%) occurred in Haut Uele.

OCHA said raids, looting, ambushes, and other incidents, allegedly committed by members of the LRA, have been reported since mid-February in Haut Uele and Bas Uele, where few national security forces are present. The LRA, a Ugandan militant movement
operating in DRC since 2005, was responsible for 164 incidents in the province in 2013. An estimated 113,000 people remain displaced in Bas Uele and Haut Uele, which also host 6,574 CAR refugees.

According to OCHA on 12 February, insecurity in CAR is starting to impact the northern part of Bas Uele, with the arrival of heavily armed elements suspected to be ex-Seleka members.

**Maniema**

According to UNICEF as of 8 March, 40 people have been abducted by Rayia Mutomboki rebels and a local chief was shot dead in Punia territory.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to OCHA in January 2014, 6.3 million people – 8% of the population – need humanitarian assistance. Conflict-affected areas record high levels of needs and repeated population displacements, both internally and cross-border. Displaced and host populations alike suffer from multiple shocks and are vulnerable, as are those unable to flee the violence. Due to different economic and conflict dynamics, needs vary depending on the area and the presence of humanitarian organisations. In conflict-affected areas, insecurity poses multiple protection risks and a lack of access to basic services.

**Access**

Access is limited across DRC, but mainly in the east, where insecurity is a major constraint. According to humanitarian partners, over 250 incidents against humanitarian workers were recorded in 2013.

The mountainous and volcanic terrain, and lack of tarred roads pose significant physical obstacles, especially in Maniema.

In Katanga, poor roads, the threat of violence, and insufficient resources are hampering efforts to assist up to 500,000 people displaced by violence. According to OCHA on 17 February, growing insecurity in Katanga is hindering the efforts of humanitarian agencies to deliver support. With seven UN agencies and about 50 NGOs present, Katanga has the smallest humanitarian community of DRC’s four eastern provinces. On 9 January, MSF reported that violent clashes over November and December between Mayi Mayi militias and Government forces in Katanga have hindered access to medical care and humanitarian assistance. UNICEF reported that the Shamwana, Kisele, and Kiambi axis, in Manono territory, remain inaccessible. Heavy rains have also left roads impassable. In areas where assistance can be delivered, agencies often find themselves targeted by Mayi Mayi militias seeking to pillage supplies.

In North Kivu, OCHA reports on 3 April that some sections of the Sake–Masisi road have been significantly damaged due to heavy rainfall. Some secondary roads near Masisi are also inaccessible, such as Karuba–Ngungu Kibabi–Katayo, Kibabi–Luke and Nyabiondo–Lukweti, isolating thousands of displaced people. In Walikale territory, OCHA has reported illegal checkpoints on many roads. On the Musenge–Hombo axis, southern Walikale, Raiya Mutomboki rebels reportedly erected over 30 barriers on a 35km section, where local populations and humanitarian partners are subject to taxes.

In South Kivu, Shabunda territory, OCHA reported that Raiya Mutomboki rebels were hampering access to medical supplies, potentially affecting 25,000 people.

In Orientale, 13 INGOs have withdrawn from the districts of Haut Uele and Bas Uele since mid-2013, due to lack of funding, leaving thousands of people without assistance.

**Disasters**

**Floods**

As reported by local media on 22 April, more than 3,600 people have been affected by heavy rain in Tshikapa area, Kasai-Occidental.

On 10 April, the overflowing Congo River drove an estimated 2,000 Bukama residents in Katanga province from their homes.

**Displacement**

According to OCHA, 2013 mirrored 2012 with continuous instability and violent events causing populations displacements, mostly in the east. Ongoing conflict in CAR and South Sudan triggered new influx of refugees and Congolese returnees, mostly in the northern provinces.

**IDPs**

As of December 2013, the national Commission on Population Movements estimated that 2.9 million people are internally displaced, 60% located in the Kivus, and the rest in Orientale, Katanga, and Maniema. Over 190,000 people have been newly displaced between October and December 2013. Armed conflicts represent 89% of the causes of displacement, and 72% of IDPs live with host families.

**North Kivu IDPs**

As of 25 March, the Commission on Population Movements reported that North Kivu is the province most affected by IDPs, with 1,076,745, representing more than a third (37%) of DRC’s total IDP population. This figure is a decrease of some 14,800 people (1%) since February, due to returns in the territories of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru, where the security situation improved.

Mass displacement is a constant in the conflict-affected province. At end March, 66% of IDPs were living with host families and 34% in public buildings and camps. Over 90% of displacements are related to violence or insecurity.

At 3 April, an estimated 32,860 returnees and some 6,200 newly displaced people were recorded in the localities of Borura, Nyabiondo, Kaandja and Bonde-Lushebere, on the Nyabiondo–Lukweti axis, as reported by two INGOs in the province. They had fled clashes between FARC and APCLS insurgents that occurred over 15 February–13 March.

According to OCHA in late March, some locations regained by the FARC on the Mbau–Kamango axis are beginning to see the gradual return of residents, although the security
situation in the area remains fragile.

Beni territory has been particularly impacted by violence in past months. Increasing activity of suspected ADF-NALU groups in Kamango and Nobili (northeast area of Beni) continues to raise concerns among humanitarian partners. According to OCHA, in late February, 80,000 people have been displaced following repeated attacks in the area since July 2013. Access to Kamango and Nobili remains limited because of insecurity and major administrative constraints. Most urgent needs include drinking water, health and food.

During the last several months, the region of Pinga, 80 km north-east of Walikale, has been affected by clashes between the armed groups APLCS, Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC), and the FARDC. These clashes caused the displacement of thousands of people towards more secure zones in Walikale and Masisi. Despite the return of more than 15,000 inhabitants, the situation deteriorated mid-January, when NDC attacked FARDC’s positions in Pinga. Fighting between APLCS and FARDC in the neighbouring area of Kitchanga also triggered the displacement of 8,000 people. The security situation has been deteriorating since the death of FARDC commander Colonel Ndala on 2 January and the launch of military operations against the ADF-NALU.

Sporadic violence is reported in other areas in North Kivu which continues to record small-scale population displacements.

South Kivu IDPs

According to OCHA at 31 December 2013, there were 579,607 IDPs in South Kivu, a decrease compared to September as security improved in Shabunda territory. Clashes between Nyatura and Raiya Mutomboki in mid-October in Kashovu (Masisi, North Kivu) were the main cause of displacement over 2013. As of 12 February, OCHA reported the return of some 26,000 IDPs. Their most urgent needs include food, NFIs, health, and education.

Following FARDC operations on 7–8 April against a faction of Raiya Mutomboki in eastern Shabunda, 22,000 residents remain displaced in the forest, as reported by OCHA on 22 April.

On 15 April, up to 75% of Misisi residents fled their homes following violent clashes between FARDC and Mayi-Mayi Yakutumba rebels. Most of them fled to Kalonda-Kibuyu inManiema province while others were displaced to Lulimba in Katanga. Officially, Misisi has 19,000 inhabitants, but as the area attracts many economic actors, up to 100,000 people could live in the city.

According to an INGO operating in Kalehe territory, more than 6,200 people (1,000 households) have arrived in the area since March fleeing abuses by Raiya Mutomboki in Kabare territory. Late March, more than 2,100 people living in the northern region of Shabunda (Ndese, Lumba, Palais) fled to Lukala, Lulingu, and Tchronka.

Since mid-January, OCHA reported that over 5,900 people fled violence perpetrated by Raiya Mutomboki rebels in Kalo and Punia territories, Maniema province to seek refuge in Shabunda territory, South Kivu. Despite a process of disarmament of Raiya Mutomboki in Shabunda, civilian protection has not improved: in 2013, protection incidents increased by about 51% (2,858 against 1,894 in 2012).

On 2 January, UNICEF reported that over 10,800 people fled Basimukindje II, Bijombo, and Kigoma (Uvira Plateaux) in December, fleeing clashes between FARDC and Burundian National Forces of Liberation. As calm was restored, people have started to return, but many IDP assets, including harvests, were looted. Almost 90% of the inhabitants of Muturule (Uvira territory) have returned, after 7,180 were displaced last August in the areas of Luvungi, Nyakabere, and Sange.

Orientale IDPs

On 2 January, authorities noted a slight increase (8%) in the number of IDPs from 506,900 people during the third quarter of 2013 to 550,000 during the fourth quarter. This increase results from the crisis in South Irumu (since August) and armed group activities in Tshopo. Returns increased by 73%, from 90,000 to 156,350 people, mainly in Uele.

The major causes of displacement since mid-2013 have been conflict between FARDC and FRPI rebels, and the activities of natural resources warlords Morgan, Thoms, and Luc, leading to more than 250,000 IDPs, most of whom are in South Irumu territory in Ituri. At least 30% of IDPs in Ituri and Tshopo are inaccessible due to insecurity. Logistical constraints are also a major obstacle in several areas, especially in eastern Tshopo.

According to OCHA on 15 April, an estimated 20,000 IDPs have been living in the bush for two months following the burning of their houses by militias in the area of Opieange in Bafwasende territory (Tshopo district). Despite the deployment of FARDC in the area, they still fear to return home. A rapid assessment conducted on 24-28 February in the area reported urgent needs in almost all sectors.

The terror spread by the LRA continues to be the cause of significant displacement in the Uele districts, with new displacements recorded in 2013 and 2014 – although there have been more returns than displacements, leading to an overall downward trend. According to OCHA on 12 February, an estimated 5,000 people fled their homes in Niangara territory following armed attacks perpetrated by LRA members. Another 4,000 who also fled LRA attacks in December in Ango territory, Bas-Uele, are still in urgent need of assistance.

According to OCHA on 22 January, the FARDC’s military operation against ADF-NALU in North Kivu is affecting Ituri district: local authorities report that 24,000 people have crossed into Ituri. The humanitarian community is highly concerned as capacities in the district are already overstretched. According to ECHO, movements of ADF-NALU from North Kivu to Ituri had already displaced 30,000 people on 10 December. OCHA expressed concerns that Ituri may become a reservoir for both ADF-NALU and persistent M23 forces, which would further deteriorate the precarious security situation in southern Ituri.

FRPI continues to launch targeted actions against FARDC in South Ituri, but humanitarian partners have reported a gradual return of IDPs to certain parts of South Ituri since February. According to OCHA at 19 March, some 28,000 IDPs had returned to Bukiri and Aveba as security conditions improved.

On 21 January, local media reported that an estimated 12,000 people remain displaced in Balobe forest (Bafwasende territory). They originally fled clashes between FARDC and
Mayi-Mayi rebels. On 29 December, FRPI rebels attacked Soke (50km from Bunia), which displaced 30,000 people from the town to the forest. In November, OCHA reported that violence between FARDC and FRPI had displaced 200,000 people in South Irumu since August, when a first wave of clashes displaced 80,000 people.

Early April, FARDC announced new operations to track the FRPI, and troop movements were observed in Geti since late March. As the militia is scattered in small groups throughout the area, a large-scale operation may cause new waves of displacement.

**Katanga IDPs**

Mid-April, OCHA reported that over 500,000 people are currently displaced in Katanga, of whom almost 70% are in the Triangle of Death between Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba territories, and Malemba Nkulu and Moba. The remaining IDP population (32%) was displaced in the territories of Pweto and Kalemie due to fighting between FARDC and Mayi Mayi militias. The situation is of particular concern as the number of returnees has decreased in the first quarter of 2014.

The territory of Malemba-Nkulu has recorded the largest increase, with more than 35,000 IDPs in the past three months due to the activism of Mayi Mayi militias. Humanitarian partners face difficulties in accessing these communities due to insecurity and heavy rains, which have left roads impassable. In areas where assistance can be delivered, agencies often find themselves targeted by Mayi Mayi militias seeking to pillage supplies.

Pweto has also recorded an increase of 23,770 people in the first trimester of 2014 and remains the territory most affected by violent events, hosting up to 185,000 IDPs (35% of IDPs in the province).

Some ten new Mayi Mayi movements have been created in the Triangle of Death and in the territories of Malemba Nkulu and Moba in recent months, in addition to the secessionist movement Bakata-Katanga. At 5 March, the chieftdom of Kasenga Nganye, one of the six chieftdoms of Moba territory, was the most affected by activities of Mayi Mayi groups. The surge in violence has led to the creation of several self-defence groups. Recurrent clashes between Mayi Mayi rebels and FARDC, and between rebels and self-defence groups, continue to trigger displacement.

Local media also reported on 15 March that an estimated 15,000 people had been displaced in eastern Manono, following clashes between FARDC and Bakata-Katanga militias.

Unlike other provinces in the country, there is no IDP camp in Katanga: 86% of IDPs are living in host families who are themselves already living in dire conditions, while 14% are spread across four informal camp sites in Kalemie, Manono, Pweto, and Moba.

**Maniema IDPs**

On 31 December 2013, OCHA reported that Maniema province was hosting an estimated 293,510 IDPs, an increase in the number of IDPs in eastern Maniema due to attacks by Raiya Mutomboki in South Kivu and Mayi Mayi Kems in northern Maniema. The IDPs are mainly located along the administrative borders with the Kivus, between Punia and Pangi.

**Equateur IDPs**

According to UNICEF in early January, ethnic clashes following land conflict erupted between villagers of Bondaki (Budjala territory) and Ndjeka (Gemena territory), leading to massive human rights violations and the displacement of a reported 17,000 people.

**Refugees in DRC**

UNHCR reported on 22 April that 12,400 CAR refugees have entered DRC since December 2013, despite the closure of the border in December. Of a total of 59,000 CAR refugees in DRC, half are living in four refugee camps in Equateur (Buyabo, Inke and Mole) and Orientale provinces (Mboti), the other half with host families. The strategy for support to refugees in host communities remains problematic as DRC authorities at the provincial level continue to insist that assistance should only be delivered within the camps.

In addition, 71,750 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 candidates registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 candidates who have opted for local integration.

**DRC Refugees in Neighbouring Countries**

Late December 2013, UNHCR reported that an estimated 430,400 DRC refugees currently live in neighbouring countries, including 152,900 in Uganda, 72,000 in Rwanda, and 65,000 in Tanzania, and 43,000 in Burundi.

On 18 February, the Tripartite Commission on the voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees living in Congo held its third meeting in Brazzaville. Representatives of the Governments of DRC and Congo and UNHCR agreed on the intensification of the voluntary repatriation by June.

**Returnees**

On 10 April, UNHCR and CAR authorities officially launched a programme of voluntary repatriation for the 6,000 DRC refugees from Equateur province who are settled in Batalimo camp in CAR. So far, 3,000 people have been repatriated and the operation is expected to last three weeks.

Following the surge of violence in CAR, an estimated 3,000 DRC returnees were registered by UNHCR in Zongo, North-western Equateur.

On 27 March, Ugandan authorities said at least 251 DRC refugees hoping to return home were observed in Geti since late March. As the militia is scattered in small groups throughout the area, a large-scale operation may cause new waves of displacement.

According to UNHCR early February, roughly 6,200 DRC returnees from South Sudan have been recorded since December 2013 in several localities of Haut-Uele, Orientale province. Their most urgent needs include food, NFI, education, and health. In January, UNICEF reported 500 DRC returnees from CAR in Haut and Bas-Uele.

**Food Security**

According to the results of the 10th analysis report on Integrated Food Security Phase
Classification undertaken in December 2013, 6.7 million people or 11% of the rural population face food insecurity and livelihood crisis. This is an increase of 300,000 people compared to June 2013.

In central Katanga, a rapid assessment of food security and nutrition conducted in February 2014 in the territory of Mitwaba showed that one out of two newly displaced households reported poor food consumption.

On 7 April, national authorities and WFP said only 27% of the IDPs living in camps in North Kivu (71,300 people) will receive food assistance due to lack of funding. A vulnerability survey conducted in 33 IDP camps around Goma and Masisi, Rutshuru, and Walikale in February-March indicated that 27% of the IDPs living in these sites are highly vulnerable to food insecurity. Other rapid assessments in areas of newly displaced and returnees also indicate a serious food security situation with high proportions of households with limited food consumption.

Despite a slight improvement in North Kivu, the number of regions affected by severe food insecurity has increased. The most severely affected populations (IPC Phase 4) are in five territories of three provinces: Katanga (Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories); Maniema (Punia territory); and Orientale province (South Irumu territory), where the escalation of civil conflict during 2013 severely damaged local livelihood systems and caused massive displacement. In June 2013, five territories were classified as Phase 4 but only in two provinces: North Kivu (Rutshuru, Nyiragongo, Masisi, Walikale); and Katanga (Manono). A relative reduction was reported in the number of territories classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to December 2013, from 82 to 68.

Extreme poverty and limited livelihood options are the main reasons for food insecurity. In the conflict-affected eastern areas, food security and livelihoods are negatively impacted by insecurity and displacement, which in turn disrupt agricultural and income generating activities. Host areas of CAR refugees are affected by food security. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, lack of infrastructure, and the effect of economic shocks.

Health and Nutrition

The health system remains weak due to structural problems and violence. Epidemics are rife and the burden of infectious and non-infectious disease is one of the highest in the region. Due to extreme poverty, limited basic services, and lack of access to healthcare, maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates remain high.

Cholera

Cholera is endemic in DRC. As of 8 March, UNICEF has recorded 4,277 cholera cases and 79 deaths, representing a case fatality rate of 1.8%. According to local health authorities, 27,000 cholera cases were recorded in 2013, including 491 deaths (case fatality rate of 1.8%), a decrease from 30,753 cholera cases and 709 deaths in 2012.

The surge in cholera cases is largely the result of limited access to safe drinking water, poor hygiene conditions, and poor sanitation. The critical period for the emergence of new cases usually extends until end March.

According to WHO, cholera outbreaks persist in four provinces: North and South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale. Just over 73% of all cases in DRC have been recorded in Katanga and South Kivu.

As of 8 March, 1,525 cases of cholera including three deaths have been registered in South Kivu, with Uvira, Ruzizi and Nundu health zones still reaching epidemic levels. According to OCHA on 3 April, an outbreak of cholera has been ongoing since early March in Uvira health zone, with 282 cases and five deaths reported, following the interruption of the water supply by the public company responsible for water distribution due to power cuts in the region.

UNICEF also reported 705 cases and 12 deaths in North Kivu province. The cholera epidemic continues to gain ground in Katanga province. As of 8 March 2014, almost 2,000 cases of cholera including 62 deaths have been recorded in the province. In 2013, Katanga was the province most affected by cholera with 13,726 cases and 348 deaths registered against 6,930 cases and 223 deaths in 2012.

In Orientale province, the district of Ituri registered 12 cases and 2 deaths (case fatality rate 17%).

Malaria

Over four million cases of malaria have been reported in the first semester of 2013, 8,500 deaths were registered (against 21,000 deaths in 2012). As of late November, OCHA reported a threefold increase in the number of malaria cases recorded in the former M23 rebel stronghold of Rutshura (North Kivu) compared to past years. While the cumulative number never exceeded 25,000 per year between 2009 and 2012, over 76,000 cases had been recorded in the area between January and November 2013.

Measles

As of 8 March, UNICEF reported 6,700 cases of measles and 78 deaths in 16 health districts of five provinces so far in 2014. In 2013, DRC recorded 89,000 cases of measles, including 1,392 deaths.

Several health zones are affected by epidemics in Kasai Oriental and Occidental (Citenge, Kansele, Mikope, Lukunga, Demba), and in Bandundu (Kimputu, Mushie). A significant decrease in suspected measles cases was registered in Orientale, Equateur and Nord Kivu during the first quarter of 2014 in comparison with 2013.

Yellow Fever

Following confirmation of four cases of yellow fever in Orientale and one case in Katanga, a vaccination campaign is being planned, targeting more than 600,000 people in high-risk zones in both provinces.

Malnutrition

GAM in DRC is 11%. According to UNICEF as of December 2013, an estimated two million children under five suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Local response capacity is limited, and health stakeholders struggle to monitor epidemics of disease and
displacement, key contributors to the high rates of acute malnutrition.

According to UNICEF at 8 March, Bukama territory, Katanga province, is showing signs of a serious nutritional crisis, with worrying rates of SAM (4.8%) and Kwashiorkor (90%), potentially affecting over 7,000 children. Early January, UNICEF also reported alarming rates of GAM in Katanga, especially in Manono (19.8%), Malemba Nkulu (19.3%), and Kambove (18.8%).

**WASH**

According to UNICEF on 27 March, 38 million people in DRC (53.5% of households) do not have access to safe drinking water.

**Protection**

Armed groups and armed forces are all accused of repeated abuses against civilians, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, looting, violence, and executions. Sexual violence and conscription of children are two main protection threats.

Early April, a report from the UN Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC reported over 3,600 victims of sexual violence between January 2010 and December 2013. The findings of the report indicate that rape is used as a weapon of war to intimidate local communities, and to punish civilians for their real or perceived collaboration with armed groups or the national army. It is also occurring as an opportunistic crime carried out in tandem with other human rights violations. It also shows that armed groups were responsible for just over half of rapes, while FARDC soldiers were held responsible for around a third. The remaining assaults were committed by other state agents.

On 3 March, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that it treats more survivors of sexual violence in DRC than in any other country. In 2012, MSF teams provided medical care to 4,037 women, men, and children after incidents of sexual violence in different project locations. The annual number of cases treated has not dropped below this number since 2008.

**Food Security**

On 1 March, FAO reported that 285,000 people were at risk of food insecurity, caused by both flooding and drought exacerbated by a lack of proper irrigation and poor land use practices which have led to low productivity. In November, FAO reported that continued food assistance is needed, especially for vulnerable populations. Coping mechanisms have eroded due to the 2011 Sahel Crisis and heavy flooding in July/October 2012 and August/September 2013, leaving households vulnerable. Access to food continues to be constrained by high food prices and the lingering effects of the Sahel food crisis. Two thirds of households face food insecurity, of whom 5.5% suffer from ‘moderate’ or ‘severe’ food insecurity.

National food insecurity is further influenced by the fact that some twenty million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. Across the region an estimated 5 million children under <5 are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis and pressure on resources accordingly.

Although the agricultural production in 2012/2013 was higher than in the previous season, OCHA observed that it remained below the 5-year seasonal average as of July 2013. Floods, outbreaks of epidemics, and the recurrence of the contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia remain risks that could increase existing household vulnerabilities further.

Despite an improved domestic harvest, prices of imported cereals are likely to stay high, in view of the continuing depreciation of the Dalasi, the Gambian currency. Access to food
will remain difficult for the population with a significant portion continuing to be food insecure in 2014 as a result of high food prices and of the lingering effects of last year’s food crisis, according to FAO.

Health and Nutrition

OCHA’s Strategic Plan for 2014-2016, published on 3 February, emphasised the risk of natural disasters and disease outbreaks in The Gambia. The report said that an estimated 65% of the land, mainly along the Senegalese border and on major border crossing routes, is highly prone to cholera outbreaks. In addition, the country lies in the meningitis belt and every year there are sporadic outbreaks in all regions, especially in the east of the country, in the Upper and Central River Regions. As of 3 February, OCHA reported that poor health services, poor sanitation, and limited access to clean water are the leading causes of water-borne diseases as diarrhoea (among children <5), cholera, and meningitis: WASH-related deaths account for 20% of the <5 deaths. Access to basic public services such as hospitals remains a challenge for many families. Although each of the seven regions across The Gambia has a hospital; the staffing is very poor and availability of adequate equipment limited.

Diarrhoea

As of 3 February, OCHA stated that the incidence of diarrhoea in children stands at 14% and leaves children vulnerable to malnourishment and other health problems.

Malaria

As of 3 February, OCHA said that according to the National Malaria Sentinel Surveillance System, the Malaria Programmatic Review, and the Health Information Management Service Statistics for 2012 malaria remains endemic in all districts and is likely to affect the entire population. Malaria remains the leading cause of deaths among Gambian children <5, with a 23% annual fatality rate.

Meningitis

On 19 March, WHO reported that from 24 February to 2 March, 5 cases of meningitis were found, and two people died. Since the beginning of the year, 53 cases were reported, and 10 people died. An alert threshold has been reached in two districts so far.

Malnutrition

As of end January 2014, 48,800 children were reported to be malnourished, of whom 7,800 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 41,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). This represents an increase of 19,300 to the global acute malnutrition (GAM), an increase of 3,800 SAM, and of 15,500 MAM as compared to July 2013 (OCHA).

The 2011 Sahel crisis and 2012 and 2013 floods resulted in persisting acute malnutrition. FAO reported on 29 November that child malnutrition remains a cause of concern with chronic malnutrition rates ranging from 13.9% to 30.7% with North Bank Region and Central River Region surpassing the ‘critical’ threshold of 30%.
as Prime Minister. In total, 19 ministers were reinstated.

On 12 December, the European Union announced full resumption of development cooperation with Guinea. The EU had suspended aid after the 2008 coup, setting out a roadmap for its gradual resumption with the return to constitutional order and democracy. With the holding of parliamentary elections in September 2013, Guinea fulfilled the conditions for full resumption. With the exception of Hope for National Development, all opposition parties now have a seat in the National Assembly.

On 25 November, at least one person was killed and several were wounded during a protest over the results of the 28 September parliamentary election. Guinea's opposition parties also called their supporters to the streets to protest a Supreme Court decision released on 15 November that rejected all opposition challenges to the ruling party's victory in the elections.

In October 2013, OCHA reported continued tensions in response to the official results of the 28 September parliamentary elections. Results were initially due to be published by 2 October but were delayed to 17 October and gave the lead to the Rally of the Guinean People party headed by Condé. The opposition insisted that electoral fraud had occurred and called for the annulment of the elections. On 9 October, the international community – including Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General Said Djinnit and representatives from the EU and ECOWAS – echoed the opposition's claims, noting electoral irregularities in eight of the 38 constituencies. The Independent National Electoral Commission has admitted errors but labelled them as minor.

Security Context

National Context

On 27 February, protesters angered by the death of a young man in police custody ransacked a police station and government buildings in the town of Fria, 160km north of Conakry. The violence came little over a week after two people were killed and 33 others injured in protests against frequent power cuts in Conakry.

Inter-communal Violence

The Government reported in July 2013 that a sudden outbreak of ethnic violence between 15 and 17 July killed at least 100 people, a significant increase on the previously announced death toll of 58. UNHCR reported on 19 July that 242 were wounded when Guerze tribesmen, who form the majority in Guinea's forest area, allegedly attacked three ethnic Konianke in the town of Koule. Fighting spread to the provincial capital N'Zerekore, and clashes reached the town of Beyla on 17 July. According to the UN, security and defence forces were deployed to restore order with the support of additional troops from Macenta and Gueckedou.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

As of 30 October 2013, OCHA reported that over 6,500 Ivorian refugees currently reside in Guinea. Several international organisations reported on 23 July that 30,000 people were displaced following the ethnic violence of 15–17 July: on 19 July UNHCR had reported that several hundred IDPs had sought refuge in military camps in N'Zerekore and Beyla.

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in mid-February, Guinea's food security outlook until August 2014 remains unchanged from 2013 and the five-year average. Guinea is expected to experience Minimal food security (IPC Phase 1) until June as well as during the lean season, expected over June–September 2014. In late January, above-average harvests of rain-fed crops and, in some cases, the first harvests of off-season crops were improving conditions by providing households with a diversified supply of food.

Markets are functioning normally. Prices for locally grown and imported rice were stable between November and December due to the arrival of newly harvested crops in the local markets, relatively stable rice prices on world markets, and average local demand. Stable prices and average incomes will improve poor households' access to staple foods and will enable them to meet their food needs without any major difficulties during the entire 2013/2014 consumption year (October 2013 to September 2014). As a result, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food security outcomes will continue through at least June 2014.

Health and Nutrition

Ebola Fever

On 15 April, Guinea’s Health Ministry said the country had brought the spread of the deadly Ebola virus under control while the number of related deaths has slowed dramatically.

As of 20 April, a total of 208 suspected and confirmed cases and 136 deaths have been reported since the outbreak began in February. Medical observation is continuing for some 210 contacts. All age groups have been affected but most of the cases are adults aged 15–59. Twenty-five health workers have been affected, 16 of whom have died.

The epidemic affects mainly the six prefectures of Conakry, Guéckédou, Macenta, Kissidougou, Dabola and Dinguiraye. The spread of the disease from the southeastern forest districts of Macenta, Gueckedou, Nzerekore and Kissidougou to the capital, where some two million people live, marked a significant escalation in the spread of the disease.

On 15 April, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) resumed activities in a treatment centre in Macenta, after it was forced to suspend work following assaults by local youth who blamed them for bringing the disease to the area.

On 8 April, WHO said that it expects to have to confront an outbreak of the highly contagious disease in West Africa for the next two to four months, across a region where health systems are ill-equipped to cope. As of 21 April, there have been 11 deaths from 34 cases in Liberia, including at least two health workers. Samples tested in Mali, Ghana, and Sierra Leone have been negative so far. Senegal has closed its normally busy land border with Guinea in the southern region of Kolda and the southeastern region of Kedougou in order to prevent the spread of the disease. Gambia also stepped up travel restrictions,
banning in-bound flights from collecting passengers in Guinea, Liberia, or Sierra Leone.

To date, no treatment or vaccine is available for Ebola, which kills between 25% and 90% of victims, depending on the strain of the virus. The disease is transmitted by direct contact with blood, faeces or sweat, or by sexual contact or unprotected handling of contaminated corpses.

**Measles**

UNICEF reported a sharp increase in measles cases in 2014, echoing an earlier confirmation by the Ministry of Health of 1,300 new suspected cases and five child deaths in and around Conakry as of mid-February. With 143 suspected cases and 38 confirmed positive in December 2013 and early January 2014, the measles outbreak is shown to have crossed the epidemic threshold in several districts.

UNICEF, MSF and the Government of Guinea have started a massive emergency vaccination campaign to reach over 1.7 million children, starting in Conakry and rolling out to affected communities throughout the country.

The Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak in the Conakry municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma on 25 January. On 27 January, the health authorities reported they that were struggling to control the spread of the disease, which had reached 15 districts (among them, Boké, Coyah, Dubreka, Kissidougou, and Mandiana). One child was reported dead from measles in mid-November. Almost all cases have been reported among children under ten. According to the Demographic Health Survey, only 37% of Guinea’s children have been fully vaccinated. Low immunisation coverage has raised fears of a major epidemic.

Periodic measles outbreaks occur in Guinea: the last outbreak in 2009 saw 4,755 cases and ten deaths, with the region of Conakry most affected. The latest 2014 figures represent a dramatic increase on the 2013 figures provided by the IFRC, with only 54 confirmed cases of measles.

**Cholera**

On 4 November 2013, UNICEF highlighted concerns about a cyclical epidemic of cholera in Guinea, with 294 cases and 28 deaths reported until November. The rainy season, dirty water, and population movements amplify the spread of the disease.

Guinea experienced severe cholera outbreaks in 2012 but the number has declined steadily over 2013, with 5,523 cases (and 105 deaths) until September 2013.

**Malnutrition**

In December 2013, WFP highlighted that child malnutrition remains a serious problem in Guinea. At least 139,200 children suffer from acute malnutrition, another 609,700 from chronic malnutrition, and at least 1,592,890 from anaemia.

Updated: 24/04/2014

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

22 April: MUJAO Islamist militant group said a French hostage who has been held captive since 2012 is dead.

17 April: French troops freed five ICRC staff members kidnapped in the north of the country in February.

16 April: Mali’s Health Ministry announced that all suspected cases had tested negative for the deadly Ebola virus. There are no other suspected cases in the country.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Security, particularly in the north, remains volatile. Civilian rule was re-established mid-2013, but a truce with Tuareg separatists in the north remains fragile. Banditry, carjacking, and kidnapping incidents have been reported in the north, and access is limited for aid workers. Security in and around the northeastern region of Kidal, where French troops are largely based, is of particular concern due to a lack of law enforcement.

- An estimated 186,880 people are currently internally displaced, largely as a result of conflict and food insecurity (Malian Committee on Population Movement, February 2014).

- An estimated 2.1 million people are moderately food insecure, while 1.5 million are reported to be in need of immediate food assistance (OCHA, March 2014).

- An estimated 136,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, another 360,000 from moderate acute malnutrition. These figures represent a decrease compared to July 2013 UNICEF estimates of 660,000 acutely malnourished and 210,000 SAM (OCHA, February 2014).

**Politics and Security**

Mali continues to face political challenges, including restoration of security in the north and further strengthening of key government institutions after the presidential and legislative elections. In late January, OCHA raised concerns about limited access to basic social services and the fragile capacity of public administration, citing them as key drivers of the ongoing crisis.

**Political Context**

**International Presence and Military operations**

One year after French and African military intervention recaptured northern Mali from Islamist and separatist armed groups, the stability of the Sahel region is still heavily reliant on the presence of armed foreign troops. The Malian and French armies, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the National
Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) troops are all present in Kidal.

On 15 April, the European Union established a civilian mission, EUCAP Sahel Mali, to support internal security forces: i.e. the police, gendarmerie, and National Guard. It will complement the EU military training mission and support the Malian state in ensuring constitutional and democratic order and the conditions for lasting peace, and maintaining its authority throughout the state.

In mid-February, following a security and defence meeting in Paris, France and Germany decided on a joint military brigade to be deployed under the aegis of the European Union. These troops are to be integrated in the EU training mission currently operating within Mali.

On 18 February, following a request by the UN, Sweden sent several hundred soldiers, in addition to the 70 troops sent in June, in support of MINUSMA. On 15 January, the second contingent of Chinese peacekeepers to MINUSMA arrived. French President Hollande confirmed that France’s military presence will remain at 1,600 soldiers, but be reduced to 1,000 by the middle of the year.

Regional Context

On 16 February, the Presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to monitor and align development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritanian President Abdel Aziz, and follows a pledge by the international community of USD 8 billion to these countries to fight terrorism and support development within the region. The next G5 meeting will take place in Chad within six months.

On 19 January during a meeting in Algiers, Malian President Keïta welcomed the Algerian Government’s initiative to hold exploratory talks with Malian rebel groups in preparation for possible inclusive peace negotiation talks with the Malian Government. On 14 January, President Keïta concluded a visit to Mauritania to improve security and military cooperation and organise and support the (voluntary) return of Malian refugees from Mauritania.

National Context

On 5 April, Planning Minister Moussa Mara was promoted to the premiership after Mali’s first post-war Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly quit just six months into office. Mara announced he would form a government that would prioritise security and reconciliation for the deeply-divided country.

The Tuareg Rebellion and the National Reconciliation Process

On 25 March, the leader of a new armed group in Mali’s troubled north said the central Government could face another uprising of the Tuareg people if it resists pressure to launch long-delayed talks on the region’s future. Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh, a leading Tuareg negotiator, launched the Coalition for the People of Azawad (CPA) in March 2014 after a dispute with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the main Tuareg separatist group behind the 2012 uprising. The CPA sent requests in March to Bamako to resume political talks via the MINUSMA. CPA members claim that their group is backed by 8,000 fighters, is less radical in its aims than MNLA, and respects Mali’s territorial unity.

On 18 February, in UN-led preliminary talks in Bamako, opposition groups agreed with the Government to a roadmap and a timetable for confining members of their groups to barracks in northern Mali, including in Lere, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu.

On 3–4 February, a UN Security Council delegation visited Mali, meeting with the Governor, local authorities and civil society in Mopti, and then travelling to a MINUSMA camp for troops from Togo. The delegation met Government officials as well as representatives of the three main armed groups. The delegation called upon both sides to push forward with peace talks and expressed concern that a failure to do so might undo fragile security gains and risk a further radicalisation of fighters, who must lay down their weapons in accordance with the provisions of the peace accord while awaiting disarmament regulations. These need to be developed in cooperation with MINUSMA.

Background to the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion

In January 2012, several insurgent groups, united in the MNLA began fighting for independence and greater autonomy for the Azawad region in the north. The rebellion initially pitted Tuareg tribesmen, who have been waging a rebellion for decades against the Government. Islamist rebel groups Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) began a separate insurgency, as they wished to impose sharia in Azawad and push Tuareg rebels out of major cities. In response, the MNLA sought negotiations with the Government. The conflict was further complicated by a military coup in March 2013 and, later, fighting between Tuareg and Islamist rebels. At the request of the Government, the French military launched Operation Serval in January 2013 in response to territorial gains and a push south by Islamist fighters. Malian and French forces have now recaptured most of the north, but the security situation remains volatile.

In late November 2013, the MNLA ended a five-month ceasefire, rupturing the process to honour the June peace deal, which had led to an alliance of three Tuareg and Arab rebel movements to form a united front in the peace talks with the Government. To facilitate dialogue, President Keïta had lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion in November and created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region.

Security Context

2014 has been marked by renewed tensions in the north, including jihadi attacks, inter-communal violence, armed banditry, and clashes between Malian forces and local armed groups. The security situation in the north, where al Qaeda-linked militants are known to operate, remains volatile. Unexploded ordnance and landmines remain a significant threat. A number of so-called self-defence militias, formed in 2012 in opposition to separatist and Islamist armed groups, and functioning outside state-controlled security structures, are also active.

More than a year after France mounted Operation Serval to rid northern Mali of jihadists, local sources and security forces reported that Islamists have regained a foothold in several areas and pressured families hostile to their presence to leave their homes. Over
the past six months, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have murdered several people who helped the French military, in particular Tuareg members of the MNLA.

On 22 April, MUJAO said a French hostage who has been held captive since 2012 is dead.

On 17 April, French troops freed five ICRC staff members kidnapped by insurgents in the north of the country in February.

On 5 March, French and Malian forces killed ten suspected AQIM fighters during an operation in the northeastern mountainous Adrar des Ifoghas region.

On 26 February, a vehicle belonging to Médecins du Monde ran over an improvised explosive device near the airstrip of Kidal airport, seriously injuring two passengers.

On 24 February, Malian authorities found five corpses in army uniform in two graves near the headquarters of a former military junta in Kati. The discovery brought to 30 the number of bodies dug from mass graves around the junta headquarters, about 20km north of the capital. Mali’s new Government is trying to discover the fate of 21 paratroopers who disappeared after the coup, and whose bodies were discovered in December 2013 in a mass grave in Diago, close to Bamako.

On 19 February, local sources reported that three Tuareg civilians from the Imam tribe were killed by Malian soldiers in the eastern area of Gao. A military source confirmed the incident and said that an investigation is allegedly underway.

On 6 February, 30 people were killed in clashes between Fulani and Tuareg communities in Tamkoutat, near Gao. Strained relations between minority Tuaregs and other communities in the north, such as the Fulani and Songhai, have deteriorated since the Tuareg rebellion began in 2012.

On 22 January, French forces killed at least 11 suspected Islamist fighters and seized large amounts of weapons and ammunition 100km north of Timbuktu. French troops continue to conduct operations across northern Mali to locate and ‘neutralise’ suspected Islamist militants. In late February, French and Chadian troops captured the main Malian rear base of AQIM in the Ifoghas Mountains, close to the Algerian border, killing its emir in the Sahara, Abou Zeid.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

The outbreak of armed conflict between the Government and Tuareg rebels in northern Mali in January 2012, a military coup in March 2012, and ongoing French military operations against Islamist fighters in the Kidal region have led to large-scale displacement and a deterioration in the humanitarian situation.

Access

State authorities and humanitarian aid workers are impeded from working in northern regions due to insecurity. However, according to OCHA, humanitarian access continues to improve and aid is increasingly accessible in central and southern regions. The destruction of infrastructure, and a lack of materials to support basic services remain major challenges.

Displacement

Due to the conflict and sociopolitical factors, massive population displacement has taken place.

IDPs

In late February, the Malian Committee on Population Movement reported that around 186,880 people are internally displaced. This figure is a decrease from 256,000 in December 2013 and 350,000 in June 2013 and can largely be attributed to an improvement in security. Bamako hosts the largest number of IDPs, followed by the northern regions of Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao.

Between January and September 2013, more than 78,000 IDPs reportedly travelled from the south to the north, and surveys indicate that improvement of security conditions is the main reason for these population movements. However, sporadic violence in the north and the difficult economic situation are still causing displacement towards the south, with 39,000 people reported to be displaced between January and September 2013.

Malian Refugees

As of March, UNHCR reported that an estimated 142,970 Malians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries: 59,100 in Mauritania; 50,000 in Niger; and 32,170 in Burkina Faso.

The majority of Malian refugees remain cautious and say they are willing to return only when security improves considerably. An increase in the number of incidents, such as attacks by armed groups, especially in Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu since September, are not encouraging. Consequently, some Malians continue to leave in search of a safe haven in neighbouring countries. Some 2,600 Malians went to Niger in November and December, following fighting between the Malian army and a rebel group in Aghzaraghlan, Gao region. They found refuge in Intikane, in the Tahoua region, where they received UNHCR assistance.

Refugees in Mali

Mali hosts over 14,000 refugees from countries including Cote d’Ivoire and Mauritania.

Returnees

According to IOM on 25 March, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal regions are now hosting nearly 196,000 returnees who are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Access to basic services such as water and primary healthcare, as well as shelter, are now major concerns.

Additionally, a total of 1,700 Malians had been evacuated from Central African Republic as of 17 March, through joint operations by the Malian government and IOM.

As of 9 January, UNHCR stated that there is a risk of reprisal attacks on returning refugees and IDPs, and socioeconomic conditions have not been restored to pre-conflict levels. In light of the greater normalisation in the south, UNHCR is no longer calling for a suspension of forcible returns for those who had their claim for international protection...
rejected. Therefore, claims for international protection will now be assessed in accordance with established asylum procedures, taking into account individual circumstances.

Food Security

Late March, OCHA reported that 2.1 million people are moderately food insecure, and 1.5 million are in need of immediate food assistance. This is an increase from 970,000 in February and 812,000 in December 2013, according to the Harmonised Framework findings. If adequate food assistance is not provided, the figure is expected to reach 1.9 million in June. Bandiagara district (Mopti region), and Menaka and Bourem districts (Gao region), are the most affected.

Many households are expected to continue to face food insecurity due to persistent residual insecurity in the north, poor agricultural and livestock production in some areas, and the seasonal increase in food prices in some localities. The estimated results of the agropastoral season, according to the Government and its partners, indicate a total drop of 9% in agricultural outputs compared to the five-year average (2008–2013) and a drop of 6% compared to the difficult 2011–2012 crop year.

In late February, FEWSNET reported that newly harvested crops are gradually making their way to market and the improvement in mobility as security is gradually restored are ensuring adequate market supplies across Mali. Cereal prices are generally down from 2013 levels and near or slightly above the average.

However, low levels of rainfall led to significant production shortfalls in northern rice-producing areas along the Niger River and in the Dogon Plateau. The Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) of poor households is expected to escalate to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from March for more than 20% of the population in the Dogon Plateau and the western Sahel and agropastoral areas of the north. Without humanitarian assistance, these areas, as well as the north riverine areas, where livelihoods have not fully recovered from conflict, will face crisis outcomes during the 2014 lean season of June–August. Pockets of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels can be expected during the lean season in the worst-off areas, but will not affect more than 20% of the population.

On 26 February, the French NGO Afrique Verte (AV) noted that agricultural activities in the central Dogon Plateau were negatively affected by early depletion of water sources. The number of people facing food insecurity and in need of immediate assistance in the northern region stands at an estimated 1.3 million. Return of displaced populations continues to put pressure on local resources. In Mopti, in the Inner Niger Delta region, the situation in 16 municipalities (in Bandiagara and Koro) are classified at risk of food shortages, and 18 (in Djenne, Mopti, and Douentza) are in economic difficulty. AV reported that the food situation was improving in central and southern regions.

Key drivers of the food crisis are chronic vulnerability due to recurrent shocks as drought, floods, epidemics, locusts, and increasing poverty and market instability have contributed to deterioration of livelihoods. National food insecurity is further influenced by 20 million people being at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region with 2.5 million of them needing urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. Across the region an estimated 5 million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis, and pressure on resources.

Health and Nutrition

Ebola Fever Outbreak in Guinea

Mali’s Health Ministry announced on 16 April that the samples from all suspected cases had tested negative for the deadly Ebola virus. There are no other known suspected cases in the country. In neighbouring Guinea, an outbreak of Ebola has killed 136 people out of 208 cases registered since February.

Child Malnutrition

As of 27 February, OCHA reported that 136,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and another 360,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). These figures are a decrease compared to July UNICEF estimates of 660,000 acutely malnourished and 210,000 SAM.

The Global Nutrition Cluster on 3 February shared findings on chronic malnutrition among children under five. In northern Segou and in the Kayes region, 25,000–40,000 children are affected, and in Bamako, Southern Segou, and Sikasso (Koutiala region) over 40,000 children are suffering from chronic malnutrition.

As of 16 January, according to local sources, the shortage of cash in rural areas has prevented people from seeking treatment for malnutrition in Bandiagara and other towns in Mopti region.

Protection

From January 2012 to December 2013, OCHA reported that the Protection Gender Based Violence sub-cluster had identified nearly 6,000 cases of violence affecting women and girls, including 532 cases of sexual violence, 521 cases of physical aggression, 827 cases of psychosocial violence, 1,201 cases of denial of resources, and 1,233 cases of violence related to traditional practices (i.e. forced marriage, FGM). OCHA further stated that GBV remains widely unpunished, because of the weakness of the legal system in the crisis affected northern regions and failure by victims to report these cases due to fear of stigmatisation.

Updated: 24/04/2014

MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

21 April: Mauritania is expected to hold presidential elections on 21 June, despite a lack of agreement on the reform of election rules, which some opposition leaders argue will likely ensure the return to power of President Abdel Aziz.

KEY CONCERNS
- 800,000 people are estimated to be food insecure, of whom 190,000 are severely food insecure (OCHA, February 2014).
- Mauritania’s acute malnutrition level has already surpassed the estimated 2014 caseload (SMART survey), with a reported 31,000 SAM and 95,000 MAM children (UNICEF, March 2014). This is a 30% increase on 2013 (125,300 acutely malnourished and 30,740 SAM).
- Security challenges continue to be a problem in Mbera refugee camp on the border with Mali. The camp currently hosts most of the 59,100 Malian refugees in Mauritania. Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali (UNHCR and OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

National Political Context

On 21 April, the presidency announced presidential elections will be held on 21 June and, if necessary, a second round will take place on 5 July. This statement was made despite a lack of agreement on the reform of election rules, which some opposition leaders argue will likely ensure the return to power of President Abdel Aziz.

Reinstated on 3 January, Prime Minister Laghdaf, trustee of the President, presented his new Government on 12 February. All key ministers – defence, interior, foreign affairs, finance, and justice – retained their positions. The new Government comes after the country’s ruling party Union for the Republic and its allies won 76 of 147 parliamentary seats in November and December 2013.

These were the first parliamentary polls since 2006. The National Electoral Commission announced a record turnout of 75% of 1.2 million registered voters. However, the vote was boycotted by most parties in the 11-member Coordination of Democratic Opposition. The credibility of the Government continues to be questioned by much of the northern population, who claims it is being marginalised concerning the provision of basic services.

Regional Political Context

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to institutionalise a common approach for the monitoring and coordination of development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritanian President Abdel Aziz, and follows a pledge of US$8 billion by the international community to fight terrorism and support development in the region. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad within six months.

In a bid to strengthen bilateral relations, Malian President Keita concluded an official visit to Nouakchott on 13 January. President Keita met with President Abdel Aziz to discuss security issues and the voluntary return of over 66,000 Malian refugees who have fled to Mauritania since the outbreak of violence in Mali almost two years ago. Also on the agenda was military cooperation regarding the increased threat of militant terror groups in the Sahel region.

Security Context

On 4 March, hundreds of Muslims protested in Nouakchott after news spread that the Koran had allegedly been desecrated at a mosque. An imam reported that four men entered the mosque, tearing copies of the Koran and throwing them into a toilet. Police fired teargas to disperse angry crowds, and one person was reportedly killed. It is still unclear who allegedly desecrated the Koran or what their motive was.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Mauritania continues to suffer from a multi-dimensional crisis related to food insecurity, high prevalence of malnutrition, the presence of Malian refugees, and significant flooding that hit the country in 2013. According to the 2014–2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, an estimated 531,000 people will require assistance in 2014, including 315,200 children.

Disasters

Floods

According to UNICEF in end March, 140,000 people were affected by floods in 2013 and will need humanitarian assistance in 2014.

Displacement

Malian Refugees

Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali. As of late March 2014, UNHCR reported that Mauritania currently hosts 59,100 Malian refugees. UNHCR reports that almost all refugees live in Mbera camp, a remote desert location on the border with Mali that has significant security challenges. According to UNICEF, 60% of camp residents are women and children, and many have been in the camp for almost two years, resulting in overlapping emergency and medium-term needs. Mbera camp is located in a poor region, where food insecurity and malnutrition are high and government services are few. Security problems and the inaccessibility of areas of northern Mali make it difficult to obtain return figures. At the moment, a tripartite agreement is being prepared between UNHCR, Mali, and host countries to facilitate the safe return of refugees.

Food Security

According to OCHA in late February, Mauritania is experiencing widespread food insecurity. Chronic poverty and limited access to basic services have created high levels of vulnerability, with nearly 800,000 people, a fifth of the total population, currently food insecure, including 190,000 severely food insecure.

The overall number of food insecure people has increased dramatically since the last estimate of 470,000 presented in January. Half of the country records malnutrition rates above the emergency threshold, and humanitarian partners indicate that a third of the country’s population require humanitarian assistance.
Food security had improved in Mbera camp, according to a joint assessment conducted by WFP and UNHCR in October 2013. SAM reduced from 13.6% in March 2013 to 2.3% in October 2013, and global acute malnutrition is stagnating, at 21.6% in March 2013 and 22.2% in October 2013. Increasingly, households are transitioning from severe to moderate food insecurity.

Mauritania’s domestic cereal production only covers a third of the national consumption need for a normal year. The country is highly dependent on imports of coarse grains, millet and sorghum from neighbouring Senegal and Mali as well as wheat purchased on the international market. International wheat prices are decreasing, but relatively tight coarse-grain markets are anticipated in both Senegal and Mali due to reduced cereal harvests in these countries.

Food security in the Sahel region

Harvesting of the 2013 cereal crops was completed in December and an above-average harvest was recorded for the second year in a row, with 33% above the previous five-year average, according to FAO.

By contrast, pastures have been affected by insufficient rains in southern regions, notably Brakna, Gorgol, and Guidimaka. As of 20 February, FEWSNET reported that erratic rainfall in areas of the southern Sahel resulted in crop losses of up to 50% and below-average pasture growth during the 2013/14 season. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households. Pasture and water availability for livestock is poorer than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than normal.

Northern Guidimaka, in the south, is anticipated to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity between April and June. The ability of households to expand their coping beyond current levels will be limited. As a result, the poor are expected to either face consumption deficits or be able only marginally to meet their basic consumption needs through irreversible coping strategies.

National food insecurity is further influenced by twenty million people currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. Across the region, an estimated five million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition.

Senegal River Valley

Infestation of pests on flood recession agriculture in the Senegal River Valley and in the agropastoral zone has significantly reduced household grain production in these areas. Following the poor distribution of rainfall in 2013, poor households in rain-fed areas and agropastoral cultures will continue to depend on food purchases until June. With seasonal income insufficient to compensate for production losses, they will face difficulties in meeting their essential non-food needs and will be in a situation of Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity between January and June 2014.

Health and Nutrition

Malnutrition

Late March, UNICEF reported that 125,300 children will be affected by acute malnutrition in 2014, including 30,740 children with severe acute malnutrition; an increase of almost 30% compared to the 2013 caseload. An estimated 90% of expected SAM cases live in the seven most vulnerable regions.

According to the post-harvest Nutrition Survey of December 2013, 6% of under-fives are affected by acute malnutrition, and 0.7% by SAM. However, these malnutrition rates are likely to rise with the approach of the summer lean season. According to ECHO, over 114,000 Mauritanian children needed therapeutic feeding in 2013.

Updated: 25/04/2014

NIGER FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

22 April: Members of a gang in Diffa region said Boko Haram militants from Nigeria regularly come across the border, looking for recruits, according to the BBC. A number of incidents, including an attempted kidnapping of officials, and the seizure of arms and arrest of militants, suggest the insurgents may be using southeast Niger both as a base and a potential target, according to Reuters.

KEY CONCERNS

- 4.3 million Nigeriens (24% of the population) are food insecure, with 420,000 severely food insecure. Another 7.5 million are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity in 2014 (ECHO, February 2014).
- Around 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (OCHA, January 2014).
- Crises in neighbouring countries have led to the arrival of an estimated 100,000 people from Mali (50,000) and Nigeria (50,000) (UNHCR, March 2014).
- Niger is affected by a cholera epidemic, reportedly linked to the one in neighbouring Nigeria. Since January 2014, 95 cases and two deaths have been recorded (UNICEF, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Regional Context

Niger is affected by instability in neighbouring Mali and Nigeria. In the north, Niger is at the heart of international efforts to tackle Islamist groups in the Sahara, following a French-led offensive in 2013 against Al Qaeda-linked groups who occupied neighbouring northern
In the south, spillover from Nigeria’s Islamist uprising is also threatening Niger’s security. A growing number of incidents has been recorded, including the seizure of arms and arrest of militants. On 22 April, the BBC reported that members of a gang in Diffa region said Boko Haram militants regularly come across the border from Nigeria, looking for recruits.

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to coordinate and institutionalise the alignment of their development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritanian President Abdel Aziz, and follows a pledge from the international community for US$8 billion to these countries to fight terrorism and support development regionally. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad within six months.

National Political Context

On 13 February, police in Niger detained a union leader who criticised the President on air at Anfani private radio station. Three journalists were arrested and held as his accomplices.

On 8 February, 36 parties mobilised 18,000 people to rally in the capital Niamey in support of President Issoufou, in response to large-scale opposition protests in December 2013. The Government accused a leading opposition figure of calling for a coup and inciting ethnic strife. At least six journalists and three civil society leaders have been arrested over similar charges.

Thousands of protestors from the opposition coalition Alliance for the Republic, Democracy, and Reconciliation (AFDRD) took to the streets on 28 December to express discontent over the failure of the Government to improve living standards. It was the largest public protest for three years, and took place after a ban on opposition demonstrations was lifted in November.

The new parliament opened on 4 October, yet the final composition of the presidential majority remains unclear. In August, President Issoufou appointed a national unity government in an attempt to reinforce political stability, address regional security threats, and deal with corruption, impunity, and demographic and economic challenges.

Security Context

Since May 2013, insecurity has been rising in Niger and across the region due to a series of crises in Libya, Mali, and Nigeria. The fragile socioeconomic and political environment is further affected by terrorist threats, including the Nigerian Boko Haram group, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa.

There have been no major security incidents in Niger since mid-February, the security situation remains uncertain. A number of incidents, including an attempted kidnapping of officials, and the seizure of arms and arrests of militants, suggest that Boko Haram may be using southeast Niger both as a base and a potential target, according to Reuters. Kidnapping of foreigners has led to fear of Al Qaeda taking advantage of some of Niger’s disputed borders.

Niger is also facing increasing communal tensions connected to the Tuareg insurgency. Divided along lines of class, clan, and generation, some Tuareg are integrated into the administration. However, others have been waging a low-level war in an attempt to achieve greater autonomy for the north.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

On 2 January, OCHA reported that humanitarian workers travelling from the southern regions towards the border with Mali, Chad, and Libya need military escorts. When travelling towards Algeria, OCHA has recommended humanitarian teams travel in convoy.

Displacement

An estimated 100,000 people sought refuge in Niger following crises in Mali and Nigeria.

Mali Crisis

UNHCR reported in March that 50,000 Malian refugees are in Niger; 80% are women and children. Most live in the three camps established in Tillabery region in 2012, namely Abala, Mangaize and Tabareybarey. In 2013, in an attempt to adapt to the specific needs of nomadic refugees, two ‘refugee hosting areas’ were established in Intikane and Tazalit, Tahoua region. After the 2013 French and ECOWAS military intervention and the creation of the MINUSMA force, refugees continued to cross into Niger. Since the presidential elections over July–August 2013, there has been a back-and-forth movement between Niger and the areas of origin in Mali. In November 2013, UNHCR and the Niger authorities began facilitating a voluntary repatriation programme. According to UNHCR in late March, 1,124 Malians have returned spontaneously to Mali.

In late March, UNHCR reported that the crisis in northern Mali since 2012 has also led to the return of 5,120 nationals of Niger who had been living in Mali’s Gao region.

Nigeria Crisis

As of late March, 15,000 Nigerian refugees and 30,000 returnees have crossed into southeastern Niger (Diffa region) following the declaration of the state of emergency in Nigeria’s northern Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states on 14 May 2013, according to UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee. This is a significant increase from totals of 37,000 in September 2013 and 6,400 in July 2013. Priority needs are food, shelter, NFIs, WASH, and health.

There are now more returnees and refugees from Nigeria in southeastern region of Diffa than there are Malian refugees in western Niger, straining extremely vulnerable host populations. There are no refugee camps in Diffa. The majority of refugees are women and children, who are living with host families with limited food and water resources in Bosso, Abadam, Main Soroa, Diffa, Kablewa, Tchoukoudjani, Garin Amadou, and Baroua.

The Government has reportedly been slow in giving the newly arrived Nigerians refugee status, despite a decree in December granting refugee status to people fleeing places...
under a state of emergency in Nigeria. On 10 February the Government with UNHCR and UNICEF launched a civil documentation campaign. Biometric registration is expected to begin in May for both Nigerian refugees and Nigerien returnees.

**CAR Crisis**

Since December 2013, 1,160 Nigerien nationals were repatriated from CAR by the IOM in coordination with the Government of Niger.

**Food Security**

On 14 February, ECHO reported that 4.3 million Nigeriens (24% of the population) are food insecure, with 420,000 individuals in a severe condition. According to OCHA in late February, 80% of food insecure people live in rural areas. In late March, 30,000 Malian refugee children were in need of food assistance.

Most households in Niger will be able to meet their basic food and non-food needs without resorting to irreversible coping strategies. The national food security situation will be marked by Minimal levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and June 2014.

However, 7.5 million are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity in 2014. As of late February, FEWSNET reported localised production deficits in agro-pastoral areas of Tillabéry, Tahoua, and Zinder regions, with poor households resorting to market purchase for food earlier than usual. Market prices are above normal, making these purchases much more difficult. Agro-pastoral and poor households will face Stressed levels of acute food security (IPC Phase 2) between January and June.

These higher prices will also affect pastoral households in Zinder and Diffa regions, where pasture availability is below average. Despite an increase in livestock sales, these households will still be unable to meet all their non-food needs and will also be facing Stressed levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) between January and June.

Certain households in Tillabéry, Tahoua, Zinder, and Diffa will experience Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) between January and June. However, since these crisis conditions will affect fewer than 20% of households, so the zone classification remains IPC Phase 2.

On 7 February, ECHO reported that the violence in Nigeria and the displacement of 40,000 people into Niger has affected large areas of farmland. The ICRC adds that poor security conditions almost halted trade with Nigeria, causing a leap in the price of basic necessities.

The national food insecurity situation is further influenced by the fact that some 20 million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Child Mortality**

On 27 February, the UN reported that Niger has made remarkable progress in cutting under-five mortality over the past decade. However, high maternal mortality, skyrocketing population growth, and low government capacity are still impeding progress. Some 590 women per 100,000 live births die of pregnancy-related causes, and just 18% of births are accompanied by a skilled attendant.

**Cholera**

Since January 2014, a total of 95 cholera cases have been registered including two deaths, representing a fatality rate of 2.11% in Tillabéry, Dosso, Maradi, and Zinder regions, as reported by UNICEF in March. The WASH cluster reported that more than 8,200 cases of cholera were recorded in Niger between 2011 and 2013, 7,000 of which were in Tillabéry region, in the departments of Ayorou, Tera, Tillabéry, Kollo, and Gotheye.

In mid-February, Niger’s health authorities stated that the epidemic is linked to the one raging in neighbouring Nigeria, where 6,600 cases and 229 deaths were recorded in 2013. The epidemic is exacerbated by polluted water, limited access to safe drinking water, and unsanitary conditions.

**Diphtheria**

As of mid-October 2013, with 41 registered cases, of whom 16 have died, diphtheria has returned to Niger seven years after the last epidemic in 2006. The epidemic was confirmed by local health officials in Tillabéry, 120km northwest of the capital. The most affected age group is 5–14 years, with 26 registered cases.

**Malnutrition**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition, amounting to a caseload of one million children under five suffering from acute malnutrition. This is an increase compared to 2012 and 2013, when, respectively 567,700 and 625,500 children suffered from acute malnutrition. UNICEF reported in mid-October that more than 2,500 children under five died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

Updated: 25/04/2014

**SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

21–22 April: Two Somali members of parliament were shot in Mogadishu, in attacks claimed by Al Shabaab.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Violence and insecurity are widespread across Somalia, but particularly in the south-central areas, where armed non-state actors such as Al Shabaab are active. An estimated three million people live in the Al Shabaab-held areas that are targeted by the Somalia–African Union military offensive: Bakool, Gedo, Lower
Insecurity and bureaucratic impediments continue to affect humanitarian access. Recurrent attacks on aid workers pose a serious constraint, and the movement of personnel and commodities is frequently disrupted by violence.

An estimated 1.1 million Somalis are internally displaced, mainly in the south-central region, with high concentrations in the capital Mogadishu. More than one million Somalis are refugees in neighbouring countries, mostly in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Yemen (UNHCR, March 2014).

2.9 million people are estimated to need humanitarian and livelihood support assistance between March and September 2014 (OCHA, April 2014).

An estimated 857,000 people are at Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4), 74% of whom are believed to be IDPs (FSNAU, March). Two million people, a third of Somalia’s population, are considered to be at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2). More than 203,000 children under five are acutely malnourished, mainly in south-central Somalia (FSNAU, March).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Somalia suffers from a chronic fragility of state institutions as a result of two decades of civil war. On 4 March, human rights groups called for the arms embargo against Somalia, which had been partially lifted by the UN Security Council in March 2013, to be tightened, citing government failure to control the flow of arms into the country, and its participation in the diversion of weapons. The lift was, however, renewed on 5 March until October. In mid-February, a leaked UN report accused the Federal Government of supplying weapons to militant group Al Shabaab. These claims had been made in earlier reports.

In early February, 700 soldiers demonstrated against their dismissal from the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF): local observers reported that the Government had neither disarmed the fired soldiers nor provided them with appropriate reintegration plans.

On 21 January, new Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed named a new Cabinet, following a vote in the Federal Parliament. Following the dismissal of Prime Minister Shirdon on 2 December, Ahmed was appointed by President Mahamud on 12 December, ending a government crisis that had raised significant concerns over security. Infighting between presidents and prime ministers is a recurrent problem, and while the swift replacement of Shirdon is seen as a positive development, the political situation remains unstable. The choice of Prime Minister Ahmed is in line with the Government’s effort to fight corruption, following reports accusing Somali officials of economic and political collaboration with Al Shabaab militants.

Security Context

Since the launch of the SNAF and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) military offensive against Al Shabaab-held areas of Somalia in early March 2014, security is said to have deteriorated. The number of attacks and fatalities in the country had decreased between 2010 and 2013, but south-central Somalia remains particularly affected by non-state armed groups, and semi-autonomous northeastern and northwestern territories Puntland and Somaliland are subject to inter-communal violence.

2011-2012 marked considerable strategic gains in Mogadishu and its surroundings by the Somalia–AU campaign, especially after the deployment of Ethiopian and Kenyan troops in 2011. The expansion of the Federal Government has pushed Al Shabaab both southwards and northeast, and the group retains strongholds in parts of rural southern and central Somalia and in the mountains of the semi-autonomous Puntland region.

Puntland and Somaliland experience far lower levels of violence than the rest of the country, but show a higher proportion of communal violence, especially during the June-November rainy season, when improved resource access and competition for cattle lead to increased raiding activity among the various groups.

Al Shabaab Attacks

Al Shabaab is reportedly fleeing in advance of the SNAF–AU offensive, but has repeatedly pledged to increase retaliatory attacks. Uganda and Kenya, who contribute troops to AMISOM, announced that they anticipated retaliatory terrorist attacks by Al Shabaab in their countries following the offensive.

On 21-22 April, two Somali members of parliament were shot in attacks claimed by Al Shabaab in Mogadishu.

On 2 April, the media reported that the town of Qoryooley in Lower Shabelle has suffered a number of attacks, causing an unconfirmed number of casualties. Qoryooley had been captured by SNAF on 22 March and Al Shabaab militants are said to have retreated to the outskirts of the town. On 26 March, OCHA reported that four civilians had been killed in a suicide attack near a hotel in Bulo Burto in Hiraan. On 18 March, observers reported eight people dead after a suicide bombing in the town of Buulo Burde, in Hiraan. Buulo Burde had been recently taken by SNAF-AMISOM. In late February, Al Shabaab had vowed to recapture all Somali territory that it had lost in 2013.

On 15 March, a car bomb near a Mogadishu hotel popular with government officials injured at least one person. The same hotel had been bombed, and several people killed, in November 2013. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in Mogadishu in February, with a death toll of 28 and targets including the intelligence headquarters, the presidential palace, and a UN convoy near the airport. On 10 February, two car bombs wounded five people in Mogadishu. No group has claimed responsibility, but authorities blamed the incident on Al Shabaab.

A twin bombing in Mogadishu on 2 January, which killed 11 people, represented the start of Al Shabaab’s 2014 insurgency campaign, according to the group. On 27 December, a suspected Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab bomb attack killed eight people in the Daynille district of Mogadishu, though Al Shabaab did not claim responsibility.
Security in Mogadishu is still better than at its lowest point in August 2011, but Al Shabaab attacks in urban centres and along transport axes are common. Sporadic violence by other armed groups, targeting mostly soldiers and security forces, is also an issue.

On 31 March, an INGO analysis confirmed that there had been a surge in conflict events in February. These were reportedly due both to attacks involving Al Shabaab (which represented 40% of events) and to communal and militia violence (over half of events).

Observers consider that the recent resurgence of attacks is due both to insufficient military commitment by the Government and AU and to discontent with the state’s inability to provide basic services, which fuels armed groups’ leverage for recruitment campaigns.

**Puntland**

On 7 April, international media reported that two UN consultants were killed in a suspected targeted attack by two gunmen at Galkayo airport, in Puntland. Observers fear that the current military effort to force Al Shabaab out of urban areas is pushing the group into the northern semi-autonomous region of Puntland. Puntland is struggling to uproot Al Shabaab and has scaled up operations in the Bari area, from where insurgents launch their attacks.

On 5 December, a suspected Al Shabaab car bomb targeting a military vehicle reportedly killed ten people and wounded 30 in Bossaso town. A month earlier, 40 insurgents staged a failed attempt to free militants detained in the same locality. On 29 September, the defence forces of Puntland raided Al Shabaab positions in the Galgala Mountains, reportedly inflicting casualties.

On 8 January, former Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali was elected President of Puntland in a tightly contested poll unseating President Farole. Elections were initially set for July 2013, but had been postponed due to the risk of violence and tension between the central Government and Puntland authorities. The region, home to 2.5 million people, declared itself semi-autonomous in 1998. In late August, President Farole said the central Government was undermining plans to create a federal system and that he would develop potential oil resources in his area even without a revenue-sharing deal with Mogadishu. On 5 August, Puntland cut all ties with the central Government in a clear sign of distrust towards Mogadishu, on the grounds that central authorities refused to share power and foreign aid with the region.

**Military Operations and International Presence**

As of 26 March, according to OCHA, the SNAF-AMISOM offensive launched in early March to recover Al Shabaab-controlled areas of southern and central Somalia continued. An estimated three million people live in these areas, which comprise Bakool, Gedo, Lower and Middle Shabelle, Galgaduud, Hiraan, Bay, and Middle and Lower Juba.

On 22 March, according to the AU, the SNAF, with the support of AU forces, recaptured the town of Qoryooley, located 120km southwest of Mogadishu, in Lower Shabelle. However, reports indicated that Al Shabaab militants remained on the outskirts of the town on 2 April.

On 7 March, Somali forces captured the previously Al Shabaab-held city of Hudur, capital of Bakool region, with the help of Ethiopian AMISOM troops. Twelve people were reportedly killed during the attack.

In November, the AU’s Peace and Security Council endorsed the recommendation to boost AMISOM with an additional 4,400 soldiers, taking its total strength to more than 22,000. The UN Secretary General urged member states to provide AMISOM with financial and military support. Following the Westgate attack in Kenya in September, the UN envoy for Somalia called for additional AU troops to counter the 5,000 Al Shabaab fighters, which the UN said posed an international threat.

According to the AU on 9 May 2013, an estimated 3,000 AU peacekeepers had been killed in Somalia since 2007. Tensions between local authorities and the different military forces in Somalia had prompted Ethiopia, on 22 April, to announce its wish to remove troops from the country. However, it has no plans for a complete withdrawal. In January 2014, according to official reports, Adiss Ababa pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is achieved. During March–April 2013, the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Hudur, a town in the southern Bakool region, led to its immediate occupation by Al Shabaab.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

Protracted conflict, consecutive years of drought, natural hazards, and disruption of basic infrastructure have led to large-scale displacement in Somalia and across the region, leaving almost half of the population, around 3.2 million people, vulnerable to external shocks and lacking access to basic goods and services.

**Access**

Insecurity continues to affect humanitarian work, with reports in late December and early January of aid workers being targeted by armed groups, including Al Shabaab, for arrest and detention in the areas of Bakool, Bay, Gedo, and Lower and Middle Juba. In the south, where floods have affected the population since November, humanitarian access is reportedly hampered by bureaucratic impediments to the recruitment of staff and implementation of assistance operations.

The withdrawal of Al Shabaab from key towns in the south had enabled increased international presence in some areas, but on 26 March, OCHA reported that Al Shabaab retains control of some supply routes, which continues to hamper commercial activities as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Roadblocks had been set up in various locations, including Xudur, Bakool region, according to a 21 March OCHA report. FAO noted that conflict has disrupted the movement of food and other basic commodities in most southern regions, particularly Bakool.

**IDPs**

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who had worked in Somali since 1991, ceased all Somali operations on 14 August, after attacks against its staff increased. On 15 August, the Government urged MSF to reconsider its withdrawal. On the same day, Al Shabaab militants looted MSF hospitals in Dinsoor (Bay region) and Mararey (Middle Juba region).
At 10 April, according to UNHCR, an estimated 1.1 million Somalis were IDPs, most of whom are in the south-central region (893,000); 129,000 are in Puntland and 84,000 in Somalia. In the south-central region, 369,000 IDPs are living in makeshift camps in Mogadishu.

On 17 April, an INGO reported that 70,000 people had been displaced following the AMISOM offensive. Earlier OCHA reports on 15 April stated that 41,000 people were estimated to have been displaced since the beginning of the offensive: 11,500 people in Bay region, 10,000 in Hiran region, 7,900 in Lower Shabelle, 6,100 in Banadir camp (Mogadishu), 2,000 in Gedo, 1,800 in Bakool and 900 in Lower Juba. This represents a decrease from the 46,000 IDPs reported on 6 April by UNHCR.

In January 2013, authorities announced plans to relocate IDPs from the capital to camps outside the city, as a consequence of urban development. The UN estimates that several thousand IDPs were evicted during August and September 2013, and 27,000 people evicted from different settlements in Mogadishu in November and December. While the official relocation plans are on hold, trends show that eviction of IDPs by private landowners has increased. The proposed solution is to move IDPs to the Daynille district, west of the city centre. This area is considered particularly insecure, and ownership issues raise the question of whether the land is public property and thus available for relocation purposes. As of 7 March, Government sources estimated that 30,000 Somali IDPs in Mogadishu were awaiting relocation.

Refugees

As of 9 April, UNHCR reported that 956,000 Somalis were refugees in neighbouring countries, the majority in Kenya (around 439,000), Ethiopia (245,000), and Yemen (230,000). About one million Somalis in refugees worldwide.

In March, UNHCR announced that 34,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya during 2013. Although their status is not specified, it is implied that these people were mostly Somali refugees. As of 17 February, there were 353,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab.

At the end of March, the Kenyan Government ordered all 50,000 Somali refugees living in urban areas to relocate to Dadaab or Kakuma refugee camp. In April, thousands of Somalis were arrested in security operations in Nairobi and other cities. Dozens of illegal immigrants were deported to Mogadishu. International press reports indicated that six people were killed during one operation in Nairobi. In 2012, according to a human rights NGO, a similar encampment order was issued to 100,000 refugees living in urban areas, and led to the arrest of more than 1,000 Somalis and Somali Kenyans.

On 10 November, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the Governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish the legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. Since the attack on the Westgate Mall in September, the Kenyan Government has pushed to expedite the return of these refugees, citing national security concerns. The international community has warned that a premature return could result in these refugees becoming IDPs in Somalia. On 23 November, the Kenyan Government ordered the shutdown of the Dadaab refugee camps and requested that all UN agencies supporting refugee operations in Kenya move their programmes to Somalia on the grounds that the repatriation process had begun. On 25 November, UNHCR declared it will not close the camps, as these measures were not part of the November agreement.

Disasters

According to OCHA as of mid-January, seasonal rains in the Ethiopian highlands and across Somalia caused flooding in Middle Shabelle region, affecting over 80,000 people, mainly in Jowhar district. FAO reported that an estimated 8,000 hectares of land were inundated, and the Food Security Cluster included an additional 30,000 people in its November programming. According to AMISOM, the situation has been compounded by the early seasonal outbreak of clan fighting. Insecurity prevented the repair of a breach in the Shabelle river embankment, resulting in floodwater pouring onto the plain. Water has contaminated wells, disrupted markets, destroyed crops, and delayed crucial planting for the next crop season. A major frontline between AU troops and Al Shabaab is further limiting access and the provision of assistance.

On 10–11 November, Tropical Cyclone Three made landfall on the impoverished region of Puntland, with rain and high winds triggering flash floods, which caused at least 100 deaths in coastal areas and inland in Nugaal and southern Bari. As of early December, FAO reported that an estimated 35,000 people (5,000 households) were affected, along with 270,000 livestock. As of 22 November, ECHO reported that heavy rains affected IDP settlements on the northern coast of the Bari region and inland in the regions of Karkaar, Nugaal, and Mudug. The cyclone caused substantial damage to houses and infrastructure, and preliminary findings of the Multi-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment indicated that the storm damaged and contaminated large clean water sources, leading to half the affected population no longer being able to access sanitation and sustainable clean water sources. The assessment also indicated that access to basic health services was limited in the affected areas. In early December, OCHA reported that the storm also hit parts of Somaliland, where it caused the deaths of at least ten people and over 500 livestock, mostly in the Awdal, Sanaag, and Woqooyi Galbeed regions.

Food Security

The situation has improved only slightly since the 2011 Horn of Africa drought and famine, when the number of people requiring urgent assistance peaked at four million. As of February, according to a November–December 2013 assessment, insecurity, disasters, and a below-average harvest are all affecting food security.

According to observers, populations in regions affected by the SNAF-AMISOM offensive are experiencing rising food prices and reduced availability of basic commodities. According to OCHA on 7 April, shortages were reported on local markets in towns affected by conflict, including Bulu Burto (Hiraan region), Buur Dhibuo (Gedo region), and Rab Dhuure, Waaqo, and Xudur (Bakool region). According to OCHA on 26 March, prices in the town of Xudur have increased by 26% since the beginning of the month. FEWSNET reported on the same day that food security was likely to deteriorate in areas affected by the military offensive, especially Middle and Lower Shabelle, while on 21 March, OCHA reported that fighting had affected planting activities in Bakool. On 18 March, OCHA had reported that the military offensive could disrupt the gu planting season (March/April), whose harvest could in turn be negatively affected in August/September, especially in the Shabelle and Juba regions and in parts of Bay and Bakool regions.
On 31 March, FAO reported that the number of people currently in acute food security crisis (IPC Phase 3 and 4) was 603,000, with a total of 857,000 projected to be at Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity from February to June 2014. The number of Somalis at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2) is two million; however, their situation remains fragile, and any significant shock could put them at Crisis or Emergency levels.

An estimated 74% of people experiencing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity are IDPs. Most are located in the northern regions of Sanaag, Sool, Bari, and Nugaal, the central regions of Mudug, Galgaduud and Hiran, and the southern regions of Middle Shabelle, and Middle and Lower Juba. In late February, according to Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, food prices were reported as stable over the months of December –January. However, cereal prices were reported as significantly higher than at the same period in 2013. In addition, maize price are increasing in the southern Juba and Shabelle regions.

In Bari and Nugaal in Puntland, the areas hit by the November cyclone, the widespread loss of assets, livelihoods, and livestock present a challenge to the local population. In the south, a deterioration in the food security situation is expected in parts of Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle, and Hiraan regions. This is mainly due to recent floods and the poor performance of the deyr rainy season (October–November), which affected production and caused displacement and livelihood disruption. In most urban centres, the population is expected to remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels due to the relative stability of food prices. Rainfall is expected to be below-average to average throughout the gu rainy season (March–May).

Health and Nutrition

**Polio**

The first confirmed case of the wild poliovirus since 2007 was reported in Mogadishu on 9 May 2013. The total number of confirmed cases in 2013 stood at 194 as of March 2014. The polio epidemic has spread to neighbouring countries with 14 in Kenya, six in Ethiopia, and three cases reported in South Sudan. The first vaccination campaign began on 14 May 2013. However, fighting in Kismayo halted the planned July polio vaccination campaign, targeting 24,000 people. Large insecure areas of south-central Somalia have not conducted immunisation campaigns since 2009, leaving 600,000 children vulnerable, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The risk to populations across Somalia is high due to substantial population immunity gaps.

**Malaria**

As of 28 February, a malaria screening in nine cyclone-affected IDP settlements in the coastal city of Bogasso, which covered over 27,000 people, found that 7.9% of the people tested positive, according to an IOM report.

**Malnutrition**

Nutrition indicators in Somalia have improved since the 2011 famine. However, according to a February FSNAU report, the prevalence of malnutrition remains critical and above WHO’s emergency threshold of 15% for GAM. Critical rates of GAM reportedly affected child IDPs in south Somalia.

According to an OCHA report released on 1 April, 304,000 children under five years are in need of treatment for acute malnutrition. At 31 March, a post-deyr FSNAU nutrition assessment conducted from November to January indicated that 203,000 children are acutely malnourished, a slight decrease compared to January 2013, when the caseload was 215,000. As of March, FSNAU indicated that an estimated 51,000 children suffered from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), an increase from 45,000 at the same period in 2013.

At the start of August 2013, FAO had reported critical levels of GAM in northeast, central, and south Somalia. GAM of 19% were reported in Kismayo, a flashpoint area of tribal fighting.

**WASH**

According to an INGO report, Gedo region has been affected by a severe water crisis, with four out of five water sources reportedly dry. According to OCHA on 26 March, access to water is limited for the people recently displaced by conflict in Bakool.

**SOUTH SUDAN** CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

19 April: Local media reported that 100 people had been killed in a cattle raid in Warrap state.

17 April: An attack on the UN peacekeeping compound in Bor, capital of Jonglei state, left at least 58 people dead and over 100 wounded, according to international media reports. The Protection of Civilian site of the compound hosts 5,000 mostly Nuer civilians, according to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). On the next day, according to official sources, the South Sudanese army was deployed to protect the site.

14–15 April: Rebel forces captured Bentiu, capital of oil-producing Unity state, following heavy clashes with government forces, international media reported. A death toll of 406 has been established by international media. The UN stated that the rebel assailants had killed people along ethnic lines, while UNMISS reported on 21 April that they especially targeted non-Nuer communities and Darfuris.

11 April: Clashes between the Durbaar, Athoi, and Durceek clans left 24 people dead in Rumbek East, Lakes state, local media reported. On the next day, a clash between Panyar and Nuei Beag clans reportedly killed 18 people.

**KEY CONCERNS**
- The security situation in South Sudan remains volatile with ongoing conflict and clashes, particularly in Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states.

- Since December 2013, the conflict has caused the internal displacement of 916,900 people (OCHA, April). There are over 353,000 refugees in neighbouring countries; 283,000 have fled since the outbreak of the crisis in December (UNHCR, April). An estimated 67,900 people are sheltering in eight UN peacekeeping bases (UNMISS, April).

- Up to 300,000 IDPs are living in 33 sites that are at risk of flooding. Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people reside in flood risk areas (OCHA, January).

- Humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people are currently facing Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phases 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority located in the eastern states. 740,000 of them are children under five (UNICEF, April). Overall, an estimated 4.9 million people are considered in urgent need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, April).

Politics and Security

Since fighting broke out in mid-December 2013, violence has rapidly spread across the eastern part of the country, mostly in Jonglei and Upper Nile states. Despite the signing of a ceasefire on 23 January, violence continues and tensions are running high, especially in Unity, Jonglei, Lakes and Upper Nile states. According to local sources, internal strife has progressively adopted characteristics of an inter-communal conflict between the Dinka tribe allied to South Sudan President Kiir and government forces on one side, and Nuer forces loosely allied with former South Sudan Vice President Riek Machar on the other. Peace negotiations have been showing slow progress.

On 2 April, the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan held its second meeting. The Commission had been appointed by the AU on 7 March, and is tasked with investigating human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict that led to the independence of South Sudan.

Sudan–South Sudan

The unrest in the South Sudanese states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity has led to concerns in Khartoum that the flow of oil through Sudanese territory will suffer further disruption. Landlocked South Sudan, which gained independence from Sudan in 2011, pays fees to Sudan to refine its crude oils and export them from Port Sudan on the Red Sea, making oil trade an important source of income for both countries. Sudanese officials also said they were concerned about an influx of refugees and arms.

On 16 April, local media reported that the South Sudanese army had accused Sudan of supporting the rebel movement. Both the rebels and Khartoum denied the accusation.

On 22 March, local sources reported that South Sudan and Sudan had agreed to accelerate negotiations towards the implementation of the security mechanism and of a border buffer zone, which had been agreed by the two countries in September 2012. On 19 March, local sources reported that Sudan and South Sudan had agreed to reactivate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). South Sudan had withdrawn from the agreement in November over a border dispute.

In early January, Sudanese President Bashir met with his southern counterpart President Kiir, and expressed his willingness to support the Government of South Sudan and the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African regional bloc brokering the negotiation process. However, Khartoum announced that it had no intention of deploying troops to help protect Juba’s oil-producing regions, citing past failures to establish military cooperation with South Sudan.

Renewed tensions have been reported in the contested Abyei area, which lies at the centre of the Sudan–South Sudan border. In early March, South Sudan accused its northern neighbour of killing 77 people in the region, alleging that the Sudanese army (SAF) carried out repeated and coordinated attacks on civilian settlements in a bid to occupy the area claimed by both countries. Fighting reportedly occurred on 25 February and 1 March, and supposedly involved elements of the SAF and armed members of the Sudanese nomadic Misseriya tribe, which traditionally migrates towards Abyei for pasture and grazing. These claims followed accusations by the Sudanese government that the South Sudan army (SPLA) attacked Sudanese citizens north of the 1956 border line, and called on Juba to withdraw its forces, while Juba denied the presence of SPLA troops in the area.

On 25 February, however, the UN released a report indicating the presence of 660 SPLA forces and police elements in different parts of Abyei, along with heavy artillery and military-type settlements. This would represent an additional violation of the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for Abyei, which includes the redeployment of all Sudanese and South Sudanese forces out of the area. Both Khartoum and Juba claim the disputed area, whose residents were to vote in a self-determination referendum in 2011, but disagreement over who is eligible to vote has repeatedly delayed the process.

National Context

Violence erupted in the capital Juba in mid-December and quickly spread to the northeastern states. Clashes have led to a decrease in oil production, and concerns remain that the country is on the brink of civil war. The unrest quickly deteriorated into all-out conflict following an alleged coup by former Vice-President Machar, who was sacked in July for leading a dissident group within the ruling Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM). Violence has pit President Kiir’s government forces, who are being backed by Ugandan troops, against a loose alliance of military defectors loyal to Machar, along with ethnic militia forces. The conflict also included fighting between some members of Kiir’s Dinka tribe and Machar’s Nuer group.

Both sides have been accused of trying to influence the conflict through manipulation of the media. On 18 April, an international organisation reported that media freedom was being curtailed by the South Sudanese government, including through arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists in Juba, and confiscation of printed material. On 21 April, UNMISS reported that the SPLA-in-Opposition had engineered the broadcasting of hate messages on a local radio station.
**Peace Negotiations**

On 11 April, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which is brokering negotiations, announced that Monitoring and Verification Teams, agreed as part of the South Sudan peace talks, had started operations to monitor the implementation of the 23 January ceasefire in Bor (Jonglei state) and Bentiu (Unity state). IGAD had dispatched a 14-person joint technical committee, comprising both Government and opposition representatives, to the main flashpoint towns of Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu in early February. The team was deployed to initiate the establishment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and was expected to meet with state and non-state stakeholders. On 7 February, the delegation reported back to IGAD Special Envoys in Addis Ababa to provide recommendations before the beginning of the second round of peace talks.

On 31 March, observers reported that the second round of peace talks in Addis Ababa had again been suspended, this time at the request of IGAD mediators. Negotiations have been slow, and stalled several times. Parties have not agreed on a framework for the peace talks and there is reportedly disagreement over the release of political detainees, the participation of seven former political detainees in the negotiations, Uganda's role as an observer at the talks, and the inclusion of certain territories within the joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM).

On 26 February, IGAD had presented a proposal for an interim government in South Sudan, pending presidential elections. Both warring parties accepted the proposal in principle, dismissing rumours that this interim government would exclude both South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, and former Vice-President turned rebel leader Riek Machar.

In a separate development, on 28 March, according to local observers, a peace agreement was signed between South Sudanese authorities and the Jonglei-based rebel group South Sudan Democratic Movement – Cobra Faction (SSDM-Cobra faction). The movement had waged a small-scale rebellion against the Government since the 2010 general election that preceded South Sudan's independence.

In late February, an exiled South Sudanese opposition organisation requested participation in the peace talks. The South Sudan United Democratic Alliances (SSUDA), based in neighbouring Ethiopia, announced that it was backing the formation of an interim government as proposed by IGAD mediators, and insisted that the negotiations must be inclusive. Three other exiled opposition parties agreed on 15 March to take part in peace talks as an umbrella organisation under the leadership of the SSUDA. The three parties are the National Revolutionary Democratic Party/Front (NRDP/F), Revolutionary Alliance for South Sudan (RASS) and the South Sudan Republican Party (SSRP).

**Security Context**

Although the 23 January cessation of hostilities agreement led to a considerable reduction in violence in February, reports indicate fighting persists on the ground and both sides continue to trade accusations that each is violating the terms of the truce. Clashes took place in Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity in February and March. The security situation remains relatively calm in the states of Central and Eastern Equatoria, and fighting between rival factions reported in Juba on 5 March was contained by 6 March.

Casualty numbers cannot be verified due to limited access, but thousands of people are believed to have been killed or injured since the conflict started. In January, the International Crisis Group estimated the death toll to be 10,000. As of 12 March, humanitarian partners reported that over 5,900 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds since mid-December; although the number of gunshot patients has decreased significantly since early February, possibly due to fewer clashes between the warring parties compared to January.

On 7 April, according to a UNHCR report, the city of Neem, in the northern part of Unity state, was bombed by a suspected military aircraft. An aircraft was also spotted in the area of Yida two days later. UNHCR reported that Yida hosts 70,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan, while Neem is located on a road used by incoming Sudanese refugees.

**Fighting in Upper Nile State**

At 17 April, UNHCR reported that opposition forces were mobilising for an offensive against the oil-producing area of Paloch, Melut county, Upper Nile State. The area was described as Juba's last major source of revenue.

According to aid agencies, over 7–10 April government forces and SPLA-in-Opposition were fighting in Kakak and Woddikona near Malakal, Upper Nile state. According to OCHA, fighting also occurred in Renk.

Humanitarian organisations reported that the situation of Sudanese refugees in Maban county remains critical. In late March, clashes had occurred in Malakal and Maban counties. Clashes in Fashoda were reported by OCHA in mid-March, and fighting was reported near the oil fields of Adar earlier in the month. In areas around Malut and Malakal, the conflict was reportedly moving north, and aid agencies indicated that both parties continued to mobilise.

As of late February, the security situation in the key oil-hub town of Malakal was tense following heavy fighting between government and opposition forces from 18 to 20 February. The fighting represented the biggest clash since the ceasefire was signed, and was reportedly triggered by an assault by the insurgents.

The town was deserted, with opposition forces present near the airport and hospital. While the overall death toll is unknown, reports mentioned up to 16 deaths and 120 wounded among the IDPs residing close the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) base, located in an area which got caught in the middle of the fighting. Looting was reported across the town. The week before, inter-communal clashes broke out inside the UN base, which shelters over 20,000 displaced people. At least 10 deaths and 150 wounded were reported following the incident. Clashes were also reported in the south and west of Malakal town in early February. Local sources report increased armed mobilisation in other parts of the state.

**Fighting in Jonglei State**

On 17 April, an attack against the UN peacekeeping compound in Bor, capital of Jonglei state, left at least 58 people dead and over 100 wounded, according to international media
reports. The Protection of Civilian (PoC) site of the compound hosts 5,000 mostly Nuer civilians, according to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). On the next day, according to official sources, the South Sudan army was deployed to protect the site.

According to international media reports, the attack was in retaliation for the opposition movement’s capture of Bentiu, capital of Unity state, a few days earlier.

According to the Health Cluster on 3 April, clashes between SPLA and opposition forces in Jonglei state caused the displacement of over 10,000 people from Twic East and Duk counties to the area of the state capital, Bor.

Over the last week of March, according to local sources, over 30 civilians were killed in violence between pro- and anti-government armed groups in Duk county. Clashes causing displacement were also reported by OCHA in mid-March, and tensions in Duk and Twic East counties triggered displacement towards Awerial county, Lakes state in early March. On 24 February, local authorities reported that an attack by rebel fighters killed three civilians and displaced over 68,000 people from their villages in Duk county. Most displaced were said to be moving towards Twic East county.

Clashes were also reported in Gadiang, north of Bor, on 23 February. According to military sources, over 170 insurgents were killed in three rounds of attacks, while the SPLA lost 19 soldiers.

Jonglei remained relatively calm in early February, although local sources reported that at least 25 people were killed in Bor county on 5 February by armed men suspected to be associated with insurgents loyal to Machar.

**Fighting in Unity State**

On 14–15 April, SPLA-in-Opposition forces captured Bentiu, capital of oil-producing Unity state, following heavy clashes with government forces, international media reported. An international media report pronounced a death toll of 406. UNMISS on 21 April reported that the rebel forces especially targeted non-Nuer communities and Darfuris. According to a media report on 15 April, the leader of the SPLA-in-Opposition stated that Juba and the oil fields would be targeted as part of the movement’s attempt to remove President Salva Kiir from power. Bentiu had been held by the rebels between December and January, before being re-taken by government forces. The town had been reported as tense but stable at the end of February; new arrivals in the UN base were fearing a possible attack by armed forces.

Leer county was the scene of fighting in late March. Humanitarian partners had reported a significant military presence in the area at the end of February, but no new incidents had been reported since clashes earlier in the month. OCHA also indicated continuing clashes in Guit county.

Local sources reported that nine people were killed in an attack on a civilian convoy in Mayom county on 10 February. Local authorities blamed the attack on anti-government forces, but this was denied by the insurgents.

**Fighting in Lakes State**

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**International Military Presence**

As of 19 March, the UNMISS command told the UN Security Council that it would suspend its current activities to focus on protection of civilians, prevention of inter-communal clashes, and support to IGAD as requested.

On 16 March, South Sudan approved the deployment of the Protection Deterrent Force (PDF), a regional force drawn from IGAD member countries. While the size, mandate, command and deployment timeframe of the contingent are still under discussion, it is expected to come in addition to the over 10,000 UN peacekeeping personnel, and will be tasked with providing protection to the IGAD Joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) agreed by the warring parties in the 23 January ceasefire deal. The East African force will also be charged with the protection of oil fields in the northern states of Unity and Upper Nile on the grounds that these areas are considered rebel strongholds.

In late February, Uganda announced it would withdraw its troops from South Sudan, where it is supporting the SPLA, as soon as IGAD’s regional stabilisation force is ready to take over.

On 4 February, a contingent of 266 additional peacekeepers arrived in South Sudan, and more battalions are expected. This latest deployment is pursuant of the UN Security Council resolution voted on 24 December, which authorised increasing the number of peacekeepers in the country to 12,500.

**Inter-communal Violence**

The current unrest is occurring against a backdrop of persistent inter-communal violence, concentrated in Jonglei state and the central tri-state area of Lakes, Unity, and Warrap, with incidents in Northern Bahr El-Ghazal and Western Equatoria as well.

On 3 April, according to local media, representatives of the Nuer community have stated that over 17,000 Nuer had been killed by pro-government forces since December.

South Sudan’s stability is still challenged by the polarisation of divergent ethnic and political communities. In late November 2013, the Government announced that it had succeeded in integrating a dozen former rebel groups in its regular army, as well as in other security organs and civil services. Following several months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, presidential orders pardoning militant groups resulted in a significant reduction in insurgency, mostly in the Greater Upper Nile region of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states. As of November, 13 armed groups had responded to a general amnesty. Juba underscored that efforts must continue to bring rebels on board, and called on tribal leaders of the Murle, Nuer and Dinka to address the protracted violence affecting their communities, in order to bring sustainable stability to Jonglei.

**Inter-communal Violence in Lakes State**

On 11 April, clashes between the Duraar, Athoi, and Durceek clans left 24 people dead in
On 10 April, humanitarian organisations reported that 21 people were killed during cattle raids in Tonj East and Twic county. On 18 February, local sources reported two cattle raids in Akop Payam, Tonj North county, and Pallang Payam, Tonj East county. The incidents were reportedly different from typical cattle raids, notably due to the use of heavy weapons. Local authorities indicated that nine civilians and over 150 attackers were killed in the fighting, while approximately 2,000 people were displaced.

On 15 and 16 March, dialogue was reportedly facilitated by UNMISS between Apuk Juwir and Thony communities in Tonj South county.

In early February, local sources reported that at least 42 people had been killed in attacks on two areas in Tonj North county. While it is unclear who carried out the attacks, cattle were reportedly taken.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

At 4 April, OCHA reported that an estimated 4.9 million people – over 40% of the total population – are in need of urgent assistance. Only one million have been provided with humanitarian assistance. Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity are priority states for humanitarian assistance, and priority sectors are food security and livelihoods, health, non-food items and shelter, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The crisis that erupted in mid-December has caused significant population displacement across the east of the country and towards neighbouring countries. Insecurity and armed clashes are reportedly hampering the delivery of assistance, while the UN reported widespread violation of human rights and targeted violence against civilians.

**Access**

On 3 April, OCHA reported that the onset of the rainy season in late March, and the flooding of roads, was impeding access to populations in need and increasing the cost of humanitarian assistance in a context of already insufficient humanitarian funding.

Several humanitarian organisations have reported that impediments and logistical constraints due to bad road conditions threaten to complicate access to vulnerable populations in Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity states through the humanitarian corridor established from Gambella, Ethiopia, to these regions.

On 19 April, local media reported that 100 people had been killed in a cattle raid in Warnap state.

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As of 21 March, UNHCR reported that the South Sudan government claimed to have intercepted arms and ammunition in UNMISS-contracted vehicles in Rumbek, Lakes state, and announced it would implement routine searches of UN and relief organisations convoys.

As of 19 March, OCHA reported that access constraints were increasingly hampering the delivery of aid, forcing humanitarian organisations to resort to airlifting humanitarian supplies to areas that cannot be reached otherwise, especially in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states.

As of 13 March, OCHA had reported that renewed tensions and violence in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile are hampering humanitarian access, notably in three counties – Duk in Jonglei, Leer in Unity, and Fashoda in Upper Nile. Insecurity continues to constrain road
movement, and many private transporters are reportedly reluctant to move humanitarian goods, alleging increased levels of intimidation, impediments to paying staff, and the imposition of arbitrary taxes by non-state actors or local authorities. Additionally, physical impediments still prevent aid organisations from reaching rural areas, limiting the ability of agencies to preposition supplies ahead of the onset of the rainy season in June.

In January, the UN accused both rebels and government forces of obstructing aid, with reports indicating that government authorities reportedly hampered UN flights carrying supplies for peacekeepers and clinics, while insurgents looted warehouses in Bentiu, Unity state, and Bor, Jonglei state. Since the start of the crisis, dozens of aid compounds have been looted and dozens of vehicles stolen. As of 24 January, WFP reported that looting has caused the loss of over 3,700 metric tons of food destined to feed 220,000 people for a month in the northeast of the country.

OCHA reported at 30 November that 293 violent incidents had been recorded since January 2013. As of 12 September, Upper Nile and Jonglei states are the worst affected, with repeated violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, active hostilities, and interference in implementation of relief programmes. Insecurity led humanitarian actors to halt distributions of food assistance twice during August.

Displacement

As of 3 April, OCHA reported that over a million South Sudanese have been displaced internally and across borders since conflict erupted in December 2013. Humanitarian partners indicated that displacement figures are still considered to be an underestimate due to the fluidity of displacement patterns and the limited access to rural areas affected by the violence. In mid-February, UNHCR released a non-return advisory for South Sudanese fleeing conflict, recommending that states refrain from returning South Sudan nationals to the country, unless cases involve people who may have committed serious human right violations.

IDPs

According to OCHA, as of 17 April the number of IDPs in South Sudan stood at 916,900, most of whom are located in the northern state of Unity (236,000), the eastern state of Jonglei (204,000), the northeastern state of Upper Nile (197,000), and the central state of Lakes (119,000).

According to an April Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) report, approximately 70% of IDPs live in spontaneous settlement sites, 28% in PoC sites, and 2% in collective centres.

On 16 April, UNMISS reported that 67,000 people were sheltering in eight peacekeeping bases, including 12,000 in Bentiu, 32,000 in Juba (Tomping and UN House) and 18,000 in Malakal. According to OCHA at 17 April, the number of civilians seeking refuge in Bentiu UNMISS base rose to 14,000 following the rebel attack on Bentiu, from an estimate of 8,000 at the beginning of April.

At 9 April, overcrowding at UNMISS PoC sites reportedly posed significant risks for the IDPs. A relocation of IDPs from the Tomping UNMISS base, and expansion works at the Juba, Malakal, and Bor UNMISS bases, were in process. At 16 April, UNMISS reported that 1,500 civilians had been relocated from Tomping to UN House site. The relocation targets all 21,000 IDPs at the site. According to media reports, by mid-April, with the onset of the rainy season, the site was affected by flooding and stagnant water.

As of 6 February, humanitarian partners had reported that improved security in Jonglei state is allowing some IDPs to return to their home villages.

As of 20 January in the southern state of Eastern Equatoria, tens of thousands of people are reportedly congregating close to the border with Uganda, and OCHA indicated that the border with Uganda is open, which suggests that the displaced are not attempting to leave South Sudan. In Jonglei state, IDPs are reported to be fleeing Bor and its surroundings and heading west towards Lakes state.

Refugees in South Sudan

As of 24 March, UNHCR reported South Sudan hosts an estimated 235,000 refugees, mostly from neighbouring Sudan, and who are mainly in Upper Nile and Unity states (125,000 and 80,000 refugees, respectively). In late March, humanitarian organisations had expressed concern over the tensions between South Sudanese refugees and host communities in Maban county of Upper Nile state, South Sudan, where, according to OCHA on 3 April, 126,000 Sudanese refugees reside in four refugee camps.

Returnees

An estimated 71,000 South Sudanese have returned from Sudan since January 2013, totalling 1.9 million returnees from Sudan since 2007. Up to 350,000 South Sudanese remain in Sudan.

South Sudanese Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

On 8 April, UNHCR reported that the number of South Sudanese in neighbouring countries stood at 353,000, 283,000 of whom had left due to the recent conflict, according to 11 April figures. At 11 April, UNHCR reported that over 92,000 South Sudanese refugees had arrived in Ethiopia, 96,000 in Uganda, 33,000 in Kenya and 60,000 in Sudan. Humanitarian partners reported the daily rate of arrivals is estimated at 1,000 for Ethiopia, 890 for Uganda, 360 in Kenya, and 350 in Sudan. The humanitarian community expects the total number of South Sudanese refugees in the Gambella region of Ethiopia to reach 150,000 over the course of 2014.

In late March, disagreement arose between Sudanese and UN officials regarding the status of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals in Sudan. According to a statement by UNHCR on 3 April, the Sudanese Government has refused to recognise the South Sudanese nationals as refugees and instead has announced that it considered them to be Sudanese citizens. In late March, the Sudanese Government stated that all foreigners in Sudan had to legalise their situation by registering with the immigration administration by 1 April. UNHCR has declared that this dispute over the status of these South Sudanese nationals constitutes an obstacle to their access to humanitarian assistance.

Disasters
On 4 April, IOM reported that the onset of the rainy season had triggered flooding and the collapse of temporary shelters in displacement sites across the country. In late March, UN agencies had reported that the rainy season had started early, and that flooding was likely to increase humanitarian needs and the risk of a food crisis among IDPs. In late January, OCHA indicated that up to 300,000 IDPs are currently living in 33 sites that will be at risk of flooding during the rainy season (April–October). Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people currently reside in flood risk areas. According to OCHA on 10 March, early rains in the capital Juba caused flooding in the UN T Tommy displacement site, which hosts over 20,000 people. According to local observers, swamp communities of the Dinka ethnic group from Bor county, Jonglei state, who had fled to Tok area, Central Equatoria state, following fighting in December, are now seeking to relocate given the flooding forecast in Tok. Flood risk is also reported as high in the Mingkaman displacement sites, in Lakes state.

In early December, OCHA reported that seasonal flooding in South Sudan had affected up to 345,000 people, mostly in Jonglei (127,000), Northern Bahr El-gazal (45,700), Warrap (41,000), Unity (30,800), Lakes (30,400), and Central Equatoria (29,000).

**Food Security**

As of late January, humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people currently face Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phases 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority located in the eastern states of Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile. This represents almost four times the pre-crisis estimate of one million food insecure. On 18 April, humanitarian NGOs and US officials warned of a looming food and nutrition crisis in South Sudan, due to the continuing effects of conflict.

While the overall food security situation had improved slightly over the last two years, the Food Security Cluster has reported high food insecurity in conflict-affected areas. As of 7 March, Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4) were recorded in most of Jonglei state, in northern Unity state, and in parts of Upper Nile state. Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) were recorded in most of Central and Eastern Equatoria, northeastern Jonglei, southern Upper Nile, southern Unity, and northern Lakes. The rest of the territory is showing Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2), except for Western Equatoria state, which records Minimal levels (IPC Phase 1) of food insecurity.

**Outlook for Food Security**

Conflict is affecting major supply routes, displacing traders and leading to a rise in food and fuel prices. Local markets are also disrupted. Given that 78% of the rural population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, this disruption is concerning. In mid-January, FAO warned that violence was threatening to hamper the March planting season for maize, groundnuts, and sorghum.

South Sudan’s economy is almost entirely reliant on oil production and the ongoing internal crisis and tensions with neighbouring Sudan continue to threaten its production and export. There has been a reduction in oil revenues following disagreement over oil revenue sharing with Sudan since 2012.

Along with a de facto devaluation of the national currency between 2011 and 2013, the reduction in oil exports and the increase in imports are likely to reduce significantly households’ purchasing power. The country depends on food imports. The population relies mostly on low productivity agricultural and pastoral activities based on traditional systems. While the current crisis has not affected the main harvest, forecasted to be 38% above the recent four-year average, most conflict-affected states show high cereal production deficits against cereal demand.

### Health and Nutrition

At 14 April, according to UNICEF, rising malnutrition rates could put the lives of 50,000 children at risk. Malnutrition could be caused by a lack of food and access to health services, as well as the spread of infectious diseases. As of 4 February, health partners reported 19 suspected cases of measles in Yida refugee camp, Unity state. As of 23 January, health authorities raised the alarm about a possible outbreak of cholera in the UN base in Bor, Jonglei state, where thousands of people sought protection from the violence. Over 30 children reportedly died over the previous 10 days.

A measles outbreak was confirmed in Upper Nile state in early October 2013. Since August, 44 cases of measles had been registered in Malakal county, according to South Sudanese authorities and WHO. South Sudan declared an outbreak of meningitis in Malakal county in late May.

**Wild Poliovirus**

On 25 October, health officials announced that the country has been polio-free since June 2009, after three suspected cases tested negative. South Sudan had been on alert following polio outbreaks in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

**Hepatitis E**

OCHA reported that the hepatitis E outbreak that began in mid-2012 and peaked in February 2013 in refugee camps in Unity and Upper Nile states is now under control. Though the number of cases per week is decreasing in most locations, it is still increasing in others, with Maban and Doro refugee camps (Upper Nile state) of particular concern. In Maban, as of mid-July 2013, 11,279 cases and 205 deaths had been recorded since the beginning of the outbreak.

**Malnutrition**

At 14 April, according to UNICEF, rising malnutrition rates could put the lives of 50,000
children at risk if nutrition programmes are not scaled up.

According to OCHA, as of mid-June 2013, global acute malnutrition among under-fives stood at 18.1%. In August, WFP estimated the average national GAM rates to be at around 11%, with Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states showing serious to critical levels ranging from 14% to 21%.

WASH

According to an April CCCM report on IDP settlements, the average number of persons per latrine is of 52 in UN bases, 93 in spontaneous settlement sites, and 135 in collective centres. Water supplies were reportedly insufficient in a quarter of displacement sites. In 40% of sites, IDPs rely on unimproved or surface water sources.

As of mid-March, Central Equatoria authorities warned of the risks of a cholera outbreak in the capital Juba, if water and sanitation facilities are not improved before the April–October rainy season starts.

Education

According to a CCCM report, at 17 April children were not attending school in 70% of IDP sites.

Updated: 22/04/2014

SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

28 April: According to local sources, three people were killed after the shelling of a village by the Sudanese Air Force in the El Fashir area, North Darfur. On 26 April, local sources reported that an air raid had destroyed a water reservoir in Um Baru area, North Darfur.

26–27 April: At least ten people died in clashes between Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes in the area of El Sareif Beni, North Darfur, according to local sources. On 20 April, 7,000 people were reportedly displaced following an attack by Abbala camel herders on villagers in the Tawila locality, North Darfur.

26 April: Heavy rains caused widespread material damage and cattle losses in the area of Mershing, South Darfur, according to local sources.

25 April: According to local sources, the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) published its proposed roadmap for a peace settlement across Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and other conflict areas. The umbrella movement said it was ready to join the national dialogue with Khartoum and to enhance its cooperation with the UN–AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), provided the Government lift the state of emergency and allow unimpeded humanitarian access to war zones.

24 April: According to local sources, negotiations between Khartoum and the SPLM-N in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, failed. The case was referred back to the AUHIP chairperson.

24 April: According to local sources, an IPD camp representative in Zalingei, Central Darfur, was killed by Rapid Support Force militia. On 23 April, a displaced woman was reportedly killed in the Wadi Salih area, Central Darfur.

KEY CONCERNS

- Sudan is facing protracted insurgencies by several armed groups across Darfur, and South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. The conflict in South Sudan has also raised tensions: Khartoum has expressed concern about an influx of refugees and arms.

- Clashes between rebel groups, militias, and the Sudanese army in the Darfur region are estimated to have affected 332,000 people and displaced 325,000 since the eruption of violence in February, 224,000 of whom remain displaced (OCHA, April 2014). There are an estimated 2.8 million IDPs in Sudan; two million of whom are in Darfur, including 380,000 displaced in 2013 (OCHA, March 2014).

- An estimated 62,000 South Sudanese have crossed into Sudan since the beginning of the South Sudan crisis in mid-December (UNHCR, April 2014). 6.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 3.5 million people in Darfur and 1.2 million in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states (OCHA, December 2013).

- An estimated 4.2 million people face Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity. Most food insecure people are in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and the disputed Abyei area. Humanitarian access remains a significant problem due to insecurity, the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), logistical constraints, and restrictions placed by the authorities.

For specific information on Darfur and Blue Nile and South Kordofan, see below the general section.

Politics and Security

Tensions continue to run high between Sudan and South Sudan, where conflict since mid-December is affecting oil transit and causing population displacement. Khartoum is also dealing with numerous protracted insurgencies waged by several coordinated armed groups across Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

On 11 March, according to Amnesty International, one person was killed and over 100 students were arrested following peace demonstrations in Khartoum.

The east of the country, in contrast, has not seen a deadly conflict since 2006, but is still challenged by infighting within the Eastern Front (EF) alliance of armed groups, another indication of Sudan’s relative instability.
Sudan–South Sudan

Tensions between Khartoum and Juba have been increasing since violence erupted in South Sudan in December 2013. The two governments have been attempting to continue negotiations and implement agreements, but have also accused each other of supporting rebel forces. The disruption of oil flow is a key concern for both countries; oil and transit fees are their main source of foreign income.

On 23 April, according to media reports, the Sudanese Government accused Juba of using Sudanese rebel groups in its fight against Riek Machar’s SPLM-in-Opposition. Sudanese nationals were reportedly killed when the capital of Unity state in South Sudan, Bentiu, was taken by Machar’s forces on 15 April. SPLM-in-Opposition said Sudanese militiamen supporting South Sudanese President Salva Kiir had been killed during the capture of Bentiu. On 16 April, according to local media, the South Sudanese army had accused Khartoum of supporting the SPLM-in-Opposition. Both the rebels and Khartoum denied the accusation.

On 7 April, according to a UNHCR report, the city of Neem, in the northern part of South Sudan’s Unity state, was bombed by a suspected military aircraft. An aircraft was also spotted in the area of Yida, close to the border area of Jau, two days later. UNHCR reported that Yida hosts 70,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan, while Neem is located on a road used by incoming Sudanese refugees.

On 22 March, local sources reported that South Sudan and Sudan had agreed to accelerate negotiation of the implementation of a security mechanism and a border buffer zone, which had been agreed by the two countries in September 2012. Three days earlier, the two countries agreed to reanimate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). South Sudan had withdrawn from the agreement in November over a border dispute.

Sudanese officials denounced the involvement of the South Sudanese army (SPLA) in clashes between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka tribes in the disputed Abyei region on 2 March. South Sudan denied such involvement. Abyei has seen the arrival of 2,500 South Sudanese refugees since December, according to IOM.

In early January, Sudanese President Al Bashir met with his South Sudan counterpart President Kiir and expressed his willingness to support Juba’s Government and the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the East African regional bloc brokering the negotiation process in South Sudan. However, Khartoum also said that it had no intention of deploying troops to protect Juba’s oil-producing regions, citing past failures to establish military cooperation with South Sudan.

On 26 November, Khartoum hosted the fifth meeting of the Joint Security Committee: Sudan and South Sudan discussed their respective complaints and claims relating to the presence of, and support to, rebel groups in both countries. The two sides had issued a joint statement agreeing to expel rebel groups from the demilitarised zone between the two countries and open crossing points for oil export two months earlier. Tensions had risen in June over Juba’s alleged support for Sudanese rebels and Khartoum’s alleged support for rebels in Jonglei state, South Sudan.

In March 2013, the two countries signed a technical agreement on implementation of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement, which established a buffer zone, created a joint force to monitor and ensure security of the common border, and laid the groundwork for the re-launch of crude oil exports from South Sudan.

Insurgent Groups

Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups in the states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur. Violence in Blue Nile and South Kordofan has grown significantly since South Sudan won independence in 2011, and insurgents in Darfur have been active since 2003, when they took up arms accusing the Government of neglecting the region. This led to a counter-insurgency campaign in Darfur, which continues today.

Sudan Revolutionary Front

In late 2011, an alliance of opposition groups formed the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), with the stated aim of organising new elections to end the current regime. The SRF is made up of the SPLM-N, mainly active in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, as well as Darfur’s three largest rebel groups: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al Nur (SLM-AW), and the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Arkou Minnawi (SLM-MM).

On 25 April, according to local sources, the SRF published a proposed roadmap for a peace settlement over Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and other conflict areas. The umbrella movement said it was ready to join the national dialogue with Khartoum and to enhance its cooperation with the UN–AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), provided the Government lift the state of emergency and allow unimpeded humanitarian access to war zones. On 20 February, three SRF leaders met with the US Special Envoy to Sudan to discuss their position on the comprehensive peace process, unification of the negotiation platforms, and their view on President Al Bashir’s call for dialogue. They insisted that security must be established on the ground before any meaningful dialogue could take place.

In early November 2013, SRF representatives met with French, German, and UK representatives in Europe to discuss the humanitarian situation in rebel-held areas of Sudan and gather support for a comprehensive peace process. Representatives of the EU reportedly dismissed meeting the insurgents on the grounds that they could not accept any new forum for negotiations outside the framework of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). The African Union Peace and Security Council recently called on Darfuri rebels to join the DDPD negotiating table, warning that they would take measures against insurgents, and demanding that the UN Security Council also agree sanctions, if the insurgents rejected its appeal.

Peace talks remain deadlocked because the SRF demands a holistic process while the Government of Sudan is only willing to discuss the conflict in Darfur. Despite Khartoum’s peace gestures towards separate rebel factions, in mid-November the Defence Ministry announced the beginning of extensive military operations, which aim to end rebellion in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile by mid-2014. A large-scale military campaign was reportedly already ongoing in the three areas at the end of January 2013.
**Instability in the East**

Despite being home to the largest gold mine and Port Sudan, where all the country’s oil exports transit, east Sudan is one of the poorest regions. Though it has seen no deadly conflict since the signing of the 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA), it is currently challenged by increasing divisions between the various armed groups that form the Eastern Front (EF), the alliance that signed the agreement seven years ago. Factions of the EF have been calling for regime change, and claim they wish to join the southern and Darfuri-based SRF, because of spreading conflict and Khartoum’s alleged failure to implement the core elements of the ESPA. In 2012, activists demanded separation from Khartoum and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Eastern Sudan on the grounds that the Government was exploiting the region’s resources for its own gain and neglecting the development of eastern states. In an attempt to maintain dominance over the region, the Government is reportedly buying off tribal leaders by allowing local militias to arm, and boosting support to Arab tribes, raising fears of renewed inter-communal violence.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

The humanitarian situation remains critical, with several regions dealing with large-scale internal displacement, widespread food insecurity, malnutrition, lack of access to basic services – including healthcare – and recurrent natural disasters. According to OCHA, as of 31 January, 6.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

**Access**

Humanitarian access for international relief organisations remains a major problem, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian operations are heavily hampered by insecurity, the presence of mines and ERW, logistical constraints, and government restrictions.

In January, in the latest restrictions on foreign aid workers, the Government announced that it would suspend the activities of ICRC from February on the grounds that ICRC did not respect the guidelines for working in Sudan.

On 4 October 2013, the AU Rapporteur of the joint Sudan and South Sudan Security Committee announced that both countries had agreed to re-open five border crossings between the two countries. The Committee recommended that both countries agree on facilitation of delivery of humanitarian aid, the transport of citizens stranded at the borders, the relocation of refugees from the demilitarised zone, and the repatriation of prisoners of war. Information on whether these measures have been implemented is lacking.

On 21 August, the Sudanese Interior Minister announced that the Government would introduce new rules on the work of foreign relief organisations. Only national organisations will be authorised to work for human rights, excluding foreign humanitarian groups and UN agencies. The additional restrictions underlined Khartoum’s lasting discomfort with international organisations, which it has repeatedly accused of exaggerating the magnitude of internal conflicts, disseminating false information, and spying.

According to UNMAS, 250 locations, covering an estimated 32km², are contaminated by mines and ERW, with the greatest concentrations in Kassala, Gedaref, Red Sea, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur states.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

According to OCHA, as of 31 January an estimated 2.3 million Sudanese are internally displaced due to conflict, food insecurity, and environmental conditions. On 14 April, OCHA reported that clashes between rebel groups, militias, and the Sudanese army in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 325,000 people since the renewed conflict in February. At 22 April, 224,000 people remained displaced.

**Sudanese Refugees in Other Countries**

As of 9 March, OCHA reported that there were 353,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad, 237,000 in South Sudan and Ethiopia, and 5,000 in Central African Republic.

In late March, humanitarian organisations expressed concern over the tensions between Sudanese refugees and host communities in the Upper Nile state of South Sudan, where, according to OCHA on 3 April, 126,000 Sudanese refugees reside in four refugee camps.

On 6 March, local sources indicated that Sudanese refugees from Blue Nile state had been attacked in Upper Nile state, leaving 12 people unaccounted for. The clashes were reportedly the result of increased pressure and competition for scarce resources, and exacerbated by the war in South Sudan.

**Refugees in Sudan**

According to UNHCR, in mid-February Sudan was hosting 156,000 refugees, mostly from Eritrea, with smaller numbers from Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan.

There is concern about the arrival of refugees from South Sudan, and the potential return of 200,000 Sudanese refugees originally from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, given that the violence in South Sudan is reportedly most intense in the northeastern states of Upper Nile and Unity, where most Sudanese refugees are living.

At 23 April, UNHCR reported that 62,000 South Sudanese nationals had arrived in Sudan since 15 December. An estimated 2,500 South Sudanese had settled in the disputed area of Abyei, 33,000 in White Nile, 13,000 in South Kordofan, 12,000 in Khartoum, and the rest in West Kordofan and Blue Nile. UNHCR reported earlier in March that the daily rate of arrival averaged 350 people. According to UNHCR on 17 April, the Government had improved a relocation programme to move South Sudanese refugees from the Kilo 10 and Al Alagaya camps of White Nile state to three sites in the Kosti area. Acute respiratory infections, diarrheal disease and malaria were reportedly the most prominent health issues. The Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission had reported in late January that the number of South Sudanese refugees in Sudan was estimated at 8,100, most of whom were located in White Nile state.

In late March, disagreement arose between Sudanese and UN aid officials regarding the status of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals in Sudan. According to a statement by
UNHCR on 3 April, the Sudanese Government has refused to recognise newly arrived South Sudanese nationals as refugees and instead has announced it would consider them as Sudanese citizens. In late March, the Sudanese Government stated that all foreigners in Sudan had to legalise their situation by registering with the immigration administration by 1 April. UNHCR has declared that this dispute over the status of these South Sudanese nationals constitutes an obstacle to their access to humanitarian assistance.

South Sudanese Returnees

By mid-September 2013, an estimated 71,000 South Sudanese had returned from Sudan since January 2013. According to IOM, over two million people of South Sudanese origin have returned to South Sudan from Sudan since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005.

Food Security

As of 11 February, FEWSNET reported that an estimated 3.3 million people face food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. On 10 April, FAO said that this figure was expected to increase to four million in the coming months, due to the early onset of the lean season, rising food prices, and the impact of conflict and displacement. IDPs make up 80% of food insecure people. On 15 April, FEWSNET stated that the number of food insecure (IPC Phases 2 to 4) is expected to peak at five million in June 2014, due to decreasing food availability.

Food availability is reportedly decreasing as a result of conflict and of rising food prices. At 15 April, according to FEWSNET, cereal prices were increasing unseasonably, partly due to the reduced harvests in 2013/2014.

Households in drought-prone areas of North Darfur, North Kordofan, and Red Sea states are expected to evolve from Minimal (IPC Phase 1) to Stressed food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) with the early start of the lean season in March/April. This likely deterioration is based on below-average harvests, the likely continuation of conflict, refugee influx, rising prices, and limited food aid access. The deterioration is expected to affect primarily IDPs.

Agriculture and Markets

Harvest prospects for the 2013/14 main agricultural season have been revised downwards and are expected to be 30–35% below the national average. This year’s low production is mainly due to late and insufficient rains during critical times in the season. In eastern and central Sudan, rainfall totals over the season were 20–50% below average, according to FEWSNET. The late start of the rains resulted in a delayed July–September planting season, increasing the risk of wilting. In total, the areas planted across Sudan are 20–30% below the five-year average according to a September assessment by FEWSNET, FAO, USAID/FFP, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Insecurity and conflict are expected to reduce harvest prospects, as well as cause continued destruction of assets and displacement.

As of 28 February, FEWSNET reported that staple food prices were increasing due to a below-average sorghum harvest. Staple food prices had risen across most markets during the December harvest, with sorghum and millet prices being on average 30% above their 2012 levels, and 104% above their five-year averages, although food prices in general decreased, according to FEWSNET in January. Prices are likely to increase until June 2014.

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locusts were continuing to develop, mostly along the coast and in the Nile valley. The outbreak is expected to intensify in March, compounding an already deteriorating food security situation.

Health and Nutrition

Measles

On 2 March, OCHA reported four suspected cases of measles in Kassala state. On 24 November, the Federal Ministry of Health launched a national measles catch-up vaccination campaign targeting some 15 million children aged nine months to 15 years of age, OCHA reports. Sudan has experienced a resurgence in measles outbreaks since 2010, mainly due to population growth, with a major outbreak in Kassala in 2012.

Malnutrition

According to WHO, global acute malnutrition among children under five stands at 16.4%, above the emergency threshold of 15%. In mid-June, the Ministry of Health issued a report noting that 33% of children are chronically malnourished and 5.3% suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). An estimated 500,000 children under five suffer from SAM and up to two million children are stunted, according to a recent Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and partners report. Malnutrition rates in east Sudan (Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref states) are reportedly the highest in Sudan, with 28% of children suffering from moderate or severe acute malnutrition in Red Sea state, although it is difficult to obtain consistent data across the country.

Protection

On 22 March, local Sudanese officials announced that they would implement measures in border areas to stop human trafficking. On 14 March, members of the UN Human Rights Council had called on the governments of Sudan and Egypt to investigate and prosecute cases of abduction, torture and murder of Eritrean refugees by traffickers. According to a February human rights NGOs report, between 2010 and 2013 Sudanese traffickers kidnapped Eritrean refugees in Sudan and sold them to Egyptian traffickers in Sinai.

Darfur

Politics and Security

For over a decade, the Darfur states have been affected by various conflict dynamics, including fighting between government forces and rebel groups, and inter-tribal fighting. The region also faces rampant crime.

The Darfur Peace Process
Though some progress has been made, the Darfur peace process is currently stalled because it does not include all opposition groups, and because some groups have requested a comprehensive settlement for the whole of Sudan, and not a dialogue for Darfur only.

The process does not include SLM-MM, SLM-AW, or JEM, who have consistently rejected the Doha process and have been responsible for clashes with government forces across the state since April 2013. Like the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement, the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) has only a minority of the rebel movements as signatories – the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), and JEM–Mohamed Bashir, a splinter group of JEM.

On 7 March, African Union–UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) officials met with the leaders of JEM and SLM-MM in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of UN–AU mediation in the Darfur conflict. On 10 February, Joint AU–UN senior officials met with representatives of SLM-AW, SLM-MM, and JEM in Uganda, to follow up on outcomes of a technical workshop on peace and security in Darfur held in Ethiopia the previous December.

This three-day All Inclusive Peace and Security in Darfur Technical Workshop aimed to draw the Darfur movements that did not sign the 2011 DDPD to the negotiating table and revive the peace process. Parties discussed the humanitarian situation in Darfur and the lack of access to affected populations, and JEM and SLM-MM restated their demand for a comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable, negotiated peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflicts.

On 24 January, JEM had suspended its participation in meetings on the implementation of power sharing and security arrangements agreements, accusing the head of Darfur peace implementation of deliberately slowing the process. JEM also underlined the delay in the formation of the ceasefire commission, and added that UNAMID had not yet started the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process. On 26 January, President Al Bashir reportedly met with the leader of JEM in a bid to resolve the conflict.

On 20 November, the Government and the non-SRF-affiliated LJM signed an agreement aiming to integrate 3,000 former rebels in the army and police forces, concluding a long discussion brokered by UNAMID over the implementation of a security agreement signed in July 2011 as part of the DDPD.

Over 13–16 November, the AU–UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur met with the Vice President of South Sudan and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Security in Juba to discuss peace efforts. The visit was part of a larger tour including a number of Sudan's neighbours in an attempt to build consensus around the importance of regional cooperation to implement measures announced in the DDPD.

Military Operations

On 8 April, the Sudanese Air Force bombed the area of Um Baru in North Darfur, local media reported. On 6 April, the Sudanese Government announced that it had expelled rebels from the town of Kutum, North Darfur. Air strikes by government forces were reported on the same day. On 3 April, according to the same source, a clash between the SAF and border guards in Kutum had caused the death of three security and military officials. Attacks by pro-government militia in the region have reportedly caused the displacement of 10,000 people between mid-March and early April. On 1 April, the North Darfur state government convened a meeting in the state capital El Fashir to discuss an emergency plan for the people affected by the recent surge in militia attacks.

On 22 March, the SAF announced that they had recaptured SLM-MM-held areas of North Darfur. On 13 March, the SLM-MM had announced it had captured the town of Mellit, 80km north of El Fashir. Sudanese officials said the SAF had repelled the attack. According to local sources, 78 soldiers, 9 rebels, and 10 civilians were killed during the clash. On 20 and 21 March, according to local sources, a further five people were killed in SAF bombardments of Mellit.

On 27 March, according to local sources, an SAF raid on the area of Khazan Tunjur, in East Jebel Marra, killed three civilians. Local sources reported that aerial bombings by the Sudanese Air Force intensified in the East Jebel Marra area of South Darfur 16–20 March, causing a number of deaths and the displacement of thousands of people. Since August 2013, the Sudanese Air Force has carried out regular air raids on East Jebel Marra and Nyala in South Darfur, and Kadja and Dady in North Darfur. Security has reportedly deteriorated significantly since late December, with almost daily air strikes. At least 14 deaths have been reported since August 2013, with dozens of casualties, and widespread damage.

Insecurity and Violence Targeting Civilians

On 28 April, local sources reported three people killed after the shelling of a village by the Sudanese Air Force in the El Fashir area, North Darfur. On 26 April, according to local sources, an air raid destroyed a water reservoir in Um Baru area, North Darfur. On 23 April, a civilian died after he was set on fire by pro-government militiamen in El Fashir, North Darfur, according to local sources.

On 6 April, local sources reported that the El Fashir–Kutum road in North Darfur had been closed for four weeks. Earlier local reports indicated that this was due to the insecurity generated by RSF attacks in the area of Kutum. RSF attacks were reported by local media in Kutum, where an infant was killed on 8 April, and in the El Fashir area, where three civilians were killed on 8 and 11 April.

The security situation in Saraf Omra area of North Darfur has improved, and IDPs have started to return, according to OCHA on 7 April. However, according to local sources on 22 April, IDPs were still coming to Central Darfur from the Saraf Omra area. According to Sudanese aid officials, nearly 32,000 people were displaced between late February and 17 March, due to attacks by Musa Hilal’s Janjaweed militia in the Saraf Omra locality.

On 18 March, according to local sources, clashes between police and border officers in El Fashir led to an unconfirmed number of deaths. At 24 March, according to OCHA, SLM-MM attacks in the El Taweisha area, North Darfur, had displaced 81,000 people.

On 22 April, according to local sources, UNAMID officials have pledged the deployment of an additional 6,000 peacekeepers at the Nyala base, South Darfur. Sources indicated that the area may be targeted by RSF attacks.
On 24 April, according to local sources, an IDP camp representative in Zalingei, Central Darfur, was killed by RSF militia. On 23 April, a displaced woman was reportedly killed in the Wadi Salih area, Central Darfur.

On 25 April, one IDP was reportedly killed by pro-government militias in Nyala, South Darfur.

On 15 April, according to local sources, two people were killed in an attack by the pro-government RSF against a village in the East Jebel Marra region of Darfur.

In late March, at least four civilians were reportedly killed in attacks targeting IDP camps in Central, North, and East Darfur. At 5 March, according to local sources, dozens of civilians had been killed by the RSF in South Darfur, 11 in militia attacks in North Darfur, and six in Central Darfur. According to local sources on 12 March, IDPs in camps across North Darfur, South Darfur, Central Darfur, and West Darfur have requested protection against attacks by pro-government Janjaweed militias.

Infighting within the SLM-AW has also reportedly caused the displacement of thousands of people in the East Jebel Marra area of South Darfur.

On 15 March local sources reported that the RSF, which had been deployed to South Darfur from North Kordofan in late February, attacked East Jebel Marra before the SAF bombed the area. On 27 February, according to OCHA, clashes occurred between the SLM-MM and the SAF in Nyala, South Darfur, following the deployment of the RSF. According to local sources, the RSF attacked civilians and IDP camps, causing IDP representatives to request protection measures from UNAMID and Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) officials.

On 19 February, the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) and pro-government militia raided an IDP camp in Zalingei, Central Darfur, with reports indicating that residents were beaten and their shelters looted as they demonstrated against the Social Peace Conferences organised by the Darfur Regional Authority. Two people were allegedly killed by troops and more than 20 others wounded.

**Tribal Violence**

On 9 September, Darfuri leaders took part in a conference organised by UNAMID in Khartoum to discuss the root causes of recent tribal conflicts and seek solutions for peaceful coexistence among tribes. Participants recommended disarmament, the establishment of laws regulating relations between farmers and pastoralists, and the settlement of disputes over land resources.

Yet regional tribal conflicts continue. On 2 February 2014, representatives from the AU, the Government of Sudan, the UN, and UNAMID met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the 17th Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNAMID. Concern was expressed about the deterioration of security in Darfur throughout 2013.

**North Darfur Tribal Violence**

On 26–27 April, according to local sources, at least ten people died in clashes between Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes in the area of El Sareif Beni, North Darfur. On 20 April, 7,000 people had reportedly been displaced following an attack by Abbala camel herders on villagers in the Tawila locality.

Although returns of IDPs to the Saraf Omra area had been reported during the first half of April, the area was still experiencing violence according to a local media report on 22 April. In early March, fighting had intensified in the area of Saraf Omra, causing the displacement of thousands of people, according to UNAMID. Violence between militias and Tama tribes members led to the closure of school and government institutions. Eleven people were reportedly killed. A heavy presence of the SLM–MM had been reported in the Taweisha and El Lait areas.

On 26 July 2013, the rival Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes signed a comprehensive peace agreement in El Fashir, and on 18 August the treaty came into effect. Roads linking Saraf Omra with Al Sareif Beni Hussein were reopened. The two tribes agreed to cease hostilities, hold outlaws from any side accountable, and return all stolen agricultural lands. The tribes had clashed violently since early 2013 over control of the Jebel Amer gold mine in Al Sareif Beni Hussein, leaving 839 people dead as of August, according to authorities. The UN reported that an estimated 150,000 people had been displaced. UN reports further note that the gold mine death toll is twice the number of all people killed by fighting in Darfur in 2012.

**South Darfur Tribal Violence**

According to the UN Department of Safety and Security, the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in South Darfur signed a peace agreement on 15 December 2013, which aimed to pave the way for the deployment of government forces to secure the area, the return of IDPs, and the disarmament of tribesmen.

On 17 March, local sources reported that the Beni Halba and Gimir tribes had signed a reconciliation agreement in Nyala, after a year of negotiation. As of 16 March, according to OCHA, renewed tribal violence between various groups has caused the displacement of an estimated 59,000 people in the area of Um Gunya.

**Central Darfur Tribal Violence**

On 2 April, according to a local NGO, fighting erupted between two Arab tribes, Nawaya and Ergat, in Nertiti area, causing two deaths. Violence between local tribes has intensified as resources become scarce.

Localized fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central Darfur has flared over past months. The fighting is primarily linked to a longstanding conflict over access to resources. Between 17 and 20 February, clashes between Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen in Um Bukhun led to dozens of deaths and the displacement of 10,000 people, according to local sources and OCHA. Violence reportedly erupted following the assassination of a Misseriya tribal chief, but local authorities blamed the fighting on the withdrawal of the National Intelligence and Security Services and the Central Reserve Forces from the region. On 12 March, pro-government militias reportedly killed two people and stole 100 cattle.

In mid-November 2013, unverified reports suggested that over 50 people were killed and...
many others wounded following violence in the Abuzar IDP camp, in the area of Um Dukhun town. Only a week earlier, three days of tribal clashes had killed 100 people and injured many more. Heavy fighting between the Salamat and Misseriya, and their Taaysha allies closed markets and roads; there were also reports of civilian abuse by combatants. The fighting escalated following cattle raiding. At the same time, fierce fighting reportedly took place in Amar Jadid in Mukjar. The Central Darfur State Government Security Committee and the Governor visited Um Dukhun in an attempt to facilitate dialogue between the belligerents and reinvigorate the July peace agreement.

Unconfirmed reports suggest that nine Chadian soldiers were killed during clashes with Salamat tribesmen trying to flee Sudan after violent battles in Central Darfur. The Chadian troops were part of a joint force with Sudan and allegedly killed around Um Dukhun, on the border with Chad.

**East Darfur: Rizeigat and Maaliya Tribes**

On 20 March, 17 people were killed in clashes between Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes in the village of El Sahab. The two tribes had been engaged in a reconciliation process: in early December 2013, the AU–UN Joint Special Representative had met with state authorities and traditional leaders of the Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes in East Darfur.

From mid-July, tensions over land ownership and cattle had increased between Rizeigat and Maaliya in Kulaykil Abu Salama in Adila. On 22 August, a peace deal was signed between the two Arab tribes, aimed to end the fighting and the displacement of 144,000 people, and prepare for a reconciliation conference. But in September, more clashes caused the death of over 40 people and injured dozens. On 23 October, local media reported that three people from the Maaliya tribe were killed in an attack by members of the Rizeigat tribe in Bakhit, Abu Karinka locality.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

OCHA reported in March that 3.5 million people, a third of Darfur’s population, need humanitarian assistance. This includes two million IDPs, 1.2 million non-displaced severely affected by violence, and 136,000 returnees or refugees from neighbouring countries.

**Access**

Access to Darfur remains restricted due to hostilities and insecurity, including the direct targeting of aid workers and peacekeepers. On 20 March, an aid worker after being hit by a stray bullet in El Fashir.

On 26 March, UNHCR reported that access to locations affected by new displacement was improving. OCHA indicated on 7 April that security was improving in the Saraf Omra area, North Darfur, although on 22 April, local media reported continuing displacement from the area. On 6 April local sources asserted that thousands who fled attacks by armed militia in North Darfur in early April are receiving no humanitarian assistance.

On 14 April, OCHA reported that humanitarian agencies had access to 249,000. An estimated 203,000 out of 262,000 new Darfur IDPs had been accessed. On 31 March, OCHA had reported a number of major accessibility issues; in North Darfur, access was limited in El Taweisha, El Lait and Kutum, which has been cut off from El Fashir since early March due to the closure of the road. A further local media report on 14 April indicated that 8,700 new IDPs in the El Salam area of North Darfur had received little to no humanitarian aid; 9,000 IDPs at Kalma camp in South Darfur were receiving no humanitarian aid.

The East Jebel Marra region, which lies across North, South, and West Darfur, has been virtually inaccessible since 2010. On 15 April, local sources reported that following attacks allegedly by the RSF in East Jebel Marra, roads from this area to El Fashir, Tawila and Shangil Tobaya (North Darfur), Nyala (South Darfur) were closed.

In East Darfur, Abu Karinka and Adila localities have been inaccessible since August 2013. In Central Darfur, insecurity is hindering the movement of humanitarian supplies by road, especially to the southern corridor localities of Um Dukhun and Birdisi.

On 3 March, UNAMID reported that authorities denied its peacekeeping soldiers access to regions affected by renewed violence and displacement in Darfur.

According to the UN, 16 peacekeepers were killed in hostile acts in Darfur in 2013, representing a 50% increase from 2012, and bringing the number of personnel killed to 57 since UNAMID was deployed in 2008. On 29 November 2013, the UN reported that two Sudanese health ministry workers helping to vaccinate children were killed. On 23 October, the leader of a national NGO was killed by gunmen in South Darfur, according to OCHA.

**Disasters**

On 26 April, according to local sources, heavy rains caused widespread material damage and cattle losses in the area of Mershing, South Darfur.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

On 14 April, OCHA reported that clashes between rebel groups, militias, and the Sudanese army in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 325,000 people since the eruption of conflict in February. At 22 April, 224,000 people remained displaced. According to OCHA on 31 March, there are nearly two million IDPs in Darfur, including 400,000 displaced in 2013. This figure is over twice the number of people internally displaced in Darfur in 2011 and 2012 combined.

At 24 March, OCHA reported that there were 81,000 IDPs in the El Taweisha area of North Darfur. Earlier OCHA figures on 16 March indicated that fighting had led to the displacement of a cumulated total of 65,000 people in Saraf Omra, of which 53,000 had returned. OCHA figures on 7 April suggested that the returns in Saraf Omra area constitute the bulk of overall returns in Darfur, estimated at 58,000 people. However, according to local sources on 22 April, IDPs were still coming to Central Darfur from the Saraf Omra area.

According to local sources, attacks by RSF in the area of Kutum had reportedly caused...
the displacement of 10,000 people in mid-March, and another 30,000 people were displaced by RSF attacks in the area on 16 March. According to an inter-agency assessment on 13 March, IDPs' most pressing needs are household items, food, and WASH. Protection needs are also considered high due to the presence of armed groups.

As of 24 March, according to OCHA, recent tribal and militia violence was estimated to have displaced 61,000 in the Um Gunya area of South Darfur. The bulk of displacements occurred around El Salam and Nyal. As of 11 March, according to an inter-agency assessment, the priority needs of IDPs from the Um Gunya area are food, household supplies, shelter, water, sanitation, health, and education services. Between March and November 2013, according to HAC, an estimated 55,000 people had been displaced due to inter-tribal fighting in South Darfur. According to a December assessment, most pressing IDP needs were water, non-food items, and health services.

As of 17 March, according to Sudanese aid officials, 32,000 people had arrived in the Fass area of Central Darfur, following clashes in Saraf Omra. Over 25,000 people have been internally displaced in Central Darfur since April 2013, when fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes began. There is little information available about civilian displacement caused by the fighting in early November, although local media reported population movements from Central to South Darfur. Between April and June 2013, fighting between the two tribes created 22,000 IDPs, and displaced 30,000 people to Chad and 3,300 to CAR, according to UNHCR.

In East Darfur, an estimated 176,000 people have been displaced since April 2013 due to fighting between SAF and the SLM-MM and inter-tribal fighting between Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes. Of these, 140,000 have been displaced as a result of tribal clashes that began in August 2013. While government restrictions have prevented humanitarian organisations from assessing the needs of these people or verifying their number, ECHO reported on 12 September that the most urgent needs appear to be food, non-food relief supplies, shelter, WASH, and healthcare.

Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

According to UNHCR as of 22 November, around 36,200 Sudanese refugees from Darfur have arrived in Chad since January 2013, bringing the estimated number of Sudanese refugees in Chad to 346,000. Some 3,400 new Sudanese refugees have arrived in CAR from Central Darfur since January 2013.

Food Security

Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) are expected in Darfur January–June. As of January, FEWSNET reported that continued violence is impacting harvests and access to markets and food assistance. IDPs are most affected, with at least 30% of recent IDPs (who missed the harvest season in 2013) not having received any humanitarian assistance.

This situation is likely to be compounded by increasing staple food prices, mainly due to below-average harvests. According to FEWSNET, as of late February, retail sorghum harvest output were 50% below average in Darfur.
On 24 April, according to local sources, Khartoum and the SPLM-N announced the failure of their negotiations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The case was referred back to the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP) chairperson. Peace talks had resumed on 22 April. The AU has set a 30 April deadline for the signature of an agreement. Reports on 25 April indicated that the talks had failed over the recurring problem of diverging views between Khartoum and the SPLM-N. The latter have repeatedly demanded a comprehensive peace process, whereas the Sudanese government has said it was ready to negotiate a separate solution for South Kordofan and Blue Nile. On 2 March the AUHIP had announced the adjournment of negotiations on the conflict in the ‘Two Areas’ of Blue Nile and South Kordofan following a deadlock between the two parties, who have failed thus far to agree on the framework and agenda of the talks. The talks had begun on 13 February, with both sides meeting for the first time, and broken down five days later.

The SPLM-N is an offshoot of the group that initially led the southern rebellion during the 1983–2005 civil war and is now in power in South Sudan. SPLM-N has reportedly demanded humanitarian access to the civilians in rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which Khartoum rejected on the grounds that rebels would take advantage of humanitarian assistance. On 23 February, the AU had proposed an agreement that included humanitarian access to more than one million people, the adoption of an immediate ceasefire, and the designation of the third-party to monitor its implementation on the ground. But no progress was made.

The Government chief negotiator had said issues relating to the humanitarian situation would be addressed but insisted the two sides focus on a political partnership as outlined in the framework agreement reached on 28 June 2011. SPLM-N reportedly expected to negotiate a comprehensive cessation of hostilities and the opening of humanitarian corridors as well as a comprehensive political solution with the participation of all political forces and civil society groups. On 11 April, local media reported that the Sudanese Defence Minister had called on rebel factions to take part in the peace process, stating that continued opposition would be crushed by a summer military offensive.

In mid-January, South Kordofan’s governor called on traditional leaders to convince rebels to lay down their weapons, join the ongoing efforts to develop the region, and hold a conference for peaceful coexistence. Negotiations between Khartoum and SPLM-N had previously collapsed in April 2013.

Security Context

Armed clashes between SAF and SRF forces continue to cause death and displacement in South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Blue Nile. Aerial bombardment by the SAF has reportedly escalated, and tensions have intensified as roads become passable with the end of the rainy season in mid-November.

According to an SPLM-N spokesperson quoted by local sources on 21 April, the SAF launched an offensive in North Kordofan, causing the displacement of 70,000 people.

On 15 April, according to an international organisation, satellite images suggested that a major SAF offensive was being prepared in the Nuba Mountains region of South Kordofan. The same source reported evidence that RSF militias were also being mobilised.

According to a January 2014 INGO report, South Kordofan has seen the highest number of bombings and civilian casualties in more than two years, with an estimated 25,000 people displaced, notably from the mountainous northeastern El Abassiya and Rashad counties, and the north-central Al Sunut and Delling counties.

On 12 March, three children were killed in an aerial bombing on El Nagara, in the Nuba Mountains region of South Kordofan. According to an INGO report, at least 30 people were killed in aerial bombings in February. Local sources reported that suspected SPLM-N rebels launched a rocket attack against Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan on 19 February, a day after peace talks with the Government broke down. According to the January INGO report, Government forces suffered heavy losses of life and equipment in early January in South Kordofan, near the border with South Sudan. Since mid-January, the military has refocused operations on Blue Nile state, increasing air strikes. On 31 December, the SAF reported that it had recaptured several rebel-held areas bordering South Sudan. However, SPLM-N rebels denied this. Accurate information has been difficult to verify as Government authorities severely restrict access to the fighting zone.

South Kordofan is the most heavily-mined area of Sudan, according to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, and local sources noted on 12 February that five people were killed and another 13 wounded in a landmine explosion.

Aerial bombing and fighting between SAF and SRF, and between SAF and SPLM-N, continued throughout November and December 2013. An August 2013 report by Sudan Consortium (a coalition of 50 Africa-based and Africa-focused NGOs) reported that at least 23 civilians had been killed and another 81 injured due to aerial bombardments since January 2013.

In Blue Nile, on 27 January, local sources reported that SAF bombardments in the area of Yabus caused one death and triggered population displacement into nearby valleys and forests. On 19 January, rebels claimed to have killed dozens of soldiers and seized military weapons and artillery. The SAF denied this claim. In mid-January, local sources reported that SAF aerial bombing killed three civilians and injured four. In October 2013, the monitoring platform South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN-CU) reported that Sudan Air Force aerial bombardments resulted in civilian casualties and displacement in multiple localities.

Armed clashes in West Kordofan between the Hamar and Maaliya tribes were reported on 5 December in the Um Deibut area, near the border with East Darfur state. According to local reports, at least 38 members of the two tribes were killed. The fighting reportedly stopped following the deployment of the SAF.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

According to OCHA on 31 March, 1.2 million people in government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states need humanitarian assistance, including 433,000 non-displaced who are severely affected by the violence. SPLM-N estimates, reported by OCHA on 31 March, that there are 800,000 people either displaced or severely affected by the conflict in areas not controlled by the Government in the two states. Limited humanitarian access makes verification impossible.
Access

Due to insecurity and restrictions by the authorities, humanitarian access to insurgent-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states is virtually non-existent. The authorities have banned foreign groups from accessing rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. As of mid-October, there has been no humanitarian access from Sudan to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan.

On 25 June, the Sudanese ruling National Congress Party (NCP) warned foreign aid groups expelled from Sudan against entering Blue Nile and South Kordofan states without government permission. The NCP Secretary stated that some organisations previously working in Sudan who had been expelled due to violating government policies were trying to sneak back in. He claimed that these groups sought entrance through political organisations and people with connections to rebels in order to collect information on the humanitarian situation and fabricate reports with the help of organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International.

Displacement

IDPs

On 31 March, OCHA reported that an estimated 800,000 people were either displaced or severely affected by violence in non-government controlled areas of the two states. OCHA had reported on 30 June 2013 that 231,000 people in government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and 120,000 in Blue Nile were displaced or severely affected by conflict. In SPLM-N areas, 700,000 people in South Kordofan and 90,000 in Blue Nile are displaced or severely affected by conflict, according to local estimates. With no presence in SPLM-N controlled areas, the UN is unable to verify these figures.

OCHA, estimates that 2,800 people, including 1,850 children and 600 women, have fled fighting and food insecurity in the Jugo, Seen, Com Reg and Bobuk areas in Bau locality in Blue Nile state, and taken shelter in the El Gerri area, north of El Roseires. As reported by local media in early December, renewed tribal fighting in the Um Deibut area in West Kordofan triggered the displacement of over 6,000 people to El Taboun and Babanusa in West Kordofan, and Adila in East Darfur.

Sudanese Refugees in Other Countries

At 31 March, according to OCHA, 250,000 people have fled from the two states to South Sudan and Ethiopia.

On 17 January, the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, the humanitarian wing of SPLM-N, reported that armed violence in South Sudan is affecting thousands of Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile. According to UNHCR, there are over 200,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile in South Sudan’s Unity and Upper Nile states.

SKBN-CU reported that in late November 2013 over 3,800 people from South Kordofan and Blue Nile crossed into South Sudan and Ethiopia. During September, refugees arrived in Upper Nile state, South Sudan, from Talodi and Abu Jubaiha areas of South Kordofan due to aerial bombardments and acute food insecurity, according to SKBN-CU. Following ground fighting in Blue Nile, 3,000 refugees reportedly crossed into Ethiopia in late September. As of early October, 32,000 refugees from Blue Nile had arrived in Ethiopia since 2011.

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in January, fighting is likely to trigger further displacement, disrupt market access, and have a further adverse effect on food security: conflict-affected areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile reportedly show the highest levels of food insecurity in the country. The 2013/2014 harvest is expected to be below average.

In SPLM-N controlled areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, food security is expected to deteriorate to IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) respectively as of March/April. This likely deterioration is assumed on the basis of below-average harvests, the continuation of conflict, refugee influx, rising prices, and limited food aid access. The deterioration is expected to affect primarily the IDP populations.

As of October 2013, according to a joint Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 104,240 people in South Kordofan, and 100,000 people in Blue Nile, faced Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) levels of food insecurity. An estimated 30% of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan remain at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity; 20% of poor residents in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and IDPs in Government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states will remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels.

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust development were ongoing in the Nile valley, with the outbreak expected to intensify over the course of the month, compounding an already deteriorating food security situation.

Health and Nutrition

The UN estimated in mid-December 2013 that 165,000 children in rebel-held parts of South Kordofan and Blue Nile do not have access to basic health services, including vaccinations against measles and polio.

Polio

The HAC announced that the polio vaccination campaign planned for SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile was still delayed as of January 2014, with the Government and SPLM-N unable to agree on logistics. In late October, the Government had announced a 12-day cessation of hostilities in non-government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states from 5 November 2013 to facilitate a polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation campaign for children under five. If the vaccination campaign is implemented, it will be the first cross-line access into SPLM-N areas within Sudan since 2011.

Yellow Fever

In mid-November, Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Health alerted WHO to a yellow fever outbreak in West and South Kordofan. WHO also reported that, between 3 October and 24
November 2013, 44 suspected cases of viral hemorrhagic fever, including 14 deaths, presenting a case fatality rate of 31.8%; 12 localities in West and South Kordofan were affected as of late November.

Updated: 29/04/2014

BURKINA FASO FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
No new developments this week. Last update: 10/04/2014.

KEY CONCERNS
- Long-term displacement of 32,170 Malian refugees continues to put pressure on the resources of host communities (UNHCR, February 2014).
- An estimated 3.3 million people are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, March 2014).
- 430,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, of whom 115,000 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Regional Context

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to institutionalise alignment as well as monitor and coordinate development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritania President Abdel Aziz and follows a pledge by the international community of US$8 billion to these countries to fight terrorism and support development in the region. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad within six months.

National Context

Burkina Faso has been generally politically stable for over two decades, but of late has suffered from fallout of the political and military crisis in neighbouring Mali. Instability and unrest in Niger and Côte d’Ivoire further impact the country.

Political divisions arising from concerns that President Compaoré may push for constitutional changes, potentially revising Article 37 of the Constitution allowing him to run again in 2015, led to a wave of resignations in early January and could lead to further political instability.

Large-scale public protests organised by opposition parties took place on 18 January 2014. A new political party, the Mouvement du peuple pour le progrès (People’s Movement for Progress, or MPP), was created by those leaving the ruling party on 25 January. The President of the MPP is the former head of the National Assembly, Roch Kabore. The ruling party created an alliance called the Front républicain with 40 other political parties. On 4 February, public sector unions staged a 48-hour strike across the country. On March, an attempted mediation of the sociopolitical crisis had not succeeded in resolving the issue of amending Article 37 of the Constitution. Protests have been peaceful so far, but significant upheaval could ensue if the President were to push through the amendments.

Burkina Faso remains at risk of social unrest stemming from disputes over land, traditional leadership, and increasing inequalities. In 2011, a number of violent protests erupted in various cities due to public distrust in the ruling authorities.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Refugees

According to biometric registration by UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF), as of late February, over 34,000 refugees reside in Burkina Faso. Most reside in the four refugee camps (12,300 in Mentao, 9,970 in Goudebou, 1,900 in Sagnioniogo and 1,150 in Bobo-Dioulasso), while 25% live in villages in Ouadian province (Inabao, Tin-Hedja, Dibissi, Déou, etc.).

The total number of Malian refugees is 32,170, 22,605 of whom are in the three refugee camps (Mentao, Goudoubo and Sagnioniogo). This figure is a decrease of 17,700 since April 2013. UNICEF has also registered 1,400 unaccompanied or separated children.

Food Security

According to the results of the Cadre Harmonisé held in March, almost 3.3 million people (18% of Burkinfasso’s total population) are at risk of food insecurity in some 19 provinces across the country, due to chronic structural vulnerabilities, compounded by recurrent shocks such as drought, flood, epidemics, and locusts, which have eroded household and community resilience, and caused families to rely on negative coping strategies.

The food insecurity and malnutrition crisis affecting the Sahel region had a lingering effect on Burkina Faso in 2013. The time needed for affected families to recover from the 2012 drought and acute food crisis, combined with chronic problems such as insufficient access to health services and water and sanitation, continue to expose the most vulnerable households to a wide variety of risks affecting their nutritional status.

On 22 March, FEWSNET reported that Burkina Faso will face Minimal food security (IPC Phase 1) in September 2014 and will not need external food assistance. The key lean season will take place from July to September 2014. On 24 February, FEWSNET reported that poor households in and around the Sahel region, including those in Burkina Faso, increasingly lack access to food and are therefore more reliant on market purchases and more likely to sell their livestock as a means of survival.

Regionally, the 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was average. However, FEWSNET reported that localised erratic rainfall in northern areas and the southern Sahel has resulted
in crop losses of up to 50% and below-average pasture growth. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households. Pasture and water availability for livestock is also lower than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than usual.

The national situation regarding food insecurity is further influenced by the 20 million people currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region, 2.5 million of whom need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. An estimated five million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, 1.5 million of whom will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes, creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis, and pressure on resources.

Continued food assistance is needed in the Sahel, north, and east as a result of localised rainfall deficits in 2013. Oudalan and Soum provinces in the northern Sahel region, already facing food insecurity and high malnutrition rates, are heavily affected by the arrival of 32,000 refugees from Mali. OCHA reported in early July that the arrival of Malian refugees and their cattle had further increased pressure on scarce resources leading to tensions with local communities. A May WFP and UNHCR assessment showed that 15% of Malian refugee households have poor or borderline food consumption, against 13% in the host population. A February FAO/WFP joint assessment indicated an elevated prevalence of food insecurity in Malian refugee camps and in Burkinabé host communities, with an estimated 52% of refugees and 58% of host populations affected by food insecurity.

On 24 March, the UN reported that severe food shortages in the Sahel and West Africa are also the result of inefficient intra-regional trade, placing significant strain on food availability, and exacerbating hunger. Poor roads and railways, high transaction costs, lack of sufficient market information, incoherent trade policies by governments and bureaucratic hurdles are among limitations to free trade in West Africa.

Health and Nutrition

Meningitis

On 19 March, WHO reported that from 24 February to 2 March, 141 cases of meningitis were reported, and 15 people died. Since the beginning of 2014, 957 cases and 98 deaths have been reported. An alert threshold has been reached in the areas around Bobo-Dioulasso (West) and Bousse (Centre).

Located in the African meningitis belt, the country has faced a series of outbreaks since 1996, with 2,800 cases and 320 deaths (fatality rate of 11.5%) reported as of 15 December 2013 in all 63 districts of Burkina Faso since the beginning of the year.

Measles

From January to October 2013, 2,832 cases of measles were reported, with a mortality rate of 0.42%. Of these cases, 976 cases (34%), but no deaths, were reported in the Sahel region.

Malnutrition

As of late March, OCHA reported that 430,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, including 115,000 from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). The latest SAM caseload represents a significant increase compared to October 2013, where UNICEF reported 96,000 cases.

Malnutrition is of particular concern among certain Malian refugee communities, especially in Mentao (GAM: 5.5%; SAM: 2.1%) and Goudebou (GAM: 10.6%; SAM: 1%).

As reported by OCHA on 11 March, the national SAM rate was 8.2% in 2013, down from 10.9% in 2012, while chronic malnutrition rate dropped fractionally, to 31.5% from 32.9% over the same period, according to government health statistics.

UNICEF estimates that one million under-fives in Burkina Faso are affected by stunting due to chronic malnutrition. Stunting rates are particularly high in the Sahel (46%) and East regions (43%).

Reviewed: 24/04/2014

ETHIOPIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

21 April: WHO said it was concerned about health conditions in Kule refugee camp as a consequence of flooding and stagnant water. Kule camp hosted 36,000 South Sudanese refugees at 21 April according to OCHA.

KEY CONCERNS

- Armed insurgencies continue to affect the southeastern Ogaden region. Intercommunal tensions cause frequent violence.

- Ethiopia is host to over 500,000 refugees, including people from Kenya and South Sudan (UNHCR, March 2014). Over 96,000 South Sudanese refugees are hosted in the northern Gambella region, 95% of whom are women and children (UNHCR, April 2014).

- An estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance, a 12% increase on the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia, Somali, Amhara, Tigray, and Afar (FAO, March 2014).

- Measles cases have surged since mid-January 2014, with over 5,000 suspected cases reported to date (OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Ethiopia is considered comparatively stable, but two decades of deadly conflict in the southeastern region of Ogaden have had a severe impact on the Ethiopian Somali...
population, especially after five years of a relatively successful government counter-insurgency campaign. While there are signs that the peace process may restart in the coming months, deep clan tensions and intra-communal violence persist against the backdrop of wider regional rivalries involving neighbouring Somalia and Kenya. The Government has successfully suppressed protests and contained armed insurgencies in Ogaden and Oromo regions, but has yet to address the root causes of the violence.

According to observers, Ethiopia is likely to remain stable in the coming decade, due to weak political opposition, the perspective of a new peace process between the Government and separatist groups, and Addis Ababa’s determination to accelerate economic growth in a context of sustainable peace. However, the recent shift in national leadership, following the death of the longstanding Prime Minister Meles in August 2012, is raising fears of unrest if new constituencies start voicing grievances against the lack of political freedom and an economic situation characterised by high inflation and food insecurity.

**Participation in Regional Military Operations**

Ethiopia has been involved in peacekeeping and counter-terrorism military operations in the East African region. On 5 March, Ethiopia announced it was considering sending troops to South Sudan as part of a protection and stabilisation force. Peace talks on the South Sudan conflict, under the mediation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, are in progress in the capital, Addis Ababa. The latest round of negotiations was held on 27–31 March. Talks are expected to resume in late April.

On 7 March Ethiopian troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) helped Somali forces capture the Al Shabaab-held city of Hudur, capital of Bakool region in southwestern Somalia. In January 2014, according to official reports, Addis Ababa pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is achieved. The Somali militant group Al Shabaab has repeatedly threatened Ethiopia since Ethiopian troops arrived in Somalia. On 13 October 2013, a bomb blast killed two people in Addis Ababa. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. The Government has thwarted plots of attacks blamed on rebel groups based in the south and southeast and on Al Shabaab.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

**Refugees**

As of 28 February, UNHCR reported that Ethiopia was hosting over 500,000 refugees, including 239,000 Somalis, 87,000 Eritreans, 135,000 Sudanese, and refugees from other countries. December saw the arrival of more than 3,600 refugees, mostly from Eritrea.

At 17 April, UNHCR reported that over 96,000 South Sudanese refugees, mostly from Jonglei and Upper Nile states, have registered in Ethiopia since fighting broke out in South Sudan in December. Women and children make up 95%, according to UNHCR. At 21 April, OCHA indicated that daily arrivals averaged 800 to 1,000 individuals.

Most refugees have crossed into Ethiopia via the Pagak and Akobo Tergol border points. At 21 April, according to OCHA, camp facilities remained overwhelmed. Leitchuor camp hosted 43,000 people, and Kule camp 36,000. Each camp has a capacity of 30,000. Over 9,600 people were awaiting relocation in the Pagak and Akobo Tergol entry point areas at 21 April, a figure that has remained unchanged since 7 April. On 14 April, OCHA indicated that 200,000 refugees were expected to arrive over the course of 2014, an upward revision from 150,000.

On 15 April, UNHCR reported that refugees in low-lying, flood-prone areas of Kule camp had been relocated, with a similar operation due to start for Leitchuor. On 21 April, OCHA said that 5,000 people had been relocated to Okugu camp and 1,700 to Pugnido camp. UNHCR said that the building of a new camp in less flood-prone areas was under way as of 12–13 April near Kule (Kule 2), and is expected to host 30,000 refugees. OCHA had reported the risk of flooding in the camps on 31 March.

As of 17 February, according to local press, there were renewed tensions in the border district of Moyale. Tensions and clashes had risen in September 2013, leading to a significant escalation of violence along the Ethiopian border. By 20 January, tribal clashes between the Borena, Burji, and Gabra communities in the districts of Marsabit and Moyale had displaced an estimated 72,000 Kenyans, mostly into Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, latest reports indicate that some remain with host families. Priority needs include food, WASH, shelter, and healthcare. In early September, ECHO reported that clashes in the same area displaced over 25,000 people in July–August, many into Ethiopia.

**Returnees**

Between mid-November and late December, Ethiopia saw the large-scale return of nearly 150,000 migrants who had been deported from Saudi Arabia. The migrants returned following the end of an amnesty period for illegal migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, which was enforced in mid-November 2013. OCHA has indicated that the recent surge in arrivals is causing congestion in transit centres and, due to poor sanitation in some of them, the risk of a disease outbreak has increased. The most urgent needs for the migrants include food, sanitation, and health services.

**Food Security**

As of 24 March, most parts of Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia, respectively in the north, northwest and southwest, are expected to be experiencing IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) levels of food insecurity through June, whilst poor and very poor households are expected to experience IDP Phase 3 (Crisis). In Afar, Somali, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ (SNNP) regions, in the northeast, the east, and the southwest, respectively, most livelihood zones are also experiencing Stressed levels. Food insecurity in these areas is due to below-average rainfall, which had a negative impact on the meher harvest and on pasture (October–January). Poor to very poor pastoral households and ginger-producing households in Afar and SNNP regions are expected to experience Phase 3 through June.

According to FEWSNET on 26 February, an estimated 2.7 million people are food insecure. This represents a 12% increase compared to the first half of 2013. Food insecurity is
reportedly due to consecutively below average 2013 belg and sugum rains (February–May and March–May), low crop production, deterioration of livestock, and asset depletion. The most affected regions are Oromia (897,000 people in need), Somali (690,970), Amhara (548,000), Tigray (321,400), and Afar (152,600).

From October to January, according to FEWSNET, the national meher crop output was 10% higher than the previous year. Prices are expected to remain stable for most staple foods due to sufficient harvests and availability on markets, except in the Somali region, where price increases have been observed since November.

Health and Nutrition

Polio

On 17 March, according to OCHA, a new case of polio had been confirmed in Somali region, bringing the caseload in Ethiopia to ten since the outbreak started in May 2013. All cases were reported in woredas (districts) that share borders with Somalia, where the regional polio outbreak started in May. An immunisation campaign targeting over three million children is ongoing.

Measles

On 31 March, OCHA reported over 5,000 suspected cases of measles in Amhara, Gambella, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions since mid-January 2014. At 20 March, according to OCHA, there were 50 cases of measles in the South Sudanese refugee camp of Pagak in Gambella region. Between 3 and 10 March, 690 new cases had been reported nationally, over half of which in the Amhara region, bringing the total to over 4,300. According to WHO, the measles epidemics initially affected SNNP, Oromia, and Amhara in early 2014 and later spread to Tigray, Somali, and Gambella regions.

In mid-February, over 90% of cases had been recorded in SNNP region. A vaccination campaign targeting 6.8 million children under 15 was due to start on 11 January, but continues to be delayed due to lack of resources. At 31 March, fewer than two million children had reportedly been vaccinated in SNNP region, and 250,000 in Amhara. OCHA reported on 16 December that 2,860 cases of measles were confirmed between January and October 2013 nationally, with children under five constituting 37% of the affected.

Malaria and Dengue

As of 17 March, 15 new cases of dengue have been reported in Gode, Somali region, bringing the caseload to 55 since mid-January. According to ECHO on 6 December, 9,258 cases of dengue fever were reported in Dire Dawa city since the beginning of the outbreak in mid-October.

Reported cases of malaria have been gradually declining in most regions since mid-November due to the end of the rainy season. As of late December, over 60,000 cases and two deaths were reported nationally for 2013, with Amhara and SNNPR being the most affected regions.

Meningitis

According to OCHA, 35 suspected cases were reported over 3-10 March in the Dilla area, about 250km south of the capital. Another 66 cases were reported across Oromia, SNNP, and Gambella regions, where the ongoing seasonal meningitis outbreak requires an estimated two million doses of vaccine.

Child Malnutrition

At 21 March, OCHA reported that over 16,000 children had been treated for malnutrition in February.

As of 7 March, malnutrition rates in the South Sudanese refugee camp of Pagak were reportedly extremely high, with 37% of children under five suffering from global acute malnutrition, and 11% from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). As of February 2014, according to OCHA’s nutrition hotspot mapping, priority districts in terms of nutrition were located along the Eritrea border in Afar region, in Oromia, and in Tigray. Hotspots were also recorded along the South Sudan border in Gambella.

WASH

The onset of the gu rains in late March has led to an improvement in water availability in drought-affected Ethiopian regions. However, at 21 April the delivery of water was falling short of the requested amount in Somali (nine water trucks were requested but none were delivered), Amhara (two out of three requested trucks short), Tigray (six out of eight short), Oromia (five out of 21 short), and Afar (one out of eight trucks short) regions, according to OCHA. The shortage in Tigray was reportedly due to lack of funds. As of 17 March, water shortages across Oromia, Afar, Tigray, Amhara, and Somali regions affected an estimated 360,000 people. A week earlier, according to local government, critical water shortages had been recorded in almost half of the Somali region’s districts.

Protection

In mid-February, human rights NGOs reported that a government-run land clearance plan has affected an estimated 7,000 indigenous people in the lower Omo Valley in the southwest. This raises concerns over indigenous people’s livelihoods. Forced resettlement of indigenous people in the area has also been reported.

A government-run land development plan to allow sugar-cane plantations, dam construction, and commercial agriculture is expected to relocate 150,000 indigenous people into permanent sedentary villages.

Education

At 14 April, according to the Education Cluster, 30,000–40,000 children are in need of emergency education intervention in Gambella region.

Updated: 24/04/2014

KENYA FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY
KEY DEVELOPMENTS

23 April: Four people died in a bomb blast near a police station not far from the Eastleigh district of Nairobi, international media reported.

18–19 April: Tribal clashes over the use of irrigation water supplies in Marakwet West constituency, Rift Valley province, left two people injured, according to local media.

17–19 April: 281 Somali refugees were transported from Nairobi’s Kasarani stadium, where media reported that hundreds of refugees had been detained, to Kakuma and Dadaab camps.

KEY CONCERNS

- Conflict is ongoing in the northeast, where two-thirds of violent attacks have been attributed to the Somali Islamist Al Shabaab movement.

- Inter-communal tensions remain high. In 2013, 491 people were killed and 47,000 displaced because of tribal conflicts. Most affected counties are Tana River (coastal area), Mandera (northeast), Marsabit (north), and Moyale (north).

- Kenya currently hosts over 587,000 refugees, including at least 477,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the northeastern Dadaab refugee camp complex (UNHCR, January 2014; OCHA, February 2014). An estimated 34,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into Kenya in recent weeks (April, March).

- 1.3 million people are acutely food insecure (KFSSG, February 2014). 1.6 million are expected to need urgent food assistance in the first half of 2014 (GoK, November 2013).

Politics and Security

National Context

Kenya is considered relatively stable in the Horn of Africa and held peaceful presidential elections in March 2013. However, the country remains deeply divided, ethnically polarised, and affected by two decades of conflict in neighbouring Somalia.

Kenya’s political stability is facing major challenges, including the implementation of a devolution process, land reform, and national reconciliation. Institutions are perceived to be weak, and minority groups are said to use politically motivated violence to influence the devolution process, which risks polarising the country further while the 47 newly established counties are seeking to tackle socioeconomic inequalities. The political scene is also likely to be dominated by the planned trial of the President and Vice President at the International Criminal Court in the coming year.

Tensions with Somali communities

On 23 April, according to international media, four people died in a bomb blast near a police station not far from the Eastleigh district of Nairobi.

Over 17–19 April, 281 Somali refugees were reportedly transported from Nairobi’s Kasarani stadium, where media reported hundreds of refugees to be detained, to Kakuma and Dadaab camps.

On 25 March, the Government had ordered 50,000 refugees living in urban areas to relocate to two refugee camps: Dadaab, near the Somali border in the east; and Kakuma, in the northwest. The call was reiterated by Kenyan officials on 15 April, according to NGO reports. Since early April, refugees have been arrested in targeted operations throughout the country. Police reportedly arrested 3,000 Somalis in Eastleigh, Nairobi on 2–3 April; international press reports indicated that six people were killed during the operation, and 82 were later deported to Mogadishu for being illegal immigrants. On 11 April, 48 Somali and Sudanese refugees were arrested in Trans Nzoia county, eastern Kenya, according to local media. On 15 April, 94 people were arrested in the South C district of Nairobi; 55 people were arrested in Mombasa on the same day.

The operations were launched shortly after seemingly coordinated bomb blasts in Eastleigh on 31 March killed six people, international media reported.

While the Government is focusing on counterterrorism, observers suggest that the main challenge remains the increasing radicalisation of the ethnic Somali Muslim population, which is allegedly fuelled by systematic ethnic profiling and discrimination. In September 2013, the Society for Threatened People reported that the Westgate attack may have serious consequences for the Muslim population, 11% of Kenya’s 40 million inhabitants, and for Somali refugees in Kenya.

On 7 February, three people were stabbed in riots that broke out after Friday prayers in the coastal city of Mombasa. Around 300 men, some armed, blocked the roads in protest at the arrest of 130 Muslim men accused of attending a radicalisation session in a mosque. A few days earlier, local sources reported clashes between authorities and Muslim youths in Mombasa, following a police raid on a mosque in which three people died and over 100 were arrested. The operation was launched after the police received information that an alleged jihad convention was taking place in the mosque. According to local security forces, mosques have been at the heart of Al Shabaab’s attempts to radicalise Kenyan Muslims, and authorities have been dismantling recruitment networks among Muslim communities.

Over the past year, five Muslim clerics have been killed in Mombasa on allegation that they were terror suspects recruiting in mosques for Al Shabaab. In October, there were riots in Mombasa after the killing of a Muslim preacher. Rising sectarian tensions also affect the city’s Christian community: two separate attacks conducted on 19 October claimed the lives of two Christian clerics.

Militant Incidents

The frequency and scale of attacks have increased dramatically since Kenyan troops began operating in Somalia in 2011, as has the nature of the violence, with 40% of events now targeting civilians. In September, an unprecedented attack was conducted by Al Shabaab fighters on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, killing 67 people and raising fears...
of increased communal tensions and discrimination against Somalis and Muslims.

On 10 December, gunmen killed eight Kenyans, including five policemen, in an ambush near the border town of Liboi, North Eastern Province. While the identity of the perpetrators remains unclear, such attacks against police and security forces are routinely blamed on the Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab insurgents. North Eastern province, dominated by ethnic Somalis, has suffered for more than 30 years from unequal development, insurgency, repression, chronic poverty, and poor infrastructure. It experiences 83% of violent attacks attributed to the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab, which has built a cross-border presence and clandestine support network among the Muslim population in the northeast, Nairobi, and the coast.

Inter-communal Violence

In 2013, 491 people were killed and another 1,235 injured in inter-communal violence. This number represents a marginal decrease compared to 2012, when 503 were killed and 1,315 injured. Population displacements due to inter-communal conflicts were significantly lower year-on-year, from 116,000 recorded in 2012 to 47,000 in 2013. A growth in the population of both people and livestock has led to more frequent cattle raiding and violence. The violence also affected by the availability of small arms. The Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front rebel group is also said to have made several deadly incursions into Kenya.

The areas most affected by inter-communal violence are the southeastern county of Tana River, which recorded 222 deaths, the northeastern county of Mandera, and the Moyale area in Marsabit county, which recorded 40,000 displaced for 2013. Sporadic clashes were recorded in the eastern counties of Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Kwale, and Mombasa, and the western counties of Turkana, West Pokot, Baringo, Bungoma, Busia, Narok, Migori, and Kuria.

On 18–19 April, tribal clashes over the use of irrigation water supplies in Marakwet West constituency, Rift Valley province, left two people injured, local media reported.

On 6 March, the local Red Cross reported that tribal clashes along the border between Kericho and Kisumu districts, in the west, had caused five deaths.

Conflict in Moyale

On 21–22 February in Nairobi, the government-organised Marsabit Peace Initiative brought together leaders from the communities that have experienced conflict over recent years, namely the Borena, Gabra, Burji, Sakura Garre and ‘Corner communities’. These communities live in Moyale district and in Marsabit county. The Boma Peace Agreement was unveiled. All leaders pledged to form a multi-ethnic committee to steer joint peace rallies and dialogue, to facilitate reconstruction of houses for the displaced, to facilitate the return of the displaced and ensure their security, to strengthen cross-border dialogue with Ethiopia on the issue, and to ensure that all public resources, under the charge of the national and county governments, be allocated fairly to all communities.

Violence in Moyale had erupted in December 2013 and sharply escalated from mid-January, causing significant population displacement. As of February, clashes between the Borena community and a joint force of Burji and Gabra tribes had displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and into Ethiopia. The Government had reportedly deployed troops, and the situation stabilised, while authorities established a Directorate for Cohesion and Non-state Coordination, in an effort to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation in the area.

Conflict in Turkana, West Pokot, and Samburu

On 3–4 March, a peace meeting was held between the Turkana and the Pokot to end the conflict in the Turkwel Gorge. Armed clashes had flared in July–August 2013, and stem from longstanding disputes over land, water, and grazing rights. The Rendille and Garri communities have also been drawn into the conflict, amid political antagonism following the March 2013 general election.

Inter-clan violence also erupted early December on the West Pokot–Turkana border, causing more than 20 deaths and displacing hundreds of families.

On 10 February, local sources reported that two Ethiopians were killed in a clash between raiders from the Ethiopian Daasanach community, also known as Merille, and local herdsmen and Kenyan Police Reservists in Kokuro division, Turkana county. According to local sources, confrontations are traditionally over pasture and water. Ethiopian raiders have allegedly killed over 20 people in the past two months, most in neighbouring West Pokot county.

Two people were killed early October by suspected Turkana raiders. At the end of June, a raid killed three herders, and repeated incidents in August and September caused a number of families to flee the area of Bargoi in Samburu county. The attacks were suspected to be in retaliation for the killing of a Turkana boy by Samburu raiders.

Conflict in Mandera and Wajir

The northeast is also affected by fighting between the Garre and Degodia Somali clans, which have been feuding in Mandera county since March 2012 over competition for natural resources. Since March 2013, tensions are attributed to political disagreements under the new devolution structures. Inter-clan violence has spread to neighbouring Wajir county. Leaders from both clans signed a peace agreement on 23 June 2013 to stop the clashes, but violence resumed a day later. The Kenyan Red Cross reported that the conflict had left over 85 people dead in Mandera county as of 25 June.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

On 16 April, a mudslide destroyed several houses in the Tetu area of Nyeri county, central Kenya. There were warnings that several villages in the area were vulnerable to mudslides.

On 1 April, the local press reported that floods were affecting counties of Baringo, Turkana, West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet in the Rift Valley region. Nairobi was also reportedly affected by heavy rains on 26 March, causing several deaths according to the local press.
Displacement

Internal Displacement

According to OCHA on 20 January, fighting that erupted in December 2013 in the northern area of Moyale displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and into Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, weeks of sporadic violence have impacted household food security and livelihoods at the very beginning of the dry January–March season.

According to OCHA as of July 2013, inter-communal conflict between the Degodia and the Garre clans in the northeastern counties of Mandera and Wajir caused the displacement of 52,000 people.

Refugees

As of 29 January, UNHCR reported that Kenya was hosting more than 587,000 refugees.

As of 12 April, according to UNHCR, more than 33,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into Kenya since mid-December; they currently reside mostly in the northwestern camp of Kakuma. The camp, which has a capacity of 150,000, has almost reached full capacity. Government officials have authorised the construction of a new camp in the vicinity. The daily rate of arrival is as high as 500, and latest reports indicated that the most pressing needs include protection for separated children, registration, and health services. According to an NGO report on 8 April, if no drainage system is put in place, the onset of the rainy season will put some areas of Kakuma at high risk of flooding and waterlogging.

As of February, UNHCR reported that there were 439,000 Somali refugees in Kenya, a decrease of 38,000 from earlier 2014 estimates of 477,000 Somali refugees. Most Somali refugees are in the northeastern Dadaab and Aalinjugur refugee camp complex, which in early February hosted 353,000 Somali refugees, according to OCHA (a revision of January UNHCR figures recording 391,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab). Other Somali refugee settlements include the northwest camp of Kakuma (54,000) and the capital Nairobi (32,400), according to UNHCR.

Since early April, thousands of people have been arrested in Nairobi, and dozens have been apprehended elsewhere in the country, in security operations targeting refugees. So far, 86 of those arrested have been found to be illegal Somali immigrants. A Kenyan official announced on 7 April that all illegal immigrants who had been arrested would be deported. International press reports indicated that six people had been killed during the initial operation in Nairobi. The arrests came swiftly after the Kenyan Government had ordered 50,000 refugees residing in urban centres to relocate to Dadaab or Kakuma refugee camps.

In 2012, according to a human rights NGO report, a similar encampment order had been issued, and had led to the arrest of more than 1,000 Somalis and Somali Kenyans in Eastleigh.

On 28 February, OCHA announced that 30,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya in 2013. Although their status is not specified, it is implied that these people are mostly Somali refugees.

On 10 November, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the Governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish the legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. The Kenyan Government estimated the number of Somali refugees in Kenya at 600,000 as of late June 2013 and has been pushing to expedite the return of these refugees since the attack on the Westgate Mall in September, citing national security concerns.

Food Security

As of February, 1.3 million people were estimated to be acutely food insecure, according to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG). As of March, according to FEWSNET, most of the country remains at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) level of food insecurity. Acute food insecurity was reportedly concentrated in pastoral areas of central, coastal, and northern Kenya, in Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Tana River, and Wajir counties.

According to local media reports on 15 April, drought in Kwale county, south Kenya, has left 10,000 people in urgent need of food assistance.

According to FEWSNET on 3 January, 45% of the Kenyan population in both the south eastern and coastal marginal agricultural livelihood zones are expected to remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food insecurity during the post-harvest period, due to below average harvest.

As of March, according to FEWSNET, much of Turkana and Marsabit counties in the north are experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels. As of February, in pastoral areas of Turkana, which borders Uganda and South Sudan in the north, and Marsabit, northern Kenya, poor households have entered IPC Phase 3: Crisis, due to below average rains, and to reduced access to livestock sales and markets as a result of inter-clan conflict. FEWSNET forecast that these areas will slowly recover to Phase 2: Stressed with the onset of the long rains (March–May), which are expected to be two to three weeks late.

As of February, FEWSNET indicated that food insecurity was expected to increase due to declining food availability and rising prices, but will likely remain at IPC Phase 2 throughout the 2014 lean season (August–November). The availability of legume harvests through May is expected to mitigate the effects of declining food security.

According to OCHA in mid-November, the food insecure population declined from 1.1 million in February to 850,000 in August, a significant improvement compared to August 2012, when the number stood at 2.1 million. This is mainly attributed to the implementation of food security resilience programmes, but also to near-average short rains crop production and improved grazing conditions compared to the 2012 August to September lean season. As of early November, the Government highlighted the drought affecting 20 counties and warned that 1.6 million people could need urgent food assistance.

On 26 March, NGO reports cited by international media indicated that the Turkana region was facing a potential humanitarian crisis due to the prolonged drought currently affecting the area. A drought report released on 27 January by local authorities indicated that the
Turkana region, home to 850,000 people, has reached an emergency stage. An estimated 440,000 people are affected by hunger and need urgent food assistance. In October, a food security assessment in Turkana region indicated that more than 346,000 people were in urgent need of food assistance. Over 500,000 head of cattle are also at risk as water and pasture run out.

Health and Nutrition

Measles

According to OCHA, as of 24 February, a measles outbreak was reported in the Kakuma refugee camps, with 96 cases confirmed.

Polio

According to WHO on 14 November, the outbreak of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) had reached a case count of 14 for Kenya, most reported in the eastern area of Dadaab, and more than half the caseload originating from the refugee community. This is the first WPV1 outbreak in Kenya since 2011. To date, four rounds of outbreak response activities have been undertaken, targeting 4.9 million people in 24 counties. Priority is given to the northeast, where nearly 50% of children have not been vaccinated, compared to less than 5% nationally.

Malnutrition

According to FEWSNET in July 2013, malnutrition levels remain below the five-year average, except for the southeastern county of Lamy, where malnutrition has increased and is now above the five-year average due to increased prices and limited milk availability. Malnutrition levels are also expected to deteriorate in areas affected by conflict and floods, such as Tana River county and Mandera county, where UNICEF says nutrition status is critical.

Protection

On 11 April, international human rights NGOs raised concerns regarding the detention conditions of Somalis and Somali Kenyans following the mass arrests of early April.

Updated: 24/04/2014

LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 25/03/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- Food security conditions have improved significantly since 2013. However, 223,000 people remain food insecure, with the largest proportion (27%) located in the western Maseru district. The number of food insecure marks a 70% decrease compared to 2012, mainly due to strong production gains in 2013 (Lesotho Vulnerability Committee, October 2013).
- Lesotho has the world’s third highest rate of HIV prevalence, currently over 480,000 people or 23.5% of the population (WFP, June 2013).

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Food Security

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Lesotho will not be needing external food assistance in the period up to September 2014. In September, the food security situation will be Phase I: Minimal, which represents an improvement compared to both the same period last year and the five-year average. Earlier, in February 2014, FEWSNET reported that stable income opportunities from agricultural activity, ongoing poverty reduction and humanitarian programmes, and the start of the green harvest are all expected to contribute to improved access to food.

On 7 March, FAO presented its crop prospects and food situation report, stating that food security conditions remain stable. An estimated 223,000 people were assessed as food insecure in 2013/14 and will require assistance until the start of the main harvest in April 2014. The largest proportion of food insecure (27%) are located in the western Maseru district. The Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (Southern Africa) reported that this number includes 15% of the rural population. The number of food insecure marks a 70% decrease compared to 2012, mainly due to strong production gains in 2013 compared to the drought-affected harvest of 2012. Production has doubled compared to 2012.

In February, FAO reported that in the more marginal producing zones of the centre and southeast, production levels may be negatively affected by delayed planting following a late start of seasonal rains.

Health and Nutrition

On 7 March, international media reported that contribution shortfalls from donor countries – cutbacks of around 30% in 2014 and another 20% in 2015 – threaten adequate treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in what is an already underfinanced healthcare system. Lesotho already struggles with a lack of qualified staff and facilities. WFP reported in June 2013 that the country records a HIV prevalence of 23.5% among adults, the world’s third highest rate.

Malnutrition

In June 2013, WFP reported that 39% of children under five are stunted, and iron deficiency anaemia stands at 47%.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

MADAGASCAR FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, CYCLONE
KEY DEVELOPMENTS

18 April: The new Prime Minister Roger Kolo announced his new Government, consisting of politicians who previously backed President Rajoelina in the transitional period. The Mouvance Ravalomanama maintains the agricultural portfolio.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated four million people, or 27.5% of rural households, are food insecure following a reduced harvest in 2013. A further 9.6 million people are at risk of food insecurity (FAO).

- Malagasy Migratory Locust infestation, largely concentrated in western and southwestern areas since April 2012, threatens the livelihoods of 13 million people. In March 2013, approximately half the country was infested by swarms of locusts (FAO). It is the worst outbreak since a 17-year infestation that began in the 1950s.

- A plague outbreak affected four of 112 districts in December 2013. Since September, 86 cases have been recorded, including 42 confirmed deaths (WHO). Heavy rains and poor waste management are raising concerns that the disease could spread to other areas.

Politics and Security

Political Context

Since the army-backed coup by Andry Rajoelina, who ousted President Ravalomanana in 2009, Madagascar has been in political turmoil. In late October 2013, the first presidential election took place since the coup. International observers declared the election to be free, transparent, and peaceful despite isolated incidents of violence and organisational flaws that prevented some from casting their ballots. On 17 January, former Finance Minister Rajaonarimampianina was announced the new President-elect, with 53.5% of the votes. The defeated rival candidate, Jean-Louis Robinson, demanded a recount and swiftly rejected the outcome. Rajaonarimampianina was sworn in on 25 January.

Legislative elections were held concurrently with the second round of the presidential election. Preliminary results suggest that of the 151 seats, the Mouvance Rajoelina won 52, the Mouvance Ravalomanana 31, independent candidates 49, and other political entities 19.

On 18 April, the new Prime Minister Roger Kolo announced his new Government, consisting of politicians who previously backed President Rajoelina. The Mouvance Ravalomanama maintains the agricultural portfolio.

Roger Kolo, who was unable to run in the presidential elections because he did not meet residency requirements, was appointed Prime Minister by the President on 11 April, according to international media.

On 13 March, international media reported that the International Monetary Fund had restored ties with Madagascar, five years after the 2009 coup.

On 21 November, the Government sacked the regional administrators of eight of 22 provinces and replaced them with five colonels and three generals. The Government cited the candidacy of some regional leaders to legislative elections, recent insecurity, and the national political context as the main reasons for the move. Several local observers accused the President of the High Transitional Authority, Andry Rajoelina, of trying to establish a military junta. This was the second round of such sackings. In August, authorities dismissed seven regional leaders, replacing them with civilian appointees.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters: Cyclone Hellen-14

Tropical Cyclone Hellen-14 struck Madagascar at about 1200 GMT on 31 March. The cyclone weakened rapidly just before landfall in Boeny region, northwest Madagascar. Hellen brought one-minute maximum sustained winds of around 157km/h.

Disaster management authorities stated that moderate Tropical Cyclone Hellen resulted in three deaths and nine people are still missing after their boat capsized off the coast of Soalala. In total 2,141 people were affected, 1,736 left homeless and 437 homes were destroyed. Mahajanga, Mitsinjo and Soalala districts were most affected. Most IDPs have returned home, but those from Mahajanga and Marovoay are still in Ambalavola, or in school buildings in Mahajanga and Marovoay.

The Government of Madagascar stated on 4 April that there was also damage to roads and public buildings, and over 5,500 hectares of rice fields and 114 hectares of crop fields were submerged.

On 3 April, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that additional rainfall during the coming week may exacerbate ground conditions that were already impacted negatively by the cyclone.

Food Security

Damage to agricultural lands due to floods and tropical storms in early 2013, insufficient rains throughout the remainder of the year and a locust infestation caused for the domestic rice harvest falling 18% below average and for food prices to rise. These factors are all contributing to persistent food insecurity.

According to an FAO/WFP crop and food security assessment, as many as four million people (of a total population of 22 million), mostly in rural areas, are food insecure following a poor 2013 harvest. A further 9.6 million people, according to the Food Security Cluster and FEWSNET, mostly in Betioky and Ampanihy in the southwest, are at risk of food insecurity, IPC Phase 3. Significant and severe food insecurity is also occurring in the southern regions of Androy, Atsimo Atsinanana and Atsimo Andrefana, in Hirombe, on the southern plateau, and in the eastern ‘food basket’ region of Alaotra Mangoro.

On 1 April, FEWSNET reported that poor households in Menabe (Manja and Belo-
Tsiribihina districts), Atsimo Andrefana (Antsalova a Melaky and Morombe districts), and
Atsimo Atsinanana (Vaingaindrano district) will experience persistently high food prices,
limited resources and low purchasing power, and face difficulties meeting their food and
non-food needs. Poor households will improve to Minimal conditions (IPC Phase 1) in April
–June, following the main harvest. Poor households in the Atsimo-Andrefana region
(Ampanihy and Betiocky districts) and Androy region (Tsishombe, Beloha, and Bekily
districts) are expected to improve to Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in
April–May, with a return to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) by August.

Agricultural Outlook

The US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported on 26 March that
during mid-March, a significant decrease in rainfall was observed over the southern and
eastern parts of Africa. Little rain (less than 10mm) fell in southwestern Madagascar.

In 2013, the global production of rice was well below the ten-year trend of over 2% per
annum. The negative results in Madagascar are attributed to weather disruptions.
According to FAO/WFP, the country is estimated to have a rice deficit of about 240,000
metric tons for the 2013/14 marketing year (April/March). Approximately 48,000 metric
tons of imported maize would be required to satisfy the national maize deficit.

Locust Outbreak

Since April 2012, Madagascar has faced a plague of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, largely
concentrated in western and southwestern areas, which threatens the livelihood of
13 million people, nine million of whom earn a living from agriculture, according to FAO.
The locusts have expanded beyond their endemic areas in the southwest, where crops contribute on average about 7% to the national rice input and the impact has been most
severe, to affect over two-thirds of the country. This has damaged crops and discouraged farmers from planting. A three-year eradication campaign is ongoing.

On 31 March, FAO reported findings from a May 2013 damage assessment that rice crop
losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10% to as much as 40% in 17 of Madagascar’s
22 regions. FEWSNET added that much of the locust infestation is largely concentrated in
western and southwestern areas of the country between Besalampy in Melaki and Toliara in Atsimo Andrefana.

USAID reported on 19 March that extensive locust surveys were carried out during the
second half of January. By the beginning of February hopper groups and bands as well as
immature and mature adults were reported on some 360,000 hectares in the outbreak and
invasion areas. Locust outbreak control teams at the airbases in Toliar and Morondava
were re-deployed. Aggressive control begun at the end of January had treated and
protected more than 236,000 hectares by the end of February. Aggressive surveillance,
monitoring and timely preventive interventions remain imperative to avert any major crop
damage in the coming months, all the more so in the West Central invasion areas, North
Central multiplication and concentration areas.

Optimum rainfall for the Malagasy locust was recorded during the first half of February,
and as good rains continued, second-generation breeding progressed. More locusts are
expected to appear in the outbreak and invasion areas during the forecast period. The
prevailing wind was from east to west in the outbreak area and from northwest to
southeast in the invasion areas.

Health

Polio

On 21 March, WHO reported that outbreaks due to type 2 cVDPV (cVDPV2) in
Madagascar appear to have been interrupted.

Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague

Between 300 and 1,200 cases of bubonic and pneumonic plague are reported annually
between October and March. OCHA reported that the plague season arrived early in 2013,
with 285 suspected cases and 71 deaths between October and December in 27 districts of
ten regions in the north, northwest, southwest, and central highlands. With, heavy rains
during the peak of the rainy season between February and March, and poor waste
management, there is concern that the disease could spread to other areas.

Updated: 23/04/2014

MALAWI FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

16 April: The European Union reported the departure of an Election Observation
Mission to Malawi in response to an invitation by Malawi’s Electoral Commission. The
elections are scheduled to take place on 20 May.

KEY CONCERNS

- Around 1.9 million people are food insecure, an increase of around 30% from
  July 2013 (Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, January 2014).
- Around 180 new HIV infections are occurring every day. HIV prevalence is 10%
  among people aged 15-49. More than 40% of new infections are among 10–19 year
  olds (UNAIDS, March 2014).
- Up to 43% of people have experienced some form of gender-based violence;
  women represent more than 50% of victims.

Politics and Security

Since 2007, Malawi’s economy has grown significantly, and healthcare, education, and
environmental conditions have improved. However, turbulent politics have hampered
governance, and more than half the population lives below the poverty line.

On 16 April, the European Union reported it deployed an Election Observation Mission to
Malawi in response to an invitation by Malawi’s Electoral Commission. The elections are
Scheduled to take place on 20 May 2014.

On 19 March, Malawi’s President reportedly confirmed that clashes between opposition protesters and police after an election rally left a police officer and a protester dead. Stating the violence was likely to be politically motivated, the President called for an investigation. On 17 March, international media reported that the event had triggered concerns that violence could increase in the period leading up to the May national elections.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

On 4 March, the UN reported that since mid-January an estimated 2,000 people have arrived in Malawi, fleeing clashes in Mozambique between the Government and former rebels. Those who fled are yet to receive assistance as the Government and UNHCR remain in disagreement about their status as asylum seekers.

Disasters: Heavy Rainfall and Floods

FAO reported on 7 March that rainfall had increased during the first week of March, as torrential rains over the western and northern part of southern Africa continued. High rainfall (over 50 mm) was recorded in Malawi.

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that since the onset of the 2013/14 rainy season in November, 54,280 people have been affected in 19 districts. Of these, 16,040 people in Mangochi, Nsanje, and Salima districts were affected by floods. The rest were affected by wind and rain storms, with varying levels of damage to houses and property.

Food Security

On 7 March, UNICEF reported that the number of food insecure people remains at 1,894,780, or 12% of the population.

On 1 April, FAO reported that updated results from the 2013 Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee’s (MVAC) evaluation in November indicated deterioration in national food security conditions. Approximately 1.9 million people were assessed to be food insecure until the end of March, up 27% from the figure released in July 2013. The largest numbers of food insecure people are in the districts of Mzimba (Northern region) and Mangochi (Southern region). The revised figures were based on a continuing increase in the price of food (as well as the generally high cost of living), as approximately 54% of a household’s income is allocated to food purchases. Food security conditions are anticipated to improve in the coming months, with the start of the 2014 harvest in April.

On 25 March, FEWSNET reported that due to humanitarian assistance and expected green harvests within the month, acute food insecurity among poor households in targeted areas is expected to remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) until September 2014. Between April and June, the majority of poor rural households are expected to be able to access adequate food through a combination of purchases from markets and household stocks, and will be facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes.

Agricultural Outlook

On 3 April, the Southern African Development Community reported that more rainfall is expected over northern Malawi 2–10 April. From April to June, increased chances of normal to above-normal rainfall are forecast over northern and southern Malawi.

Mid-season dryness is likely to reduce yield potential in some parts of Malawi. However, prices are expected to remain stable or decrease in April, when ADMARC sales and humanitarian interventions are expected to come to an end, as green and early harvest availability will reinforce household supplies.

On 3 April, FEWSNET reported that while maize prices increased throughout the region between January and February, Malawi was an exception to this general trend. Maize prices decreased country-wide by an average of 6% – and by 19% in southern Malawi – in response to expanded subsidised grain sales through the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC), which also improved overall market supply. A favourable harvest outlook, the start of green harvest consumption in some areas, and the scaling-up of humanitarian assistance to affected households also contributed to decreasing prices.

FEWSNET added that informal maize imports in the 2013/14 season have remained above the five-year average as well.

Red Locust Outbreak

On 25 March, FEWSNET reported that red locust monitoring and control efforts by the Government have been limited, resulting in an increased risk of swarms in the coming months. An outbreak of red locusts damaged 2,500 hectares of crops in the southern area around Lake Chilwa.

Armyworm Outbreak

On 19 March, USAID reported that isolated late African Armyworm outbreaks may appear. On 2 March, OCHA said that an outbreak of African armyworm affected 16 districts and a total of 10,903 hectares of land in February. The armyworm is known to attack more than 40 plant species, including key crops such as corn, wheat, and maize as well as forage grasses and small grains such as oat, barley, and rye.

Health and Nutrition

HIV

On 8 March, UNAIDS reported that the Government is revitalising its national HIV prevention strategy. In 2012, new HIV infections among children declined to 11,000 compared to 28,000 in 2001. Estimated AIDS-related deaths also decreased, from 86,000 in 2001 to 46,000 in 2012. Despite progress, around 180 new HIV infections are still occurring every day.

Malnutrition

UNICEF reported on 7 March that an analysis of community management of acute
malnutrition (CMAM) data for January 2014 indicated that 18 of 24 food-insecure districts targeted with the current nutrition emergency response showed more new admissions in 2014 than in January 2013. Districts that showed increased admissions were Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Dedza, Karonga, Kasungu, Machinga, Mchinji, Mzimba, Nchichu, Salima, Thyolo, Nsanje, Neno, Mangochi, Balaka, Ntchisi, Nkhataba, and Dowa. Nutrition rehabilitation unit (NRU) admissions were lower in most districts in January 2014 as compared to January 2013 except for nine districts: Thyolo, Nsanje, Machinga, Rumphi, Ntchisi, Nkhataba, Kasungu, Karonga, and Dowa. High NRU admissions are mainly a result of late presentation to the CMAM programme, leading to severe acute malnutrition with complications.

**Protection**

On 26 March, WFP reported that according to the Government of Malawi, up to 43% of people have experienced some form of gender-based violence and more than 50% of victims are women. Malawi ranks 124 out of 148 on the UNDP gender inequality index.

WFP reported that according to Government statistics, half of all girls in Malawi will be married by their 18th birthday, with some being forced to marry aged nine or ten. Human Rights Watch recently released a report stating that the Government should increase efforts to end child and forced marriage or risk worsening rates of poverty, illiteracy, and preventable maternal deaths.

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

25 April: Over 40 insurgents and four soldiers died in clashes between Nigerian troops and suspected Boko Haram (BH) members nearby Sambisa forest in Borno state, where 187 kidnapped schoolgirls are believed to be held.

24 April: President Jonathan held a security meeting with governors of all 36 states and appealed for a united front against Boko Haram, asking Nigeria's largely Christian south and mostly Muslim north to seek ways of ending the insurgency.

22 April: At least 17 people were killed in the predominantly Christian Jukun village of Kauyen-Yaku, in religiously-divided Taraba state. According to police sources, the gunmen, thought to have been Muslim Hausa– Fulani herdsmen, stormed the village disguised as soldiers. Human Rights Watch has said that inter-communal violence has escalated across five states in central Nigeria (Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Taraba) since December 2013, killing more than 1,000 people.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 9.5 million people in Nigeria are affected by or at risk of natural disasters and conflict. The Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast is a key concern.

**Politics and Security**

Alongside fears of a possible military failure in the fight against the Islamist-led insurgency of Boko Haram, there is a risk of political instability as opposition factions put pressure on President Jonathan. The opposition is questioning his intention to run again in the February 2015 elections. Public distrust in the Government has grown due to its failure to ensure public order or implement peacebuilding measures, economic decline, and growing inequalities.

**Political Context: The 2015 Elections and Tensions within the Ruling Party**

Internal political divisions on whether President Jonathan should seek another term in office continue to stoke tensions in the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Critics say Jonathan’s re-election would violate the unwritten rule that governance should rotate between the Muslim north and Christian south every two terms.

On 17 February, the United States and Nigeria — more specifically the Governance, Transparency, and Integrity Working Group of the United States–Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC) — met to discuss integration of civil society organisations into the electoral process ahead of the 2015 general elections. The aim of the meeting was to support the establishment of benchmarks for transparent and inclusive elections, with corruption potentially impeding effective governance and economic development in Nigeria.

On 12 February, in a fresh attempt to resolve the political crisis within his ruling party, President Jonathan fired four cabinet members on corruption accusations.

On 3 February, Nigeria’s former Vice President Abubakar left the PDP to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) opposition party, stating he believed in a two-party political system for Nigeria.

**Updated: 22/04/2014**

**NIGERIA INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

- Almost six million people are directly affected by violence. Since the beginning of 2014, more than 1,500 have been killed (HRW). Due to the significant increase in violent attacks, the International Criminal Court qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013.
- Almost 471,000 people are internally displaced, of which 255,000 from the SoE states (OCHA/NEMA, March 2014).
- Nigeria has 1.74 million acutely malnourished: some 540,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM); 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, January 2014).
- Nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water (UNICEF).
- 6,149 cholera cases reported so far in 2014 are worrying cholera experts, given the lack of WASH infrastructure in the country and growing humanitarian concerns tied to the conflict in the northeast (OCHA, February 2014).
significant pressure from the opposition. As a close ally of the President, Tukur’s resignation aims to settle party divisions, which continue to rock the current administration.

On the same day, President Jonathan fired all his military chiefs and appointed an air force officer from the troubled northeast as the top military commander, Air Marshal Alex Badeh. These dismissals came amid growing concern about the military’s failure to end the Islamist-led insurgency, despite the state of emergency imposed on three states in May 2013.

Security Context

Over the past decade, Nigeria has been facing a number of security challenges, including militant insurgency, ethno-religious conflict and piracy. Due to the significant increase in violent attacks, the International Criminal Court qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013.

A surge in violence in the northeast, with almost daily attacks, has already killed some 1,500 people in 2014, as reported by Amnesty International. Half of the victims were civilians. Human rights groups have criticised both Boko Haram (BH) and Nigeria’s military for failing to protect civilians.

Counter-insurgency Campaign against Boko Haram

On 24 April, President Jonathan held a security meeting with governors of all 36 states and appealed for a united front against Boko Haram, asking Nigeria’s largely Christian south and mostly Muslim north to seek ways of ending the insurgency.

On 19 March, the National Security Adviser unveiled measures in what is to be a new and broader approach of ‘soft power’ to tackle the BH insurgency. The Nigerian Government will implement de-radicalisation programmes for suspected and convicted BH fighters, and cooperate more closely with communities affected by the violence.

The Nigerian authorities have been fighting BH since 2009. Founded in Maiduguri, Borno state, BH has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in the predominantly Muslim regions of northern Nigeria.

Since April 2013, attempts by military forces to engage with BH militants have resulted in excessive use of force and large-scale destruction in civilian areas. In May 2013, BH took control of part of Borno state, prompting authorities to deploy large numbers of troops. In order to contain the BH insurgency a state of emergency (SoE) was declared in mid-May 2013 in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. The SoE was extended for six months in November 2013. The state of emergency is feared to have strengthened the recruitment base of Boko Haram since May 2013. So far, the Islamist group has dismissed the possibility of participating in a peace resolution committee set up in April to frame potential peace talks with authorities.

In a separate dynamic, civilians have formed vigilante groups or self-defence militias, reportedly with the tacit backing of the Nigerian Government, which in turn has led to retaliation by BH. BH has expanded its initial military and security targets to include Christians, Muslims, students, politicians, and others opposing BH’s ambition to impose Islamic law.

Boko Haram Incidents

Amnesty International reported in late March that more than 1,500 people have been killed in more than 40 attacks in the first three months of 2014. In the past six months some 2,700 people have been killed.

On 25 April, over 40 insurgents and four soldiers died in clashes between Nigerian troops and suspected BH members nearby Sambisa forest in Borno state, where 187 kidnapped schoolgirls are believed to be held.

On 15 April, heavily armed men raided a secondary school in the Chibok area of Borno state and kidnapped over 230 girls. Some 187 girls are still missing while 43 managed to escape. Nigerian media reported two members of the security forces killed, and residents said 170 houses were burned down during the attack. The attackers are believed to be from Boko Haram, which means “Western education is sinful” in Hausa.

This unprecedented mass abduction came a day after a morning rush hour bomb killed at least 75 people and injured 141 at a crowded bus station on the outskirts of Abuja. It was the first attack in two years and the deadliest ever on Nigeria’s capital. BH’s leader claimed responsibility for the bombing.

On 13 April, suspected BH killed at least 60 people in Borno state, close to the border with Cameroon. The attackers stormed Amchaka and neighbouring villages in Bama using trucks, motorcycles and two armoured vehicles, shooting residents and torching homes, triggering displacement from the villages in the area.

On 9–12 April, suspected BH gunmen killed 135 civilians in at least three separate attacks in Borno state, including six people at a teacher training college in the remote village of Dikwa, and 130 in Kala-Balge and Dalwa, near the border with Cameroon.

On 9 April, scores of gunmen attacked a police station, a court and a bank in Gwaram in northern Jigawa state, killing seven officers and a civilian. The state neighbours Yobe, which is under a state of emergency, but is not itself covered by the emergency rule and therefore has a lighter deployment of security forces.

On 6 April, BH militants are said to have attacked a village in Yobe state, killing 17 people and setting houses and cars alight.

On 1 April, BH was held responsible for the killing of 15 civilians in a suicide bomb attack on a state oil company facility in Mule, on the outskirts of Maiduguri, in Borno. Another 17 civilians and five soldiers were wounded by the blast.

On 23 March, at least 17 people were killed by an explosion in a village market in Ngurosoye, Borno state. Ten days before, militants had attacked the Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri, Borno state, headquarters of the 10-month government offensive against the group in northeast Nigeria.

In early March, the military stated it had killed 20 BH when repelling an ambush in Mafa village, Borno state. There has been no independent confirmation of the death toll. This
followed an attack on 2 March where BH fighters killed 29 people in Mafa. On 1 March, 35 people were killed by suspected BH gunmen in the crowded Gomari district of Maiduguri, as they prepared for evening prayers.

On 2 March, at least 20 people were reportedly killed when government jets bombed the village of Daglun in Borno state. A Senator representing the region stated they probably mistook the village for a Boko Haram camp. The Nigerian military dismissed the allegation that civilians were killed.

On the same day, BH fighters clashed with Cameroonian soldiers when crossing the border into the Cameroonian Far North Region, killing seven soldiers. On 23 February it was confirmed that Nigeria has closed its northern border with Cameroon – from northern Borno state, by Lake Chad, to the southern end of Adamawa state – to block the movement of BH.

In late February, suspected BH gunmen killed at least 37 people in three separate attacks in Shuwa and Kirchinga, in northern Adamawa state. Militants attacked the Federal Government College at Buni Yadi, Yobe state, leaving some 45 children between 13 and 17 dead. Students fled the surrounding boarding schools. Since June 2013, four attacks have resulted in school closures.

**Inter-communal Violence**

On 22 April, at least 17 people were killed in the predominantly Christian Jukun village of Kauyen-Yaku, in religiously-divided eastern Taraba state. According to police sources, the gunman, thought to have been Muslim Hausa–Fulani herdsmen, stormed the village disguised as soldiers. At least seven people were killed in the town of Wukari in Taraba on 15–16 April, when Christian Jukun gunmen reportedly attacked their Muslim Hausa–Fulani neighbours as a reprisal following fighting in a nearby village.

On 15 April, Human Rights Watch said inter-communal violence has escalated across five states in central Nigeria (Benue, Kaduna, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Taraba) since December 2013, killing more than 1,000 people. The main causes of the violence include struggles around livelihood and identity, particularly between sedentary farmers and nomadic pastoralists.

On 7 April, clashes between suspected Fulani Muslim gunmen and local youth from the rival Hausa ethnic group led to the death of at least 79 people in the remote village of Yar Galadima, in northwest Zamfara state.

Fulani gunmen were accused of the killing of more than 110 people in March, in several attacks on three mostly Christian villages in the south of Kaduna state – Chenshyi, Ugwar Sankwai and Ungwan Gata and on a farming community in central Nigeria.

On 13 March, gunmen on motorbikes in Katsina state, northwest Nigeria, killed at least 69 people and torched several homes in Mararrabar Maigora, Kura Mota, Unguwar Rimi and Maigora villages. According to the state’s police chief, the violence was perpetrated by ethnic Fulani herdsmen.

On 20 February, gunmen killed 13 people, including nine children, in a raid on Rapyem village in the Barkin Ladi local government area in Plateau state. On 3 February, 24 people were killed in two separate attacks in Ganawuri, Plateau state. According to local sources, a raid carried out by Fulani herdsmen on Shonong village in Riyom local government area, Plateau state, on 9 January killed 34 people, injured 24 and displaced 600.

The Middle Belt area is divided between the Islamic north and the more secular Christian/animist south and is home to a number of minority groups. Plateau and Kano states have experienced the most violence. Thousands have been killed since the early 1990s in competition mainly for land and water.

**Niger Delta**

On 25 January, an attack on a security patrol boat on the Nembe-Bassanbiri waterways in southern Bayelsa state was carried out by the rebels of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. In claiming responsibility, it stated that it served as a reminder of the rebel group’s presence in the oil-rich delta. There were no casualties.

In the Niger Delta region, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta is causing unrest by threatening to sabotage and end Nigerian oil production by 2015. It is the largest militant organisation within the Niger Delta region, made up of several armed groups. Its aim is “to expose the exploitation of people in the Niger Delta as well as the destruction of the natural environment by public–private partnerships”.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

The conflict in northeastern Nigeria has displaced a large number of people, restricted movement, disrupted food supply, seriously hindered access to basic services, and limited agricultural activities. On 14 March, the UN reported that humanitarian needs are mounting. A rapid assessment mission by OCHA established that food, water, and sanitation are priority concerns. OCHA estimates that half of the 12 million people living in the three states under a state of emergency (SoE) – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – are directly affected by violence.

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that around 9.5 million people are affected by both natural disasters and conflict. According to UNHCR, women and children represent half the population of concern; most urgent needs are food, WASH, and protection.

**Access**

On 25 February, OCHA reported that most international actors have withdrawn from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, where a state of emergency (SoE) has been declared for security reasons. Only a dozen humanitarian agencies are present in the northeast, leaving many of the thousands displaced by Boko Haram violence with little access to food, healthcare or clean water.

**Displacement**

The security situation in the SoE states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno continues to deteriorate. As of 25 February, OCHA reported that following the crisis in northeastern Nigeria, exacerbated by the declaration of the state of emergency on 14 May 2013 (extended for six months on 12 November 2013), more than 520,000 people, mainly...
women, children and the elderly, have moved within Nigeria or sought refuge in neighbouring Niger, Cameroon or Chad.

Maintaining the civilian nature of places of asylum or displacement is a concern. The Government lacks capacity to ensure the protection of basic human rights for refugees, and recurrent crises have eroded the ability of households to withstand repeated and frequent disturbances.

According to UNHCR, the influx of refugees and the spillover of violence is creating cross-border tensions. In November 2013, Niger and Nigeria established a Joint Border Patrol Command to address the security challenges related to displacement and rebel activity in the area.

**IDPs**

In February, OCHA reported that almost 471,000 people are internally displaced across Nigeria, half of them children.

According to NEMA, violence displaced an estimated 255,000 people in Yobe, Borno and Adamawa states between January and March 2014. This figure indicates a decrease of 40,000 compared to late 2013, and is believed to be due to the fact that some IDPs have migrated westwards to the states of Bauchi and Gombe. Borno state is considered most affected in terms of population movements, with an estimated 111,000 people displaced. Yobe and Adamawa record 76,000 and 67,000 IDPs, respectively. The assessment showed that the vast majority of IDPs live with host communities, while some 5,300 currently reside in temporary camps.

In the Middle Belt, NEMA said it has established nine camps for approximately 100,000 IDPs affected by inter-communal conflict between herdsmen and farmers. With daily arrivals, the camps are reportedly getting overcrowded.

**Nigerian Refugees**

According to UNHCR, over 57,000 people have sought refuge in neighbouring Cameroon, Niger, and Chad since the declaration of the state of emergency in the states of Yobe, Adamawa, and Borno in May 2013. Niger received the highest number, with some 15,000 Nigerian refugees and almost 35,000 returning migrants. There are approximately 1,000 new arrivals every week. Concentrated in the Diffa region, most refugees are staying with local communities, and food and water resources are limited. In Cameroon, authorities and UNHCR have registered about 12,400 Nigerian refugees in the Far North and North regions.

Temporary refugee status has been granted to those Nigerians fleeing the three states under an SoE. UNHCR has advised against forced returns to the northern areas.

**Food Security**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity in Nigeria. On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that conflict has strained household resilience to acute food insecurity as poor households have been reverting to atypical levels of coping over consecutive years.

According to FEWSNET at late March, dry season harvests have begun and land preparation activities for the upcoming planting season continue, increasing income opportunities and food access for most households in the country.

In western Niger state, poor households will deplete their food stocks two to three months earlier than usual, intensifying their market purchase after a significantly below-average harvest. These households will seek more labour opportunities and increase their animal sales as well as limit non-food expenditures as they face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity from April.

**Food Security in the State of Emergency States**

Households in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, impacted by the Boko Haram conflict, face difficulty meeting their food needs.

Poor households in the conflict-affected northeast will continue to rely on atypical and unsustainable coping strategies, including atypical sales of livelihood assets and labour migration, or begin to face food consumption gaps. Borno and Yobe states continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, as they have since January 2014, and Adamawa state continues to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. As of March, a multi-sector assessment covering the three SoE states indicated that meal consumption has dropped from three to one per day in most communities.

As the conflict has spread to rural areas, the 2013/14 agricultural season has been severely impeded, and household food stocks are significantly below average. Conflict is also limiting off-season livelihood activities, at a time when people would typically be participating in fishing and dry-season cultivation. Household incomes from seasonal labour are also dropping as labour demand decreases. This situation is expected to continue until August as conflict constrains the normal, seasonal increase in labour demand for land preparation and cultivation.

Markets are also negatively impacted. Supply is low because of the below-average local production and disruption in trade flows caused by check points, roadblocks, and traders’ security concerns. With low market supply, staple food prices are higher by 10% or more than last year’s prices and upwards of 30% above their five-year average. For households with below-average seasonal incomes and increasing market dependence (as they exhaust their own stocks), atypically high prices sharply hinder food access.

**Regional Outlook**

The food security situation in Nigeria, especially in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, is aggravated by the ongoing food crisis across West Africa. Due to a combination of conflict and production deficits in agropastoral areas of the Sahel, some 20 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity throughout the region, of whom 2.5 million need urgent lifesaving food assistance.

**Health and Nutrition**

As of March, a multi-sector assessment covering the three SoE states – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – indicated that only 37% of health facilities in these states are functional.
Dozens of clinics have been shut down and doctors have fled, leaving residents to seek medical attention across the border. Mortality rates are increasing and vaccination programmes are severely hit. ICRC adds that tens of thousands are missing out on vital services, and the availability of shelter, food, water, clothes and health services has worsened in the northeast. These developments could have a detrimental impact on the reliability of epidemiological surveillance systems and the quality of the care still being delivered. For instance, routine vaccinations: the polio campaigns are now limited to the Maiduguri metropolis. A break in procurement chains for antimalarial drugs and bed nets is another concern.

**Cholera**

In March, WHO reported that the northern states of Bauchi, Adamawa, and Kano continue to report cholera, with a total of 1,394 cases including 12 deaths in week 10 of 2014. Bauchi is considered most affected and accounted for 94% of reported cases. In 2014, 12 states in Nigeria have so far recorded 6,149 cases of cholera, with 67 deaths (case fatality rate 1.1%).

These figures represent a significant increase compared to the same period in 2013. According to OCHA, at mid-December, 2,880 cholera cases had been reported across 16 states in 2013. Over 70 people died, and almost 90 cholera high-risk wards were identified. The 2013 figures themselves represent an eightfold increase compared to the same period in 2012.

This is a worrying caseload, given the lack of WASH infrastructure in the country and growing humanitarian concerns tied to the conflict in the northeast. WASH experts underline that there is a high risk of a large cross-border cholera outbreak in the states bordering Lake Chad (Chad, northern Cameroon, northeast Nigeria, and southeast Niger) given the occurrence of previous outbreaks in this area, the current caseload during an inter-epidemic period, and the precarious security situation in northeast Nigeria with its accompanying spillover into neighbouring Cameroon and Niger.

**Lassa Fever**

As of March, WHO reported 208 suspected Lassa fever cases with 17 deaths (case fatality rate 8.2%) in nine states in the first three months of 2014. Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic fever caused by the Lassa virus, first described in 1969 in Lassa, Borno state. The infection is endemic in West African countries, with 300,000-500,000 cases and 5,000 deaths reported annually.

**Polio**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative reported that as of 12 March, one case of wild poliovirus (WPV1) had been reported in 2014, and 53 in 2013. The total number of type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) cases for 2013 remained four.

UNICEF reported 49 cases of polio in 2013. This represents a decrease compared to the 102 cases reported in 2012. 72% of cases have been recorded in Borno, Yobe, and Kano states, where insecurity is slowing the polio immunisation campaign.

The large indigenous type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) outbreak in northern Nigeria, first detected in 2005, appears to have dropped to a very low incidence. Outbreaks due to cVDPVs continue to emerge in settings of insecurity, poor infrastructure, and widening immunity gaps. In Nigeria, polio cases have been associated with both indigenous and imported cVDPVs. When children are accessible, outbreaks caused by cVDPVs have been stopped by supplementary immunisation activities. Successive supplementary immunisation rounds of increasing quality appear to have brought incidence down, but a new outbreak due to imported cVDPV2 has occurred in insecure areas of the northeast.

**Meningitis**

As of March, WHO reported 268 cases of meningitis, with 39 deaths across 17 states in the first three months of 2014.

**Malnutrition**

As of March, UNICEF and humanitarian partners estimated that some 510,000 children under five will suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in 2014. An estimated 80,000 of them reside in the SoE states.

As of 30 January, OCHA said that 1.74 million are acutely malnourished in Nigeria. Some 540,000 children are suffering from SAM. A further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition. An estimated five million children under five years of age will experience malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition.

**WASH**

According to reports from UNICEF, nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water, and a third does not have access to sanitation services. The 2010 and 2011 rainy season caused for water-borne epidemics to spread easily, killing nearly 2,000 people.

*Updated: 29/04/2014*

**SENEGAL FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

- No new developments this week. Last update: 10/04/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 2.5 million Senegalese (20% of the population) are estimated to be food insecure in 2014, among whom around 675,000 people (5%) will be severely food insecure (WFP, December 2013).

- 340,000 children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition: 79,000 from severe acute malnutrition, and 261,000 from moderate acute malnutrition (UNICEF, March 2014).
Politics and Security

Although Senegal enjoys a reputation for stability in a largely volatile region, the country has been unable to resolve the conflict in the coastal Casamance area. Separatist movements continue to oppose the authorities along Senegal’s southern border with Guinea-Bissau in a 30-year old conflict. In March 2013, attempts to restart talks between the warring parties were undertaken but did not succeed.

On 25 February 2014, the Community of Sant'Egidio, which is mediating the conflict, announced that progress has been made in discussions between the Senegalese authorities and rebels of the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamance (MFDC) with the signature of confidence-building measures. Senegalese authorities agreed to withdraw an international arrest warrant issued in 2001 against the leader of the separatist movement, Salif Sadio. However, MFDC rebels have not yet agreed on demining as part of the peace negotiations.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

In Senegal, flooding affects at least 300,000 people each year, causing significant damage to crops and property. Heavy rains in August and September 2013 led to severe flooding in the centre and the north, affecting 74,000 people and damaging houses and infrastructure. The most affected regions include Louga, Matam, Diourbel, Kaffrine, and Fatick. Crop production has been affected by both the heavy rains and by prolonged dry spells.

Displacement

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 14,200 refugees now reside in Senegal. Most are from Mauritania and Rwanda.

Food Security

According to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2.25 million Senegalese are likely to be food insecure in 2014, 480,000 requiring immediate aid. Recurrent shocks from drought and flooding, poor infrastructure, and inadequate social safety nets continue to increase the chronic overall vulnerability of the population, while households and community resilience continues to erode due to poor coping strategies.

National Outlook

On 18 February, FEWSNET reported that national level crop production was about 17% lower than average in 2014. Poor households in areas of the north and southeast will be most affected and are likely to be in Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2) from April.

Previously, FEWSNET had reported that Senegal would be in need of external food security assistance until at least August 2014. This is similar to the outlook of last year, and the five-year average. The lean season will take place in June–September.

OCHA reports that cereal production has decreased by 17%, resulting in high food prices. The Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN) reported in June 2013 that rural food security levels have generally deteriorated since 2010. Rural households are more at risk (25.1%) with the regions of Casamance showing high levels of food insecurity (Ziguinchor 68%, Sedhou 67%, and Kolda 50%), and the regions of Matam and Kedougou following with food insecurity at 48% and 45.6%, respectively.

According to FAO in early December 2013, erratic rains disrupted groundnut, cowpea, and cereal production. Agricultural production and output remains uneven across the country, with crops in Dakar and the northern areas of Fatick and Kaolack reportedly the worst affected. Agriculture land was submerged by floodwaters in Fatick and Kedougou. In Kedougou, agricultural lands were flooded by the Gambia River and in Fatick agricultural lands were reportedly flooded by flash floods. The post-flood situation could lead to an increase in food insecurity and malnutrition in the 2013/14 agricultural year.

Sahel Food Crisis

The Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) reported on 9 April that almost 4.9 million people need immediate assistance in the Sahel. It warns that this number could reach eight million during the lean season if action is inadequate. It is expected that global acute malnutrition (GAM) will pass critical thresholds and possibly reach emergency levels between June and August 2014 in several areas in Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso.

On 3 April, FEWSNET reported that regional food availability will remain stable in March, and then decline progressively. On the same day, FAO added that production declines had been recorded in several zones, especially in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

On 20 February, FEWSNET reported that erratic rainfall in the northeastern region of Senegal, and other countries across southern Sahel, had resulted in regional crop losses of up to 50% and below-average pasture growth.

ECHO had already reported a dramatic increase in people expected to be food insecure in the Sahel on 7 February; from 11.3 million in 2013 to 20 million in 2014. ECHO estimated five million children under five will suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition.

Health and Nutrition

Ebola Fever Outbreak in Guinea

As of 15 April, no Ebola cases have been reported in Senegal.

On 29 March, Senegal closed its land border with Guinea in the southern region of Kolda and the southeastern region of Kedougou in order to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus, which authorities say have killed 108 people in Guinea so far. Suspected or confirmed cases have also been reported in Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone, causing fears that the highly contagious disease could spread in a region where health systems are ill-equipped to cope.

Tsetse Fly

Tsetse Fly and the five-year average. The lean season will take place in June–September. To cope.
On 10 January, FAO reported that Senegal had radically reduced the numbers of tsetse flies, which transmit sleeping sickness and devastate livestock. The most affected area is Niayes, near the capital. Senegal aims to eradicate the tsetse fly population completely by mid-2014.

**Malnutrition**

According to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 340,000 children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition, including 79,000 from SAM, and 261,000 from MAM. These figures represent an increase compared to 2013, in which 63,323 SAM and 255,675 MAM cases were reported.

Following the national Food Security and Nutrition Survey of June 2013, 17 of 45 departments were found to be in a nutritional crisis. Furthermore, the survey showed a critical prevalence of GAM in all three departments of Matam (Matam 21%, Kanel 18%, and Ranerou 16%) and in the bordering department of Podor (17%). St Louis, Bakel, Goudiry, Medina Yoro Foula, Bounkilling, and Mbour all had a critical prevalence of more than 2% SAM. Twelve more departments are seriously affected with a prevalence of 10 –15% GAM.

Eleven of 14 regions, Diourbel, Fatick, Kafrrine, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sedhiou, Tamacoudna, and Thies needed humanitarian assistance in 2013 due to high GAM and aggravating factors such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections.

In October 2013, Senegalese authorities launched a policy of free healthcare for children under five who now can get free treatment in nutritional facilities and health centres.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

On 10 March, OCHA reported that eight people have drowned in various parts of Swaziland. Ten rivers flooded following heavy rainfall over most of Southern Africa in the beginning of March, causing infrastructure damage. On 21 March, the Southern African Development Community added that heavy rains affecting South Africa and Mozambique over the last two weeks have also caused damage and casualties in Swaziland, mainly in the Incomati basin, which is shared by the three countries.

Swaziland is vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly drought in the east and occasionally severe flooding in the north.

**Food Security**

The UN states that as of 3 March, 167,000 people (or one in ten Swazis) receive direct food assistance. The SADC and World Bank estimated that 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity in 2014, of whom 56,300 (5% of the population) require immediate food assistance. This figure represents a 150% increase on the 2012/2013 figure of 116,000 given by WFP’s Vulnerability Assessment in November 2013.

Food insecurity has increased primarily due to poor crop performance in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 and increases in prices of food and agricultural inputs. A fiscal crisis, caused by a reduction in Government revenues, has aggravated food insecurity and led to an increase in unemployment and cuts in social services.

While 70% of Swazis rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, consecutive years of drought have undermined crop production, particularly maize.

On 3 March, the UN reported that a prolonged dry spell with scorching temperatures has undone an optimistic outlook for the main maize harvest. Experts are predicting another round of scarcity and assistance in the perennially food-insecure country. Hard-hit regions are Shiselweni and Lubombo, where the crops have been decimated by lack of rainfall and high temperatures. The dry spell in January 2014 was part of an emerging pattern over the past decade; certain parts of the country have gone dry by mid-summer since 2006. The maize harvest has dropped by a third from its pre-2000 levels, to about 70,000 tonnes per year on average. Cereal is now imported to meet annual consumption.

While the forecasts for 2013/2014 may indicate improved production, the Food and Nutrition Security Working Group recalled in January that many underlying factors contribute to the trend of low production: erratic weather, high input costs, the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS, and low implementation of improved agricultural practices.
Health and Nutrition

HIV

Swaziland has the most severe level of HIV infection in the world. HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 stands at 26.5%, according to the latest numbers from WHO in 2012. In 2011, 566 people per 100,000 people died due to HIV/AIDS.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

TANZANIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

13 April: Seventeen people were injured in an explosion in a bar popular with tourists in the city of Arusha.

11–13 April: Heavy rains killed ten people and displaced hundreds in Dar es Salaam. Some bridges were swept away and several roads damaged, partially cutting Dar es Salaam off from the rest of the country.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 1,615,450 people are currently food insecure (OCHA, February 2014).

- 63,300 people (43,100 from Burundi, 15,500 from Rwanda, and 4,700 from Uganda) have been forcibly repatriated from Tanzania. The country is currently hosting about 102,000 refugees, mainly from DRC and Burundi (IOM February 2014 and UNHCR mid-2013).

Politics and Security

Tanzania has enjoyed political stability under a multi-party system introduced in 1992. The political union between Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania has weathered more than four decades of change: Zanzibar has its own parliament and president. The country hosts over 100,000 refugees fleeing conflict in the neighbouring Great Lakes region.

On 9 March, international media reported that Tanzania is embroiled in a feud with Rwanda after Tanzania’s President urged Rwanda’s Government to negotiate with the DRC-based Rwandan opposition group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The Rwandan Government suggested Tanzanian President Kikwete sympathised with FDLR, which he strongly denies.

Security Context

On 13 April, international media reported that seventeen people were injured when a handmade bomb went off in a bar popular with tourists in Arusha. The attack has not been claimed yet; investigations are ongoing.

Deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers have broken out as persistent drought and dwindling water resources have pushed pastoralists to the edge of survival, and farmers have accused them of destroying their crops by allowing animals to feed and trample on them. In January, ten farmers were killed in Keteto district, central Tanzania.

On 7 March, international media reported that the Government is planning to open special grazing areas for nomadic herders as part of a policy to prevent recurring conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralists received the new policy with mixed feelings, hoping it would ease tensions, however stating that it was an attempt to drive them away from their traditional grazing lands and enable commercial exploitation instead.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

Over 11–13 April, heavy rains killed ten people and displaced hundreds in Dar es Salaam. Some bridges were swept away and several roads damaged, partially cutting Dar es Salaam off from the rest of the country.

Food Security

OCHA reported in mid-February that 1,615,450 people are food insecure.

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Tanzania is forecast to face Phase 2: Stressed levels of insecurity in September 2014. However, it will not be needing external assistance.

Agricultural Outlook

On 4 April, FEWSNET reported that heavy rainfall throughout central Tanzania during the last week has resulted in isolated flooding, damage to infrastructure, population displacement, and damage to crops and livestock in Kagera, Singida, and Dodoma regions. Moderate to heavy rainfall is forecast over southwestern Tanzania over the next seven days.

On 31 March, FEWSNET reported that in early 2014 wholesale dry bean prices have increased by up to 6%. Earlier, FEWSNET reported that significantly below-average vegetation conditions were measured in the Lake Victoria basin.

Red (Nomadic) Locust Outbreak

Red locusts are expected to have bred successfully. Hopper groups and bands may have begun forming in outbreak areas in Tanzania, USAID reported on 19 March.

African Armyworm Outbreak

On 19 March, USAID reported on African armyworm outbreaks (AAW) in Tanga and coastal regions and control operations that were launched by affected farmers with technical and material assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives. AAW outbreaks are forecast to continue.

Quelea Birds
On 19 March, USAID reported that Quelea (QQU) birds had damaged sorghum, millet, and rice in Kilimanjaro and Shinyanga regions. QQU damage is forecast to continue.

Displacement

Tanzania has long been a major country of asylum, having hosted many refugees from conflicts across Africa’s Great Lakes region.

Refugees

As of mid-2013, UNHCR indicated that Tanzania hosts about 102,000 refugees mainly from DRC and Burundi. According to UNHCR on 10 April, 2,136 Somalian refugees live in Tanzania.

Tanzania has expelled refugees from Burundi (43,100), Rwanda (15,500), and Uganda (4,700) following a 29 July 2013 Presidential decree stipulating that all migrants without “valid residential documents” had to leave the country by 11 August 2013 or be forcibly removed by security forces. Many of the expelled had lived in Tanzania for several decades, and back in their country of origin, the returnee population is largely deprived of access to basic services. For Ugandan returnees in Sango Bay, IOM warned of a looming shortage of food rations. The Rwandan Government has reported that the most pressing need is for reintegration assistance, especially shelter. For Burundians, there is concern over family reunification, as most returnees wish to return to their families in Tanzania.

Protection

Despite strong laws prohibiting it, women farmers still face discrimination, and local attitudes make it difficult for women to access decent land. On 14 March, while discussing the boosting of food security by eliminating the gender gap in agriculture, the UN reported that an outmoded system of land tenure continues to restrict women from land ownership. A male-dominated system, social stereotypes, and outdated traditions undermine women’s land rights. According to USAID, women own only 20% of registered land; even less land is held under customary law.

Updated: 15/04/2014

ZIMBABWE FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last update: 31/03/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- Whereas the food security situation in Zimbabwe mostly improved following the start of the green consumption and humanitarian assistance, the situation in southwestern areas – where assistance is limited – indicates Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes as of March 2014. Staple food prices are likely to continue to increase countrywide in the coming months (FEWSNET).

Disasters

Heavy rains, which started in late January, led to flooding across the country. At least three people died and many were displaced when their homes and property were destroyed. The most affected areas were the districts of Chivi, Masvingo, and Tsholotsho, in Matabeleland North province. According to local authorities, the drought-prone Masvingo province received nearly double the annual average rainfall, causing water levels to rise rapidly at the partially constructed Tokwe Mukosi dam. On 21 March, OCHA reported that the total water inflow at the Tokwe Mukosi dam has decreased significantly to 86.97m3/s from 105.28m3/s. Dam levels elsewhere across the country increased during the course of the week. On average, national dam levels have increased by 0.94% per cent since 10 March and now stand at 83.6%. Chances of flooding in vulnerable areas of Zimbabwe, including Muzarabani, Gokwe, Middle Sabi, Tsholotsho, Malapati and Chikwalakwala,
remain high until the end of the rainy season.

On 17 March, international media reported that over 100 houses in Dete’s Mutuya township had been destroyed by heavy rains in Matabeleland North province. OCHA reported that over 22,000 people had been moved to Chingwizi resettlement camp by 7 March, straining limited facilities and resources. Heavy rains at the camp over 2–3 March have raised fresh health and shelter concerns, as around 800 families were without shelter. A bridge on the road to Chingwizi was temporarily submerged, hampering access to the camp for two days. Significant humanitarian needs, especially in the WASH, health, shelter, education, and food sectors, persist at transit points and relocation sites.

A state of disaster was declared in Masvingo province on 9 February. Authorities called upon the international community to help evacuate and assist an estimated 60,000 people at risk in the Tokwe Mukosi dam basin and downstream. Both shelter and crops have been affected, and continued heavy rains could have a negative impact on crop yields.

Food Security

**National Overview**

FEWSNET on 19 March reported that the recent floods have damaged an estimated 1,056 hectares of food crops, leading to a loss of 718 tonnes of potential harvest. Food and nutrition security risk being severely compromised until the 2015 harvest. A loss of livestock assets, due to the distress sale of animals, as well as the loss of productivity of the remaining livestock, due to stress and disease, were reported.

On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that as the lean season ended in February, food insecurity improved to Phase I: Minimal, and there will be no need for external assistance before the end of the outlook period in September.

Nonetheless, following a Government-led survey in 2013, the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee estimated in early February that 2.2 million people (25% of the rural population) will remain food insecure until April. This is the highest level of food insecurity in Zimbabwe since early 2009, and is a significant increase compared to the 1.67 million people considered food insecure at the same time in 2013. The escalation is largely due to lower domestic production and poor cereal harvests in 2013 in the south and west. The highest proportions of food insecure households are currently estimated to be in Zvishavane, Midlands (52%), followed by Binga, Matabeleland North (50%).

According to WFP, food insecurity is due to various factors including adverse weather conditions, the unavailability and high cost of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilisers, and projected high cereal prices due to the poor maize harvest.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 31 March, FEWSNET reported that maize grain and meal prices continued to increase atypically in parts of Zimbabwe. Earlier, FAO reported that harvesting of the 2014 maize crop is expected to begin in April/May, and current production prospects remain favourable. Preliminary planting estimates for maize indicate an 18% expansion. Heavy rains in the first quarter of 2014 caused some flood damage to crops. Production of sorghum and millet are also expected to increase on last year’s good outputs due to more extensive planting.

On 24 March, FEWSNET reported that the consumption of green harvest products like groundnuts, pumpkins and green mealies is ongoing in most parts of the country, especially in northern and central areas that had an early start to the season. The start of this green consumption and humanitarian assistance are contributing to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in central and northern districts. However, southwestern areas where assistance is limited still show Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

FEWSNET added that the first-round crop and livestock assessment report indicates that crop conditions range from good to very good, with a 16% increase in area cropped when compared to last season. The continuation of rains into mid-April are expected to result in good harvests, even for the late-planted crops.

On 6 March, USAID reported that Quelea (QUQ) birds were attacking sorghum and millet in February in Kenya and Tanzania. This threatens to damage the rain-fed and irrigated small grain cereal crops in Zimbabwe. Also, locust hoppers in neighbouring countries might spread to cropping areas in Zimbabwe.

**Health and Nutrition**

Following the floods in February and heavy rainfall on 2–3 March, there are health concerns in Chingwizi resettlement camp, Masvingo province. A quickly growing camp population is straining facilities and resources. Water delivery has been limited, due to water in the camp over 2–3 March. Heavy rains at the camp over 2–3 March have raised fresh health and shelter concerns, as around 800 families were without shelter. A bridge on the road to Chingwizi was temporarily submerged, hampering access to the camp for two days. Significant humanitarian needs, especially in the WASH, health, shelter, education, and food sectors, persist at transit points and relocation sites.

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**Health and Nutrition**

Following the floods in February and heavy rainfall on 2–3 March, there are health concerns in Chingwizi resettlement camp, Masvingo province. A quickly growing camp population is straining facilities and resources. Water delivery has been limited, due to hampered access to the camp. Food needs are covered for March, but young children and pregnant and lactating women have special needs that need to be addressed. There is a high risk of communicable disease, especially malaria and waterborne diseases. There are no anti-rabies vaccines, despite concerns with jackals in the area and, to date, one case of a suspected rabid dog attack.

**Dysentery**

On 19 March, the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR) reported that health staff are attending to at least 100 cases of dysentery every day. ZADHR is also deeply concerned by reports of a diarrhoea outbreak in Chingwizi transit camp in Masvingo province. The causes of the outbreak are not yet clear, but the camp is currently housing 15,000 people displaced by the Tokwe Mukosi dam flooding. The camp has poor sanitation and overcrowding at the holding camp.

**HIV**

IFRC has raised concerns about the impact of the HIV epidemic, especially in the town of Gwanda in the southwest. An estimated 21% of adults in Gwanda are HIV positive and many halt or disrupt treatment due to poverty.

**Typhoid**

According to local media, a typhoid outbreak has been confirmed in the densely populated
suburb of Mabvuku, east of the capital city Harare. Nine cases have been confirmed in the area so far. Four months of water shortages has resulted in many residents drinking water from unprotected wells in the surrounding Chizhanje area.

**ANGOLA**  DROUGHT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

23 April: Poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since February has led to deteriorating ground conditions in western Angola. Long-term moisture deficits are negatively impacting crop and pastoral conditions in many areas, with no seasonal rains expected that would solve the abnormal dryness.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Angola suffered from outbreaks of cholera, dengue fever, measles and malaria in 2013. Its population remains highly vulnerable to outbreaks, especially following natural disasters in the epidemic-prone south and in the hyperendemic areas of the north.

**Politics and Security**

President dos Santos has been in power for over 30 years. The rivalry between the governing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and UNITA dates from before independence in 1975.

**Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC)**

Much of the country’s oil wealth lies in Cabinda province, which is cut off from the rest of Angola by DRC. For decades, a low-intensity separatist conflict has simmered between the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) and the Government. FLEC signed a ceasefire in 2006, which was rejected by the Paris-based president of FLEC’s armed wing.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

On 26 March, the Government reported that at least 400,000 people are affected by drought in Sumbe and Porto Amboim, central Cuanza Sul province. Conda, Ebo, Kilenda and Seles municipalities have also been affected.

On 16 March, the Government reported that almost 23,000 people in the Bocoio municipality, in the central Benguela province, have been affected by the drought that hit their crops in the first 2013/2014 agricultural season.

Angola has a history of drought-related emergencies. The last was in mid-2013.

**Food Security**

Angola is to expect Phase 2: Stressed conditions until at least September 2014, and the lean season will last until July.

On 23 April, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that poorly distributed seasonal rainfall since February has led to deteriorating ground conditions in western Angola. Long-term moisture deficits are negatively impacting crop and pastoral conditions in many areas, with no seasonal rains expected that would solve the abnormal dryness.

On 17 April, FEWSNET reported that continued dryness due to a late start of the seasonal rains might impact the food security situation in Benguela and Cuanza Sul provinces. It is the fourth consecutive year of abnormal rainfall in these provinces; river levels have dropped or even dried up completely, negatively impacting cultivation. On 16 April, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration added that, as seasonal rains are expected to decline this month, these long-term moisture deficits are likely to negatively impact crop and pastoral conditions in many areas. FEWSNET reported that cropping is no longer viable in much of Benguela and Cuanza Sul, forcing poor households to migrate to urban areas.

Government food assistance has not been distributed efficiently in Cunene and Namibe provinces and food security outcomes have not yet improved. Therefore, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity outcomes are expected to persist in all four provinces until September.

Above-normal rainfall in the centre of the country, namely Huambo, Bie, and Huila, could cause damage by run-off and negatively impact the cereal harvest.

**Displacement**

As of 28 February, UNHCR reported that 558 DRC refugees reside in Angola. Some 71,755 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 people registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 people who have opted for local integration.

On 18 April, the government of Angola reported that at least 10,000 Angolan refugees have been integrated in Zambia after the termination of their refugee status and the period for voluntary return to Angola.

**Health and Nutrition**

Angola was affected by numerous epidemics during 2013. An estimated 6,655 cholera cases were reported, including 86 deaths, according to WHO. A total of 1,081 cases of dengue fever, including ten deaths, were reported. At the end of 2013, there was a measles outbreak in 60% of municipalities. Some 15,000 malaria cases were registered, including 75 deaths, in the first quarter of 2013.

**Updated: 28/04/2014**

**BOTSWANA**  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY
No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 31/03/2014.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 31/03/2014.

KEY CONCERNS
- Botswana’s upcoming cereal harvest is predicted to be below average, due to dry conditions in late 2013. Low water levels in dams in the south are contributing to food insecurity (FAO, 2014).

Humanitarian Needs and Context

Disasters

Following widespread and heavy rains with high rainfall (over 50mm) over the past weeks, the US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported on 26 March that little rain (less than 10mm) fell in eastern Botswana from mid-March onwards; a significant decrease in rainfall was observed across southern and eastern parts of Africa. On 22 March, FEWSNET reported that southeastern Botswana registered moderate to heavy rain – over 150% of average rainfall, in the beginning of the year. On 17 March, local media reported that three border gates between South Africa and Botswana, Groblersburg, Zanibar, and Platjan, remain closed due to overflowing of the Limpopo river.

Food Security

Food insecurity is linked to an ongoing drought affecting the whole country and adversely impacting crop growth in the main agricultural areas of the east and south. On 26 March, the US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that little rain (less than 10mm) fell throughout eastern Botswana in mid-March; there was a significant decrease in rainfall across southern and eastern parts of Africa.

On 11 February, FAO announced that the upcoming cereal harvest was expected to be below average due to dry conditions in late 2013. The harvesting of the 2014 cereal crop, planted between November and December, is due to take place in April. The Government officially declared the 2013/14 agricultural season a drought year following an assessment that confirmed that rainfall was poorly distributed and much below normal in most parts of the country. Areas most affected by the drought are Ngamiland, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Southern, and Central districts.

The 2012/13 cropping season was largely characterised by a prolonged period of below-average rains, punctuated by intense rainfall in January 2013, which caused localised flooding and minor damage to the agricultural sector. The aggregate cereal production for 2014 is estimated at 45,000 tons, 17% below the five-year average. Although domestic production covers only 10% of total national consumption requirements, FAO says poor production in the subsistence sector and deterioration in livestock conditions have aggravated the food security situation.

As of late November, FAO estimated 372,000 people, 49% of the rural population and 18% of the total population, to be at risk of food insecurity in 2013–2014. Government estimates indicate that 28% of the total population is chronically food insecure.

According to Government sources, water levels in dams in the south were low in January 2014. This will be an aggravating factor for food insecurity and will lead to water rationing in some regions.

WASH

On 6 March, the Government declared that it has embarked on infrastructure development projects aimed to ensure an adequate supply of water and electricity, since dams in Gaborone area have proven unable to meet demand, with supply more than halved from 88 to 48 million litres per day. These developments are part of the 30-year national water master plan established in 1990 and reviewed in 2006.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

BURUNDI  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, POLITICAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

18 April: The ruling party voted to set up a reconciliation commission, with the President selecting its members. Junior coalition and opposition parties boycotted the vote.

17 April: The security chief of the UN office in Burundi was expelled from the country over an internal UN report, which contained allegations of the ruling party distributing weapons to its youth wing, the Imbonerakure.

KEY CONCERNS

- Below-average harvests in the central region of Plateaux Humides means households in this area are likely to experience IPC Phase 2: Stressed levels of food insecurity until June 2014 (FEWSNET, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Burundi is struggling to emerge from a 12-year civil war: between 1993 and 2005, fighting between Tutsis and Hutus claimed around 300,000 lives in inter-ethnic killings. As laid down in the Arusha Peace Accord of 2000, peace was built on a system of quotas, with 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi representation in parliament and other public institutions. The quotas serve to protect the Tutsi minority from domination by the Hutus, who make up some 85% of the population.

Since the President’s re-election in 2010, scores of political killings, intimidation of the opposition, and a crackdown on media freedom have all been reported, which has cast a shadow over the post-civil war reconciliation process. Most recently, observers stated concerns on restrictions on civil and political rights, following a series of violent acts by the ruling party’s increasingly militant youth wing, Imbonerakure.

In February 2014, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Office in
Burundi (BNUB) until 31 December 2014.

2015 General Elections: Proposed Constitutional Amendments

After years of relative stability, relations between the parties within the ruling coalition are deteriorating. Tensions stem mainly from the desire of President Nkurunziza, elected in 2005 and again in 2010, to run for a third term in the 2015 elections. The President had pressed the parliament to adopt amendments to the constitution, which allows only two terms, to enable him to run again. Failing to gain parliament’s support, Nkurunziza announced in March 2014 that a referendum would be held on the issue. This triggered a political crisis, due to the perceived threat to the inter-ethnic power-sharing agreement. Five senior figures of the predominantly Tutsi UPRONA party – including the first Vice President – had resigned in February, refusing to support the proposed amendments to the constitution. On 14 February, Prosper Bazonganza was sworn in as the new Vice President, despite not having majority support from his own UPRONA party, which boycotted the vote.

On 18 April, international media reported that the ruling party voted to set up a reconciliation commission, with the President selecting its members. Junior coalition and opposition parties boycotted the vote.

On 17 April, international media reported that the security chief of the UN office in Burundi was expelled from the country over an internal UN report, which contained allegations of the ruling party distributing weapons to its youth wing, the Imbonerakure.

On 10 April, the UN warned Burundi leaders to address political violence and human rights restrictions, threatening international prosecution if human rights abuses were committed. The warning follows a series of violent acts by the ruling party’s youth wing and the police.

On 8 April, local media reported that President Nkurunziza met with Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the UN and Mark Simmonds, responsible for British Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in Africa. The President said at the meeting that there will not be a referendum and that the 2015 election invites all political actors to contribute and participate freely.

At the beginning of March, police forces disrupted opposition parties’ public meetings. Several members of the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) opposition party were injured in clashes and another 71 were arrested. The Burundi authorities have ordered the arrest of MSD Chairman Alexis Sinduhije for participating in an insurgency movement and rebellion. MSD has been suspended and its headquarters placed under police guard. Possible opposition candidate for the 2015 elections and head of the former rebel and Hutu-dominated National Forces of Liberation, Agathon Rwasa, had warned of a political crisis that risks sparking new unrest.

On 26 March, the UN office in Burundi – cooperating with the Government of Burundi – stated that it plans to convene a meeting with political actors by May. The meeting aims to resume political dialogue and help ease tensions in the lead-up to the general election.

In February, the UN Secretary General was tasked with establishing an electoral observer mission to monitor the situation ahead of, during, and after the 2015 presidential election.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Land scarcity and high population density has resulted in pervasive tensions over land ownership. This is aggravated as a high number of IDPs and refugees are returning to their places of and claiming land where other families, often of a different ethnic background, have since settled.

Returnees

UNHCR reported that as of 28 February, 9,751 Burundian refugees were residing in DRC.

As of January, IOM reported that 43,000 Burundians living in Tanzania have been forcibly repatriated. Limited information makes it difficult to quantify the exact number of people expelled since the end of July 2013. Many returnees, 65% of whom are women and children, have chosen to return to their province of origin without being registered due to a lack of reception facilities at entry points.

IDPs

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre states that although there has been no new displacement recorded since 2008, since 2011, there are still up to 79,000 IDPs, mostly ethnic Tutsis. They are mainly located in and around 120 sites across northern and central Burundi.

Refugees

As of late October 2013, UNHCR reported that Burundi was host to over 47,200 refugees and 8,300 asylum seekers. Refugees are mainly located in the border regions of Ngozi (north, alongside Rwanda), Ruyigi, Muyinga, and Cankuzo (east, alongside Tanzania) and Bubanza (west, alongside DRC). More than 46,000 refugees are fleeing violence and armed conflict in DRC. Over 6,000 new refugees arrived between January and August 2013, compared to 3,500 over the same period in 2012.

According to UNHCR as of late November, Burundi’s three refugee camps (Bwagiriza, Musasa and Gasorwe) have reached their maximum capacity with a total population of 26,000 refugees. In May 2013, UNHCR opened a new refugee camp in Kavumu, Cankuzo province, to cater for refugees fleeing fighting in eastern DRC.

Food Security

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Burundi is expected to face Phase 2: Stressed conditions again in September 2014. The food security situation is worse than in the same period last year and worse than the five-year average. The next lean season in the bimodal cycle will run from October to December 2014.

On 27 March, FEWSNET reported that the planting of beans, maize, Irish potato and sorghum for Season B (February–June) 2014 is almost complete, with slightly above-
average rainfall in February. From end March through June, households in most livelihood zones will experience Minimal food insecurity except the Plateaux Humides zone, which will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) conditions until season B harvests in June. The FAO announced in February that harvests of the A season crop, which run from September to February, were slightly below average due to plant diseases and heavy rains, and that the Plateaux Humides region was most affected.

Prices of the main staple commodities generally stabilised in February compared to January. However, in Ngozi, a key market in the Plateaux Humides livelihood zone, sweet potato prices increased by 28% in February compared to last month and were 88% and 101% higher than last year and the five-year average, respectively.

**Update: 22/04/2014**

**ZAMBIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 07/04/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 200,000 households are at risk of food insecurity, mostly in the south (FAO, February 2014).

- Since the end of January, there has been a significant increase in waterborne diseases.

**Politics and Security**

In 2011, Michael Sata won the presidency, unseating a Government that had been in power for 20 years. Zambia has a reputation for political stability and a relatively efficient, transparent government.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

On 10 March, FEWSNET reported that high rainfall of more than 50mm was recorded in the north at the start of the month. On 19 March, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration stated that consistent above-average rains over the past several weeks have raised the Zambezi River near to flooding levels in western Zambia. The rainbelt is expected to move north, increasing the chance of flooding along downstream areas, as moderate to heavy rains are forecast to persist. On 24 March, OCHA added that localised flooding has particularly affected the city of Kitwe, where houses and infrastructure were damaged and some local residents displaced.

**Food Security**

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Zambia will not need external assistance until at least September 2014, when the country will face a Phase I: Minimal food security situation.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 4 April, FEWSNET reported that little to no rain fell in southern Zambia in March. The greatest moisture deficits remain over eastern Zambia. An early cessation of the monsoon may adversely impact crop development and ground conditions.

On 31 March, FEWSNET stated that maize grain and meal prices continued to increase atypically in parts of Zambia, especially in Choma (14%) in the south and Solwezi (15%) in the northwest. Prices remain significantly above 2013 and five-year averages due to reduced national production, higher fuel prices, and strong regional demand (particularly from DRC in Solwezi).

As of 15 February, FAO reported that according to 2013 vulnerability assessments, one million people were at risk of food insecurity. They are mostly located in the south. On 27 February, FEWSNET reported that acute food insecurity remains Minimal (IPC Phase 1) at the height of the lean season, despite atypically high staple food prices. Most households depend on the market to meet basic food needs.

**Red (Nomadic) Locust Outbreak**

Red nomadic locusts are thought to have bred successfully: hopper groups and bands may have begun forming in outbreak areas in neighbouring countries and in Zambia, to a lesser extent.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Waterborne diseases**

OCHA reported on 10 March that 298 cases of dysentery and 172 cases of typhoid fever have been reported in Lusaka district since the end of January. Since the beginning of March, 36 suspected cases of dysentery and nine suspected cases of typhoid fever have been reported.

**HIV**

UNICEF indicated in 2012 that the prevalence of HIV among adults (15-49 years of age) is 14.3%.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

**ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

24 April: According to media sources, the United Arab Emirates Red Cross had access to a million children across six Eritrean provinces to proceed to clothes distributions.
No accurate or verified data relating to the food security situation or food price
levels in Eritrea is available, therefore Eritrea is not included in the Global
Overview prioritisation.

KEY CONCERNS

- Torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression,
  association, and religion are still major concerns in Eritrea (UN, HRW).
- Ongoing human rights abuses prompt thousands of Eritreans to flee the country
every year. In December 2013, Ethiopia was hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean
refugees (UNHCR).
- Over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished between
2011 and 2013 (WFP).

Politics and Security

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Eritrea is plagued by human rights abuses,
including torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression,
association, and religion. Conscription to national service is reportedly poorly paid and can
last for an indefinite period of time. On 31 March, interviews with Eritrean asylum seekers
by UN Human Rights Council officials revealed that the main reason for fleeing the country
was to avoid compulsory national service. Harassment of citizens by authorities, on the
grounds of their plotting to leave Eritrea, is reportedly widespread.

On 5 February, participants a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council pointed out that
human rights abuses remained widespread in Eritrea. Between 5,000 and 10,000 political
prisoners are being held in a country of just over six million people. The UN human rights
chief has accused the Eritrean Government of torture and summary executions.

Eritrea and Djibouti engaged in border wars in 1996 and 2008. During the latter, according
to Ethiopian officials in 2014, a number of Eritrean soldiers deserted and became
refugees in Djibouti.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Eritrea is currently undergoing the belg or short rainy season (February–April). In mid-
March, according to media reports, a hail storm hit the capital Asmara, leaving large
quantities of ice that led to the flooding of roads.

Access

There is a lack of updated and reliable data on the humanitarian situation due to limited
humanitarian access and a ban on humanitarian organisations assessing needs. As
reported in ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) released in October 2013,
providing direct humanitarian assistance in Eritrea remains a challenge due to limited
access and humanitarian space. On 24 April, according to media sources, the United Arab
Emirates Red Cross had access to a million children across six Eritrean provinces to
proceed to clothes distributions.

Displacement

Eritrean Refugees

According to 2012 UNHCR figures, there are 300,000 Eritrean refugees in neighbouring
countries as well as in Europe and Israel.

On 15 April, UNHCR announced that the Government of Djibouti had released 266 Eritrean
refugees, most of which were believed to be ex-soldiers who had attempted to flee
conscription in Eritrea, according to Ethiopian officials.

On 22 March, Sudanese officials announced that they would implement measures in border
areas to stop human trafficking. On 14 March, members of the UN Human Rights Council
had called on the governments of Sudan and Egypt to investigate and prosecute cases of
abduction, torture, and murder of Eritrean refugees by traffickers. According to a February
human rights NGOs report, between 2010 and 2013 Sudanese traffickers kidnapped
Eritrean refugees in Sudan and sold them to Egyptian traffickers in Sinai.

According to UNHCR, the number of Eritrean refugees crossing to neighbouring Ethiopia is
on the rise while the number entering Sudan has dropped compared to 2012. In December
2013, OCHA said Ethiopia had registered the arrival of 3,043 new refugees from Eritrea.
As of 31 December, OCHA indicated that Ethiopia was hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean
refugees, who are mainly settled in four camps in the northern Tigray region and two
others in the Afar region. As indicated in ECHO’s HIP, the high proportion of
unaccompanied minors who cross from Eritrea to Ethiopia is a priority problem in need of
action.

According to UNHCR, eastern Sudan received an average 500 Eritrean refugees per month
in 2013, down from 2,000 a month in 2012. Sudan reportedly hosts at least 114,500
Eritrean refugees. Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

Hundreds of Eritrean refugees are currently in Yemen. In early January, an exiled Eritrean
political organisation, the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization, called upon Yemeni
authorities to stop deporting Eritrean political refugees.

Refugees in Eritrea

According to UNHCR, as of January 2014, Eritrea hosts 3,468 Somali refugees.

Food Security

At 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust development was ongoing south of Massawa,
along the central portion of the Eritrean coast. The northern coast was also affected. The
outbreak was expected to intensify in March.

As reported by FAO on 11 February, erratic rainfall affected the 2013 cropping season.
Although available information remains limited, erratic rainfall is likely to have resulted in
fewer fields being cultivated in 2013 as well as having negatively impacted the crucial
grain-filling phase of crop development. FAO indicated that livestock with poor pasture conditions had also probably been affected.

As indicated in ECHO’s October HIP, as a result of access restrictions imposed by the authorities, no data on food security in Eritrea is available. However, it is estimated that Eritrea produces only 60% of the food it needs, and markets do not seem to be functioning properly. These two factors suggest that a significant part of the population may be in need of food assistance. In addition, local food and fuel prices are likely to remain high, putting severe pressure on household coping mechanisms. The Government officially denies any food shortages within its borders and refuses food aid.

Health and Nutrition

Malnutrition remains a widespread problem. As reported by UNDP, quoting the Food Security Strategy (2004) report, 38% of Eritrean children experience stunting; 44% are underweight, and 50% suffer from anaemia. About 59% of the Eritrean population consumes less than the daily calorie requirement.

According to FAO in 2013, over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished during 2011–2013.

Updated: 25/04/2014

KEY CONCERNS

- Throughout 2013, the Taliban has intensified attacks against foreign and local military and humanitarian targets as the country prepares for the withdrawal of NATO-led troops. According to UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan figures, 2,959 civilians were killed during 2013 (OCHA, March 2014). In the first months of 2014, violence escalated ahead of the 5 April presidential and provincial council elections.

- Protracted conflict has triggered massive displacement, with over five million Afghans in Pakistan and Iran. Over 647,000 people are internally displaced; 113,000 people were displaced in 2013 (UNHCR; OCHA, February 2014).

- Other main humanitarian needs are also conflict-induced. An estimated 7.7 million people are in need of protection, and 2.2 million are classified as severely food insecure. The conflict has caused widespread disruption to health services (OCHA).

Politics and Security

2014 will be marked by the first democratic transition since President Karzai took power. The outcome of the presidential elections of April will have implications for internal cohesion, since the vote is likely to be split along ethnic lines. The Afghan Government faces both internal and external challenges to its capacity and legitimacy.

International security and governance assistance is being reduced after twelve years of US-led military engagement. The bulk of the 86,000 foreign troops – including 60,000 US personnel – are scheduled to leave the country by the end of 2014.

The security environment remains highly volatile. With no significant progress in talks with the Afghan Taliban, further destabilisation is expected and a security vacuum is likely to develop. The continued presence of international military personnel is seen as vital for the stability of post-2014 Afghanistan.

International Military Presence and Afghan–US Relations

The waning NATO military presence in Afghanistan shifts the role of the international community to a more political and developmental one.

On 18 June, NATO will officially hand over authority in the remaining 95 districts in the south and east of the country to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). However, there is widespread concern within the US-led NATO coalition regarding the capacity of the 352,000-strong Afghan security forces to cope with the insurgency. Insurgents continue to control remote parts of the south and southeast, near the border with Pakistan. Their numbers have increased by 15% since the beginning of 2013, while Afghan security forces and civilian casualties are close to the record levels registered during the peak of the insurgency in 2011. Police deaths have nearly doubled since NATO forces started withdrawing: an estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen died, and over 2,700 were wounded,
between April and September 2013.

**Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA)**

The Bilateral Security Agreement between Afghanistan and the USA will determine the scope and strength of future US military presence in Afghanistan, as well as its support to the Afghan National Security Forces.

President Karzai has been reluctant to sign the agreement. In December 2013, he stated he had no intention of backing down from the demands he outlined before agreeing to sign the BSA, which include an immediate end to US military raids of Afghan homes, the need for a clear US commitment to peace talks with the Taliban, and the handover of the remaining Afghan detainees from Guantanamo Bay. Karzai also requested a commitment from Washington to refrain from backing any candidate in the April elections, and asked that the US either restart peace talks with the Taliban or leave if it is unable to do so.

Some observers believe that Karzai prefers to leave the decision to sign the BSA to his successor and that the US might be ready to wait until then. While Karzai’s reluctance to sign is seen as a high-risk gamble by the international community – as it may put both US support in jeopardy - local supporters argue that his move is aimed at appeasing the Taliban, at a time when Kabul is trying to engage in peace talks with the insurgents.

According to official sources, the US had planned, as part of the BSA, to leave more than 10,000 troops in Afghanistan for counter-terrorism and training. Failure to sign the bilateral pact could lead to the end of US financial support and disruption of broader western aid. To date, Washington has reportedly not made any decision on the matter, nor has it indicated any deadline.

**Regional Dimension**

Insecurity in Afghanistan destabilises the broader region, and neighbouring countries have a clear interest maintaining political, economic, and security cooperation with Afghanistan. Nonetheless, the region is marked by tensions between governments.

**Pakistan**

Tensions with Pakistan, in particular its support for the Taliban, negatively affect Afghan security and development. Despite complex US–Pakistan relations, a complete US withdrawal by the end of 2014 is not in Pakistan’s interest due to the risk of a security vacuum developing along Pakistan’s border.

**India**

Afghanistan serves as a land bridge to India from Central Asia and Iran, and is therefore of strategic and economic interest. However, strained relations between India and Pakistan have impeded a stronger role for India in Afghanistan so far: while security and stability are crucial for the realisation of India’s interests, deploying troops in Afghanistan and supplying heavy equipment have so far been red lines.

On 12–15 December 2013, Karzai visited India and requested greater defence and security cooperation in the years to come. The two countries signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement in October 2011, and India is now the fifth largest development donor in Afghanistan.

**Iran**

Tehran’s biggest concerns are the Taliban, and the strong US presence at Bagram airbase and other intelligence facilities along the Iranian border. Hence, Iranian authorities are pressuring the Afghan Government not to sign the BSA, which would allow the US to maintain its security presence to a certain extent. Instead it is pushing for a comprehensive bilateral economic and security agreement. Iran acts has hampered the development of hydroelectric facilities on Helmand River.

**Russia**

Russia is concerned by threats of drug trafficking, and the possible spillover of violence from Afghanistan to Central Asia. The deterioration of the security situation could create opportunities for radical Islamic organisations, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, to further destabilise the region.

**National Political Context**

**April Presidential Elections**

On 26 April, the preliminary results of the presidential elections were announced. Opposition member and former foreign minister Abdullah is in the lead with 44.5% of the vote. He needs a majority in order to become president, and a runoff election will take place on 7 June between Abdullah and Ahmadzai, who received 31.5% of the votes. The final results of the first round are expected to be announced by May.

Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai is of Pashtun descent and has chosen the Uzbek ex-warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum as running mate. Abdullah Abdullah, of Tajik descent, ran against Karzai in 2009, and was Karzai’s foreign minister until 2006.

Despite pre-election attacks by the Taliban as well as its threats to not participate in the polls, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) reported that around seven million people turned out to vote on 5 April, and polling day passed off without major attacks by militants. Overall, the turnout of over 50% was larger than expected.

Upon Afghan request, the elections were monitored by the EU Election Assessment Team. Following the 20 March Taliban attack on a hotel in Kabul, the US National Democratic Institute and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) announced the withdrawal of their staff from the country.

**Peace Talks with the Taliban**

Several attempts were made by Kabul and the US to re-launch peace talks with the Afghan Taliban in 2013. Since 2001, Karzai’s Government has cultivated informal contacts with current and former Taliban figures and seems to have renewed efforts to establish a dialogue with militant representatives in recent months, according to observers. To date, both Washington and Kabul remain interested in peace negotiations with the insurgents. Although various official and informal sources have evoked renewed preliminary contacts,
no substantial talks have yet been launched.

In late March, militants and security sources reportedly indicated that the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have secretly agreed to conduct a concerted insurgency in Afghanistan, with Pakistani militants announcing a ceasefire with Islamabad in order to preserve militant bases used to stage cross-border attacks.

**Afghan-led Initiatives**

On 19 February, a Taliban spokesman restated that insurgents are still opposed to negotiations, and reported that they were not involved in a meeting in Dubai between former and current Taliban figures who appeared open to talks with the Government. On 16 February, Kabul officials reported that a delegation from the High Peace Council, a government body launched to promote a political end to the conflict, had travelled to Dubai to meet a group of former and current Taliban figures that had allegedly floated the possibility of talks. The aim was to build on an informal meeting held in the same city earlier in February. No additional comments are available from Afghan authorities.

In late January, a senior Pakistani official said that Islamabad sees a chance to resume peace talks between Afghanistan and the Taliban, stalled for six months or so, after Karzai steps down. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. Afghan authorities are trying to engage Taliban leaders in Pakistan to reach Taliban groups in Afghanistan while the rift between Kabul and Washington widens.

On 30 November, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif met Afghan President Karzai in Kabul as part of ongoing efforts to launch a peace process in Afghanistan before NATO troops withdraw. Sharif, visiting for the first time since taking office in May, promised he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, captured in Pakistan in 2010, is considered by Kabul as key to reaching moderate Taliban commanders and involve them in the peace talks.

**US-led Initiatives**

On 23 February, the Taliban indicated that it had effectively suspended talks over a possible exchange of Taliban and US prisoners due to what the insurgents called the "complexity" of the situation in Afghanistan. The statement came as Washington officials had hinted at renewed contacts with the Afghan insurgents the previous week. Renewed contacts, which was supposed to lead to negotiations between the US and the Taliban, has been cited by Karzai as a necessary step before Kabul agrees to sign the BSA.

In August, tentative peace talks staged by the US in Qatar with the Taliban were interrupted after Kabul was outraged by the talks not being Afghan-led. In mid-August, a senior Afghan peace negotiator and former Taliban diplomat, now working with the Karzai Government, reported that the resumption of peace talks in Qatar with the Taliban looked unlikely.

**Security Context**

Since they vowed to start a new campaign in April 2013, using insider attacks as a key tactic against foreign and Afghan military force targets, the Taliban has intensified activities in Afghanistan as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) withdraws. Since May, insurgents have targeted foreign military, humanitarian personnel, and civilians seen to cooperate with the Government. A Taliban spokesperson indicated in June that the insurgents have no intention of changing tactics despite possible peace talks. The east and the southeast are most affected by violence, although an increasing numbers of attacks are hitting the northwest and Kabul.

On 25 April, an Afghan policeman – assigned to protect a US charity-run hospital in Kabul – opened fire, killing three Americans including a doctor, international media reported. The assailant shot himself after the attack.

On 7 April 2014, a roadside bomb killed 15 civilians and wounded five others on the outskirts of Maiwand district, in the southern Kandahar province. Although the attack was blamed on Taliban militants, there was no immediate claim of responsibility. In the first three months of 2014, the UN recorded the deaths of 187 civilians and injuries to another 357 from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), a casualty number up 13% compared to the same period in 2013.

On 6 April, a roadside bomb hit a truck carrying ballot boxes in the north of the country, killing three people a day after the country voted for a successor to President Hamid Karzai. Although polling day appeared to pass without major disruption, the Taliban claimed that they staged more than 1,000 attacks and killed dozens on 5 April, but security officials argued this was a gross exaggeration, adding that there were dozens of minor roadside bombs and attacks on polling stations, police and voters, but that the overall level of violence was much lower than the militants had threatened.

More than 350,000 security forces were deployed, and rings of checkpoints and roadblocks secured Kabul. In the south and southeast, observers indicated that 14% of polling stations did not open as the military were unable to provide security in areas where the Taliban presence is strong. Casualties were reported from small incidents around the country.

Observers fear that, considering the wave of attacks in the run-up to the vote, the Taliban may have deliberately laid low to give a false impression of improving security.

On 2 April, a Taliban suicide attack targeted the closely-guarded Afghan interior ministry in Kabul, killing six police officers. On the same day near the Pakistan border, a bomb attack killed at least two people and injured another 13 in the Vash Mandi area, Kandahar province. While the incident was not immediately claimed, Afghan officials indicated Taliban insurgents were likely responsible.

In March, attacks across the country killed over 55 people including over 40 civilians. Suicide bombings targeted civilians in the northern provinces of Kunduz and Faryab, and in the eastern city of Jalalabad. Violence targeted elections and campaign workers, as well as the Kabul Headquarters of the IEC, attacked twice in late March: these incidents caused the deaths of 19 civilians, two policemen and 10 milita. Mid-March, Reporters without Borders announced that since the beginning of the presidential election campaign in February, it had recorded 20 violent incidents against local journalists.
In February, a high-profile attack on an Afghan army outpost in the eastern Kunar province killed 21 soldiers, as the US and Kabul attempted to launch peace talks with the Taliban. A series of other attacks targeted mostly security forces and foreign military troops, and killed at least five people.

In January, several attacks were recorded in Kabul and surroundings, targeting mostly Afghan and NATO military personnel. A high-profile attack in the capital’s diplomatic district killed over 20 people, including foreign UN and IMF workers.

As indicated in a February UNAMA report, the number of civilians killed or injured in 2013 increased from 2012. The report documented 2,959 civilian killed and 5,656 injured in 2013. These figures mark a 7% increase in deaths and a 17% increase in injuries compared to 2012 and are similar to record high numbers of civilian casualties documented in 2011. The new figures further suggest a slight increase in the number of killed and injured during the second part 2013.

While improvised explosive devices used by anti-government elements were the biggest killer of civilians in 2013, increased ground engagements between pro-government forces and anti-government armed groups emerged as the number two cause of civilian casualties, with rising numbers of Afghan civilians killed and injured in cross-fire. UNAMA attributed 74% of casualties to insurgent groups, 8% to Afghan National Security Forces, 3% to international forces, and 10% to ground fighting between the two the insurgents and pro-Government forces, and 5% of casualties were unattributed.

Military Operations

According to a US report, Afghan troop casualties climbed by 79% during key fighting months in 2013, as the Taliban intensified attacks amid NATO’s ongoing withdrawal from Afghanistan. In parallel, NATO casualties fell by 59% from April to September. While US officials acknowledged that Afghan troop combat capabilities have improved, the report suggests that the National Security Forces would be at risk without international support after 2014. In August, Afghan military sources reported that insurgent numbers were up 15% on 2013 summer fighting months.

On 15 January, new tensions arose between Kabul and Washington after the Afghan president blamed the US for an air raid in Parwan province that killed Afghan civilians. ISAF reported that a joint force of Afghan troops and foreign soldiers called in the strike after being ambushed by Taliban insurgents. Accidental civilian deaths during ISAF airstrikes have been a major source of friction between Washington and Kabul.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Climatic Conditions

The severe winter has created additional logistical constraints for humanitarian access. On 10 February, ECHO reported that some access roads were blocked between the provincial capitals and districts. The most affected provinces are Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar, and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan. As reported by OCHA in February, many of the 13 passes in Ghur province are closed during winter with snow hampering movement along main transport axes.

Insecurity and Attacks against Aid Workers

Active hostilities and threats of violence continue to impede humanitarian access, with contested areas remaining the most problematic. Movement restrictions are increasingly applied to aid workers. From January to end March, 57 incidents of violence targeted humanitarian aid workers.

On 17 April, OCHA reported that a higher number of violent incidents on health workers were recorded in March 2014 than the previous two months. Nine incidents were recorded across seven provinces, mostly in the east and south. In total, 22 incidents involved humanitarians, including seven criminal incidents. Seven people were killed, three were injured, two were abducted and one person was arrested and detained. The central region registered eight incidents, including five crimes in Kabul; six incidents were registered in the south, four in the east, three in the west, and one in the north.

OCHA added that in Sangin district, Helmand province, three immunisation campaign personnel were killed by an IED, and another volunteer was shouted during a dispute with a local resident. One immunisation supervisor was abducted while in transit and released shortly afterward. In the northeast, a hospital was robbed in Takhar province. In Kunar province, an NGO vaccinator along with five other people were arrested and remain in custody, and an NGO clinic was severely damaged in an attack in its vicinity. In the eastern province of Nangahar, five polio vaccinators and their driver were abducted. They were released within hours following negotiations by local elders. In the southwestern province of Nimroz, an NGO ambulance was destroyed by an IED.

On 28 March, Taliban militants attacked a guesthouse used by a US anti-landmine charity in Kabul, killing two people. In February, insecurity severely constrained operations across several Afghan provinces. Two fatalities were reported amongst aid workers in Helmand, and the body of an aid worker was found in Balkh.

In Farah province, humanitarian organisations are severely constrained in their movement outside of Farah city with almost no work taking place in the east and north. In Ghor province, NGO movements outside of the provincial capital are also severely constrained. In Herat province, districts in the north and south remain largely off-limits with almost no work taking place in the east and north. In Ghor province, NGO ambulance was destroyed by an IED.

In Farah province, humanitarian organisations are severely constrained in their movement outside of Farah city with almost no work taking place in the east and north. In Ghor province, NGO movements outside of the provincial capital are also severely constrained. In Herat province, districts in the north and south remain largely off-limits with almost no work taking place in the east and north.

As of 30 November, OCHA recorded 266 incidences against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets in 2013, including 37 deaths, 28 arrests and detentions, 47 injuries and the abduction of 80 personnel. October OCHA reports indicated that over 55% of incidents are attributed to insurgent elements, but there is a significant rise in incidents attributed to pro-government forces, especially in contested areas. With high-profile attacks against ICRC and IOM compounds in May, security incidents involving aid workers were on the rise in 2013 compared to 2012 when only 175 incidents, including 11 deaths, were recorded over the whole year.

Displacement

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Climatic Conditions

The severe winter has created additional logistical constraints for humanitarian access. On 10 February, ECHO reported that some access roads were blocked between the provincial capitals and districts. The most affected provinces are Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar, and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan. As
UNHCR reported that as of 31 March 659,960 people were displaced due to conflict. This figure represents an increase of 5,300, including 2,970 people displaced in February, mostly in Herat, Helmand, Ghor, Farah, and Badghis provinces. Most of the country is vulnerable to new waves of displacement due to conflict and natural disasters. On 11 February, the Government launched a policy aimed at providing a systematic framework for addressing internal displacement issues.

In 2013, conflict-induced displacement led to acute humanitarian needs, with a marked increase in previously stable provinces in the north, particularly Faryab and Badakhshan, noted OCHA. In mid-December, OCHA reported that the number of IDPs rose from 80,000 in 2011 to 113,000 in 2013. An estimated 60,000 people were displaced in northwestern Faryab province because of conflict, according to OCHA on 30 November 2013.

In early December, additional displacement was recorded in Ghor, Daykundi, and Bamyan provinces in the central highlands following drought-like conditions and crop failure. As of 30 November, an estimated 4,700 people were displaced around Herat and Ghor areas and had registered for assistance.

**Returnees**

UNHCR reported that in March 2014, a total of 1,351 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan. Of the returnees, 821 came from Iran (mostly from Tehran and Esfahan), 524 from Pakistan (mostly from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan).

From January to March, a total of 2,346 Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan. This figure represents a sharp decrease (56%) compared to the same period last year, primarily due to the winter season, the extension of Proof of Registration cards in Pakistan until 31 December 2015, and the uncertain situation leading up to the elections in Afghanistan.

**Afghan Refugees in Other Countries**

According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 31 December, there were an estimated 2.4 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants in Iran, including one million undocumented Afghans. Roughly 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including one million undocumented Afghans, are in Pakistan. An estimated 200,000 Afghan refugees are registered in other countries. The protracted Afghan refugee crisis is placing an increased humanitarian burden on neighbouring countries and triggering tensions as Iran and Pakistan push for their repatriation.

As reported by Human Rights Watch in late November, Afghan refugees in Iran face persecution, arbitrary arrest, detention, beatings and harassment by authorities. Pakistan agreed this summer not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June. At a UN-backed meeting, Kabul and Islamabad agreed to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation; 60% of Afghan refugees are in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where they are triggering tensions in Pakistan.

**Disasters**

Following torrential rains and flash floods over 22–26 April in northern Afghanistan, 132 people were killed, around 16,000 people displaced, and around 39,000 affected, OCHA reported on 28 April. In total, 281 houses were destroyed and 657 houses damaged, most in Sar-e-Pul province.

Eleven provinces had received between 19–55% of their long-term average rainfall by 31 March, resulting in flash floods in ten provinces – and 34 districts – in the northern. IOM added the flooding negatively impacted more than 6,508 families, and resulted in the destruction of public facilities, roads, and thousands of hectares of agricultural land and gardens.

Jawzlan province was worst hit, with almost 27,000 affected and 87 killed. In Khojadoko district 13 villages were flooded, namely Mahajir Qeshlaq, Shakarak Baza, Chopbsh Afghanistan, Arab Gariq, Labjar Taghan, Salitiq Afghanistan, Quraqa Aroq, Chopbash Khord, Yetrouqh, with around 300 families displaced. In Qoshtepa district, approximately 7,000 people were affected and 43 bodies were found. In Darzab district, over 5,000 people were affected, 44 were killed and 16 are still missing. Both Qoshtepa and Darzab remain insecure, with roads flooded.

Faryab province is suffering from heavy damage in several districts, with almost 17,000 people affected. In Kohja Sabzposh district over 2000 people were severely affected. In Dawlat Abad district, over 3000 people were severely affected, with five killed. Some 250 livestock drowned and 5,000 jeribs of agricultural land was damaged or destroyed. Affected families lost household items and food stocks. In Sherin Tagab district, over 4000 people were affected, 23 killed, and 400 livestock drowned. In Maimana district, over 800 people were severely affected. In Pashtoon Kot district, over 2000 people were affected, six died and over 500 livestock were killed. In Almar, insecurity prevails, with 200 families affected and over 700 livestock killed. In Qaisar, insecurity remains, with seven dead and over 700 livestock drowned. In Gorziwan district, livestock was killed and much agricultural land was damaged. In Belcheragh, no assistance has been delivered, since government and humanitarian agencies are working elsewhere.

Balkh and Samangan provinces were impacted to a lesser extent, with almost over 1,000 people affected in Kohja Sabzposh district and several houses destroyed in Aybak district, Samangan province.

In the western provinces of Herat and Badghis, flood waters caused damage to infrastructure and agricultural land. In Badghis over 1,000 people were affected and 12 killed. In Herat, villages surrounding Herat city were most affected.

On 16 April, humanitarian partners reported that in March around 2,800 people (or 400 families) were affected by continuous rainfall in Kapisa province’s Hisa-i-Awali Kohistan, Hisa-i-Duwumi Kohistan, Koh Band, Nijrab, Mahmudi Raqi and Tagab districts. Of the affected, around 330 people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In Takhar province, around 800 people were displaced after a landslide in Rustaq district (Khowja Khaireab village) in the northeast. Some 30 families were affected by a flash flood in Chah Ab district (Bashir Abad village). Surrounding roads were temporarily closed.

In Badakshan province, floods destroyed houses, agricultural land, and infrastructure in
In Ghor province, around 1,100 people were affected by a flash flood in Du Layna district (Korab Cheshma Safid village).

On 12 April, a landslide triggered by heavy rains and a small earthquake swept through two villages in Takhar province. The disaster killed at least four people, destroyed around 100 houses, and an unknown number of people moved to higher ground for safety.

Although accurate information is scarce, humanitarian sources have reported that the winter season has put many Afghans at further risk, especially the 647,000 IDPs. The affected people are reportedly in need of shelter and food. Humanitarian sources say the Government response is lacking. Information remains limited, but ECHO reported that severe weather and heavy snow was affecting vulnerable families, including IDPs, in seven provinces. Local sources indicate that 63 people have died and 12 been injured; 100,000 livestock are also at risk. Provinces in central and northern Afghanistan are the most severely affected.

In late January, ECHO reported that heavy snowfall and low temperatures continue to affect northern Darz Aab and Qush Tepa districts of Jawzjan province. As of February, reports indicated that Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar, and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan were most heavily affected by harsh winter conditions. In late February, USAID indicated that Balkh province was also affected. At 19 March, according to IOM, heavy rainfall and flash floods were affecting much of the country, causing small-scale displacement and casualties.

### Food Security

According to OCHA in mid-December, an estimated 2.2 million people were classified as severely food insecure. A further eight million people are considered food insecure. Households in the extreme northeast, especially in Badakhshan province, central highlands, low-income and disaster-affected households across the country, and IDPs are especially vulnerable to food insecurity. As reported by FEWSNET in February, western central highlands will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food security from January to March, due to the strain on usual food sources and the replacement by external assistance. Resumption of seasonal livelihood activities is expected to improve food security outcomes to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) from April to June.

After dryness caused crop failures, an estimated 2,700 people in eastern Ghor and Herat areas needed food assistance in October, and had moved to urban centres in search of income to buy food.

### Agriculture and Markets

As of March, according to OCHA, the seasonal precipitation in nine of the major wheat-producing provinces that rely primarily on rain-fed crops is half or less of the long-term average. This is particularly the case for Kunduz, Takhar, Jawzjan and Badakhshan. March to June are critical months for rainfall in the wheat-growing season.

In late September OCHA reported that vulnerable households are facing a tough winter after dryness in the growing season caused crop failures in Ghor, Daykundi, and Bamyan provinces in the central highlands. A WFP/FEWSNET mission reported that 80% of rain-fed areas and 24% of irrigated areas were affected.

According to a mid-August WFP report, a preliminary forecast put the 2013 wheat production at 4.9 million metric tons, slightly below the 2012 harvest, the second highest for 35 years. However, large differences exist between provinces. Smaller wheat harvests were gathered in Faryab, Ghor, Jawzjan, and Khost due to dry spells and early rains combined with wheat rust in some areas.

As reported by the WFP in February, the average wheat grain retail price in main Afghan cities increased between August 2012 and March 2013. Wheat prices then decreased from April to June 2013 only to slightly increase again from July 2013 to January 2014. The January average price of wheat in main cities was slightly higher by 5.9% in comparison to the same time last year, and significantly higher by 15.9% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

The January price for wheat flour was slightly lower, by 4.5%, compared to the same month in 2013, and significantly increased by 12.6% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. The January average price for low quality rice, the second main staple food, was slightly lower by 4.8% compared to the same month in 2013, and significantly higher by 23.3% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. By comparison, the January average price of high quality rice was significantly higher by 11.5% compared to the same month last year, and by 33.4% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

### Health and Nutrition

According to OCHA, the number of people in need of access to health services has increased from 3.3 to 5.4 million. Conflict-related hospital admissions increased by 42% from January to April 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. In Helmand province, there was an almost 80% increase in hospitalised injuries caused by conflict in 2013. The Health Cluster reported a 40% increase in security incidents from January to April 2013 compared to 2012. 2013 saw a 60% increase in the number of people being treated for weapon wounds, stretching trauma care needs beyond the existing response capacity. The conflict is causing widespread disruption to health services.

### Polio

As of 16 April, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative reported that four wild polio (WPV1) cases have been reported so far in 2014. The most recent case dates from 25 February.

On 11 February, Afghan authorities reported on the first confirmed polio case in Kabul since 2001. An emergency vaccination campaign was launched in the capital. Medical sources stated that this case might have been contracted in Pakistan. Polio remains endemic in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

### Malnutrition

According to figures from OCHA in mid-June, 125,690 children under five suffer acute malnutrition, including 28,650 who have severe acute malnutrition.
Updated: 29/04/2014

SYRIA CIVIL WAR

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

29 April: Two mortar shell attacks hit a technical institute in the Shaghour neighbourhood of Damascus, killing 12 people and wounding 50, state media reported.

28 April: Assad formally submitted his nomination to stand for election. He is the seventh person to nominate himself in Syria’s first multi-candidate presidential vote, but none of his rivals are expected to mount a serious challenge. Syria’s opposition leaders in exile are barred from running because candidates must have lived in Syria continuously for 10 years. The constitution also says candidates must have the backing of 35 members of parliament.

28 April: The electoral commission chief announced that Syrians who fled the country via unofficial crossings will be barred from voting in the presidential election. Many refugees, particularly who fled to Turkey and Iraq, did not pass through government-controlled crossings.

27 April: Opposition forces shelled government-held districts of Aleppo and bombed government forces headquarters in the Old City, as part of a surge against government positions. At least 21 people were killed and 50 wounded.

27 April: Iraqi army helicopters hit an opposition convoy in eastern Syria, killing at least eight fighters. It was the first strike claimed by Iraq inside Syria since the conflict began. The conflict has spilt across the border, contributing to the most dramatic rise of violence in Iraq since the country’s 2006–2008 sectarian war.

KEY CONCERNS

- UN estimates indicate that 6.5 million Syrians are currently internally displaced. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment reported over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern provinces in November 2013. The total number of people displaced internally and externally now exceeds 40% of Syria’s pre-conflict population. At least half of the displaced are children.

- Over three million people in Syria live in areas that are difficult to reach. At least 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the Government or opposition forces. At least 325,000 children under five live in areas not currently accessible to humanitarian aid (UNICEF). Humanitarian conditions in inaccessible locations are reported to be deteriorating (OCHA). OCHA stated on 28 March that only 6% of the people living in besieged areas have received assistance in the past month.

- As the fighting has intensified in recent weeks, at least one million people are now in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in Aleppo alone. The road from Damascus to Aleppo – a vital lifeline – is often blocked. 1.25 million people in Aleppo city and rural parts of the governorate need food. Other key roads are blocked by different armed forces and groups.

- According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative as of 9 April, 39 cases of polio have been confirmed in Syria: 27 cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and 12 cases from contested areas (Aleppo, Idleb and Deir-ez-Zor) not yet reflected in official figures. One case has been confirmed in Iraq.

- As of 29 April, the total number of Syrians registered or waiting to register as refugees outside Syria stands at 2,726,612. Over 1,040,000 are in Lebanon (Government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total), 722,000 in Turkey, 588,000 in Jordan (Government estimates 600,000 in total), 219,500 in Iraq, and over 136,500 in Egypt (Government estimates up to 300,000).

- According to WFP, cumulative rainfall from September to mid-February was less than half of the long-term average. Given the conflict and dry weather, wheat production is expected to be at a record low of between 1.7 and 2.0 million metric tons. This will further increase import requirements: last year’s wheat needs stood at 5.1 million metric tons.

Politics and Security

Security Context

The security situation has deteriorated with increased fighting and shelling reported in parts of Homs, Idleb, Lattakia and eastern Aleppo, resulting in population displacement and constraining the delivery of assistance. Intense fighting between Government and opposition groups has worsened the situation in Rural Damascus, and Damascus has also witnessed a significant increase in mortar attacks since the beginning of April.

In Dar’a when opposition forces seized the strategic Tal al Jabiye hill on 24 April. Fighting has increased as the opposition fighters seek to take another hilltop nearby in a bid to connect territory they hold in Daraa and the Quneitra region, alongside the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Chemical Weapons

On 27 April, Sigrid Kaag, the United Nations envoy overseeing the eradication programme, announced that Syria had missed a self-imposed 27 April deadline to remove all of its chemical arsenal from the country. She said that 7.5–8% remains.

On 11 April, activists have claimed that barrel bombs dropped on the Hama town of Kfar Zita released a chlorine-based chemical weapons attack. The claims have not yet been proven. Because chlorine has many industrial uses, it is not a banned substance under the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Syria became a party last year.

The International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic reported on 5 March that the quality and quantity of chemical weapons used on 21 August 2013 in Al Ghouta
and on 19 March 2013 in Khan al Assal indicated that the perpetrators likely had access to the chemical weapons stockpile of the Syrian military and to expertise and equipment necessary to safely manipulate large amount of chemical agents. The UN mission to investigate the use of chemical weapons on Syria reported in December that chemical weapons were likely used in five out of seven attacks examined, but did not assign blame. In January, the head of the UN mission stated that it was “difficult to see” how the opposition could have weaponised the toxins used. Both the Government and the opposition deny having used chemical weapons and have accused each other. The attack in Al Ghouta in August 2013 claimed between 350 and 1,400 lives. Since the attack in Al Ghouta, the OPCW has led a process of verifying, securing, and transporting Syria's chemical weapons stock.

Regional Dynamics

On 27 April, Iraqi army helicopters hit an opposition convoy in eastern Syria, killing at least eight fighters. It was the first strike claimed by Iraq inside Syria since the conflict began. The conflict has split across the border, contributing to the most dramatic rise of violence in Iraq since the country's 2006–2008 sectarian war, with more than 600 people killed so far in April.

The authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) are digging a 17km trench on their border with Syria. Iraqi Kurdish authorities say the ditch will help reduce smuggling and keep Islamist militants out of their relatively stable region. But the Kurdish group that controls the Syrian side of the border says the ditch is designed to tighten a blockade against its enclave, and force it to submit to the authority of the ruling party in Iraq.

On 16 April, in retaliation for Al Nusra Front shelling the Naseeb border crossing between Syria and Jordan, the Jordanian air force shelled opposition vehicles trying to cross the border towards Jordan.

Political Developments

The Government of Syria announced it will hold a presidential election on 3 June. Assad formally submitted his nomination to stand in the election. He is the seventh person to nominate himself in Syria's first multi-candidate presidential vote, but none of his rivals are expected to mount a serious challenge and end four decades of Assad family rule. Syria's opposition leaders in exile are barred from running by a constitutional clause requiring candidates to have lived in Syria continuously for 10 years. The constitution also says candidates must have the backing of 35 members of the parliament.

The electoral commission chief announced that Syrians who fled the country via unofficial crossings will be barred from voting in the presidential election. Many refugees, particularly who fled to Turkey and Iraq, did not go through government-controlled crossings. Syrians living outside the country will vote 28 May. It is not clear how voting will proceed in opposition-held areas within Syria.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Revised estimates indicate that the total number of people in need in Syria has increased to 9.3 million, up from April 2013 estimates of 6.8 million. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 7.5 million people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

A Syrian Centre for Policy Research study on the socioeconomic impact of the crisis estimates that over half the population, around 11 million, now lives in poverty; 4.5 million live in extreme poverty and are unable to meet their basic needs. The Economist Intelligence Unit forecasts continued economic hardship for Syrians as the conflict continues. Nearly all the country's oil sector, which previously supplied 25% of state revenue, will remain off-stream. This means the Government will likely continue scaling back subsidies to ease pressure on public finances. Many Syrians rely completely on the subsidies on bread, fuel, and other basic items. On 16 December, the UN launched a US$ 6.5 Billion appeal to cover the needs in Syria and refugee-hosting countries for 2014.

Access

Syrian Kurdish security forces in Al Hasakeh governorate (PYD) have closed the border crossing at Peshkapor into the Kurdish Region of Iraq, cutting off escape for those wanting to flee. Iraqi Kurdish authorities had already imposed significant restrictions at the border crossing, however, the closure will also affect the cross-border movement of humanitarian assistance and other commodities to the difficult-to-reach area of eastern Syria.

Interagency convoys to Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqα governorates are becoming more complex to organise and require extensive negotiations with many parties. In some areas in these governorates beneficiaries are being coerced by actors with political or financial objectives not to accept UN humanitarian assistance. Access restrictions and continuous population movements also impede the assessment of needs.

Estimates suggest that some 3.5 million vulnerable people are living in what are essentially inaccessible locations. Military truces and ceasefire have been implemented in some hard-to-access and besieged areas, with varying degrees of adherence, allowing partial and sporadic humanitarian access.

On 24 April, the UN was able to distribute 300 food aid parcels in besieged Yarmouk, after a 15-day hiatus. An estimated 20,000 people in the camp are dependent on UN assistance.

Displacement

IDPs

Since mid-weeks, some 117,500 newly displaced people have sought shelter in camps in northern and central Idleb, having fled fighting in other parts of the governorate, rural Aleppo and northern Hama. Renewed fighting in the northeast of Syria is pushing large numbers of already displaced people to seek refuge elsewhere in the region. It is estimated that Idleb governorate hosts over 569,000 IDPs.

An estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced, with the highest concentration of IDPs in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Tartous, Hama, and Deir-ez-Zor. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern provinces in November 2013.
Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

As of 29 April, the total number of Syrians registered or waiting to register as refugees outside Syria stands at 2,726,612. Over 1,040,000 are in Lebanon (Government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total), 722,000 in Turkey, 598,000 in Jordan (Government estimates 600,000 in total), 219,500 in Iraq, and over 136,500 in Egypt (Government estimates up to 300,000).

The total number of refugees registered by UNHCR is expected to exceed four million by the end of 2014. UNHCR stated that across the region, 400,000 refugees live in formal camps and nearly two million reside outside formal settlements.

Health and Nutrition

According to OCHA, 60% of health centres have been destroyed. Nearly two-thirds of Syrian Ministry of Health public hospitals – 59 of 91 – are functioning, however many are providing only limited healthcare services. Many are operating without emergency physicians or do not have adequate services for treating malnutrition, according to the Health Resources and Services Availability Mapping System. In Aleppo there are reportedly now only 40 doctors for a population of 2.5 million people – there were previously more than 2,000 – and medical supplies are scarce.

Lack of medicines, particularly for chronic diseases, continues to be a critical problem. According to the Government, 674 medical centres and 416 ambulances have been damaged or are out of service. The shortage of intravenous fluids is worsening. Insulin, oxygen, and anaesthetics are no longer available in many parts of Syria. Before the crisis, Syria produced 90% of its needed medicines. The conflict has led to a 70% decline in production. Taking currency depreciation into account, the price of medicine has increased by 25-50%. Medicine is imported, primarily from Lebanon. Lengthy administrative procedures surrounding the supply of clinics have caused delays in distributing medical equipment and medicines to some areas.

Maternal Health and Sexual and Gender-based Violence

According to the United Nations Population Fund, an estimated 200,000 pregnant women are in need of care in Syria, and every day some 1,480 women give birth in dire conditions. The proportion of deliveries by caesarean sectio has increased from 19% in 2011 to 45% in 2013. Domestic violence, along with other forms of gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment and early marriage, have also increased as a direct consequence of conflict.

Aleppo University hospital has reported a reduction in the number of normal births from 5,251 in 2011 to only 937 in 2013. Caesarean-section deliveries increased from 42.5% in 2011 to 55.7% in 2013, due to the growing number of complicated cases admitted to the hospital. The findings also revealed an increasing number of sexually transmitted infection cases and a shortage of family planning and maternal health medicines and supplies.

According to UNFPA, healthcare providers in Aleppo have observed an increase in cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. An average of one to two cases per month were reported by different clinics in Aleppo, though formal protocols for case management are not in place. Living conditions, such as overcrowding and lack of regular electricity supply, in addition to the scarcity of female staff in IDP shelters, have contributed to the observed increase.

The increase in cases of sexually transmitted infections have been associated with an increase in the exchange of sex for money among internally displaced women. In addition, early pregnancy and domestic violence are not uncommon phenomena among the IDPs, as reported by UNFPA partners in the field. UNFPA reported being unable to verify these findings due to limited access and lack of agreed protocols.

Measles

In 2014, 930 suspected cases of measles have been reported across the country so far. More than 60% of cases are among children under five, with most living in the northeastern governorates: 558 in Deir-ez-Zor, 126 in Ar-Raqqqa, and 74 in Al-Hasakeh and Hama.

Polio

According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, no new polio cases were reported from the Middle East between 16 and 23 April. The number of confirmed cases in Syria remains 39: 34 cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and five cases from contested areas not yet reflected in official figures. Mass polio vaccination campaigns commenced on 6 April in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon, aiming to reach more than 20 million children over five days. According to WHO, Compared to previous rounds, the April campaign reached more hard-to-reach areas in Rural Damascus, Ar-Raqqqa, Homs and Aleppo governorates. Moreover, in Idlib, Homs and Lattakia governorates, the initial target of vaccinated children was surpassed: for example, in Idlib, the 201 000 original target was exceeded by 25 078 children. Difficulties were reported in accessing a number of areas mainly in Deir ez-Zor and Rural Damascus, resulting in low coverage rates in those governorates; 73% and 84%, respectively.

Food Security

WFP reported that insecurity continues to cause food price surges in markets, notably in the conflict-affected governorates of Idlib and Dar’a. The price of diesel in Dar’a has increased by 50% since March, and the prices of lentils, rice, cooking oil and wheat flour have increased in rural Idlib.

WFP says rainfall since September has been less than half the long-term average, and will have a major impact on the next cereal harvest. Dry conditions across the region, coupled with the impact of the conflict, will seriously affect the agricultural sector. Wheat production is expected to reach a record low of between 1.7 and 2 million metric tons, further increasing import requirements; Syria’s wheat needs last year stood at 5.1 million metric tons. The increased dependence on cereal imports will further increase food prices.

The worst affected governorates account for close to 50% of Syrian wheat production: Aleppo, Idlib and Hama, with poor conditions extending also to Ar-Raqqqa, southern Al-Hasakeh and areas of Deir-ez-Zor. Most of these governorates show poor crop development, with the worst affected showing very similar signs to 2008, a major drought.
year in Syria. Conflict has devastated irrigation capacity, damaging pumps and canals, caused power failures, destroyed tractors and made it unsafe to work in the fields. Livestock and pastoral livelihoods will also suffer from water shortages and poor pasture availability.

An estimated 6.3 million people in Syria are highly vulnerable to food insecurity and in critical need of food and agriculture support. The crisis has severely limited food production, marketing and imports. Many families report reducing their number of meals and opting for cheaper and less nutritious foods. The most vulnerable groups will be unable to produce or access adequate food to meet basic needs this year, necessitating the continued and expanded provision of multiple forms of emergency food and agricultural assistance.

Agriculture-based livelihoods face severe constraints from production to market: restricted access to land; population displacement; reduced availability and increased cost of farming inputs; physical damage to land, equipment and infrastructure; and reduced veterinary supplies and services.

Protection

Recent field visits to Aleppo, Homs and Tartous noted reports of child marriage, domestic violence among IDPs, and an increase in incidents of sex and gender-based violence, including rape.

WASH

According to OCHA, one-third of the nation's water treatment plants no longer function. Problems have been reported at water plants in Damascus, Idlib, and Deir-ez-Zor due to depletion of the water table, and due to lack of fuel, which is needed to pump more water. Homs, Idlib, and Hama have high water needs. In Hama city, damage to the water and sewage network has led to a sharp decrease in water pumping. Water has been rendered unsafe due to infiltration of the sewage line to the drinking line, leaving three million people without access to safe drinking water.

Education

According to a local media source, the school enrolment rate has decreased from 97% prior to the crisis to 15%. Three million children in Syria are outside the education process. Essential education infrastructure has been destroyed and militarised by parties to the conflict, including more than 4,000, or 18%, of Syria’s 22,000 schools. Across the region, more than 60% of the 735,000 school-aged refugee children are not enrolled in school.

Updated: 29/04/2014

YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

28 April: The Protection Cluster reported that the security situation remains a main constraint for humanitarian access. Both verification and response remain slow, with IDPs spread over several districts and governorates. The inability to provide adequate assistance to IDPs and their host communities is of growing concern.

27 April: Following the US-supported crackdown that began a week earlier – killing almost 60 militants in drone strikes throughout the country – Yemeni forces are now conducting raids on Al Qaeda hideouts on the outskirts of the capital Sana’a. The military also besieged areas in Abyan, Shabwah and Al Bayda governorates, cutting off main roads and supply routes.

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity continue, with regular attacks by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Huthi militants in the north, and secessionists and government forces in the south.

- By the end of March 2014, nearly 500,000 people were affected by ongoing conflict, some of whom are in displacement for six years now (Protection Cluster, April 2014).

- 14.7 million people (58% of the population) will need some form of humanitarian assistance in 2014 (OCHA, April 2014).

- An estimated 10.58 million people (42% of the population) are food insecure. Another 5.54 million are severely food insecure (WFP, OCHA, March 2014).

- Around 8.6 million people have no access to healthcare (OCHA, April 2014).

- An estimated 13.1 million people do not have access to safe water; 12.1 million are without access to improved sanitation; and 4.4 million lack access to adequate sanitation (OCHA, April 2014).

- Around one million children under five are acutely malnourished and another 280,000 severely malnourished and at risk of death (OCHA, UNICEF February 2014).

- Around 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants are in need of lifesaving services (OCHA, April 2014).

Politics and Security

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab region and the seventh most food-insecure country in the world, with 14.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The country is currently undergoing a political transition process aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in 2014, but continues to face three concurrent security challenges: the presence of Huthi insurgents in the north, southern secessionists, and the increasing presence of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) throughout the country. Urban centres in western and central governorates have also seen civil unrest.

The Yemeni economy will continue to decline if the Government cannot improve protection
of oil pipelines, according to observers. A report released by the Yemen Central Bank in mid-February found that oil revenues declined almost 30% between January 2013 and January 2014. Tribesmen have been attacking pipelines, mainly in an effort to pressure the Government to provide jobs, settle land disputes, and free relatives from prison. Most attacks have occurred in Hadramout governorate, the centre of Yemen's oil production.

**Political Context**

Under a US-supported power transfer deal, President Hadi is overseeing reforms after the long-serving President Saleh was forced to step down in 2012. The political factions extended Hadi’s interim period by a year in January 2014 to allow him to facilitate the drafting of a new constitution as well as changes to the federal system that were decided upon in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). The NDC arrangements include a reshuffle of the cabinet and restructuring of the Shura Council to guarantee sufficient representation of both northern and southern insurgents, for whom the outcome is designed to accommodate demands for more autonomy.

Under the new system, the country will consist of six regions. The more populous north Yemen will consist of Sabaa, Al Jund, Azaal, and Tihamah regions. Huthi insurgents from the far north have rejected this division, claiming it is unequal in terms of wealth distribution. Huthis are currently largely settled in Sa’ada governorate and will be included in Azaal, which has no significant natural resources nor access to the sea. South Yemen, formerly independent, will be split into two regions: Aden and Hadramout. According to local sources, a large portion of southern leaders, who had declined to take part in the NDC, aim for full independence of a unified south and therefore reject the accord.

On 28 February, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2140 in support of the Government and population during the transition process. Included in resolution 2140 are travel bans and asset freezes for people in Yemen who obstruct or undermine the country’s political transition and those who commit human rights violations. Earlier in February the Security Council had expressed concerns regarding reports documenting the continuing interference of former authorities, notably former President Saleh, in the reconciliation talks.

**Security Context**

**Strategic Importance and International Military Involvement**

Yemen is of strategic importance as it flanks top oil producer Saudi Arabia and major shipping lanes. During a US-backed military offensive in 2012, Islamist militants were largely driven out of their strongholds. Since then, they have regrouped and continue fighting. From early August 2013, local security forces have been on high alert, fearing an attack by Al Qaeda in the capital Sana’a. Security has been stepped up around government buildings and possible foreign targets. Despite criticism of the many civilian casualties, the US – with the consent of the Yemeni authorities – has intensified drone strikes against militants, which have killed over 70 people since July 2013.

**Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)**

Despite counter-insurgency operations by military forces and backed by US drone strikes, AQAP remains extremely active, retaining strongholds in the east and south. Since the start of the military campaign in 2012, AQAP has targeted army and security forces, with an estimated 80 officers killed so far. AQAP has also been abducting foreigners, and regularly targeting oil pipelines. In the beginning of 2014, Yemeni security officials expressed concern about the increase in Al Qaeda attacks in the past months, which they link to dozens of Saudi Islamist militants who have come to Yemen from the battlefields in Iraq and Syria.

On 27 April, international media reported that following a US-supported crackdown that started a week earlier—killing almost 60 militants in drone strikes throughout the country – Yemeni forces are now conducting raids on Al Qaeda hideouts on the outskirts of Sana’a. The military also besieged areas in Abyan, Shabwah and Al Bayda governorates, cutting off main roads and supply routes.

Over 20–21 April, approximately 53 people were killed in a series of air raids. The Ministry of Defence reported 45 killed, including three civilians, in Abyan, Shabwah, and Marib governorates.

On 10 April, six civilians were wounded in a roadside bombing in Yafea district, in the southern Lahj governorate. Security forces have since cordoned off the area. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, although the Government blamed AQAP.

On 3 April, AQAP claimed an attack on an army headquarters in a tightly secured coastal district of Tawahi in Aden governorate. Twenty people died, most of them militants. AQAP stated the attack was part of its campaign to "target the joint operation rooms that manage the US drones in the country".

In a separate incident, on 2 April, security forces detained four AQAP fighters in the western governorate of Al Hadida. Fresh clashes then erupted in which two soldiers and two AQAP fighters were killed.

On 30 March, two members of Yemen’s auxiliary Popular Resistance Committees were killed in an overnight ambush by presumed Al Qaeda members on a road between Loder and Moudia, northeast of Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan governorate.

**Southern Secessionists**

On 7 April, unidentified gunmen killed three soldiers and one civilian at a security checkpoint at the western entrance to Mukalla city in Hadramout governorate. They went on to attack the security department in the Broom district of Mukalla, where they wounded two soldiers. The Interior Ministry website reported that several gunmen were killed during the attack. The Ministry denied local reports that seven soldiers had been kidnapped.

Clashes between armed groups and government forces in Al Dhale’e governorate subsided in March: local media reported on 27 March that fighting between the 33rd Armoured Brigade and armed supporters of the Southern Movement had died down. A joint assessment team reported that most displaced people had returned to their homes. OCHA reported on 11 April that markets were functional and movement within the city was normal. However, unconfirmed reports indicate widespread human rights abuses of civilians, including children and women, by parties to the conflict.
A presidential mediation committee had brokered an agreement between the two sides earlier in March. The Southern Movement called for the removal of all military camps and checkpoints from Al Dhale’e, demanding that security positions in the governorate be handed over to local security personnel. The army was willing to adhere to the agreement and evacuate brigades from Al Dhale’e city as well as replace military guarding the government compound with soldiers from the Special Security Forces.

Many southern leaders fear the new division of the south is a way to limit their authority by depriving them of control over important areas such as Hadramout, where some of Yemen's oil reserves are found. A number of leaders and a large portion of the population in the south continue to ask for a mechanism that would allow the region to transition back to full independence.

**Conflict in Northern Yemen**

On 8 April, local media reported that following a week of fighting that left five dead and five injured, residents of Samh and Wazze villages in the Dhoran district of Dhamar governorate agreed to a truce on 5 April. Samh village is associated with the Salafis, and Wazze with Huthis.

10 April is the final day of a 15-day truce between the Huthis and the Government in Amran governorate. There have been reports of a troop build-up at entry and exit points (mainly at checkpoints) on the outskirts of Amran city, particularly the exit towards Sana’a. According to OCHA at 11 April, the general situation in the city remains calm and humanitarian operations are continuing. On 9 April, a clash was reported at a checkpoint near Qaren village, 8km from Amran city, on the main road to Hajjah governorate.

On 26 March, OCHA added that tensions remained high in Amran governorate, with militants reportedly arriving in Raydah district to join protestors at Beir Aidh village.

The temporary truce was agreed on 22 March; on the same day international media reported that 12 people – eight rebels, two soldiers, and two civilians – were killed in clashes between Yemeni forces and Huthi opposition on the outskirts of Amran. The rebels, on their way to a demonstration, wanted to cross a checkpoint with their weapons when shooting started. On 24 March, OCHA added that the fighting did not break the temporary truce. The fighting displaced 400–500 families, estimated to be a precautionary measure against potential future violence.

Since October 2013, intermittent fighting has been taking place between Zaidi Shi’ite Huthi insurgents and tribesmen from the Sunni Hashid confederation and their allies. The Huthis, also referred to as Ansarullah, have been advancing from their mountain stronghold near the Saudi Arabian border in Sa’ada governorate, towards other majority Shi’ite areas near Sana’a. Most of the fighting is taking place in Amran governorate.

The conflict started after Huthi fighters accused Sunni Salafi groups of recruiting foreign fighters to prepare an attack against them. By December, fighting between the tribes had attracted Salafi-affiliated tribesmen and spread to Al Jawf, Amran, and Hajjah governorates. In January 2014, local sources said the fighting had spread to Hashid groups as they supported Sunni Islamist groups fighting the Huthis.

As of late January, consolidated casualty figures remained difficult to obtain, but since 30 October at least 300 people have been killed on the Salafi–Hashid side, including 210 people who died in more than two months of clashes near the city of Dammaj. Casualty figures for the Huthi group have not been released.

**Tensions at the Saudi Arabian Border**

On 10 April, international media reported that unidentified gunmen had killed two patrolling Saudi border guards in Dhahran al Janoub in the southwestern governorate of Asir. The attack has not been claimed, yet work on the security fence on the border has often been halted by protesting Yemeni tribesmen, who say it prevents them from reaching pastures. In the past, such protests have often ended in violent clashes between Yemens and Saudi border patrols.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

An estimated 14.7 million people (56% of the population) will need some form of assistance in 2014, including nearly all two million people in Sa’ada and Al Jawf governorates in the north, according to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview and the 2014 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan.

The central governorates, Amanat, Al Asimah, Al Bayda, Dhamar, Ibb, Ma’rib, Sana’a, and Taizz, where 11.3 million people reside, have the highest levels of food insecurity. An estimated six million people need assistance, including food aid, improved water, adequate sanitation, and primary healthcare.

In the northern governorates, years of conflict have destroyed local infrastructure. Landmines and explosive remnants of war are a major concern. In the western governorates of Al Hudaydah, Raymah and Mahwit, where 5.8 million people live, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition continue to be recorded. To date, more than half of this region’s population, 3.8 million people, including 82,000 IDPs, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In the south and east, the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al Dhale’e, Shabwah, Hadramout, and Al Mahrah, where 4.89 million people reside, have a large number of returnees who fled the flash floods in mid-August 2013, pockets of instability, and limited livelihood and income opportunities.

**Disasters**

Ibb, Taizz, Raymah and Sana’a were affected by drought during the first half of 2013. Flash floods hit some districts of Abyan, Shabwah, Taizz, Dhamar, Sana’a, Ibb, Hajjah and Al Hudaydah in mid-August 2013. Desert locust affected Hajjah and Al Hudaydah end of November 2013 and could possibly extend to Taizz, Lahj, Hadramout and Shabwah in the coming months.

**Access**

Humanitarian access remains impeded across Yemen, especially in Amran and Al Dhale’e governorates, where tribal conflict, civil unrest, natural hazards, and obstacles imposed by...
non-state actors have prevented humanitarian workers from reaching those in urgent need.

On 28 April, the Protection Cluster reported that the volatile security situation remains a main constraint for humanitarian access. Both verification and response remain slow, with IDPs are spread over several districts and governorates.

On 10 April, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen called upon parties to avoid further escalation of the conflict and allow humanitarian partners full and unfettered access to people affected, to ensure the delivery of assistance, and effective protection of civilians.

Médecins Sans Frontières, ICRC, and OCHA have reported that parties to the conflict continue to cut off humanitarian assistance to vulnerable IDPs living in camps and host communities as well as to people newly displaced by conflict in the northern governorate of Al Jawf, Al Dhale’e in the south, Al Mahwit and Raymah in the west, and Al Maharah in the east. Obstructions are partly a result of civil disobedience campaigns set up as the NDC began. Civilians in Sa’ada are out of fuel and those in Dammaj and Kitaf are running out of food, water, and medical supplies.

Kidnappings

The UN reported on 2 April that the diminished capacity of state security forces since the political crisis began in 2011 has created pockets of lawlessness. In January, the UN Security Council responded to the alarming spike in kidnappings for ransom with a resolution warning that the jump in ransom poy-outs, and political concessions to secure the release of hostages, were benefiting terrorist organisations.

On 28 April, international media reported that a German diplomat was injured in a suspected kidnapping attempt in the southern district of Hadda, Sana’a. On 14 April, international media reported that an armed group kidnapped a foreign doctor – of Uzbek or Russian nationality – in Marib governorate, east of Sana’a. On 25 March two UN workers were kidnapped and rapidly released. Humanitarian agencies have responded to the new security environment by scaling up protective measures, including minimising travel. In March, the ICRC decided to lower its profile in Amran, following threats against personnel, closing a northern-based office also as part of the restructing of its Sana’a delegation. The increasing frequency of threats to patients and personnel in hospitals and health centres forced Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to halt lifesaving services in Al Dhale’e in February, as well as pull staff from facilities in Amran governorate in August 2013.

Displacement

Tribal conflict, the current fluidity of displacement, tribal traditions, and a lack of access to affected populations are all hindering identification of new IDPs.

Yemen is also a transit country for migrants seeking to reach wealthier states with better job opportunities. Recently, measures by both Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia led to a massive reduction in the number of African migrants and refugees entering Yemen and caused many Yemenis to return from Saudi Arabia.

IDPs

On 11 April, OCHA reported that as of 28 February 309,820 IDPs reside in the country. Significantly declining from around 500,000 after September 2012, the figure has stabilised at around 300,000 between May 2013 and February 2014.

Amran and the North

In late 2013, the UN reported that almost 307,000 IDPs remain in north Yemen, including Sana’a. As of February 2014, OCHA reports that 95% of IDPs are hosted in five governorates: Hajjah (81,940 people), Amran (54,270 people), Al Jawf (24,700), Sa’ada (103,010 people), and Sana’a (42,760 people).

As of 30 March, OCHA cited unconfirmed reports that, after fighting between government forces and Huthi militants in Amran governorate, 400 to 500 families fled. They are staying principally in districts north and west of Al Dhabr village and in other areas of Amran district. These reports also indicate that demand for food has increased substantially in local markets, indicating that people may be making bulk purchases. Humanitarian partners are particularly concerned about the impact on Amran city and its estimated population of 85,000, should tensions escalate.

As of 17 March, OCHA reported that 75,000 people have been displaced within Amran governorate – an increase of 5,000 in a month. The figures includes 44,000 people displaced prior to 2011, and 31,210 displaced people registered since October 2013.

Around 13,500 IDPs from the Amran governorate have been verified and provided with assistance. The relatively low number of registrations in Amran city could be because IDPs in large cities tend to live with relatives. OCHA states that Amran city has the highest number of displaced people, but the highest number of verified IDPs, namely 5,220 people, is in Bani Suraim. Protection Cluster partners are verifying the reported 5,820 people from Amran governorate who have arrived in the capital Sana’a.

In the beginning of January, about 10,000 Salafis came homeless to Sana’a as a result of an agreement reached between the Salafis and the Huthis, which stipulated that 15,000 non-local Salafis residing in Dammaj, Sa’ada governorate, had to leave. Although the Government, which had appointed a committee to broker the agreement, committed to provide housing and transportation, the displaced reportedly did not receive this support, and are said to be staying in mosques and tents in the Sawan district of the capital. An estimated 5,000 other Salafis left for other parts of Yemen.

Al Dhale’e and the South

On 14 April, local media reported that following clashes between the local tribes of Al Ahwal and Al Aslm six people were killed, four others injured and 350 people – or 50 families – have been displaced.

On 17 March, OCHA reported that conflict between government forces and separatist militants in Al Dhale’e governorate has displaced at least 8,000 people. Health, education, and water facilities have been damaged and services interrupted. Thousands of people are unable to access basic services, food, or protection.

Refugees
On 11 April, OCHA reported 2,717 new arrivals (refugees and migrants) as of 28 February. This figure represents a significant increase on 450 new arrivals in December 2013. Around 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are in need of lifesaving services.

UNHCR added that 8,148 new arrivals so far in 2014 indicate a significant decline from 103,154 arrivals in 2011, 107,532 in 2012 and 65,319 in 2013. Ethiopia has tightened policing of illegal border crossings in 2013 and has pursued traffickers more aggressively, according to its Migration and Passport Authority. According to IOM, these measures by bordering countries contributed to the lower number of African migrants and refugees making their way to Yemen. On 28 April, the Protection Cluster stated that unaccompanied Ethiopian migrant boys who became victims of smuggling are frequently still being identified in immigration centres throughout Yemen.

UNHCR reported at 9 April that 230,878 Somali refugees reside in Yemen. On 10 April, the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat added that an estimated 498 Somalis arrived on Yemeni shores in February 2014, an 18% increase from January 2014. February 2014 arrivals averaged 69% less than the arrival figures for February 2012 and 2013. New arrivals were mainly from south-central Somalia and Somaliland, particularly Woqooyi Galbeed, Awdal and Togdheer.

On 23 April, local media reported that 115 migrants and refugees from Somalia and Ethiopia were arrested by the Yemeni Coastguard off the coast of Dubab.

**Returnees**

On 11 April, OCHA reported that there are 236,147 returnees from Saudi Arabia, of whom 163,196 are in Abyan, 64,796 in Sa’ada, and 8,155 in Al Bayda governorates. As reported by UNHCR, the Yemeni returnees, who returned via al Tuwal in Haradh district, northeast Yemen, have acute humanitarian needs. The majority are undocumented migrant workers. The returns place a burden on Yemen’s fragile political transition.

In March 2013, the Saudi Government adopted a new amendment to Article 39 of the Saudi labour law, which stipulates that foreigners cannot work for anyone other than their original sponsors to the country. On 4 April, the IFRC reported that since November 2013, 154,995 Yemenis returning from Saudi Arabia have been registered at several entry points. Although the number of returnees fluctuates monthly, an estimated 400,000 more Yemeni nationals may return in 2014.

**Food Security**

Although there has been an improvement in food security compared to the crisis of 2011, conflict continues to disrupt food access, contributing to high levels of chronic food insecurity. According to OCHA and WFP in March, the total number of food insecure people in Yemen was estimated to stand at 10.58 million, or 42% of the population. Another 5.54 million are severely food insecure and require immediate improved household access to food. Food consumption on average is poor (17.9%) or borderline (24.6%) for all 19 governorates.

Overall food insecurity remains high due to inadequate physical and financial access to food, chronic extreme poverty, high food prices and limited sources of income. Acute malnutrition is also high due to poor food utilisation, water and sanitation and health issues. In 2014, the situation could worsen as hundreds of thousands of Yemeni workers are returning from Saudi Arabia, leading to loss of remittances, reduced purchasing power, and high inflation.

On 18 April, FEWSNET reported that food availability and access have become a major concern since Sa’ada market is located in a main conflict area and households in surrounding areas are staple food market-dependent.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report for December 2013–February 2014 stated that food security and consumption has improved in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Al Bayda, Al Mahwit and Dhahran governorates due to a better civil security situation as well as increased use of credit.

However, significant deterioration is reported in Abyan, Lahj, Hajjah and Al Dhale’e – where between 50% and 75% of the population are food insecure – due to insecurity and political instability. These governorates have a high number of recently returned in need of assistance. Furthermore, insecurity is hampering agricultural activity, leading to volatile food and commodity prices. Crop production levels will be lower due to drought and locust infestation in the northwest.

On 2 April, local media reported that the Agriculture Office in Sa’ada distributed hormonal traps and legal pesticides to fight the Tuta absoluta, a pestilent moth that has destroyed much of the governorate’s tomato harvest. The Yemeni Agriculture Ministry said the moth has cost Yemen around 71 billion Yemeni rial (USD 330 million) since its emergence until last August.

On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that the Yemeni population will be in need of external assistance until September 2014 at least, when it will be facing a food security situation of Phase 3: Crisis. The key upcoming lean season lasts from March/April until June.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 31 March, WFP reported that the food security situation for poor households who depend on purchases is believed to have improved marginally. The supply of food items was normal in February 2014 in most of the monitored markets, though the flow of commodities was disrupted in some parts of the country due to conflict.

Despite below-average first-season rains in the southwest and the locust outbreak in northwestern cropping areas, 2013 national cereal production is estimated to have been slightly above the five-year average. Areas experiencing shocks or conflict are likely to face the worst food security outcomes.

FEWSNET states that the March–June 2014 forecasts suggest near-average rainfall for most of Yemen with an increased likelihood for above-average rains over northwestern cropping areas. If rains perform as predicted, it could result in average agricultural wage labour income for poor households during the production season, as well as average first-season crop production beginning in June 2014.

**Locust Outbreak**

On 11 April, OCHA reported 2,717 new arrivals (refugees and migrants) as of 28 February.
On 2 April, FAO reported that locust numbers may increase slightly. On 6 March, OCHA reported that thus far US$ 46 million has been lost in crop value since locusts invaded Yemen in June 2013.

Locust infestations are mainly concentrated on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea. Infestations have also been reported on the southern coast near Aden, where work in the fields is limited by insecurity. Local authorities estimate that the locusts have destroyed about 90% of the sesame and millet crops in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah.

Health and Nutrition

A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 has severely disrupted access to health services, clean water, and basic sanitation. OCHA reported that, as of 28 February, an estimated 8.6 million people have limited access to health services: qualified medical staff are in short supply as is medical equipment. On 11 March, the UN reported concerns for the Al Dhale’e population of 400,000, where food supplies and health facilities are affected; four hospitals have been shelled.

WHO and the Government reported that between 15 and 22 February, acute respiratory tract infections, acute diarrhoea, and suspected malaria were the leading causes of morbidity.

Malnutrition

On 11 April, OCHA reported that Yemen suffers from alarming rates of malnutrition, with 12 out of 21 governorates facing critical conditions. UNICEF estimated that 1.9 million people are in need of nutrition assistance, of which one million children require emergency assistance. As of mid-March, WFP reported wasting in 13% of children under five, and stunting in 47% of children.

UNICEF stated that 1,060,000 children under five are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 279,150 suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). On 7 March, UNICEF added that the severely malnourished are likely to die from the condition.

According OCHA, Al Hudaydah and Raymah governorates have the worst levels of acute malnutrition among children under five. For those in conflict-affected areas, the situation is worsening due to the destruction of facilities and displacement.

MERS-Coronavirus

On 13 April, the first case of the deadly Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) coronavirus was reported in Sana’a. MERS – which has a more than 40% death rate – emerged in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and is from the same family as the SARS virus.

Polio

WHO reported on 21 March that outbreaks due to type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) in Yemen appeared to have been interrupted. However, new outbreaks of cVDPV3 were detected.

Over April 2012–July 2013 cVDPV3 was isolated in five patients and two contacts in the insecure northwestern governorates of Sa’ada, Hajjah, and Al Hudaydah. The cVDPV3 outbreak followed a cVDPV2 outbreak (11 reported cases, two independent contacts) during April 2011—February 2012.

WASH

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that an estimated 13.1 million people do not have access to safe water, 12.1 million are without access to improved sanitation, and 4.4 million lack access to adequate sanitation.

In Amran, 1,300 displaced families, including 5,000 children, lack access to safe water. On 6 March, OCHA reported that thousands of people in Al Jawf governorate are in urgent need of water, sanitation, and health services.

Education

The Protection Cluster reported on 28 April, following an inter-agency mission, children in Al Dhale’e are missing out on school due to insecurity. Emergency schools cannot accommodate all students.

OCHA reported in the beginning of April that an estimated 2.5 million children are not in school. The drop-out rate is more than 20% in the 37 most affected districts. Over 350 damaged schools require rehabilitation or reconstruction.

In early 2014, OCHA reported that education facilities in Sanah, Al Dhale’e governorate, were destroyed by shelling, hampering access to education for almost 1,500 students.

Shelter

Registration of IDPs in large town settings and with host communities is progressing slowly and vulnerable displaced such as women, children, and older people in Amran are in need of emergency shelter, OCHA reports.

Protection

On 28 April, the Protection Cluster reported that by the end of March 2014, nearly 500,000 people are affected by ongoing conflict, some of whom have been displaced for six years. The inability to provide adequate assistance to IDPs and their host communities is of growing concern.

The Protection Cluster added that women and children in Al Dhale’e continue to face harassment from soldiers.

An escalation of violence between Hirak Taqrer Al Masir Movement (HATM) and government forces in Al Dhale’e has led to increased insecurity and civilian vulnerability. Also, human rights violations were observed from killing to destruction of buildings, including government offices and schools.

On 11 April, OCHA reported that more than 300,000 people are in protracted displacement throughout the country. More than 236,000 IDPs returned in Abyan, Sa’ada and Al Bayda.
Lack of adequate protection institutions and a weak rule of law is exposing vulnerable
groups to abuse, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

On 25 March, local media reported that the Demining Center, which is part of the National
Committee for Landmines, estimated that since 1999 landmines have indiscriminately
killed almost 4,000 people nationwide, including 504 children. Over 2012–2013, 37 people –
including four children – were killed by landmines in the valleys of the Kushar district of
Hajjah governorate, civil society organisation Wethaq Foundation reported in March 2013.
Landmines were planted in Kushar district during the 2011 clashes, and in several other
governorates – including Taizz, Hajjah and Sa’ada – during Yemen’s 1994 civil war.

Child Recruitment

On 7 March, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2143, condemning
child recruitment in armed conflict. The Security Council is concerned over the lack of
progress on the ground in situations of concern, and the military use of schools by armed
forces. It states that the protection of children in armed conflict should be an important
aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict and build peace, and it is the
primary role of the Government to provide protection and relief to all children affected by
armed conflict, while recognising the importance of strengthening national capacities in this
regard.

On 4 March, the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict reports that three parties, Huthi,
Ansar al Sharia, and state-armed forces are recruiting children. On 28 February, the
Security Council in resolution 2140 expressed concern over continued recruitment of
children by armed groups and Government forces, calling for committed national efforts to
end and prevent further recruitment and use of children.

Updated: 29/04/2014

IRAQ CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

22 April: At least 33 people were killed and 80 wounded in suicide bombings and other
attacks across Iraq, according to officials. A suicide bomber in the town of Suwayrah,
south of Baghdad, killed 12 people at a police checkpoint. In the nearby town of Madain,
another suicide car bomber killed three soldiers and two civilians at an army
checkpoint. One soldier was killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb struck a
patrol in the town of Mishahda, 30km north of Baghdad, a police officer said. And in the
town of Latifiyah, about 30km south of Baghdad, gunmen in speeding car killed one
civilian and wounding two. Four more bombs struck various parts of Baghdad.

21 April: 18 people were killed and nearly 50 wounded in attacks across the country. In
one attack, a suicide bomber and armed fighters attacked a private Shia college in
Baghdad; four policemen and one teacher were killed and 18 people were wounded. The
Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility.

18 April: Armed groups attempted to take over a village in Diyala governorate. Baghdad
is bookended by Diyala and Anbar, so Diyala is of great strategic importance to armed
groups working their way towards the capital.

18 April: At least three attacks on political candidates were reported, and another
attack on campaigners. General elections are due on 30 April. In Baghdad, four people
were killed and eight more were wounded when two bombs exploded on a Doura district
commercial street; later, three more bombs killed five people and wounded 10 others.

17 April: Gunmen disguised in military uniforms drove armoured vehicles up to a small
military base outside Mosul and opened fire, killing 12 soldiers and wounding about a
dozen. The region around Mosul has been an ISIL stronghold and Iraqi forces face daily
skirmishes in the region with ISIL and other armed Sunni groups. Another 18 people
were killed in bomb and shooting attacks in other parts of Iraq.

17 April: Reports indicate that a rusting pipeline running from the Kirkuk oilfields to the
Baiji refinery in Salah al Din province leaked a large amount of oil into the Tigris River.
Much of northern Iraq's pipeline infrastructure is in need of renovation and is also
vulnerable to militant attacks.

16 April: Suicide bombers attacked a government compound in Ramadi. In Baghdad, three
people were killed and nine more were wounded in the Mashal neighborhood. Three were
killed and nine more were wounded in a bombing at a market in Sabaa al Bour. One person
was killed and six were wounded in a blast in Ubaidi. A bomb in Kirkuk killed two people
and wounded five more. A bomb in Sadr City killed four people and wounded 11 more.

15 April: The Iraqi Government transferred over 2,000 prisoners out of Abu Ghraib
prison due to security concerns, as the prison is near areas under the control of armed
groups.

KEY CONCERNS

- With over 8,800 people killed in 2013, tensions and violence between Iraq’s Shia
and Sunni communities have escalated to levels unseen since 2008. An
independent death count based on security and medical sources indicated that
over 2,550 have died since the beginning of 2014 (UNAMI, AFP April 2014).

- Heavy fighting in the majority Sunni Anbar governorate, where militants took
control of Fallujah and Ramadi in December 2013, has led to the displacement of
over 400,000 people. In February, the conflict in Anbar began spilling over to
neighbouring provinces (UNAMI, Gol, March 2014).

- Prior to the displacement triggered by violence in Anbar governorate, between
1.13 and 1.3 million people were already internally displaced by sectarian strife
(UN, IOM, December 2013).

- The conflict in neighbouring Syria continues to impact Iraq, bringing thousands
of refugees to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkapor crossing in Duhok governorate. As of 22 April, about 219,500 people have crossed into Iraq from Syria since the conflict began (UNHCR).

Politics and Security

Sectarian violence has increased country-wide since conflict erupted in the western Anbar governorate between Shia-led Baghdad government forces and Sunni armed groups. The violence is linked to the long-running political dispute between Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki and religious and ethnic groups opposing the allegedly sectarian policies of his Shia-led Government. Since the start of 2013, widespread discontent within the Sunni Muslim minority has fuelled unrest. Tensions are at their highest since US troops left the country two years ago. As violence grows, the country is getting closer to general destabilisation.

International and Regional Context

In early November, visiting Washington for the first time in two years, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki openly blamed the resurgence of Al Qaeda-affiliated armed groups in Iraq on regional unrest rather than internal issues. Most observers believe, however, that the unrest is mainly related to divisive policies implemented by authorities in Baghdad. During his trip, Maliki also discussed possible increased military assistance to Iraq. On 27 January, the Obama administration stated its intention to sell 24 Apache attack helicopters to Baghdad in an effort to strengthen Iraqi efforts against al Qaeda-affiliated militants.

National Political Context

Campaigning has begun for the general election, due to take place on 30 April, with Prime Minister Maliki seeking a third consecutive term in office. This will be the first vote in Iraq since the US army’s withdrawal in 2011. It is unclear whether it will be possible for voting to take place throughout the province of Anbar, which has seen heavy fighting since December 2013.

On 4 November 2013, authorities passed a new electoral law, opening the way for parliamentary polls to be held in April 2014 and alleviating concerns that they would be delayed because of insecurity. The voting on the election bill had been long delayed because of a dispute between the central authorities and ethnic Kurds, who run their own region in the north. The upcoming general election is seen as a litmus test of the country’s political stability amid growing sectarian strife.

In April 2013, provincial elections, the first held since the departure of US troops, were a proxy indicator of national stability. Although it failed to win a majority in any district, the current Prime Minister’s State of Law coalition came top.

Security Context

Violence surged in 2013 to its worst level in five years, with sectarian tensions bringing Iraq closer to general destabilisation. Most observers expect violence to increase ahead of the 2014 elections, scheduled for 30 April.

The UN reported that over 8,800 people, including 7,800 civilians and police, had been killed in the violence in 2013, making it the deadliest year in Iraq since 2008. July was the deadliest month, with over 1,050 killed and 2,320 wounded, the highest casualty numbers recorded since April 2008. Baghdad was one of the most affected areas.

As reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), a total of 592 Iraqis, including 484 civilians, were killed in violent attacks in March. The figure excludes casualties resulting from violence in Anbar governorate because of limited information.

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

Most attacks in Iraq are attributed to the Sunni militant Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) who have strongholds in Anbar, Nineveh, Kirkuk, most of Salah al Din, and parts of Babil, Diyala, and Baghdad areas. The Sunni militant group, the largest in Iraq, allegedly seeks to create an Islamic state across the Iraq–Syria border.

On 11 April the Al Qaeda-affiliated Al Nusra Front in Syria and its allies regained the border town of Abu Kamal, a day after ISIL had captured it. ISIL withdrew to the T2 oil site, 60km southwest of the town, where a Syria–Iraq pipeline lies. ISIL are thought to be attempting to consolidate control over the border between Syria and Anbar in Iraq in order to move fighters and supplies between the two countries. The conflict on the Syrian side has led to Iraqi authorities reinforcing their positions on the Iraqi side of the border.

On 10 February, ISIL withdrew its forces from Syria's oil-rich eastern province of Deir-ez-Zor, according to local sources. The move followed several days of heavy infighting with rival militant groups in the area. The withdrawal may be related to the statement released on 3 February by Al Qaeda's general command indicating that it has officially broken all links with ISIL. There had been months of tension with ISIL, and the decision was largely seen as an attempt by Al Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria by bolstering Al Nusra Front.

Since December 2013, ISIL has been involved in an open confrontation with Government forces in Anbar province. It continues to target Government security facilities, checkpoints and public places such as cafés and markets. While both Shia and Sunni populated areas have been heavily hit over the past months, ISIL appears to have further stepped up attacks on Shia targets since November–December.

According to observers, a growing rift between ISIL and Al Qaeda was perceptible even before the former extended its reach into Syria. In April 2013, ISIL tried to force the Al Nusra Front into a merger but was rebuked by Al Qaeda's general command. ISIL had been controversial among Islamists for a decade. The group was criticised for staging attacks on Shia targets since November–December.

Anbar Governorate

As of early April, the clashes in the towns of Ramadi and Fallujah continued and spread towards Diyala and Salah al Din governorates. Although security forces have reportedly managed to take back most of Ramadi, Fallujah remains under Islamist militant control, and several incidents between ISIL militants and Iraqi military in the vicinity of Baghdad are raising concerns that the rebels are seeking to open a front towards the capital.

ISIL fighters have gradually fortified their hold over a major dam located just outside...
Fallujah in recent months. ISIL fighters closed the gates of the dam on 13 April, which could be used to flood Fallujah in order to lift the siege by Iraqi security forces. Areas downstream face electricity shortages due to their reliance on hydropower and irrigated areas may also experience water shortages.

There has been sporadic fighting in the mainly Sunni Anbar governorate since December 2013. Opposition fighters, mainly ISIL, captured positions in the provincial capital Ramadi and the city of Fallujah on 1 January. The two cities have been a bastion of Sunni insurgency since the 2003 US-led invasion. The current standoff represents the most direct challenge to the Government since the departure of US forces two years ago.

According to local sources, fighting has displaced up to 400,000 people, most within Anbar, but also in Nineveh, Salah al Din, and Diyala. As of 27 March, local medical sources also reported that 336 Iraqi civilians have been killed in the violence since January 2014, 154 in Fallujah alone. Another 1,562 were reportedly injured.

Local sources indicated that militants are policing the streets of Fallujah and implementing Sharia rulings, with the stated aim of winning the support of the local Sunni population.

On 26 March, the Anbar Provincial Council held a meeting to discuss initiatives to end the violence, including the withdrawal of military forces, amnesty for militants, and compensation for the people affected. The Council announced the creation of three negotiating committees to engage with the central government, tribal leaders opposed to the national authorities, and religious scholars. This followed Prime Minister Maliki’s 22 March reaffirmation of his commitment to implement the Anbar Peace Plan. Adopted by the Council of Ministers on 18 February, the plan pledges to restore stability in the province, reconstruct damaged property, resettle displaced families, and integrate tribal fighters who fought alongside the military into the police. The measures are the latest in an attempt to pacify Anbar province and Iraq’s broader Sunni minority, who have repeatedly complained of being marginalised by the Shia-dominated government of Maliki and unfairly targeted by heavy-handed security measures.

The deadly clashes in Anbar ignited in early December after the arrest of a Sunni politician on terrorism charges and the Government’s dismantling of an opposition Sunni protest camp in Ramadi. While ten years ago many tribes in Anbar shared the US troops’ goal to rout ISIL, ISIL’s resurgence has divided the tribes, some sympathising with and supporting the Islamist militants, others vowing to help the Government regain control.

Incidents and Attacks

Iraq is subject to almost daily bombings and security incidents. As of 13 April, a death count by Agence France Presse based on Iraqi security and medical sources indicated that more than 2,550 have been killed since the beginning of 2014, including over 320 people in April. An estimated 600 Iraqis – mostly civilians – were killed and another 1,250 injured in acts of terrorism and violence in March, a slight decrease compared to over 760 deaths recorded in February. None of the figures cover casualties from the fighting in Anbar.

At least 33 people were killed and 80 wounded across Iraq on 22 April in suicide bombings and other attacks, according to officials. A suicide bomber in the town of Suwayrah, south of Baghdad, killed 12 people at a police checkpoint: five policemen and seven civilians. In the nearby town of Madain, another suicide car bomber struck an army checkpoint, killing three soldiers and two civilians. One soldier was killed and three wounded when a roadside bomb struck a patrol in the town of Mishahda, 30km north of Baghdad, a police officer said. And in the town of Latifiyah, about 30km south of Baghdad, gunmen killed one civilian and wounded two. Four more bombs struck various parts of Baghdad.

A day earlier, 18 people were killed and nearly 50 wounded. In one attack, a suicide bomber and armed fighters attacked a private Shia college in Baghdad; four policemen and one teacher were killed and 18 people were wounded. ISIL claimed responsibility.

At least three attacks on political candidates were reported on 18 April, and another attack on campaigners. A general election is due on 30 April. In Baghdad, four people were killed and eight more wounded when two bombs exploded on a Doura district commercial street; later, three more bombs killed five people and wounded 10 others.

On 17 April, gunmen disguised in military uniforms drove armoured vehicles to a small military base outside Mosul and opened fire, killing 12 soldiers and wounding around 12 more. The region around Mosul has been an ISIL stronghold, and Iraqi forces in the region face daily skirmishes with ISIL and other armed Sunni groups. Elsewhere in Iraq, another 18 people were killed in bomb and shooting attacks. On 16 April, suicide bombers attacked a government compound in Ramadi, housing the Anbar governor’s office and a provincial council building. In Baghdad, three people were killed and nine were wounded in the Mashtal neighborhood. Three were killed and nine more were wounded in a bombing at a market in Sabaa al-Bour. One person was killed and six were wounded in a blast in Ubaid. A bomb in Kirkuk killed two people and wounded five. A bomb in Sadr City killed four people and wounded 11.

Iraqi Kurdistan Political Context

While tensions persist between central authorities in Baghdad and in Kurdistan, both sides have made attempts to move closer as exemplified by the passing of the new election law in early November. Better relations with the Kurds would help ease pressure on Iraq’s Shia leadership.

Nonetheless, Baghdad continues to suppress Kurdistan’s push for greater economic independence by reasserting control over the oil resources in the region. Baghdad insists it has the sole right to export Iraqi resources, including those from the northern Kurdish region, which gained de facto autonomy in 1991. Among other countries, Turkey is currently engaged in negotiations with Kurdish authorities to begin oil exports.

In September 2013, Kurdistan’s main opposition party came second in the region’s parliamentary election, beating the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of regional President Barzani came first. Since 2005, KDP and PUK have ruled through a coalition Government as part of a wider deal in which they divide up posts in Erbil and Baghdad.

The regional Government has delayed the next election for the regional presidency to 2015, extending the term of Kurdish leader Barzani. The opposition has denounced this move as illegal.
Kurdish Regional Security Context

The authorities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq are digging a 17km trench on their border with Syria. Iraqi Kurdish authorities say the ditch will help reduce smuggling and keep Islamist militants out of their relatively stable region. But the Kurdish group that controls the Syrian side of the border says the ditch is designed to tighten a blockade against its enclave, and force it to submit to the authority of the Iraqi Kurdish ruling party.

On 16 November, on his first visit to the Turkish southeast in two decades, Kurdish regional President Barzani called on Turkish Kurds to back the fading peace process with Ankara, ostensibly showing support for Prime Minister Erdogan. Given their shared concerns over the activism of Kurdish militias in Syria, Barzani and Erdogan announced in mid-November their wish to establish a regional interim administration on the model of Iraqi Kurdistan and settle the issue of the stalled peace process in Turkey. Iraqi Kurds are also concerned over retaining the regional leadership of Kurds over the Syrian Democratic Union Party, which has links to the Turkish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). While Barzani was calling for more Kurdish support to Ankara, the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was denouncing Ankara’s regional policies in a counter rally in Diyarbakir, the main city of Turkish Kurds.

To date, the withdrawal of PKK militants from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan has stopped, with fighters citing failures by the Turkish Government to take steps agreed under the peace process, which has not moved forward since the March ceasefire. Despite the start of withdrawal on 14 May, the Turkish authorities stated in August that only 20% of PKK fighters had left Turkey, and they were mostly women and children. On 15 November, the eve of Barzani’s visit to Turkey, Turkish authorities reported that Kurdish militants attacked a military convoy near the Syrian border in one of the most serious breaches of the ceasefire to date.

The Kurdish issue continues to be a regional one and the Syrian conflict is impacting the situation of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. While the arrival of former PKK insurgents in Iraq is likely to strain tense relations between the regional Kurdish authorities and Baghdad, it remains unclear how the movement of PKK groups will impact the Syrian conflict. As fighting between Kurds and Islamist anti-government forces continues in northern Syria, the wider region is becoming increasingly involved in the conflict. Various regional Kurdish groups are trying to assert transnational leadership.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

While Iraq continues to cope with over one million IDPs and returnees, the conflict in neighbouring Syria has also led to a large influx of refugees, mostly into the Kurdistan region. Iraq is also facing new humanitarian challenges due to violence in the central Anbar province, where fighting between Government forces and insurgents since late 2013 has triggered new waves of population displacement. Sectarian violence also increased during 2013 and 2014, when almost daily bombing affected civilian safety and security across the country.

Access

In January, the UN system declared Anbar to pose extreme security risks, meaning that UN staff are not permitted to travel to or within the governorate. In addition, the communications coverage has been disrupted, making remote operations through implementing partners challenging as well. The road from Baghdad to Ramadi is highly unsafe due to military operations in the area. As reported by OCHA and ICRC, fighting makes main roads impassable, and several bridges, including one linking Fallujah with Baghdad, have been destroyed. Several humanitarian partners have reported that administrative constraints are also hindering humanitarian access.

On 24 February, UNAMI reported that hundreds of people demonstrated in Fallujah for an end to the Government’s artillery bombardment in the area and for authorities to allow supplies to enter the city.

Although humanitarian access is less restricted elsewhere in Iraq, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, the north, the central provinces, and the Disputed Territories. According to reports, access to Al Qa’im refugee camp remains difficult, though activities can be carried out by helicopter.

Displacement

IDPs

As of early 2014, UNHCR has warned that the significant increase of sectarian violence threatens to spark new internal displacements of Iraqis fleeing insecurity.

The recent outburst of violence in Anbar governorate has triggered population displacements from Ramadi and Fallujah. As of 9 April, authorities estimated that up to 426,000 people (over 71,000 households) have been displaced by fighting since January 2014, with about 70% displaced within Anbar governorate. Numbers are difficult to confirm. Ongoing military operations are likely to trigger additional population movements in Anbar and Salah al Din. According to OCHA and IOM, many IDPs have scattered around Anbar. Others have moved to Salah al Din, Kirkala, Baghdad, and Najaf governorates. Up to 29,000 have reportedly sought refuge in the Kurdish region. According to local sources, the influx of IDPs imposes a significant burden on host communities.

Thousands of people are reportedly trapped in what are described as siege-like conditions in Fallujah and Ramadi. According to the UN, the most pressing needs of the IDPs are food, NFIs, healthcare, and cash assistance.

The Government blockade of both cities has resulted in limited access to food, water, and fuel for the population. As reported by UNAMI on 30 January, shelter is becoming a pressing need as the humanitarian consequences continue to mount.

According to the IOM, prior to the outbreak of violence in Anbar governorate in late December, an estimated 1.3 million people were internally displaced in Iraq. In 2013, the UN had estimated that only 1.13 million people were internally displaced in Iraq.

Some Iraqis from Anbar have attempted to flee to Jordan but were reportedly blocked from entering by Jordanian authorities. Others have been able to enter by flying into Amman airport, although 1 family was reportedly turned back at the airport despite holding valid visas.
**Non-Syrian Refugees**

As of the end of 2013, UNHCR reported there to be 39,500 non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Iraq.

**Syrian Refugees**

As of 22 April, UNHCR reported that over 219,500 Syrians had registered as refugees in Iraq since the beginning of the crisis. This represents a significant increase on 136,000 refugees at the same time last year. The Kurdistan Region in Iraq currently hosts an estimated 97% of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq. The remaining 3% reside near the border town of Al Qa‘im, in Al Obaidy camp and in non-camp settings in Anbar, Mosul, Kirkuk and other locations.

Syrian refugees continue to cross into Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkapor crossing in Duhok province, but are subject to rigorous screening; many of the new arrivals had been waiting on the Syrian side of the border because of the border restrictions. Kurdish regional authorities have been granting access only to “genuine cases of asylum”. In practice, entry has been allowed for the following groups: Syrians able to prove they had family members in the Iraqi Kurdistan; medical cases who hold supporting documentation; and some Syrians coming to study. The Al Qa‘im border crossing in Anbar governorate remains closed since March 2013.

Domiz camp, in Dohuk province, is overcrowded. However, up to one-third of refugees receiving assistance in the camp reported that they are living outside the camp. As a result, local authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan and UNHCR will begin a verification exercise to avoid duplication of assistance between those living in camps and non-camp areas.

Some 58% of refugees are in non-camp settings, predominantly scattered in and around urban centres in Iraqi Kurdistan, but information sharing and analysis on their humanitarian situation are limited. The three governorates (Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah) have different policies towards Syrian refugees, leading to challenges in coordinating the humanitarian response. For example, in non-camp areas of Erbil, local authorities do not allow the provision of NFI or shelter assistance, in order to dissuade refugees from living in urban areas.

**Returnees**

As of the end of 2013, the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) recorded 124,150 Iraqi refugee and IDP returnees in 2013. Due to the unrest in Syria, nearly 46,000 Iraqi returnees from Syria registered with the MoDM between July 2012 and December 2013.

**Health – Polio**

Fourteen years after Iraq was declared polio free, one case of wild poliovirus was confirmed on 24 March. The case involved a six-month boy in northern Baghdad with no links to Syria, although the type of polio is the same genetic strain as that found in Syria. Polio is believed to have spread due to the conflict and displacement in Anbar governorate, which borders Syria’s Deir-ez-Zor governorate, where polio was first found in October 2013. As part of the regional immunisation campaign, Iraq’s Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and WHO started a five-day national vaccination campaign on 6 April targeting over 5.6 million children under five across all 18 governorates.

**MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Mid-April:** Thousands of vulnerable people in Rakhine state are severely affected by the disruption in humanitarian assistance since late March. Over 300 aid workers had to be temporarily relocated, and more than 1,000 humanitarian staff have been forced to stop work following an outbreak of violence on 26 and 27 March. Overall, 33 premises belonging to UN agencies and seven international NGOs were ransacked.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The western state of Rakhine remains tense after repeated bloodshed between Buddhists and Muslims since 2012. Human rights abuses against the Muslim minority have been reported (UN).

- Over 649,000 people are internally displaced as a result of years of internal ethnic conflict. An estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, are displaced in Rakhine state because of violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority in June and October 2012 (OCHA).

- Myanmar authorities are currently engaged in peace negotiations with all the country’s ethnic and regional insurgency groups, aiming to reach a nationwide ceasefire in the coming weeks.

**Politics and Security**

**Political Context**

The military-led authoritarian regime in Myanmar (Burma) has made moves to improve its record on human rights over the last years, with the release of the opposition activist Aung San Suu Kyi in November 2010 being a turning point. Since 2013, several amnesties have been granted to political prisoners.

In early January, the UN welcomed another presidential amnesty granted to political prisoners convicted of offences under seven specific laws, including unlawful association, treason, and sedition. The pardon, the first in 2014 and the sixth since the beginning of 2013, reportedly extends to over 200 political prisoners and other categories of detainees.

This recent pardon represents another goodwill gesture on the part of authorities against the backdrop of reform and peace talks with several armed insurgent movements. In July 2013, the President Thein Sein promised to free all prisoners of conscience by end 2013, a
promise that may be completed in 2014. In September, several amnesties led to the release of members of ethnic minority armed groups with whom the Government is seeking peace deals. Amnesties granted on 11 December and 15 November, included the release of prominent Karen human rights activist Naw Ohn Hla.

While recent efforts by the authorities to improve the country’s human rights record have been welcomed, local activists report that the prosecution of dissidents is continuing.

**Peace Negotiations**

Since independence in 1948, internal conflicts have been endemic in Myanmar. They developed mainly in remote and economically marginalised areas where ethnic and/or political groups conducted protracted insurgencies such as in Kachin, Kayin (Karen ethnic group), Kayah (Karenni), Rakhine, and Shan states. In 2013, authorities signed several separate peace deals with the various insurgent movements, with the exception of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), and the ethnic Ta’ang army. This effort is seen as potentially opening the way towards a nationwide peace accord, and the Government says it hopes to consolidate these agreements into a nationwide ceasefire deal. However, local sources reported that the Myanmar military were weakly involved in the current peace process, which is mainly handled by the civilian authorities through the Myanmar Peace Center.

In early April, senior government officials, military commanders and ethnic leaders held the first discussions on jointly drafting a nationwide ceasefire text, which would draw from a ceasefire proposal by ethnic groups and from the Government’s proposal. However, new demands by the Army are reportedly complicating the merger of the two proposals, as the military are asking for the incorporation of its own six-point statement into any future nationwide ceasefire deal. The statement says that all ethnic groups should come under the central command of the military, and that all parties should respect the 2008 Constitution, which was drafted by the military and put the ethnic regions under the centralised authority of the Government.

Local sources reported on 10 March that the umbrella group Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT), a coalition bringing together 16 ethnic groups, agreed to partner with the government’s Internal Peace Making Working Committee in the finalisation of the draft national ceasefire agreement. A meeting between the two parties resulted in a statement pledging the formation of a bipartisan committee, composed of nine representatives from each side, with government representatives from the President’s office, parliament, and the army.

In a separate development in early March, local sources reported that a senior leader from the United Nationalities Federal Council, the other coalition gathering 11 ethnic armed groups involved in peace talks with the Government, warned that the recent increase in violence between the military and ethnic armed groups in the north could derail the ongoing negotiation process.

**Security Context**

Despite peace negotiations between the authorities and various insurgent groups, the security situation remains tense in parts of Myanmar. Massive human rights infringements against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine state continue to be reported.

On 8 April, local authorities completed a 12-day nationwide census, the first since 1983. There had been fears that the process could inflame tensions in forcing the population to answer questions on ethnicity, religion, citizenship, and status, as the Government announced before the census that Muslims will not be able to register their ethnicity as “Rohingya”, a move aiming at appeasing Rakhine Buddhists, who fear any official recognition for the stateless minority could herald a move towards political rights. According to local observers, several minorities have expressed misgivings about the use of a list of 135 official ethnicities, fearing it could be used for political purposes. Minority groups make up some 30% of the estimated 55–60 million population.

On 6 February, ECHO reported that tensions have escalated in Rakhine state, as between 500 and 2,000 people, including Buddhist monks, participated in demonstrations in northern Buthedaung. The demonstrations, which reportedly remained peaceful, started after clashes in Du Chee Yar Tan village in south Maungdaw on 13–14 January displaced an estimated 2,000 Muslims.

According to local sources and several human rights organisations, at least 50 people, including women and children, were killed in retaliatory Government attacks on Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state on 13–14 January. Médecins Sans Frontières reported that it treated 22 people in western Rakhine state who had apparently been wounded around the same time as the reported massacre of Muslims, an incident the Government denies, though it acknowledges that clashes took place. The UN are calling for an investigation into the incident. Tensions remain high, with authorities imposing restrictions on the displaced Muslim minority.

Multiple violent incidents have been reported with fresh inter-communal violence between Buddhists and Muslims near Yangon in early October, and in Thandwe, a coastal township in western Rakhine state, in late September, which led to casualties.

In June and October 2012, sectarian confrontations between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority shook western Rakhine state, displacing tens of thousands of people. According to reports, clashes between Buddhists and Muslims since June 2012 have killed at least 237 people, including 192 in Rakhine.

**Military Operations**

Conflict between the Myanmar Army and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) erupted on 10 April in southern Kachin state. About 3,600 individuals, who fled to four IDP camps, remain in close vicinity of the fighting. Heavy fighting continues, with reports of affected people fleeing towards the Chinese border. Tensions increased significantly over recent weeks as the Government deployed large numbers of troops in the area, ostensibly to assist implementation of the UN-funded national census, which the KIO has boycotted.

Although peace negotiations are ongoing, various local reports indicate that small-scale military operations continue in Kachin state. On 12 February, a KIA outpost was reportedly seized by Government troops in Kachin state. Government troops had launched a renewed offensive against the KIA in the north on 26 December 2013. Local media reported artillery at a frontline outpost near Nam Lim Pa village in Mansi township, in southern Kachin state.
Accurate information regarding these clashes remains scarce and the impact of this spike in violence on peace negotiations is unclear.

On 4 March, local sources citing Shan ethnic rebels reported that Myanmar military forces captured two strategic outposts of the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), at the junction connecting northern and southern Shan state. Insurgents were reportedly forced to withdraw from two of their camps as they suffered two consecutive days of bombardments and attacks in late February. Fighting between the regular army and the SSA-N has continued despite agreeing a ceasefire in January 2012, with the rebels claiming it has lost five camps to Government troops and engaged in over 100 clashes since the deal was signed.

On 18 November, Kachin campaign groups called for an immediate end to clashes between Government troops and the KIA, ongoing since October despite a ceasefire having been agreed in the middle of the month. Violence has reportedly effectively trapped an estimated 2,300 people, including children and IDPs, with limited food and shelter in the remote Bhamo-Mansi area of Kachin state, near the border with China.

Heavy fighting in northern Kachin state and in the northern part of Shan state were reported in September as authorities reinforced their troops in these areas. Local and international organisations reported various human rights abuses being committed in Kachin state.

Reports indicate that though the army is still deployed in Karen state, almost no fighting has occurred in the area since a ceasefire was signed in January 2012. Little information is available on the situation in other areas as of early 2014.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

According to OCHA in mid-April, thousands of vulnerable people in Rakhine are severely affected by the disruption in humanitarian assistance since late March. Over 300 aid workers had to be temporarily relocated, and more than 1,000 humanitarian staff have been forced to stop work following an outbreak of violence on 26 and 27 March. Attacks were reported against the premises of international relief organisations and the UN in Sittwe, Rakhine state, with unidentified groups throwing stones and damaging buildings. Overall, 33 premises belonging to UN agencies and seven international NGOs were ransacked. In early February, ECHO reported that some demonstrators were demanding the departure of the UN and INGOs in Buthedaung, northern Rakhine state.

Humanitarian activities have been heavily constrained by these unprecedented attacks, in a region where many displaced people, mostly Rohingya Muslims, are completely reliant on humanitarian assistance. As of late January, OCHA indicated that inter-communal tensions and restrictions on movement continued to isolate many communities in Rakhine state, leaving them with minimal access to livelihoods and basic services. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in Myeboon township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe.

OCHA also reported that, in the second half of 2013, community resistance against international organisations working in Rakhine state increased. Rising anti-aid workers sentiment has created a difficult operating environment and in some areas is affecting the ability of international actors to provide assistance to Rakhine and Muslim IDPs and vulnerable communities. In some cases, humanitarian assistance has been temporarily interrupted. According to recent monitoring reports, there has been a rise in incidents affecting humanitarian operations across Rakhine state, with local community resistance proving the biggest barrier to effective programme implementation.

Access has reportedly improved in Kachin state as major highways, closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the Government and the KIA in 2011, were reopened on 17 March following the renewal of talks between the two sides. OCHA noted that six cross-line missions in January successfully accessed locations beyond Government control in Kachin state where approximately 30,000 IDPs currently live.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

As reported by UNHCR in late March, over 640,000 people are internally displaced because of violence.

An estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern Shan states, including over 53,000 in areas beyond Government control. Many have been displaced for up to two years, triggering renewed and additional needs for provision of basic services, livelihoods, and protection. In February, OCHA reported that, in addition to shelter renovation and WASH assistance, the most urgent needs in displaced communities are education, health care, and non-food items. In mid-April, humanitarian partners indicated that more than 3,600 civilians have been displaced by clashes between Burmese military forces and troops from the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), which began on 10 April in the southeast part of the state, near the government-controlled town of Man Win Gyi, in an area of Mansi township that is wedged between China and northern Shan State. According to local sources, these IDPs are now facing severe shortage of basic aid and clean water.

In western Rakhine state, an estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, are displaced because of inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012. According to reports from human rights groups, Rohingya Muslims continue to face abuse and movement restrictions; most are considered crisis-affected and needing humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, the Muslim minority in Myanmar is subject to many forms of persecution, discrimination, and exploitation. As reported by UNHCR, over 800,000 people, mostly Muslims, are estimated to be without citizenship in the northern part of Rakhine State.

On 21 November, authorities rejected a UN resolution urging them to grant citizenship to the Rohingya Muslims, accusing the UN of encroaching on its sovereignty. Myanmar continues officially to state that the estimated 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims are migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, thus excluded from citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law.

Up to 400,000 people across 36 townships continue to be displaced in the southeast.
following years of conflict, according to OCHA.

Refugees from Myanmar

According to UNHCR as of late March, over 415,000 refugees originate from Myanmar.

Rohingya Muslims, many of whom have been in Myanmar for generations, are rejected by neighbouring Bangladesh and are therefore stateless. To date, most Rohingya are also denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities. An estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims live in official camps where they are assisted by aid agencies, another 200,000 refugees reside in unofficial camps or Bangladeshi villages where they get little to no humanitarian assistance and almost no protection from human rights abuse.

According to reports by international human rights organisations in early December, Rohingya Muslims are also subject to human trafficking in neighbouring Thailand. To date, following the clashes and persecutions over the last years, notably in Rakhine state, several thousand Rohingya Muslims are hosted in Thailand, which is pushing for their repatriation to Myanmar. As of December 2013, according to UNHCR, an estimated 28,000 refugees, including Rohingya, and another estimated 90,000 people from various ethnic minorities, lived in temporary sites along the Thai–Myanmar border.

In early November, UNHCR reported that an increasing number of mainly Muslims from Rakhine state, at least 1,500, are setting out to sea on smuggling boats from the Bay of Bengal. Although numbers remain difficult to ascertain, such forced departures often result in disaster as boats capsize.

In June, UNHCR reported that 28,000 Rakhine Muslims were registered as refugees in Malaysia. However, according to groups representing them, the real number of Myanmar Muslim immigrants is much higher and has surged in 2013 because of the violence.

Food Security

In late January, FAO reported that the food situation is generally improving. However, the negative effects of localised flooding in 2013, particularly in Kayin state and Bago region, raised the levels of food insecurity for flood-affected households. All 649,000 IDPs in Myanmar are at risk of food insecurity.

A February 2014 joint survey by humanitarian partners and local authorities indicated that 18.5% of households in Myanmar’s central “dry zone” are facing food insecurity. The central regions of Mandalay, Magway and Lower Sagaing, which cover 13% of the country and account for a quarter of the population, have experienced very low rainfall. Latest reports indicate that one-third of households in this area experience at least a month – usually June and/or July – when they do not meet their food needs.

Health and Nutrition

As noted by OCHA in mid-July, a vulnerability mapping exercise showed that 36,000 Rohingya Muslims in 113 isolated villages in Rakhine state have no or limited access to basic services, including markets, education, and healthcare. Access to services is impeded by tension and restrictions on freedom of movement.

Dengue

Even though the numbers of dengue cases and related deaths were lower than expected for the 2013 rainy season, health authorities still recorded 16,000 cases and 75 deaths in September 2013.

Malnutrition

A February 2014 joint survey by humanitarian partners and local authorities indicated that 12.3% of children under five in Myanmar’s central “dry zone” are acutely malnourished. Main causes include food insecurity, poverty, poor water and sanitation, disease, and poor feeding practices.

WASH

According to local sources in late March, an estimated 200 villages in central Myanmar are suffering from acute water shortages, due to an ongoing long dry season. Latest reports indicated that the problem is mainly affecting the supply of safe drinking water.

Protection

As reported by OCHA in February, adolescent girls in camps in Kachin and Rakhine states face increasing violence and abuse, including SGBV.

Updated: 25/04/2014

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX, CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

26 April: The PLO held talks in Ramallah to discuss the stalled peace negotiations, after Israel’s withdrawal. At the meeting, Mahmoud Abbas confirmed his leadership of the process, the rejection of violence, recognition of Israel, and adherence to existing agreements.

25 April: Israel withdrew from the US-sponsored talks, stating that Abbas has to choose between peace with Israel or a pact with Hamas. President Obama acknowledged the need for a pause in the talks, while vowing not to give up.

22–23 April: Following talks in Gaza city, Fatah and Hamas struck a reconciliation deal. The agreement, in which the former rival factions committed to the recognition of Israel as well as non-violence, is supposed to lead to a unity government, under President Abbas, within the next five weeks. It will adhere to previous PLO commitments.

KEY CONCERNS

- The ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip limits access and movement of both people and goods. Recent operations to counter illegal activities and insecurity in
the Sinai have included imposing severe restrictions on the movement of people through the Rafah crossing and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egypt–Gaza border.

- Shortages of affordable fuel to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions in the Gaza Strip, such as emergency departments, operating theatres, and neonatal care.

- An estimated 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities.

- In 2013, an estimated 1.6 million people, a third of households in OPT, were food insecure, compared to 1.2 million in 2012. Approximately 770,000 of the food insecure reside in the West Bank.

- The number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by the Israeli army and security forces since 2006, and annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013. In OPT, an estimated 315,000 Palestinians are vulnerable to violence from various parties to the conflict, including 130,000 people considered at high risk (OCHA).

Politics and Security

Israel-Palestinian Peace Talks

On 23 April, Fatah struck a reconciliation deal with Hamas, following talks in Gaza city on 22 April. The former rivals commit to the recognition of Israel and to non-violence. The agreement is supposed to lead to a unity government within the next five weeks, under Mahmoud Abbas.

International media reported on 25 April that Israel had withdrawn from US-sponsored peace talks, stating that Abbas has to choose between peace with Israel and a pact with Hamas. President Obama acknowledged the need for a pause in the talks, while vowing not to give up.

The following day, the PLO held talks in Ramallah to discuss Israel’s withdrawal from peace negotiations. At the meeting, Abbas confirmed he is set to head the transition process and future unity Government, with the backing of Hamas, and that he would reject violence, recognise Israel, and adhere to existing agreements.

On 18 April, US envoy Martin Indyk met with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators. No breakthrough in the stalled peace talks was reported.

On 11 April, the Swiss foreign ministry confirmed that on 2 April, the Palestinian Authority signed up to the Geneva Conventions, which set down the rules of armed conflict. Although the signed conventions dealt with social and human rights rather than the quest for full membership of UN bodies, Israel announced that the signatures had created new conditions, and that the prisoners will not be freed.

On 10 April, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held a fresh round of US-mediated talks. The peace dialogue hit a new impasse in late March after both sides traded accusations of failing to honour prior commitments.

On 29 March, Israel called off the planned release of 26 Palestinian prisoners – conditional on the Palestinian commitment not to proceed engaging further with the UN and sign international conventions – until it received assurances the Palestinian leadership would continue with US-brokered negotiations beyond an initial end of April deadline. US Secretary of State Kerry swiftly visited Jerusalem in a bid to get the talks back on track, but his efforts were further challenged by the signing of 15 international conventions by Abbas in early April as well as Israeli disclosure of new settlement activity in East Jerusalem.

Talks had begun in July after three years of deadlock. Since then, US Secretary of State Kerry and his mediation team have progressively lowered the bar for success, from a comprehensive peace agreement to a framework for a deal; now it appears that keeping dialogue open beyond the initial end of April deadline will be a challenge.

The US is trying to broker a framework of guidelines addressing core issues such as borders, security, the future of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem, but Israeli officials comment that wide gaps remain in peace talks. Palestinians want to create a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and are seeking a written framework agreement. Israel is reportedly looking for a less rigid deal, expressing concerns that any formal agreement could stoke opposition from hardline members of the Israeli Government. Far-right members of Israeli’s governing coalition have repeatedly threatened to topple the Government if Netanyahu caved to Palestinian territorial demands.

Gaza Strip

While the negotiation process is expected to be lengthy, ease of access and movement for both people and goods in OPT is pressing. Recent action to counter illegal activities and insecurity in Sinai has included the imposition of severe restrictions on the movement of people through the Rafah Crossing into the Gaza Strip and the closure of smuggling tunnels on the Egypt–Gaza border.

Gaza’s economic situation continues to deteriorate, with livelihoods eroded and prices increasing. In November, the EU reported that over 250,000 workers had lost their job across all sectors. On 20 March, OCHA stated that in the last quarter of 2013, the unemployment rate hit a three-year high of 41.5%. The unemployment rate, normally around 30%, has risen as construction and tunnel-trade employment has stagnated. Shortages of electricity, fuel, and building materials have further undermined people’s livelihoods, particularly those employed in construction, agriculture, and fishing.

Egypt announced its intention to destroy the network of tunnels used to smuggle goods to the Gaza Strip, on the grounds that Palestinians have been using the passages to help Sinai militants. The Sinai Peninsula has seen frequent battles between the Egyptian military and Islamist gunmen. The closure and destruction of these tunnels has resulted
severe shortages of basic goods such as fuel for cooking and heating, affecting businesses, agricultural production, and health services, according to the UN. It is estimated that in November, less than 20,000 litres of fuel per week entered Gaza via the tunnels, compared to nearly one million litres per day until June 2013.

Security Context

Israeli military operations in OPT and settler-related violence in the West Bank continue to undermine the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians. OCHA estimates that 110 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of over 315,000 people, are vulnerable to violence from the conflict. Of these, almost 60 communities, over 130,000 people, are at high risk.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that three Palestinian civilians were killed in direct conflict in February, and another 221 were injured. In 2013, 28 Palestinians were reportedly killed during military operations conducted by Israeli forces in occupied territories, the majority in the West Bank.

In early March, an increase in Israeli raids, Palestinian rocket attacks, and border incidents built up tensions between Israel and Hamas, leading to a significant escalation of attacks between 11 and 14 March in the Gaza Strip.

Armed Violence in the Gaza Strip

On 21 April, rockets fired from the Gaza Strip landed in southern Israel. Retaliatory air strikes hit two Hamas-run training sites, wounding two.

On 15 April, an explosion at a training camp belonging to the Al Qassam Brigades, east of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, killed three Palestinians and injured five. The cause of the explosion remains unclear.

On 10 April, local authorities reported that Israeli soldiers shot and wounded three Palestinians near Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip. Witnesses reported they were labourers collecting gravel for construction. Israeli military sources indicated soldiers fired warning shots to disperse some 140 Palestinians who had gathered near the Erez crossing.

The latest confrontation between the Israel armed forces and Palestinian armed groups began on 11 March, when an Israeli air raid killed three Islamic Jihad fighters who had fired a mortar shell at Israeli troops allegedly trying to enter southern Gaza. The following day, the Al Quds Brigades, Islamic Jihad’s armed wing, reportedly launched a coordinated barrage of over 100 rockets at southern Israel in response to the killings. Israel retaliated by hitting over 35 targets across Gaza, including Islamic Jihad bases and facilities of the Hamas military wing. On 13 March, another eight rockets reportedly hit Israeli soil. While no one has claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, Gaza security sources indicated that one failed rocket attempt was linked to a Salafi splinter group.

Although there were no reports of casualties on either side, medical sources in Gaza reported that at least three people were injured in the Israeli bombardments. These attacks represent the worst confrontation since eight days of fighting in November 2012.

Settler-related Violence in the West Bank

According to OCHA in January, the number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by Israelis since 2006; annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013, injuring over 17,000 Palestinians, 342 settlers, and 37 soldiers, and killing ten Palestinians and 29 settlers.

In 2014, at least twenty settler-related incidents have occurred in the West Bank, causing (agricultural) property damage and injuries on both sides, OCHA reported.

Armed Violence in the West Bank

Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinian civilians have injured almost 200 Palestinians since the beginning of the year, notably in the area of Hebron, East Jerusalem, Ramallah and Jenin.

On 14 April, an Israeli was killed and two others wounded in a shooting near Hebron, in the southern West Bank.

On 22 March, Israeli forces reportedly killed three Palestinian civilians and a member of the Al Qassam Brigades, and allegedly wounded 14 civilians in the area of the Jenin refugee camp.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that over 70 Palestinians, including 27 children, were injured by Israeli forces across the West Bank within a week. This figure represents twice the weekly average so far this year.

On 19 March, Israeli troops reportedly shot dead a Palestinian teenager southwest of Hebron, on the ground that he was part of a group trying to damage a security fence, an accusation denied by witnesses.

In early January, human rights groups reported an increase in Israeli military training exercises being held in Palestinian towns and villages and condemned Israeli soldiers for taking up positions in Palestinian homes during mock raids, and detaining civilians for hours without explanation.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

According to OCHA, 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in OPT, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement the highest priorities. Longstanding protection threats affecting the Palestinian population, including movement and access restrictions, generate high levels of humanitarian need.
Access

As of mid-March, local sources reported that a recent escalation of violence has caused crossings between Gaza and Israel to remain almost completely closed.

Heavy Egyptian military deployment along the border, combined with severe access restrictions on people and vehicles into the border area, has reportedly resulted in a dramatic decline in the transfer of goods and fuel through the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza.

The Rafah crossing opened for five days between 4 and 10 February after 14 consecutive days of closure, allowing the departure of over 2,500 Gazans to Egypt, and the return of 1,500 people. This marked the highest number of travellers leaving Gaza since restrictions were increased in July 2013.

The crossing had opened for five days in late January, following a two-day opening early January and a three-day opening in late December. While the crossing normally remains closed for the import of construction materials and other goods, these items were briefly authorised on 19-25 January. As of early January, OCHA reported that the waiting list for people registrado to travel outside the Gaza Strip exceeded 5,000, including those seeking urgent medical treatment. In December, the number of people exiting Gaza via the Rafah crossing decreased dramatically to 3,000 people, only 15% of the monthly average recorded during the first half of 2013, of around 20,000 exits. The Rafah crossing is the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians. Movement across the other crossing points, Erez and Kerem Shalom in northern Gaza Strip, have been restricted since September 2000.

Displacement

In January 2014, aid agencies in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem reported an increase in Israeli demolition of Palestinian property, using information made available by OCHA’s Protection of Civilian Database. Between July 2013, when the US-brokered Israeli–Palestinian peace talks began, and December, the number of demolitions increased by 43%, while the number of displaced Palestinians increased by nearly 75% compared to the same period in 2012. Between 28 July and 31 December 2013, demolitions caused the displacement of 452 people, compared to 250 displaced by similar events over the same period in 2012. Humanitarian partners indicated that of the 663 Palestinian structures torn down in 2013, 122 were built with international donor aid.

Food Security

Prior to the tunnel closure, the WFP Socio-economic and Food Security Survey revealed an increase in food insecurity in Palestine, indicating that 1.6 million people (34% of households in Palestine) were food insecure, a rise from 27% in 2012. Over 770,000 people are estimated to be food insecure in the West Bank alone, according to the UN.

The deterioration was most pronounced in Gaza, where food insecurity levels surged from 44% in 2011 to 57% in 2012. Economic pressure on Gaza could impact the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The unemployment rate, normally around 30%, is expected to rise as construction and tunnel-trade employment stagnates.

WASH

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 600,000 people in the Gaza Strip may not have access to adequate and safe water and sanitation services as a result of increased power outages and lack of fuel.

Access to healthcare is further affected by the chronic shortage of drugs. Lack of sufficient funding and coordination between Gaza and Ramallah authorities are the main reasons for this. The restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the Rafah crossing, which has served as the main entry point for most medical donations, has further exacerbated the situation. According to WHO on 26 March, 30% of essential drugs and 52% of medical disposables are at zero stock (141 types of medication and 469 types of medical disposables).

WHO further reported that the number of applications for health access through Erez checkpoint was slightly less in February than the previous month, but the requests in the past two months were 76% higher than in the same period in 2013, and represent the highest demand since 2005, when WHO started monitoring.

Health and Nutrition

Shortages of affordable fuel to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions, such as emergency rooms, operating theatres, and neonatal care, OCHA reports. All health facilities, including 30 hospitals and over 135 clinics, are affected.

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As of late March, Palestinians in East Jerusalem reportedly have petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court over alleged negligence that has cut water supplies to tens of thousands of people. Currently, there is a three-week water shortage in Palestinian areas, and in Shuafat refugee camp people have no water at all, or the water pressure is so weak that it stops periodically. The water infrastructure in those Palestinian areas can support 15,000 people, but the population is estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that the Gaza Power Plant was forced to shut down between 15 and 16 March after depleting all its fuel reserves, increasing electricity blackouts across the Gaza Strip from 12 to as many as 18 hours per day. There is an acute shortage of fuel to power standby generators at 291 facilities across Gaza, including water wells, ground tank pumps, booster stations, desalination plants, sewage pump stations, and wastewater treatment plants. OCHA states that this has resulted in reduced water supply to households, with only 15% of the population supplied every day, 25% once every four days, 40% once every three days, and 20% every two days, with supply cycles lasting 5–6 hours.
Many families are forced to purchase unsafe water from unregulated water vendors and distributors. Initial reports indicate that people, mostly children, are filling jerry cans from desalination units during night hours (when the electricity is on), raising protection concerns.

Updated: 28/04/2014

PAKISTAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT, EARTHQUAKE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

22–24 April: Airstrikes targeting alleged military hideouts in Khyber Agency killed at least 16 suspected militants. A suicide bomber blew himself up in Karachi city, killing four people – including a senior local policeman – and wounding 15. At least five people were killed in separate incidents of violence in Karachi, local media reported. One person was killed and 33 injured in a bomb attack on a police van in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Unidentified gunmen killed five police officers in an ambush in Badaber, Peshawar. Four people were killed in separate incidents in Quetta, Balochistan. In what seemed a tribal dispute, two others were killed in a firing incident.

23 April: The government and Taliban negotiating committee reached a consensus regarding extension of the ceasefire. Both sides decided to form a new subcommittee addressing reservations regarding the talks.

22 April: Humanitarian partners stated that several districts in Sindh province are heavily affected by prolonged water scarcity and drought. Umerkot and Tharparkar in the south, and Qambar Shahdadkot, Jacobabad, and Kashmere in the north are facing a humanitarian emergency. The other districts, except for Karachi city, are facing an acute food and livelihood crisis. According to the government, from 1 December 2013 until 18 April, over 306,000 families have been affected, and 248 people have died of drought-related causes and a lack of access to health services.

16–21 April: UNICEF reported that 40 polio cases for 2014, most of which were in North Waziristan, South Waziristan, FATA, and Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative added that the most recent case was reported on 30 March in the previously polio-free district of Khiorangi. Local media reported that the ninth round of a one-day special polio campaign in sensitive neighbourhoods of Karachi has been postponed due to a lack of security cover. On 17 April, Prime Minister Sharif asked the military for the first time to help protect polio vaccination workers in Waziristan and adjoining tribal areas.

16 April: Between 1 January and 5 April, 182 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported, of which 179 positive cases were in Sindh province, and three in Punjab province. Over 30 suspected cases of measles were reported from Sindh province, with 85 cases in Thatta district, including three deaths. Another 22 new suspected cases were reported from Jacobad district.

KEY CONCERNS

- Military operations against the Taliban in the northwestern tribal areas and

militant attacks in urban centres continue despite the resumption of peace talks between TTP and the authorities.

- An estimated one million people were internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas as of mid-December 2013. Though numbers are difficult to confirm, there are an estimated 2.5 million documented and undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan (UNHCR).

- As of February, priority humanitarian needs in Pakistan related to health, nutrition, and food security. OCHA reported that 1.21 million people are in need of health assistance and food assistance, while 1.59 million need nutrition assistance.

- Pakistan is an extremely hazard-prone country. In September, an estimated 185,000 people were severely affected by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Balochistan province (OCHA).

Politics and Security

The security situation remains volatile due to militant attacks in urban centres and recent military operations against the Taliban in the tribal areas. As of February, Pakistan’s relations with neighbouring countries, and with the US, remain tense.

Peace Talks with the Taliban

On 23 April, local media reported that the government and Taliban negotiating committee reached a consensus regarding extension of the ceasefire. Also on the agenda were the release of non-combatant Taliban prisoners and the establishment of a peace zone. Both sides decided to form a new subcommittee addressing reservations regarding the talks.

On 10 April, the 40-day ceasefire between the Government and Pakistani Taliban (TTP) expired. A few days before, the Taliban had announced they would extend the truce and potentially free high-profile detainees in return for the Government’s release of 30 non-combatant prisoners on 7 April. A first group of 16 prisoners was released on 3 April. The detainees reportedly belonged to the Mehsud tribe, a Pashtun tribe living in South Waziristan. Overall, over 100 prisoners are expected to be freed in the coming weeks.

The parties began direct talks in North Waziristan on 26 March. The Taliban initially indicated they would not extend the truce to April if the Government did not meet their demands, which include the release of 800 prisoners described by the rebels as non-combatant family members, and the withdrawal of army troops from parts of the semi-autonomous tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan. The second round of peace talks hangs in the balance, and the Taliban announced early April that attacks would begin again if the Pakistani authorities refused to comply.

The peace talks had stalled after Taliban-linked militants killed 23 kidnapped Pakistani soldiers, which led to multiple targeted airstrikes by the military against suspected militant hideouts in North Waziristan in February. This in turn prompted the Taliban to declare a one-month ceasefire in early March. Although tensions remain high, the truce has
On 6 March, the Government announced it was setting up a new committee to accelerate the negotiation process, despite renewed attacks across the country. TTP denied involvement in the string of attacks that followed the truce announcement, which were claimed by two dissident factions opposed to talks, Ansar-ul-Mujahideen and Ahirar-ul-Hind. These developments raise fears that the movement is splintering and is unable to control its various groups, but observers have also suggested that the TTP could be using talks as cover to regroup and rearm.

In a rare admission of casualties, Pakistan’s army indicated as of late February that over 100 soldiers had been killed by Taliban fighters since September 2013, when Prime Minister Sharif convened an all-party conference that unanimously opted for peace talks. On 22 February, TTP declared there was no chance of peace in Pakistan unless authorities agree to change the political system and establish Islamic law.

**Pakistan’s Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP)**

In late March, militants and security sources indicated that the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have secretly agreed to focus on operations in Afghanistan, with Pakistani militants announcing a ceasefire with Islamabad in order to preserve militant bases used to stage cross-border attacks.

In a separate dynamic in early April, security sources reported that infighting has erupted between rival TTP factions in South Waziristan over whether to participate in talks with the Government. Between 6 and 14 April, over 50 fighters have died along the Afghan border, with clashes allegedly pitting supporters of senior TTP commander Khan Said Sajna against followers of Hakimullah Mehsud, the TTP commander killed by a US drone in November. Militant sources initially suggested that the violence ignited after Khan Said Sajna was rejected for leadership of the TTP umbrella group, but latest reports seemed to indicate that the violence is fuelled by Sajna’s support for peace talks with the Government, while his rival Shehyar Mehsud is against the tentative dialogue and has commanded his fighters to continue attacks on the Government regardless of negotiations between the Pakistani authorities and part of the TTP.

Sajna was initially seen as a strong candidate to become TTP chief following the death of Hakimullah Mehsud in November, but the movement’s ruling council finally promoted Mullah Fazlullah, a commander from the Swat Valley. Before Fazlullah, Asmatullah Shaheen held interim command of the TTP, and was considered to be a proponent of peace talks. In late February, security sources reported that Shaheen was killed by unidentified gunmen in North Waziristan, an indication of the increasing fragmentation of the Taliban movement in Pakistan since the death of Mehsud.

According to observers, the violence also has roots in a conflict between Hakimullah Mehsud and his deputy, who were killed in separate attacks by US drone in 2013.

The TTP is a fragmented movement comprising several factions that pursue different agendas. The promotion of Fazlullah is a significant change, which may shift the movement’s centre of gravity from the traditional North Waziristan area to the Swat Valley. According to local sources, the promotion of Fazlullah rapidly triggered a rift in the TTP despite the reported endorsement of Fazlullah by Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

**Security Context**

Pakistan is mostly affected by Taliban militant violence across the country and military operations targeting Taliban factions. However, the security situation is also chronically undermined by the low-level separatist insurgency in Balochistan.

According to an independent count by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), nearly 6,000 people were killed and 5,500 injured in militant, sectarian, terrorist, and politically motivated attacks across the country in 2013, making it one of the deadliest years in the last decade.

**Attacks by TTP and Splinter Factions**

According to CRSS, more than 850 incidents of violence perpetrated by the TTP and its associate factions killed over 1,400 people between June 2013 and January 2014. Since the start of the talks between the Government and TTP intermediaries in February, local authorities have reported more than 160 people killed in TTP-related violence.

On 24 April, international media reported that airstrikes targeting alleged military hideouts in Khyber agency killed at least 16 suspected militants. On the same day, a suicide bomber blew himself up in Karachi city, killing four people – including a senior local policeman – and wounding 15 others. On 23 April, at least five people were killed in separate incidents of violence in Karachi, local media reported.

On 22 April, at least one person was killed and 33 injured in a bomb attack on a police van in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The attack came after unidentified gunmen killed five police officers in an ambush in Badaber, Peshawar, on 21 April. No responsibility has yet been claimed for these attacks.

On 9 April, a bomb exploded in a market in the area of Islamabad, killing at least 22 people and injuring another 96. A TTP spokesperson said the group was not responsible. The blast came over a month after two attacks in Islamabad killed 11 people, in which TTP also denied involvement, and which was claimed by the increasingly active TTP splinter group Ahirar-ul-Hind.

According to UK-based charity Action on Armed Violence, 40 attacks with improvised explosive devices were recorded in Pakistan in the first three months of 2014, and at least 700 people were killed or injured in these incidents.

On 14 March, at least 19 people were killed and over 80 injured in two separate incidents in the capitals of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The attacks were claimed by Ahirar-ul-Hind. On 12 March, gunmen killed four people including three militants in Miranshah, a tribal district of North Waziristan, close to the Afghan border. On the same day in Karachi, at least 12 people were killed and over 40 injured in a violent clash between two gangs in Lyari.

In the first week of March 2014, militant attacks killed 19 people in the capital and in the northwest. On 5 March, a roadside bomb killed six soldiers near Hangu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. On 4 March, two people were killed in the Jamrud area of Khyber
Agency in the FATA, in an attack targeting vehicles carrying NATO supplies for Afghanistan. On 3 March, 11 people were killed and 30 others injured in a suicide attack on a court in the centre of Islamabad. Ahrar-ul-Hind claimed the attack. Although Taliban representatives have tried to distance themselves from recent attacks, latest events suggest they are not fully in control of the various factions.

In February, militants’ attacks targeting mostly the Shi’ite minority, local officials and security forces killed 52 people and wounded dozens in the northwest of the country. Also, on 17 February the Taliban said they had executed 23 soldiers in revenge for military operations in FATA. Additionally, a high profile attack on the Iranian consulate in the northwestern city of Peshawar killed two security guards, injured more than a dozen people, and was claimed by the Pakistani Islamist armed group Mast Gul, previously known for violently opposing Indian rule in contested Kashmir. The group declared its intention to target other Iranian installations, as well as Shi’ite communities, in Pakistan.

Shi’ite Muslims comprise a fifth of the country’s 180 million population. According to observers, the violence against Shi’ite targets is worst in Balochistan, and attacks are largely due to Sunni militias such as the Taliban and the Punjabi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Human Rights Watch reported that over 400 Shi’ites were killed in 2013.

**Military Operations against the Taliban in North Waziristan**

Despite the resumption of negotiations on 5 March, the Government warned that it could launch a full-scale operation against Taliban insurgents in tribal areas if the insurgents did not abide by the ceasefire they declared at the beginning of March. Between 20 February and early March, four sets of government air strikes against militant strongholds in the FATA left over 100 militant fighters dead. The latest air raids took place in the remote Shawal Valley and Dattakhel areas of North Waziristan, reportedly hosting militant training facilities and compounds. Helicopter attacks took place in Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to security sources, attacks against militant hideouts were launched on 20 February, when Prime Minister Sharif personally authorised military operations. On 26 February, Pakistan unveiled its first counterterrorism policy in parliament, ending years of failed attempts by previous Governments, due to lack of consensus around a unified set of rules to combat armed groups. In what is seen as a significant shift, the policy announces the establishment of a rapid response force to carry out counterterrorism operations and indicates that Pakistani military will react to every act of terrorism by retaliatory attacks on the headquarters of the militants along the Afghan border.

According to authorities and as reported by OCHA on 5 March, an estimated 23,000 people have been displaced from North Waziristan into neighbouring districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and into Afghanistan since 20 February. Access to the area remains heavily curtailed and no reports are available from independent sources, making it impossible to assess accurately civilian casualties or levels of displacement.

In late January, Government forces conducted a major military operation against Taliban militants in the North Waziristan region that resulted in over 40 militants killed. Local sources reported that dozens of civilians died in the air strikes. At the end of January, local sources reported that up to 70,000 people may have left their homes as a consequence, although reports indicate that most had returned home in early February as military operations were discontinued. The military operation followed two high-profile TTP attacks on 19–20 January, targeting Pakistani troops in the north western city of Bannu and a market next to Pakistan’s military headquarters in Rawalpindi, respectively.

**Separatist Insurgency in Balochistan**

In the past decade, Balochistan has witnessed a sharp rise in acts of violence due to insurgenacies and growing sectarianism.

On 19 April, at least four people were killed in separate incidents in Quetta. Armed militants targeted a police officer, killing him and injuring another person. An Afghan national was killed. No responsibility has been claimed. Two were killed in what seemed a tribal dispute.

On 8 April, a bomb exploded on a train in southwestern Balochistan province. At least 13 people died, and another 40 were injured. The United Baloch Army (UBA) claimed responsibility, warning that similar attacks were planned in the coming days.

UBA, one of several armed separatist groups, said the attack was in response to a major offensive by Pakistan Army’s Frontier Corps, which had been launched in Kalat district on 7 April and reportedly killed 40 combatants from the Baloch Republic Army (BRA) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). Security sources reported the seizure of a large quantity of weapons.

The Frontier Corps offensive represents the biggest clash in months in the gas-rich province, despite the announcement on 2 April by an army commander that the process to resolve the Balochistan issue through dialogue was under way.

According to local sources, two people were killed and six wounded in another incident on 31 March, when a train was attacked by militants positioned on a mountain top in Bolan district.

On 29 March, an armed attack in the port city of Gwadar left one person dead; militants destroyed equipment and planted a bomb at an air traffic control post. No one claimed responsibility, but officials indicated that Baloch militants in the area were suspected to be behind the attack. Authorities reported that separatist rebels blew up three gas pipelines in February, cutting supplies to Punjab, Pakistan’s most populous and wealthy province. The attack was claimed by the banned Baloch Republican Army (BRA).

On 27 March, citizens and activists in Balochistan commemorated what they say was an annexation of the province in 1948 by Pakistan’s armed forces. Many districts observed strikes as security forces increased their presence. The Baloch National Front (BNF) – an alliance of political parties that campaigns for an independent Balochistan – called for protests against the Pakistan Government.

The long-running separatist conflict in Balochistan was revived in 2004. A number of nationalist armed groups aim to stop what they consider the exploitation of the region’s natural resources, neglect of the population by the Pakistani authorities, and alleged human rights abuses. In recent years, militant sources have suggested that many people suspected of links to separatist groups have disappeared, allegedly at the hands of intelligence agencies.
International and Regional Context

Afghanistan–Pakistan

On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume stalled peace talks between Afghan authorities and the Taliban in April, after presidential elections when Afghan President Karzai is due to step down. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. The comments from Pakistan could indicate reluctance on the part of the Taliban to engage with the Karzai administration.

Prime Minister Sharif met with Afghan President Karzai in Kabul on 30 November, as part of renewed efforts to revive Afghanistan's peace process before the NATO troop withdrawal. This was his first visit to Afghanistan. Sharif promised that he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, who was captured in Pakistan in 2010, is seen by Kabul as key to reaching moderate Taliban commanders and involving them into peace talks.

In late October, a breakthrough in negotiations between President Karzai and Prime Minister Sharif was reportedly achieved at a meeting in London. On 20 November, a delegation of senior officials from Afghanistan's High Peace Council travelled to Karachi to start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and meet with Baradar, who was released by Islamabad in September, but reportedly has remained under close Pakistani supervision. In September, Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Daudullah, who were similarly not handed over directly to Afghan authorities. The release of influential Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan is seen by the Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

US–Pakistan Relations and US Drone Strikes

On 4 February, official sources said that US drone strikes had reduced sharply as peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban got underway. However, the Obama Administration indicated that it would carry out strikes on senior al Qaeda officials if immediate threats to the US were identified.

Over the past six months, official and public outrage over drone strikes has intensified, with local leaders saying they constitute a breach of the country’s sovereignty. In early December, Washington was forced temporarily to halt ground shipments from Afghanistan via its main Pakistan supply route following protests in Pakistan over US drone strikes. The route, which connects Torkham Gate, at the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, to the port city of Karachi, is crucial to the withdrawal of the US combat mission from Afghanistan. The alternative Northern Distribution Network, a grid of supply lines running through Central Asia and Russia, is far more costly and politically challenging. Long-term suspension of the supply lines running through Pakistan could potentially derail the whole US regional strategy.

Prime Minister Sharif has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes against militants. Nevertheless, an increase has been reported in FATA, with at least a dozen occurring since Sharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by Pakistani authorities in late August 2013, 339 drone attacks have been recorded since 2004, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2,200 people in FATA, including 400 civilians and 200 victims deemed probable non-combatants. The numbers released by Islamabad have been questioned by independent organisations. No official US data on the number of people killed in drone strikes is available. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released separate reports in October 2013 criticising the recourse to drone strikes and detailing the deaths of dozens of civilians in such attacks. In January 2014, news reports, field investigations and research by INGOs indicated that the number of civilian casualties in 2013 in Pakistan was much lower than Pakistani estimates.

India–Pakistan

On 8 October 2013, despite talks aimed at calming bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi, India’s military continued to accuse Pakistan of helping insurgents push into Indian Kashmir as foreign forces withdraw from neighbouring Afghanistan. Pakistan denies it is helping militants to cross into the Indian-administered part of the contested region.

Prime Minister Sharif met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 29 September, amid ongoing violence and heightened tensions over the Kashmir border. During the meeting, both leaders announced intentions to restore calm as an initial step towards reconciliation. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for incidents that killed 44 members of the security forces from the beginning of 2013 until early September 2013, up from 17 for all of 2012, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which monitors the violence.

In mid-August, several sources from the Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba said that the group is preparing to reignite the fight over Kashmir in 2014, when Western troops have left Afghanistan. The bombing of the Indian consulate in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on 3 August, for which the Taliban has denied responsibility, might be an early indication of this new strategy.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 4.2 million people were in need of humanitarian support in November 2013. These include one million IDPs in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1.61 million registered Afghan refugees.

Access

On 22 April, UNICEF reported that two of its national staff, who were abducted in Karachi on 17 April, were now safe and well.

Over January 2014, OCHA noted that 13 attacks against aid workers were reported in Pakistan, of which 11 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the other two in Sindh province. The attacks killed 11 people and injured four. In 2013, OCHA reported that 91 attacks against aid workers had been recorded, with 29 killed, 41 injured, and 21 kidnapped. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the most affected province, recording 37 attacks, including 20 people
Armed groups have killed more than 30 polio workers and troops protecting them in recent years. On 27 March, local sources reported that one police officer was killed when suspected militant attacked a polio team in the area of Nasarabad, Balochistan. On 17 February, gunmen abducted a six-member polio vaccination team in Ping village at the border of South Waziristan. A day before, a bombing targeted a polio team in Peshawar, killing a policeman. On 21 January, three polio vaccination workers were killed in Karachi. On 22 January, seven people were killed and 11 injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Charsadda district after a bomb exploded near a police van used to provide security for a polio vaccination drive.

Disasters

On 22 April, humanitarian partners stated that several districts in Sindh province are heavily affected by prolonged water scarcity and drought. Umerkot and Tharparkar in the south, and Qambar Shahdadkot, Jacobabad, and Kashmere in the north are facing a humanitarian emergency. The other provinces, besides Karachi City, are facing an acute food and livelihood crisis. According to the Government, between 1 December 2013 and 18 April 2014, over 306,000 families have been affected, and 248 people have died due to drought-related causes and a lack of access to health services.

Water scarcity has been an annual phenomenon for the past three years in the desert area, which is home to an estimated 950,000 people, and where famine killed an estimated 90% of livestock in 2000.

Displacement

IDPs

As of 22 April, OCHA reported that one million people are displaced and in need of assistance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA due to insecurity. Since mid-March, government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militant groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency have led to large-scale population movement to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to UNHCR, in 2013, an estimated 140,000 people were displaced across Pakistan, the majority in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As reported by OCHA, 90% of IDPs live with relatives or in rented houses.

IDP Returnees

As of 22 April, there are 76,000 returnees to FATA since November 2013, including 56,000 who had returned to Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency by the end of the year. In 2014, 270,000 people are expected to return to FATA. More returns are expected to the Tirah Valley from among the 80,000 people who sought refuge from hostilities between rival armed groups and security operations against non-state armed actors in March and April 2013.

OCHA added that between 2 and 14 April, more than 20,000 people – or 3,800 families – who fled sectarian violence in central Kurram Agency in 2011 had returned to their villages in Alisherzai, FATA.

In early April, local sources reported that the authorities have started repatriating thousands of Ali Sherzai tribe members to their native area in Kurram Agency, in FATA. In 2010, an estimated 55,000 people were displaced following a military operation targeting militant hideouts. To date, 7,500 people have been sent back, on a reported voluntary basis, and the repatriation process is expected to be completed by late April. While the authorities have reportedly facilitated the move, local sources indicated high levels of vulnerability among the newly returned.

Refugees

As of 22 April, OCHA reported 1.6 million Afghan refugees in need. The exact number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan remains difficult to ascertain. According to UNHCR and IOM as of 31 December 2013, there were an estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and undocumented migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, in Pakistan. Most Afghan refugees, the majority of whom were located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, require humanitarian assistance. National media report that the presence of Afghan refugees is triggering tensions in host provinces.

Food Security

Food insecurity is at emergency levels, with an estimated 58% of Pakistan’s population considered food insecure as of November 2013, as reported by OCHA quoting a National Nutrition Survey. Seven districts face IPC Phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). Inflation, rising fuel prices, and stagnating domestic productivity are pushing up food prices. Prices of wheat and wheat flour have steadily increased since June 2012, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

As of mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.21 million people, almost exclusively IDPs (living both in and outside camps) and returnees, were in critical need of food assistance and were key targets for food distribution.

On 18 April, the World Bank reported that the agricultural sector, which makes up 21% of GDP, is facing serious threats from escalating water shortages. For example, half of Punjab’s share of water in agriculture getting lost in canals and watercourses.

On 16 April, humanitarian partners reported that Tharparkar district, in southeast Sindh province, is facing extreme food insecurity and malnutrition. Drought has affected the livelihood of agriculture- and livestock-dependent households in Mithi, Chachro, Dahli, Diplo, Islam Kot Talukas, and Arid zones. A sheep pox epidemic is killing small animal flocks, threatening the economic well-being of communities in these areas.

Food Security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa/ FATA

The Detailed Food Security Assessment (DFSA) for KP and FATA, conducted by the Food Security Cluster, found that in complex emergency affected areas livelihoods have been disrupted badly, with the least opportunities in displacement areas. Most IDPs rely on negative coping strategies or income support. Increasing demand for food and NFIs has resulted in massive inflation, which burdens the food security situation of both IDPs and
host communities.

Health and Nutrition

OCHA reported in mid-February that an estimated 1.21 million people were in need of health assistance. Needs include the provision of basic health services, quality maternal and child health services, and healthcare to treat acute respiratory diseases brought on by cooler weather. Priority targets included over 508,000 IDPs and returnees in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dengue

On 16 April, WHO stated that between 1 January and 5 April, 182 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported, of which 179 cases were from Sindh province, and three from Punjab province.

On 22 April, OCHA added that the significant increase in reported cases in 2014 – there were 63 from usually less endemic areas in 2013, and 41 in 2012 – is thought to be caused by unexpected rainfall. Authorities warned that the predicted May-July rainy spell could be conducive for dengue mosquito breeding.

In 2011, Pakistan's worst dengue fever outbreak caused 16,000 cases and 257 deaths in Lahore, and 5,000 cases and 60 deaths in the rest of Punjab province. Since then, dengue fever has been affecting areas that do not usually fall into the traditional endemic belt, marking a significant difference from the usual patterns of cyclical dengue outbreaks. For instance, in 2013, a huge outbreak was addressed in Swat district, with 9,000 confirmed cases and 35 deaths reported.

Polio

On 16 April, UNICEF reported that the number of wild polio (WPV) cases for 2014 reached 49 (compared to six in the same period in 2013), most of which were in North Waziristan, South Waziristan, FATA, and Banu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative added that the most recent case was reported on 30 March in the previously polio-free district of Khairangi. The total number of type 2 vaccine-derived polio cases is 45 for 2013, and seven for 2014. The densely populated Peshawar valley is considered to be the main 'engine' of polio virus transmission, alongside North Waziristan, due to large-scale population movements through Peshawar into other areas of Pakistan.

On 17 April, for the first time, Prime Minister Sharif asked the military to help protect polio vaccination workers in the militant-dominated Waziristan and adjoining tribal areas. Attacks by militants continue to hamper national eradication efforts in these areas, which are considered some of the last wild polio virus reservoirs in the world. On 21 April, local media reported that the health authorities postponed the ninth round of a one-day special polio campaign in sensitive neighbourhoods of Karachi due to a lack of security cover.

As of early April, the health authorities declared eight districts of Punjab highly sensitive to polio, including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Mianwali, Multan, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh. An anti-polio drive targeting over 4 million children in the area is expected to start on 14 April.

On 14 April, the Health Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa declared that WHO found a polio virus from Afghanistan in water samples in Peshawar.

The number of polio infections has been rising with 91 cases reported in 2013, and 58 in 2012. Most cases were recorded in FATA, North Waziristan, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh. According to authorities, over 260,000 children in North and South Waziristan are at risk, with a Taliban ban on vaccination exacerbating the outbreak. Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria are the only countries worldwide where polio remains endemic.

Leishmaniasis

On 16 April, WHO stated that in the period of 30 March to 5 April, almost 120 cases of leishmaniasis were reported in Punjab; 95 in Chakwal district and 20 in the Multan district.

Measles

WHO reported on 16 April over 30 suspected cases of measles from Sindh province, with 85 cases in Thatta district, including three deaths. Another 22 new suspected cases were reported from Jacobad district.

In 2013, 269 deaths from measles were reported, of which 141 in Punjab province alone. WHO labelled the situation as alarming due to a steady increase in fatal cases. Following a January 2012-May 2013 assessment, OCHA found that 54% of 8,844 children in Punjab and Sindh provinces were not vaccinated against the disease.

Malnutrition

An estimated 1.59 million people need nutrition assistance, including 17,000 SAM and 55,000 MAM children. Besides the children, over 46,000 pregnant and lactating women are priorities. According to WFP as of June 2013, 40% of children suffer from stunted growth.

Malnutrition rates in some flood-affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the floods in 2012 and the situation is predicted to worsen in 2014. A December 2013 WFP survey found that the remote Neelum Valley is also prone to malnutrition, with an estimated 21% of children malnourished, which is well above the national average of 15%.

Shelter

Around 540,000 people need NFIs to cope with the harsh winter, OCHA reported in mid-February. The humanitarian caseload includes returnees, IDPs in FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and people recovering from earthquakes and floods in Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh.

Protection

As of mid-February, OCHA reported, an estimated 1.08 million people are in need of protection. This group largely consists of IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and...
Women, children, the disabled and the elderly need referral assistance and specialised protection in displacement and returnee areas.

In areas where the Taliban is active, over 500 girls’ schools have been bombed. In the south and southwest of the country, ethnic violence continues to curtail women’s social mobility.

**WASH**

As of mid-February, an estimated 690,000 people – largely IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and FATA – need assistance in accessing safe drinking water, OCHA reported. There is a need to improve knowledge of household water treatment among non-camp IDPs and returnees.

*Updated: 25/04/2014*

**BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, EPIDEMIC, CYCLONE**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**28 April:** A severe storm hit northern Netrokona district. At least 16 people were killed, of whom nine in Netrokona and six in Sunamganj, and another 20 people were injured. Over 1,000 homes were destroyed, affecting around 4,000 people, international media added.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones, which cause extensive damage and floods.

- An estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees from neighbouring Myanmar are living in official camps, and some 200,000 are residing in unofficial camps or villages, where they receive little or no humanitarian assistance.

- Due to frequent natural disasters and civil unrest, the level of food insecurity is rising. An estimated 40% of the population is considered food insecure, especially in western parts of the country.

- In 2013, 507 people died as a result of political violence, making it the deadliest year since the country’s independence. Most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters during a major political crisis towards the end of the year. It is unclear whether civil unrest will ease following the contested victory of the ruling Awami League at the last elections.

**Politics and Security**

Although the political situation in Bangladesh seemed to have relatively stabilised after the Awami League (AL) won the elections in 2008, longstanding tensions persist between Islamic groups and secular activists. Violence and protests erupted ahead of the January 2014 elections, which the AL went on to win.

Protests began in January 2013, over the trial and sentencing of senior political leaders from the main opposition party – the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) – and its Islamic allies for offences and crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. Several leaders are still officially on trial. By the end of the year, the strikes – or hartals – had evolved into open show-downs between hundreds of thousands of AL and BNP supporters.

**National Political Context: Aftermath of the January Elections**

International human rights organisations report that nearly 150 people were killed and thousands injured in election-related violence. Local monitoring organisations have indicated that the death toll might be as high as 180. On 4 February, the head of the BNP accused the Government of involvement in the killing or disappearance of more than 300 activists around the time of the general election. According to Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, an estimated 22,000 people were arrested in late December and early January. According to observers, such accusations are relatively common in the intense rivalry, and often violent confrontations, of Bangladesh’s politics, and the numbers are extremely difficult to verify.

The new Government was sworn in and Sheikh Hasina began a third term as Prime Minister on 12 January. International observers had declared the elections flawed; the BNP had mocked them as a farce. The political crisis remains unresolved and the impasse between the two dominant parties is fuelling concerns about economic stagnation and further violence.

In 2011, the ruling Awami League had scrapped a system of caretaker government, in which neutral leaders govern for the three months before an election and oversee the ballot. The AL refused to step down in October 2013, as should have happened ahead of the 5 January elections. Several critics argued that the AL was trying to stay in power to influence the outcome. The move set the stage for a political crisis that ended with the opposition boycotting the elections.

**Political Crisis and Civil Unrest**

According to estimates by the local NGO Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), 507 people were killed in political violence in Bangladesh in 2013, making it the deadliest year since the country’s independence. ASK said most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters late in the year and were largely fuelled by disputes over war crimes judgements. However, an alternative account from the news agency AFP, based on local police reports, claimed that 278 people – about half the ASK toll – died in 2013, many in clashes with the police.

It remains unclear how the situation will evolve following AL’s election victory. Observers are concerned that the political crisis will further damage the country’s economy, especially the USD 22 billion garment industry, which accounts for 80% of exports.

On 15 January, the opposition alliance conducted a dawn-to-dusk hartal in Gabtali, Bogra district, some 200km north of the capital Dhaka. The opposition are accusing the
authorities of filing fake legal cases against 52 of their leaders and activists.

The BNP staged several hartals in December and January, which closed businesses, blocked transport routes and in some cases led to violence. On 5 January, election day, local media reported at least 18 people killed and hundreds of polling stations attacked by opposition supporters.

As reported by OCHA in late January, political disturbances also led to attacks on religious minorities, mostly Hindus, and a number of smaller indigenous groups in Bangladesh. On election day, attacks on Hindus were reported in the Jessore district in southwestern Bangladesh. Similar incidents have been reported from other minority communities, mostly in the southwestern and northern districts, including Satkhira, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Chittagong, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Lalonirhat, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Dinajpur.

In 2006, prolonged clashes between the two main parties resulted in dozens killed and an intervention by the military; elections were cancelled and a military-backed caretaker government was installed.

**Labour Protests**

Aside from the political crisis, Bangladesh was hit by a wave of protests in mid-November as garment sector workers demanded a pay rise. According to reports, workers took to the streets, blocked major roads, and attacked factories in the Ashulia industrial belt, on the outskirts of Dhaka. Although information remains limited, over 50 people, including security forces, were wounded. Following mediation by authorities, garment factory owners agreed on 14 November to increase the minimum wage, but protests continued for another day, with workers demanding a bigger increase, and an estimated 200 factories remained closed.

The country is heavily dependent on the garment sector, which employs an estimated four million people and has already been seriously affected by the BNP’s hartals. The industry has also suffered several industrial accidents, which have killed more than a thousand workers in the last year and triggered widespread protests.

**1971 War Trials Protests**

Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) or the BNP have called numerous hartals since early 2013 to protest against the arrest and conviction of senior party officials for offences during the 1971 war of independence.

On 13 December, at least four people were killed after the execution of the JI Islamist leader Abdul Quader Mollah. The execution – the first to be carried out after a conviction for war crimes – triggered lootings, blockades of roads, and clashes between supporters of the opposition, including Islamist groups, and supporters of AL.

On 3 November, a Bangladesh war crimes court sentenced to death in absentia two men accused of committing offences during the 1971 war. Since the beginning of 2013, the court has convicted eight people, with six defendants sentenced to death, including senior members of the BNP and the JI. In October, the sentencing of two senior BNP members, one to death and one to life imprisonment, caused only limited protests. In September, national hartals took place after a senior leader from JI was sentenced to death, overturning a previous life sentence.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in late July 2013 that Bangladeshi security forces have frequently used excessive force in responding to street protests, killing at least 150 protesters and injuring over 2,000 since February 2013. HRW has criticised the trials, indicating that the tribunal’s procedures fall short of international standards. Several critics have suggested that the trials have been used by AL to undercut the two biggest opposition parties, the BNP and JI. Several BNP and JI leaders are still officially on trial.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

Bangladesh, a low-lying country with the world’s highest population density, is one of the world’s most hazard-prone states; seasonal floods lead to significant humanitarian caseloads every year. Disasters – mainly cyclones and heavy rains – are frequent. The frequency of natural hazards in the impoverished nation often leads to stocking needs from one year to the other as people’s livelihoods are disrupted long-term. Needs in Bangladesh can sometimes be difficult to assess; the humanitarian impact of low-profile events is chronically underreported.

**Access**

According to humanitarian partners, the political crisis is already affecting humanitarian operations, with both international missions and local field trips being cancelled. Stakeholders are struggling to oversee and implement programmes.

**Displacement**

Bangladesh is currently hosting a large number of Rohingya Muslim refugees, an ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority subject to exclusion and discrimination in Myanmar. The majority of Rohingya are denied refugee status by Bangladeshi authorities and, in late November 2013, observers expressed concerns over the Government’s recent announcement of a “Rohingya strategy”, which allegedly plans for a survey to be conducted across the country in order to identify and register all Rohingya living illegally in Bangladesh. While humanitarian organisations hope that the national strategy will aim to provide the displaced with at the very least a temporary legal status, very limited information is available on the content of the document, and officials have so far declined to comment.

As of September, according to humanitarian partners, an estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims are officially registered and live formal camps, where the Government only allows UNHCR and humanitarian organisations to assist refugees. On 24 March, the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) added that the Government has restricted aid to registered refugees living in official camps. A further 300,000 Rohingya refugees – even more according to local media – are in unofficial camps or with host communities and receive little or no humanitarian assistance. On 24 March, GSDRC indicated that conditions in unofficial camps are dire: overcrowded, lacking clean water and sanitation, with poor shelter, health and nutrition, and human rights abuses. New refugees cannot register with the Government or UNHCR and cannot enter official camps.

**Disasters**

As reported by OCHA in late January, political disturbances also led to attacks on religious minorities, mostly Hindus, and a number of smaller indigenous groups in Bangladesh. On election day, attacks on Hindus were reported in the Jessore district in southwestern Bangladesh. Similar incidents have been reported from other minority communities, mostly in the southwestern and northern districts, including Satkhira, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Chittagong, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Lalonirhat, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Dinajpur.
Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones, which cause extensive damage and floods.

On 28 April, a severe storm hit northern Netrokona district, OCHA reported. At least 16 people were killed, of whom nine in Netrokona and six in Sunamganj, and another 20 people were injured. Over 1,000 homes were destroyed, affecting around 4,000 people, international media added.

In late January, authorities reported that an estimated 270,000 people had been affected by waterlogging in the southwest of the country, with the subdistricts of Keshobpur in Jessore, and Tala, Satkhira Sadar, and Kolaroa in Satkhira being the worst affected. The disaster reportedly damaged local infrastructure as well as up to 10,000 houses. Priorities needs for those affected include shelter, livelihood assistance, and WASH.

In early January, the Government carried out relief efforts in response to a cold wave across parts of the country, notably the northwest. Although cold temperatures are a regular occurrence in the country, the latest relatively mild cold wave affected people in areas where households are generally very poor and have limited coping capacity.

### Food Security

Around 40% of the population is food insecure, especially in western parts of the country. The lingering effects of frequent natural disasters (including floods at end June, mid-July, and late September in 2012, and in mid-May 2013), violent demonstrations and disturbance, and other local problems have raised the level of food insecurity of a high number of households.

According to observers, economic growth is expected to slow to less than 6% until June 2014, following the current unrest. Higher prices have been registered for both food and non-food items in what may be seen as the first indication of the impact of the ongoing civil unrest on the country’s economy.

### Livelihoods and Food Security

The World Bank stated on 6 February that each year during the monsoon season, about 20–30% of the country is inundated; over six million hectares are flooded to depths ranging from 30cm to 2m. Farming and fishing systems are at risk of deep flooding, erosion and drainage. In the post-monsoon period, soil-moisture content declines rapidly and the water deficit needs to be compensated by irrigation. Agriculture gets the largest share of available water and this affects navigation, drinking water supply, rural health, and sanitation. Salinity intrusion, waterlogging and the contamination of the groundwater aquifer by arsenic further exacerbate this problem.

### Health and Nutrition

As reported by ECHO in late February, an estimated 500,000 Bangladeshi children suffer from severe malnutrition annually. Among children under five, 48% are stunted and 13.5% are acutely malnourished, with 3.4% of these children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

According to GSDRC on 24 March, acute malnutrition rates in unregistered refugee children under five were 18% in 2010. Refugees International established in 2013 that the GAM in one unofficial camp was twice the emergency threshold.

### Protection

On 24 March, GSDRC reported that unregistered status means that refugees who have been victims of violence have no legal recourse. Incidents of domestic and sexual violence have been increasing around Rohingya settlements. Unregistered female refugees are especially vulnerable to sexual and physical attacks. Many female refugees are forced into illegal activities as a survival mechanism or sell their children into domestic labour, putting them at risk of abuse and arrest.

Reviewed: 28/04/2014

**JORDAN**

**DISPLACEMENT**

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 10/04/2014.

### KEY CONCERNS

- Jordan remains affected by the crisis in neighbouring Syria, with the regular flow of Syrian refugees swelling Jordan’s population by almost 10%: 590,000 Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR in Jordan.
  - The influx of refugees has placed enormous pressure on scarce water resources and public services, which has increased tensions between host communities and refugees.
  - Humanitarian operations and resources are disproportionately focused on the Syrian refugee camps, which house fewer than 20% of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

### Politics and Security

While northern Jordan in particular has been overwhelmed by the influx of Syrian refugees, the country has remained politically stable and the economy appears to be recovering from the negative consequences resulting from the Arab Spring. However, this balance remains fragile as Syrian refugees have overwhelmed public services, particularly health and education, and placed major stress on scarce water supplies. Tension between refugees and host communities have manifested in localised protests, particularly in Mafraq governorate, and negative media portrayals of Syrians, as well as regular reports of discrimination and harassment of refugees.

The Jordanian military has tightly controlled cross-border movements of refugees, commodities, fighters, and weapons to limit spillover of the conflict. However, hundreds of Jordanians are reportedly fighting with opposition groups with links to Al Qaeda,
particularly Jabhat al Nusra, and dozens of Jordanians have been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict. Weapon smuggling from Jordan into Syria has increased significantly and the Jordanian Armed Forces continue to make arrests.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

Due to its relative stability and central location in a turbulent region, Jordan has historically been a reluctant host to the largest number of refugees in the world, both in terms of absolute numbers and the proportion of refugees to its resident population. Throughout most of its history, Jordan's population has been overwhelmed by refugees, beginning with the 1948 influx of Palestinian refugees and again in 1967. In 2008, Jordan hosted up to 500,000 Iraqis fleeing sectarian violence and most recently, the Kingdom has provided refuge to nearly 600,000 Syrian refugees.

**Syrian Refugees**

Jordan is hosting the third largest number of Syrian refugees after Lebanon and Turkey. As of 10 April, over 590,000 Syrian refugees were registered with UNHCR in Jordan. In February and March, there was a 40% increase in the number of new arrivals compared to January. The increase is attributed to the intensification of the conflict in southern Syria, particularly in Dar’a. Around 19% live in camps, the rest in local communities. The influx of refugees peaked in early 2013, with an average of 1,700 daily arrivals between January and April, but has since drastically reduced. While the Government has stated that the decrease in arrivals is due to obstacles for those trying to reach the border, human rights groups have documented incidents where Syrians were denied entry by Jordanian authorities.

**Refugees in Host Communities**

Over 80% of Syrian refugees living outside of the camps are located in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa. Assessments by aid agencies consistently find that the priority need among refugees in host communities is for cash in order to pay rent. Work permits are cost-prohibitive for refugees, although many Syrians, including children, work in agriculture and construction, despite the protection risks, including arrest and detention. In the northern governorates, about 20% of Syrians live in substandard accommodation, including garages, basements, chicken houses, and tents. Housing has become increasingly overcrowded as resources are depleted. Rental costs have quadrupled in Mafraq, one of the poorest governorates, where refugees now outnumber local residents.

**Camps**

Originally slated to open in mid-2013, Azraq camp in Zarqa governorate is scheduled to open for new arrivals on 30 April. At full capacity, Azraq camp will be able to accommodate 130,000 refugees. However, many aid workers are concerned that the harsh, hot, and windy climate, will be inhospitable for refugees. Shelters in Azraq will be temporary housing structures made of more durable materials.

Za’atari is the second largest refugee camp in the world. It is the equivalent of a new city in Jordan. The lack of security in certain parts of Za’atari camp impedes access to services, particularly for women and girls. Security incidents and protests are frequent. Thousands of refugees have left for other urban centres through both official and unofficial channels. However, authorities have cracked down on unofficial departures in 2014.

About 4,000 Syrians live in the Emirates Jordan Camp (EJC). Known as the “five-star” camp due to its high living standards and extensive support, primarily from the UAE Red Crescent, the camp provides three hot meals each day and caravans for all residents. Despite the improved living standards, a significant number of refugees have also left EJC camp for urban areas or to return to Syria.

An estimated 2,000 defectors from the Syrian armed forces are being held at military premises in Mafraq. The Government has not permitted UNHCR to conduct status determination for these people.

**Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)**

About 13,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been recorded by UNRWA, which provides cash assistance for vulnerable PRS, who make up the vast majority of the PRS population. About 190 PRS are in the Cyber City facility, and are subject to heavy restrictions on movement. Since late 2012, the Government has explicitly stated that it would not allow PRS to enter Jordan. Those who do enter the country are subject to a number of protection issues, including refoulement and the confiscation of documents. There has been a significant increase in the number of forced returns of PRS in early 2014; over 100 PRS have been deported since 2013.

**Non-Syrian Refugees**

Due to the conflict in Anbar province in Iraq, the number of Iraqis seeking asylum through UNHCR increased fivefold to 1,300 in December 2013, with demand persisting into 2014. The number of Sudanese asylum seekers increased throughout 2013. Over 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, Somalia and other countries currently reside in Jordan.

**Protection**

Only a small proportion of refugees live in informal tented settlements compared to Lebanon, but they are still believed to number in the thousands. In December 2013, authorities in Mafraq evicted without notice several hundred households living on public land and told the refugees that they had to enter Za’atari camp immediately. The evictions have since stopped, but are expected to increase when the winter ends in April, and probably to spread to other governorates, particularly Amman and Balqa.

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

23 April: Parliamentarians cast their votes in the first round of the presidential election: no candidate won a majority, and 52 of 128 ballots were blank. The second vote should...
take place on 30 April, when a candidate will need to secure 50% of the votes to win.

22 April: Syrian government aircraft launched three missiles at the border town of Aarsal. Within the hour, three rockets supposedly fired by Syrian opposition forces struck the Lebanese towns of Labwe and Al Nabi Othman, seen to be sympathetic to Hezbollah. No casualties were reported.

22 April: Lebanese authorities sent a rare aid convoy to the town of Tfail, located on the northeastern tip of Lebanon, which stretches into Syria. The town can only be reached by passing through Syrian territory; many of the 5,000 residents have been displaced by the Syrian conflict. Residents of Tfail vote in Lebanon, but work and receive health services and education in Syria.

19 April: Israeli forces fired gunshots at farmers in the southern Lebanese village of Khyam. No casualties were reported. This comes days after Israeli forces abducted five farmers from the southern Lebanon town of Shebaa. They were released later the same day.

KEY CONCERNS

- The conflict in Syria is polarising Lebanon, which is witnessing insecurity and sectarian tensions, with bomb attacks, sporadic clashes, and shelling from Syria into the northern and eastern border areas. There have been nine bombings in southern Beirut since July 2013, killing more than 70 people, almost all civilians, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

- As of 23 April, over 979,000 are Syrians registered as refugees with UNHCR in Lebanon and nearly 47,500 await registration, totalling 1,026,626. The number of Syrians in Lebanon who are not registered with UNHCR is unknown. Lebanon has the highest per capita concentration of refugees worldwide.

- The arrival of Syrian refugees is increasing pressure on health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices, and creating tensions between the host and refugee population.

- Lebanon has experienced a decline in trade, tourism, and investment, and an increase in public expenditures. The World Bank estimates that the Syria crisis cost Lebanon USD 2.5 billion in lost economic activity during 2013 and threatens to push 170,000 Lebanese into poverty by the end of 2014.

- 85% of registered refugees are in locations where 67% of the Lebanese host population is living below the poverty line.

- There are 989 informal tented settlements in Lebanon, housing 133,500 refugees.

- The population of the 42 Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon has now swelled to 135,000 due to an additional 35,000 refugees from Syria.

Politics and Security

International Context

On 9 February, the Hezbollah leadership publicly renewed its vow to continue fighting in Syria alongside President Assad’s forces. Hezbollah’s involvement in the offensive against the opposition-held stronghold Qusayr had already prompted the Free Syrian Army and Al Nusra Front to independently warn that their members could start fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon. On 10 July 2013, the UN Security Council called on Hezbollah to end all involvement in the Syrian conflict.

The first major clashes between Lebanese Hezbollah fighters and Syrian opposition fighters inside Lebanese territory were reported in June 2013. Shelling of Lebanese territory, including the eastern town of Hermel, a reported Hezbollah stronghold, from an area in Syria allegedly controlled by opposition forces, resulted in deaths. Shelling from Syria on the border regions frequently results in casualties.

Lebanon–Israel

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Lebanon–Israel

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On 14 March, the Israeli army announced it shelled a Hezbollah position in retaliation for a bomb that targeted a military unit on the border with Lebanon. The Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIL) claimed responsibility via Twitter for the bomb attack against Israel, though not on the group’s official page.

On 24 February, an Israeli airstrike targeted the eastern Lebanese–Syrian border area of Janta, near the village of Nabi Sheet, where Hezbollah has military training camps and key military posts. According to a local security source, the attack was aimed at two trucks transferring missiles and a missile launcher.

On 29 December 2013, the Israeli military fired shells into southern Lebanon, in response to rockets that hit Israel. The leader of the Al Qaeda-linked extremist group responsible for several of the bomb attacks in Lebanon was charged with firing rockets into Israel after being apprehended by security forces in January. Tension between Israel and Lebanon had spiked in mid-December, when shooting took place between the Lebanese military and the Israel Defence Forces in the vicinity of the Blue Line border demarcation at Naqoura.

National Political Context

Parliamentarians cast their votes in the first round of the presidential elections on 23 April. The first count showed 52 blank ballots, out of 128 votes. Samir Geagea, leader of the Lebanese Forces party, came next and received 48 votes. The second round should take place on 30 April: a candidate will need to secure 50% of the votes in order to win.

Current President Michel Sleiman’s term will expire on 25 May. The president is always elected from the Maronite Christian community and not by the people, but the parliament.
A new Government was formed on 15 February after ten months of political stalemate amid exacerbated sectarian tensions. The new Government brings together the powerful Hezbollah movement and its allies and the Future Movement bloc, who back opposing sides in the Syria war. The agreed compromise ensures neither side has veto power over the other.

Security Context

On 1 April, the Lebanese army rolled out a security plan aimed at bringing stability to the northern city of Tripoli and the Bekaa Valley. The troop reinforcements to the areas and ongoing raids have led to multiple arrests of suspected leaders of violent armed groups.

There have been nine bombings in southern Beirut since July 2013, killing more than 70 people, almost all civilians, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

On 23 March, clashes flared between supporters and opponents of the Syrian Government in southwest Beirut near Sports City, and lasted more than five hours. The fighting pitted supporters of the pro-Syrian Government Arab Movement Party against pro-opposition Salafis. The rival Sunni fighters exchanged gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades for several hours. One person was killed and 10 were wounded.

Repeated inter-sectarian strife has occurred in the northern city of Tripoli over the last months, raising fears that the Syrian conflict may become a regional one between Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims.

On 25 January, a statement by an unknown Lebanon-based jihadist figure announced the creation of a Lebanese branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIL), the most active Islamic militant group in Iraq, which has also seized large swathes of opposition-held territory in neighbouring Syria from more moderate opposition groups. Although the authenticity of this specific claim could not be verified, several developments indicate a rise of alleged Al Qaeda-affiliated currents of thought in different parts of Lebanon. The claim appeared to come from the northern city of Tripoli, which has seen frequent battles pitting Sunni militants against Alawites. While Lebanon’s Hezbollah movement has reportedly sent troops to Syria to back Damascus’s Government, Lebanese Sunni Islamists are said to mostly support the Syrian opposition.

Al Qaeda’s general command officially broke all links with ISIL on 3 February, in a move that can be seen as a clear attempt by Al Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria by bolstering the Al Qaeda affiliated Al Nusra Front. It remains unclear how this shift will impact the situation of ISIL in Iraq and Syria and its reported newly founded branch in Lebanon.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Both host and refugee populations are impacted by increasing pressure on health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices. Tensions are rising between host communities and refugees over strained resources, particularly with regard to overwhelmed health facilities and employment. Many Lebanese families see their livelihoods eroding as wages decrease and rent prices increase, with hard-pressed Syrian refugees working for less money and sharing single-family homes with multiple families to save on rent. Real economic growth, estimated at 7% in 2010, fell to 1.8% in 2013 and is expected to be at 2.1% in 2014. In June 2013, general inflation reached almost 9% year-on-year (compared to 2% in June 2012). Food inflation eased from 5.7% in June 2012 to 3% in June 2013. Unemployment rates are expected to double to 29% in 2014.

Access

Insecurity in some areas is hindering food assistance. Security in Tripoli, Wadi Khaled, and north of the Bekaa Valley remains problematic, with rockets and shelling hitting a number of towns, impeding humanitarian access, and restricting activities and the availability of services. Access to unregistered Syrians detained in Lebanon remains challenging.

Displacement

As of 23 April, over 979,000 Syrians are registered as refugees with UNHCR in Lebanon and nearly 47,500 await registration, totalling 1,026,626.

The priority need is shelter and approximately 11% of the newly arrived refugees are setting up tents in areas beyond the Lebanese army checkpoints, where authorities cannot ensure the safety and security of either refugees or humanitarian workers. There is an urgent need for improvement of waste management. Vulnerable Syrian families are settling in public spaces including highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.; 69% of refugees are in rented accommodation that includes unused shops, worksites and tents in makeshift settlements, half-finished buildings, and cramped apartment blocks, often in unhygienic conditions and with little access to food, water, or medical care. There are increasing reports of evictions of Syrians, either due to a failure to pay the rent or due to tensions with the community.

Lebanon’s population has grown by 25% in under two years. Health, education, water, and sanitation systems have all exceeded their capacities.

According to media sources, the Government is implementing strict entry controls on Syrians attempting to enter the country at all border crossings. Only Syrians with valid identification cards or passports can enter. The measures reportedly aim at preventing extremist and anti-Lebanese groups from entering the country. While most Syrians are granted access, according to UNHCR, there is a reported increase in arrests and detentions of Syrians for illegal entry and stay. Humanitarian partners also report that refugees arriving through unofficial crossings raise concerns of landmines and unexploded ordnance incidents on the Syrian side.

Food Security

According to a September 2013 World Bank study, the continuing refugee inflow will increase national vulnerability. Should the current rate continue, more than 170,000 additional Lebanese could fall into poverty by 2014, due to competition with refugees for unskilled labour. Currently, one million Lebanese live in poverty. The study estimates that the unemployment rate in Lebanon could double, exceeding 20% and affecting 320,000 people. An estimated US$1.6 billion will be needed to restore quality and access to health, education, and social safety nets to pre-crisis levels. According to the May 2013
Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees, over 70% of Syrian refugee households need food assistance. The number of people requiring food assistance continues to increase, straining existing resources.

Labour

An ILO assessment of employment of Syrian refugees found that low wages, high unemployment, and lack of labour market regulation pose serious challenges to livelihoods for both residents and refugees in host communities. The study found that almost a third of Syrian refugees in Lebanon's labour market are unemployed and most of those Syrian refugees working suffer from low wages and harsh working conditions, earning substantially less than their Lebanese counterparts. The average monthly income for a Syrian refugee in Lebanon is almost 40% less than the national minimum wage.

Health and Nutrition

The continuous influx of refugees has vastly increased the workload in primary health centres, overstretching their capacity to provide healthcare. Physical access to health centres is a challenge for some refugees who live in remote locations. Access is further limited by short working hours and the lack of trained health personnel. Refugees are charged the same medical fees as Lebanese nationals. Despite contributions by UNHCR and humanitarian health partners, many refugees still find it difficult to cover the costs of medical treatment. Some providers require upfront payment of costs not covered by UNHCR, and the current supply of medicines for acute and chronic diseases is insufficient to cover rising demand. The prevention of disease control and outbreaks presents a challenge in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation.

A Médecins Sans Frontières doctor working in the Bekaa Valley stated that 90% of patients arrive with prior diagnoses of chronic disease, typically hypertension and diabetes, and their condition can worsen quickly if they have not received treatment for weeks. The clinics are overburdened and, according to MSF, doctors can on average spend only eight to ten minutes with a patient.

Child malnutrition

A nutrition assessment showed GAM of refugee children was 5.9% in 2013, classified by WHO as poor. SAM was less than 1%. However, SAM in the Bekaa Valley was at 1.7%. This is thought to be due to lack of access to WASH and health services by the poorest Syrians, the longer-term impact of protracted displacement, and the increasing numbers of low birth-weight infants born to inexperienced and unsupported young mothers. Malnutrition treatment was uncommon in Lebanon prior to the crisis and some hospitals continue to face difficulties in malnutrition treatment protocol.

According to an inter-agency nutrition assessment released in February, nutrition status among children under five has deteriorated, with significant differences existing regionally. The lowest rates were found in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with 4.3%, GAM, while the Bekaa Valley and North Lebanon have the poorest nutritional status, with 8.9% and 6.7%, respectively. Cases of severe acute malnutrition were also found in these areas.

Polio

Lebanon launched a comprehensive public health initiative on 8 November 2013 to vaccinate all children under five against polio, following a confirmed outbreak in Deir-ez-Zor governorate in Syria. Due to poor immunisation rates in some parts of Syria and the continuous arrival of displaced from Syria, the recent outbreak represents a serious risk for Lebanon. Lebanon has been polio-free for 12 years. The November campaign reached nearly 590,000 children – a 98% coverage rate. The Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF launched the first of two planned campaigns in March and April 2014, targeting 600,000 children under the age of five living in tented settlements and collective shelters.

Protection

As capacity in Lebanon continues to diminish, affordable shelter options are increasingly hard to find. Refugees are turning to improvised shelters. In March 2014, a UNHCR survey of 6,000 randomly selected Syrian refugees found that 81% of refugees pay some sort of rent for their accommodation. Some 57% rent apartments, often sharing with other refugee families; 40% live in fragile environments such as tents in informal settlements, garages, worksites, and incomplete buildings.

Between August 2013 and April 2014, the proportion of refugees living in informal settlements increased from 12% to 15% and the number of informal settlements more than doubled from over 400 to almost 1,000, with an average of 21 families in each settlement.

WASH

According to local authorities and humanitarian partners in December 2013, 27% of Syrian refugees and Lebanese affected by the refugee influx, 909,000 and 1,500,000 people respectively, are in need of water support, and 29% in need of sanitation assistance. Many refugee settlements lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are located in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease. The scattered distribution of people requiring WASH assistance creates a challenging logistical situation. Currently, refugees reside in over 1,600 locations, of which some 700 are informal settlements. Informal settlements will increase, as the number of new arrivals increases. Many new arrivals require assistance with sanitation and access to safe water. The needs of affected people will vary depending on the capacity of existing water and sanitation services and the local authority infrastructure.

This winter in Lebanon has been unusually dry, with January 2014 the driest recorded in 100 years. Several highly strategic water reservoirs that were emptied for dredging maintenance last year remain empty. Unless the next 2-3 months see above-average rainfall, there will likely be a severe deterioration in both quantity and quality of water available, which is likely to have a direct impact on communities in affected locations, particularly in Bekaa and along the coast.

Solid waste disposal is problematic in many areas, as poor waste management practices are deteriorating the quality of ground and surface water in heavily populated areas, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases in children and adults. Also, the rise in population there has led to an increase in demand on public waste services, which has led to municipalities raising their fees.
Some refugees arrive in Lebanon with unconfirmed nationality, or without documents proving their nationality, including Syrian Kurds, who were denaturalised in Syria in 1962. Non-Kurdish stateless persons from Syria may lack nationality due to gaps in Syria’s national legislation or lack of access to civil registration procedures. Also, 15,000 Syrian refugees have been born in Lebanon, but birth registration levels are extremely low. According to an initial UNHCR survey conducted earlier this year, 75% of 1,882 refugee newborns did not possess an official birth certificate.

The renewal of legal stay documentation for refugees remains unaffordable for many refugee families. Although this does not exclude refugees from registration and access to humanitarian services, analysis shows that the lack of legal documentation continues to limit freedom of movement, especially in areas with a high security presence.

According to UNHCR, humanitarian actors in all regions are reporting increasing incidents of violence, physical abuse, and discrimination directed towards refugee children in schools. This is reportedly resulting in parents stopping their children from attending classes or in children dropping out from school.

Education

Enrolment rates of refugee children in Lebanon are at 35%, the second-lowest of the main refugee hosting countries. According to UNHCR, based on registration data at the end of February there are nearly 454,500 children in need of support for enrolment in learning opportunities; 386,500 Syrians, 21,000 Palestinians from Syria, 7,000 Lebanese returnees and 40,000 vulnerable Lebanese children. Barriers to education include transport costs and tuition fees, which can be excessive for refugee families with limited resources. Language barriers and safety concerns of Syrian parents contribute to a high drop-out rate among refugee children. Just 90,000 refugee children have enrolled in the public school system. Last academic year, 43,000 of 250,000 Syrian refugee children were schooled within the public school system.

Social Tensions

Refugee women, children and youth continue to report instances of physical violence, aggression and harassment by local community members, especially in Mount Lebanon and the north. Refugees considered this to be the result of competition over jobs and a lack of understanding of refugee issues. A recent study by Search for Common Ground confirmed that the main cause of tension is the lack of employment opportunities for both communities as well as housing shortages and increases in rent. Economic pressures, coupled with polarised political views, are key triggers of friction.

Wages and work opportunities have been reduced for many Lebanese as Syrians are often willing to work for lower wages. Many social services cannot cope with the increasing demand. A perception that Syrian refugees get preferential treatment, perhaps due to humanitarian assistance directly targeting them, is adding to the friction. Host communities also fear infectious disease outbreaks as the number of insanitary informal refugee settlements grows. This contributes to a vicious circle of prejudice and stigmatisation.

Syrian refugees are mainly residing among the poorest communities of Lebanon, sharing scarce resources: 85% of refugees are spread across 182 locations where two-thirds of the host population live below the poverty line, according to preliminary UNICEF data.

Updated: 23/04/2014

TAJIKISTAN FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, LANDSLIDES

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

25 April: ECHO reported that rain had caused flooding that affected the area of Gissar Valley, on the northern border of Khatlon province, not far from Dushanbe. Five people were killed in the district of Roudaki and the city of Tursunzoda.

16 April: A mudflow – caused by heavy rains and hailstorms – hit Kizil-Kala village of Mehnatobod in Khuroson district, Khatlon. Around 1,500 people, or 256 families, were affected. Two children were killed and local infrastructure was destroyed.

11–13 April: Heavy rain caused floods and landslides destroying villages and local infrastructure in Vose, Shurobod, Hamadony, Tugarak, Besh-Tegerman, Zarbdor areas and Kulob city in Khatlon province. Around 2,600 people, or 427 families, were affected. More than 15 people, including six children, died. Seven people are still missing and 38 people were injured. The humanitarian priorities include food assistance and livelihood support, WASH, non-food items, temporary shelter and psychosocial support.

KEY CONCERNS

- Almost half of Tajikistan’s 7.5 million population lives on less than USD 1.33 a day, remittances are the main source of income for 55% of all households (WFP).

- The mountainous territory poses climatic challenges, with natural disasters often causing energy and food shortages (WFP).

- Three-quarters of the population live in rural areas, but only 7% of land is arable, hence, access to food is a major challenge (WFP).

Politics and Security

In January, a sharp deterioration in relations with Kyrgyzstan was observed, following a border shootout between military forces of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, started by Tajikistan, military sources confirmed. Fighting, unusual with regard to the use of heavy weapons, occurred on Tajik territory, causing injuries on both sides. Reportedly, Kyrgyzstan is seeking to build a new road that would bypass the Tajik exclaves of Vorukh, which is some 20km inside Kyrgyz territory. However, land that Kyrgyzstan wants to use for the road remains in disputed territory. Only half of the 971-kilometer border has been delimited since independence in 1991, which has become a pressing issue with the population within these territories growing. Following the clashes, Kyrgyzstan withdrew its ambassador from Tajikistan. In late January, the Vice Prime Ministers of both countries met in Bishkek, and additional troops were withdrawn.
Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

On 25 April, ECHO reported that rainfall had caused flooding in the area of Gissar Valley, on the northern border of Khatlon province, not far from Dushanbe. As a result of the floods, five people were killed in the district of Roudaki and the city of Tursunzoda.

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Food Security

In March 2014, FEWSNET reported that from February to June 2014, food security outcomes are expected to remain Minimal (IPC Phase 1). Tajikistan is likely to face a Phase I: Minimal food security situation in September 2014, and will not have external needs.

The last joint assessment was carried out in June 2013, with WFP estimating that in 2013 over three million people (32% of the population) would be at risk of food insecurity due to a prolonged lean season and depleted winter stocks.

Updated: 29/04/2014

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

26 March: The UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution condemning DPRK for what it considered as longstanding and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations..

No current data on child mortality, food security, food price levels, or the general magnitude of humanitarian needs is available. Therefore, DPRK is not included in the Global Overview prioritisation.

KEY CONCERNS

- Massive human rights infringements, including against prisoners in prison camps who face starvation and torture, continue to be reported. Humanitarian access remains extremely limited (UN).

- Information on the food security situation remains limited. As of August, an estimated 16 million people (almost 65% of DPRK’s population) are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance (OCHA).

- As of August, malnutrition rates, particularly in the northwest, were extremely high with global chronic malnutrition (stunting) standing at almost 28% and global acute malnutrition (wasting) at 4% among children under five (OCHA).

- DPRK is disaster prone, regularly experiencing seasonal flooding that, for instance, affected over 800,000 people in summer 2013 (OCHA).

Human Rights Situation

On 18 February, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged world powers to refer DPRK to the International Criminal Court after a UN report documenting crimes against humanity. The team conducting the report recommended targeted UN sanctions against DPRK civil officials and military commanders suspected of the worst crimes. The report provides evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations. On 17 March, China dismissed the UN report on the ground that it made unfounded accusations, raising concerns among human rights activists that it will shield Pyongyang from international prosecution. On 26 March, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution condemning DPRK for what it considered as longstanding and ongoing systematic, widespread and gross human rights violations.

In September, UN human rights investigators released a first report that documented human rights abuses of inmates in DPRK's prison camps suffering from starvation, torture, and other human rights violations. The inquiry, based on testimonies from DPRK exiles, came after pressure from Japan, South Korea, and Western powers to investigate and begin building a case for possible criminal prosecution. The report was rejected by Pyongyang and may strain relations between the DPRK regime and the international community that have only lately begun to improve.

DPRK–South Korea Dialogue

On 12 February, Seoul and Pyongyang held talk at their fortified border in the Panmunjom truce village. The first high-level talks in seven years, the two sides explored ways to mend ties while South Korea and the US prepared for military exercises that have infuriated DPRK. According to reports, although no pre-arranged agenda was set, the parties discussed a range of issues including reunions of families separated during the 1950–1953 Korean War.

On 5 September, DPRK agreed to restore a cross-border military hotline with South Korea, a sign of easing tensions. The line had been shut down some six months earlier. In September, DPRK and South Korea reopened the joint industrial park in Kaesong after a
series of talks concerning this rare bilateral economic cooperation. Kaesong remains a rare source of hard currency for DPRK. Pyongyang had pulled its 53,000 workers out of the park in April, at the height of tensions with Seoul and Washington over its nuclear military programme.

The reopening of Kaesong appears to be a step towards improving Pyongyang’s relations with Seoul. After the soaring of tension between Pyongyang and the West over DPRK’s nuclear program, relations with South Korea improved after an unexpected DPRK reversal on 6 June. On 9 June, DPRK and South Korean officials held their first talks in years in a positive end to months of military tension.

National Political Context

On 10 March, DPRK’s leader Kim Jong-un reportedly won every ballot cast by voters in his district, where he ran uncontested during the first elections to the Supreme People’s Assembly legislature under his rule. This vote grants Kim the title of Member of Parliament, on top of being Supreme Commander of the armed forces and chairman of the powerful National Defence Commission.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Humanitarian access is extremely limited. In June, WFP approved a new two-year operation starting on 1 July and targeting 2.4 million people, almost all children and pregnant and nursing women, with about 207,000 metric tons of food assistance.

Disasters

As reported by OCHA on 23 August, floods affected 800,000 people, including 56,000 children under five and 14,800 pregnant women, and left almost 49,000 homeless. Farmland was inundated with at least 10,000 hectares affected, and 1,000 hectares of crops destroyed. Damage to agricultural land is extensive with up to 40% of the land in Pakchon county, including 80% of paddy, affected. A Health Cluster assessment on 6 August documented damage to roads, bridges, houses, and public buildings, limiting the access of affected persons to basic healthcare and other services. An increase in the number of diarrhoeal diseases was reported due to extensive damage to the water system. An estimated 678,000 people needed basic healthcare, essential drugs, and hospital supplies for lifesaving interventions.

On 9 August, authorities reported that the floods affected 73 counties and caused severe damage in 22 counties. Over 11,000 buildings were damaged. In early August, authorities estimated the death toll at 33 dead with 18 people still missing. An estimated 59,000 people were displaced. This comes after flooding and a subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012, which affected 700,000 people, damaging health facilities and reducing access to primary and secondary healthcare.

Food Security

Information on food security remains limited. According to an August OCHA report, an estimated 16 million people, of a total population of 24.6 million, are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance. OCHA further reports that although the humanitarian situation has improved slightly since 2013, the structural causes of vulnerability persist and external assistance is needed, notably targeting the most affected northeastern provinces.

On 26 March, FAO reported that DPRK could, in the right conditions, become self-sufficient in cereals by the end of the year, as a sizable increase in harvests has enabled a decrease in cereal imports by more than half from five years ago.

However, in November 2013, the results from a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission indicated that, despite a slight increase in cereal production, most households have borderline or poor food consumption, with consumption limited in terms of quantity and quality. Specifically, WFP reports that 25% of households have acceptable food consumption, while 45% and 30% have borderline and poor food consumption respectively.

Food production for 2013/2014 is estimated to increase by 5% compared to 2012/2013, according to WFP/FAO, resulting in the smallest cereal deficit since at least the early 2000s. As reported by WFP/FAO, the food system is highly vulnerable to shocks, and key gaps exist particularly in the production of protein-rich foods. According to OCHA, the lack of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser, and plastic sheets) remains the main challenge for food production.

In late February, authorities reported an outbreak of foot-and-mouth, a highly contagious livestock disease. The disease was first reported from a pig farm in a suburb of Pyongyang and has reportedly spread to other areas in the capital and to an adjacent county, leading to the culling of thousands of pigs. The outbreak may further heighten food insecurity. In 2011, the entire Korean peninsula was hit by an outbreak foot-and-mouth that led to the culling of more than three million livestock in the South alone.

Health and Nutrition

Rates of child undernutrition, through measurement of stunting, wasting, and underweight, has declined over the past decade. However, the rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children under five was almost 28%, alarming by international standards, according to WFP/FAO as of late November. Stunting is also cited as a major underlying cause of maternal and child mortality. The prevalence of wasting (4%) is now within the normal range, according to international thresholds.

Updated: 25/04/2014
HAITI FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, HURRICANE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late March: As reported by OCHA, 3,617 suspected cases of cholera and 28 deaths were recorded between January and March 2014. The number decreased by more than 75% compared to the same period in 2013, even with all departments continuing to record new cases.

KEY CONCERNS

- Haiti remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters and extreme weather events. The resilience of the population and its capacity to cope with new crises is generally very weak.
- Four years after the 2010 earthquake, an estimated 137,500 IDPs are still living in 243 camps scattered throughout metropolitan Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas (IOM, March 2014).
- Half the world’s suspected cholera cases are in Haiti: 58,608 suspected cases and 601 deaths were reported in 2013 and a further 45,000 are predicted for 2014. As of 29 March, 3,617 cholera cases, including 28 deaths were recorded between January and March 2014 (OCHA and WHO, March 2014).
- Three million Haitians are food insecure: 600,000 face severe food insecurity and an additional 2.4 million were moderately food insecure at the end of 2013 (Haitian National Coordination for Food Security, October 2013). Nearly a quarter of Haitian children under five suffer chronic malnutrition (UNICEF 2013).

Politics and Security

In November 2013, the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) reported the resurgence of violence and killings in Cité Soleil (Port-au-Prince) as well as violent incidents around schools in Cap Haïtien.

Late November, thousands of young Haitians demonstrated in several cities demanding the resignation of President Martelly. In Port-au-Prince, demonstrators from multiple neighbourhoods converged on the US embassy to denounce what they claimed was US interference in the country. Riot police and UN peacekeepers blocked access to the embassy. No incidents were reported, but tear gas was fired to prevent the demonstrators from reaching the building. Demonstrations took place in other cities as well, such as Cap Haïtien in the north.

Haiti was to have held legislative and local elections in 2011, but infighting among various government branches has delayed the vote.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As a result of previous disasters and emergencies, and in a context of extreme fragility, an estimated three million Haitians continue to have both chronic and acute needs, facing displacement, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Of these, an estimated 817,000 people in 35 of 140 communes are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Disasters

Haiti has an extremely high exposure and vulnerability to multiple hazards, including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and droughts. Although no major hurricane has hit the country in over a year, an estimated 5,500 people were affected by floods and heavy rains in 2013. Moreover, the resilience of Haiti’s population and its capacity to cope with new crises is extremely low.

In January 2014, local media reported that a drought is affecting southern Nord-Ouest department, damaging crops and leading to food shortages, weakening an already fragile food situation. On 3 April, WFP and MINUSTAH confirmed that arid conditions in the department are worsening chronic food insecurity. A state of emergency has been declared across the department.

Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 led to severe flooding that affected 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grand’Anse, and Sud departments were the most severely. In early April 2013, 72,000 people affected by Hurricane Sandy still needed humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA: 119 of Haiti’s 140 municipalities were severely affected by drought, tropical storm Isaac or hurricane Sandy in 2012, displacing at least 58,000 people.

Displacement

IDPs

At end March 2014, IOM estimated that over 137,500 IDPs are still living in 243 camps, representing a decrease of almost 9,400 (6%) since December 2013. Rental support programmes accounted for the relocation of some 4,800 IDPs, and the closure of 27 sites, while spontaneous departures to three other IDP sites accounted for the relocation of 400 IDPs. No camps were closed as a result of evictions. This is a 91% decrease in the number of IDPs, 84% in the number of IDP camps, compared to the July 2010 peak of 1.5 million IDPs in 1,555 camps.

While 30 camps have closed during this period, an estimated 78 camps (32% of the remaining camps) have recorded an increase in the IDP populations. This phenomenon, even though always present, is lately becoming more visible. When asked, IDPs have reported their inability to pay rent as the main reason for moving into camps (78%), joining their family members as a second main reason (9%) and moving from another camp being
In April 2014, the majority of IDPs were living in the three communes of Delmas, Port-au-Prince, and Carrefour. Delmas hosted almost 53,400 IDPs, or 39% of the total; Port-au-Prince and Carrefour hosted approximately 27,100 and 12,900, respectively. The three communes together accounted for 68% of the remaining IDPs in Haiti. According to OCHA in December 2013, an estimated 80,000 people in 67 camps were considered to be at particularly high risk of flooding.

Most people who have been relocated from camps have not moved into permanent housing and continue to live in dire conditions, at risk of diseases such as cholera. A lack of adequate shelter makes them vulnerable to flooding and other adverse weather conditions, especially during the hurricane season.

According to Amnesty International, forced evictions are another reason why camp numbers have fallen. In February 2014, IOM said that about a third of the total number of IDPs (58,000 people) are at risk of forcible eviction from 102 camps, including 25,600 people at high risk.

**Refugees/Migrants**

In September 2013 the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic ordered authorities to strip citizenship from children of illegal immigrants dating back to 1929, even if they were born in the country and previously held Dominican documents. If this is upheld, up to 300,000 people of Haitian origin could become stateless. Without documents, they would be unable to access health and education services, get married, or own property. The decision sparked outrage within Haiti, the diaspora, and human rights circles. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights denounced the decision, arguing that it is discriminatory, depriving Dominican-born Haitians of nationality. Despite international pressure, the Dominican Government has maintained it is not willing to revisit the ruling, which cannot be appealed.

**Food Security**

Haiti’s huge structural challenges increase exposure to recurrent food insecurity. Poverty, the high degradation of the environment, and limited government capacity to monitor, prevent and respond to crises all contributing to national fragility.

According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security, three million Haitians were food insecure as of October 2013. Of these, 2.4 million were moderately food insecure and 600,000 severely food insecure. Some 13 communes are in a food crisis situation and 106 communes in food stress. These figures indicate a significant improvement in the food security situation – 1.5 million were considered severely food insecure earlier in 2013, and 44 communes were put at high risk of food insecurity because of a long period of drought in 2012, tropical storm Isaac and hurricane Sandy.

According to FEWSNET as of mid-February, food availability has improved significantly since August 2013 due to the good spring agricultural production in the most productive areas and relatively well distributed rains. However, stocks from this production remain below the five-year average, and started to be depleted in February, two months early for the lean season. Spring harvests (June–August) are expected to reduce food insecurity throughout the country.

In Nord-Ouest, poor households are likely to face Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) between March and June. According to the National Coordination for Food Security in early April, drought is directly affecting 143,000 people in Nord-Ouest, prompting a major emergency operation. Government statistics showed that about 43% of households in Nord-Ouest suffer from food insecurity, compared to a national average of about 30%. Well below average rainfall from November to March has resulted in crop losses of mainly sorghum, beans and maize in high-altitude areas and prevented farmers from planting in low-lying parts, causing an extended lean season. To stave off hunger, increasing numbers of poor families living in drought-affected areas are pushed to negative coping mechanisms, including the reduction of meals per day, selling immature livestock and cutting down trees for the sale of charcoal, which affects Haiti’s fragile environment. Although food availability has improved and prices of local products appear to have declined, weak demand for labour reduces the purchasing power of many poor rural households. Some are experiencing Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1), while others are facing Stressed conditions (IPC Phase 2) due to lack of income.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Cholera**

Despite a significant decrease in the overall number of cholera-related deaths, half the world’s suspected cholera cases can still be found in Haiti. Cholera remains an epidemic and humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Cholera is a waterborne disease and 42% of the population does not have access to clean water.

As reported by OCHA, 3,617 suspected cases and 28 deaths were recorded between January and March 2014. The number decreased by more than 75% compared to the same period in 2013, even with all departments continuing to record new cases. The overall incidence of the disease has been reduced by 50% and fatality rates are below the 1% target set by WHO. However, response efforts need to be maintained as Haiti enters the rainy season, which, based on trends of previous years, is likely to see an increase in cases.

In 2013, 58,608 suspected cholera cases and 601 deaths were reported, bringing the total number of people affected since the outbreak of the epidemic in October 2010 to 701,000 as of 29 March 2014, with 8,574 reported deaths.

Four departments (Artibonite, Centre, Nord, and Ouest) have registered a higher number of cases than average, and two (Artibonite and Ouest) account for 52% of 2013’s registered cases.

Human rights lawyers reported that they sought compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on UN peacekeepers. The decisions to file suit in New York came after the UN said in 2013 that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti. The legal action is built on the mounting evidence that UN peacekeepers from Nepal carried with them the Asian
strain of cholera when they arrived in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake. The outbreak, which began in October of 2010, was the first instance of cholera in Haiti for at least 150 years.

**Malnutrition**

In Haiti, nearly a quarter of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, according to UNICEF. According to OCHA as of 12 December, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children under five increased from 5.1% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2013. According to UNICEF in November 2013, 100,000 children under five are affected by GAM, of whom 20,000 have severe acute malnutrition. Rural children are especially affected.

Updated: 24/04/2014

**GUATEMALA FOOD INSECURITY**

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 11/04/2014.

### KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 305,000 people (61,000 households) suffer from severe or moderate food insecurity and are in need of assistance (WFP, March 2014).
- Some 1,883 people suffer from acute malnutrition, of which 42% were children under one year of age (Government, March 2014).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

Food insecurity is concentrated in the Western Highlands and the Eastern dry areas, which are also Guatemala’s poorest territories. The situation is exacerbated by recurrent disasters. There is a significant risk of hurricane, earthquake, flood, landslide, or drought in particular areas.

Guatemala remains under a state of emergency declared in February 2013 for food insecurity caused by coffee rust and drought. The International Coffee Organization considers the current coffee leaf rust, which is affecting the entire Central America region, one of the worst epidemics ever. Some 70% of the total Guatemalan plantation has been affected, corresponding to a loss of USD 101 million and 75,000 jobs during the 2012/2013 harvest cycle. The effect of climatic factors (erratic rainfall and a prolonged dry spell over previous years) on the production and stock of staple grains have made the food security situation even more worrying.

The national Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Security (SESAN) recorded 800,000 people (160,000 households) impacted by coffee leaf rust, with effects including unemployment and harvest losses of staple grains. WFP has calculated that at least 305,000 people (61,000 families) are suffering from severe and moderate food insecurity and are in need of assistance. According to the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in September 2013, the most affected departments were Chiquimula, San Marcos, Alta Verapaz, Jalapa, Jutiapa, El Quiché, Huehuetenango, Zacapa, Baja Verapaz, and Sololá. The Humanitarian Country Team is considering applying for emergency funds from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.

With an early end to the coffee harvest and low food reserves, the lean season for very poor households in the east and the western highlands is beginning two months ahead of schedule. Lower incomes from the coffee harvest and a growing dependence on market purchase for food supplies will likely result in Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) between April and June.

In addition, the possibility of a shift to El Niño-like conditions in the second quarter of the year is close to 45%. If this were to occur, the resulting erratic rainfall would affect the growth and development of staple grain crops for the Primera season and could potentially jeopardise crop yields.

The present emergency is happening in a context with an extremely worrying nutritional situation since half of children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition in Guatemala, the highest rate in the region and the fourth in the world.

**Health**

**Malnutrition**

At 1 March, Guatemalan Health authorities reported 1,883 cases of acute malnutrition, of which 42% were children under one year of age. The five most affected departments are Escuintla, Guatemala, Petén, Quiché, and Huehuetenango, reporting 887 cases (47% of the total).

Reviewed: 24/04/2014

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**OCEANIA**

**SOLOMON ISLANDS FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EARTHQUAKE, CYCLONE**
KEY DEVELOPMENTS

21 April: Tropical Cyclone Ita and consequent floods devastated Honiara and Guadalcanal, with 22 confirmed fatalities and over 10,000 people displaced. Around 52,000 are still affected, half of whom are children. Most pressing needs include WASH, health, and NFIs.

KEY CONCERNS

- Solomon Islands is the world’s sixth most exposed country to natural hazards; situated on the geologically active "Pacific Ring of Fire".

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

Earthquake

On 13 April, a 7.6 magnitude quake and a series of aftershocks hit the area of Makira, in the southeast of the archipelago, prompting two tsunami alerts, which were swiftly cancelled. According to local authorities, the tremor provoked panic in evacuation centres housing victims of the earlier floods, but caused no serious damage.

Floods

On 21 April, humanitarian partners reported that Tropical Cyclone Ita had caused heavy rain and triggered severe flooding across the archipelago. Floods devastated Honiara and Guadalcanal, with 22 confirmed fatalities and over 10,000 people displaced. Most of the displaced are in 21 evacuation centres in Honiara. Around 52,000 people are still affected, half of them children. Most pressing needs include WASH, health, and NFIs. Damage was also reported in the provinces of Makira-Ulawa, Malaita and Isabel.

The flooding comes after the February 2013 tsunami caused widespread displacement.

Access

According to humanitarian partners, most assessments and aid operations are taking place in Honiara because damaged infrastructure and insecurity are limiting access to other areas of Guadalcanal.

WASH

Local authorities reported that people in Honiara are facing water disruptions or rationing, as only 60% of the water supply is working. Outside the capital, people have very restricted access to clean water. They are relying on coconut milk and water drawn from contaminated wells, raising fears of disease outbreaks. Several cases of diarrhoea and malaria have already been reported in evacuation centres in and around Honiara.

Health and Nutrition

According to health authorities, preventing an outbreak of dengue fever is a priority, as an epidemic was beginning before the floods. The concern is that the caseload will rise when the affected areas start to dry out.

Malnutrition

On 16 April, WHO called attention to the increased risk of acute malnutrition of flood-affected people, especially infants, children, pregnant and lactating women, and the elderly. WHO added that currently one-third of children are stunted, and half of children under five are anaemic.

Education

Around 78 schools in the Solomon Islands remain closed due to the recent floods, including ten that are being used as evacuation centres.

Updated: 22/04/2014

SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA DROUGHT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

17 April: According to WFP, an estimated 325,000 people have been affected by flooding in the country’s Amazon valleys, lowlands, and plains since the beginning of the rainy season last October.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 325,000 people have been affected by heavy rainfall and flooding across most of Bolivia. On 10 February, a State of Emergency was declared in the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosí, and Pando. Dengue and malaria outbreaks are of growing concern as the rains continue (Government, WFP and OCHA).

- Bolivia is prone to natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, and droughts. The impact of the 2013 drought and severe frost are still being felt in many areas, having affected over 340,000 people and damaged around 87,000 hectares of crops.
Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

A series of natural disasters have affected Bolivia since the beginning of the rainy season in October and have had a severe impact on livelihoods and food security.

Heavy Rainfall and Floods

According to WFP, as of 17 April an estimated 325,000 people have been affected by flooding in the country’s Amazon valleys, lowlands, and plains since the beginning of the rainy season last October. Over 145 municipalities have been affected across all nine departments of Bolivia. At least 64 people have died. Bolivian authorities reported that floods have caused the collapse of around 1,600 homes, the destruction of 63,000 hectares of arable land, and the death of 110,000 livestock. Officials estimate that agriculture is the primary income-generating activity of 40% of affected families.

Local media reported that river overflows in Pando and Beni departments are affecting the neighbouring Brazilian states of Acre and Rondonia. An emergency has been declared in the entire Amazon zone, shared by both countries.

As of 20 March, the populations most affected by flooding were in Cochabamba (88,300 people), Beni (75,430), Chuquisaca (55,540), La Paz (39,200), Santa Cruz (28,900), Potosi (16,250), and to a lesser extent Pando, Tarija and Oruro.

Water levels continue to rise in the northern municipality of Guayaramerin, Beni department, along the Mamore River, which forms part of the border with Brazil. More than 14,600 people have been affected so far in the area, local media reported on 7 April. A camp with 400 tents has been set up in Guayaramerin.

Bolivian President Evo Morales said an in-depth investigation is needed to assess whether the Brazilian hydropower plants have played a role in the floods. Environmental organisations are discussing the possibility of filing an international legal complaint against the Jirau and Santo Antônio hydroelectric dams built by Brazil, which they blame for the disaster.

Heavy rains during January and the first half of February 2014 caused rivers to overflow, resulting in flooding in low-lying areas of Beni department and its southern borders with the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, where landslides occurred. According to ECHO on 13 March, the flood situation remained critical, with heavy rainfall continuing in the most affected department of Beni. The UN resident coordinator reported in mid-March that the municipalities of San Joaquin, San Ramon and Puerto Siles in Beni are in a critical situation.

The Government declared a state of emergency on 28 January, but said that internal resources were sufficient. However, the situation worsened, and on 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosi, and Pando were placed on red alert. According to reports from previous years, the most affected regions during the rainy season are typically north of La Paz and in the south Andean plateau of Lake Titicaca.

Frost

On 3 December, local authorities reported that an estimated 21,720 people (4,345 families) from four regions of Cochabamba in central Bolivia were affected by two months of frost and hailstorms. The adverse weather damaged crops in eight municipalities of Cochabamba, affecting 664 hectares. Sacabamba in the high valley was among the worst hit, with 2,500 people (500 families) having lost food stocks. Local authorities declared a state of emergency.

Drought

Following the drought in the first quarter of 2013, the Government declared a national emergency in June. The affected population are mainly indigenous subsistence farmers. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people were affected, according to Government sources, mostly in Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija, and Santa Cruz departments.

Food Security

According to FAO on 27 February, a detailed assessment of the agriculture losses from heavy rain and flooding is still not available, but livestock is expected to be the most affected sector. Estimates indicate that close to 43,000 hectares of crops, including rice, maize, and cassava have been negatively impacted. At the time of the flooding, the 2014 main de verano season maize crop was in an advanced state and rice harvesting had just begun. Despite losses in the department of Beni, prospects for 2014’s de verano season are favourable, since the main cereal-producing departments, namely Santa Cruz, La Paz, and Cochabamba, were less severely affected and the abundant rains may have benefited the developing crops in some places.

In mid-December, FAO reported that the aggregate maize production (main and secondary seasons) for 2013 was estimated at 875,000 metric tons, 13% below 2012’s figure. This decline was attributed to lower harvest yields due to prolonged dry weather in the first quarter of 2013 and frosts in July and August. The impact was particularly felt in the departments of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz, Tarija, and Chuquisaca. The cold wave during July and August damaged potato crops and affected a large number of rural households.

Drought in the first quarter of 2013 continues to negatively impact crop production, especially severe in the regions of the Chaco and the South Cone of Cochabamba. As of 15 October 2013, an estimated 87,000 hectares of crops had sustained damage. Tarija department is worst hit, with 44,000 hectares of crops estimated to have been lost. Santa Cruz recorded the highest number of affected cattle, with approximately 29,400 dead.

In Cochabamba, 24,800 hectares in 600 communities reported damage during the first half of 2013. The most serious damage was caused by flooding (51%) and then by drought (33%).

Results of a multi-sectoral national assessment from August 2013 confirmed a
deterioration of the food and nutrition security situation in drought-affected households. Many families had significantly reduced the frequency and quantity of food consumed, and many workers had migrated from their communities in search of casual labour. Affected households are not expected to recover until the harvest in April/May 2014.

Health

Dengue

On 15 April, the Bolivian Health Ministry reported over 1,800 confirmed cases of dengue in the departments of Santa Cruz (where 60% of cases have been reported), Beni, and northern La Paz as a result of the rainy season. National authorities issued an alert for dengue and malaria in flood-affected regions at the beginning of 2014.

Updated: 25/04/2014
Introduction to the Global Emergency Overview Update

The Global Emergency Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global Emergency 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 Emergency 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? (Highlights Box and Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Emergency Overview consists of three main sections:

First, 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.

Second, 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.

Third, **narratives** for each country included in the Global Emergency Overview reflect major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country over the last months. Narratives are written based on secondary data. For each country, a specific **highlights box** is also added to put emphasis on the major developments that happened over the past 10 days.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones [click here](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.acaps.acaps).


To download the mobile application for iOS phones [click here](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/global-emergency-overview/id567382309?mt=8)


**Update**

The Global Emergency 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 on-going crisis which triggers a change of prioritisation, the Global Overview will be updated on an ad-hoc basis.

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