

HIGHLIGHTS

- Global Food Prices are 11 points higher in 2013 as compared to 2012.
- 48 per cent of the households in Guinea Bissau are facing a major food deficit, with enough cereal stocks to last for only one month.
- Regional cholera rates declined in 2013 as compared to last year.
- 1,200 refugees voted in the Malian elections.
- Malnutrition admission trends worrying in Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Cameroon.
- 22,730 children are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition, including 5,461 children with acute severe cases in the Gao region (northern Mali).
- Flood Watch: Floods in Guinea, impact over 4,000 people.



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Food Security Update

Prices Rise and Food Insecurity Threatens Guinea-Bissau

The food security situation in the region remains precarious due to a global overall increase in food prices. A July 2013 FAO/WFP report stated that the international food price index had increased to an average of 211.3 points in June, down nearly two points (one per cent) from May 2013-- but still 11 points above June last year. Countries with notable food price increases are Niger, where the price of millet increased by upwards of 15 per cent; and Burkina Faso, where the cost of coarse grains rose by 8 per cent for millet, 19 per cent for local sorghum and 11 per cent for maize.

Higher prices could have a compounded effect on access to food due to delays in the rainy season and the prevalence of displaced persons in the region.

The Food Security and Nutrition Regional Sector Group reported delays in rainfall, particularly in northern Nigeria, northern Mali, western Senegal, central and northern Ghana and north-western Niger. Whilst the group noted that it is still too early to predict what impact the erratic rainfall will have on crop yields, it insists that close monitoring of affected areas and flooding of farmlands should be prioritized.

The July FAO/WFP report highlights the strain that Malian refugees are having on host families and communities, and the particular vulnerability of displaced persons to food insecurity. The report highlights that in Burkina Faso, fifteen per cent of Malian refugees are reported to have 'poor or borderline' food consumption as compared to the general population. In Chad, the food security situation is 'dire', particularly in the refugee camps where over 71 per cent of refugees are reportedly food insecure. Higher food prices only further the strain on host families and communities and render adequate food supplies farther out of reach for displaced persons.

These price increases affect the purchasing power of households, who are increasingly turning to negative coping mechanisms (e.g. selling livestock and removing children from school) to meet their daily food needs. In Guinea Bissau, a potentially critical food insecurity situation is developing owed to recent price

KEY FIGURES FOR THE SAHEL -

Food insecure people **11.3 Million**

Nb. of children <5 estimated SAM Burden **1.5 Million**

Nb. of children <5 and pregnant women estimated MAM **3.4 Million**

* As per Mid-Year Review 2013 figures

FUNDING OF THE SAHEL STRATEGY-

2013:
US\$1.71 billion requested
US\$ 695 million received

shocks made to one of the country's main cash crop, cashews. Deterioration in the terms of trade for cashew nuts is threatening the population— 20 per cent of whom is already food insecure. Whereas one kilo of cashew could purchase an equivalent kilo of rice in 2011, presently, it takes three kilos of cashews to buy one kilo of rice; this drop represents a nearly 70 per cent reduction in purchase power for cultivators of the country's cash crop. Recent reports indicate that 48 per cent of the households in Guinea Bissau are facing a major food deficit, with enough cereal stocks to last for only one month. Negative coping strategies are already occurring such as skipping meals, reducing the quantities consumed by adults, mother, and/or children, borrowing food, taking out loans from friends or relatives, destocking breeding livestock, selling off crops, and migrating outside of communities for work.

With the start of the main planting season, vulnerable households across the Sahel continue to be heavily indebted and unable to afford the agricultural inputs required to plant. In 2012, 5.2 million people benefitted from agricultural assistance. This year, the agricultural sector has received only 12 per cent of its funding requirements. As a result, only 108,000 out of the 5.9 million people in need have received support. With millions of people having missed the main planting season, FAO is now focusing on mobilizing support for recession crop (July– September) and livestock activities.

Nigeria: Continuing Instability and Displacement

Insurgency and Insecurity Continue in Northeast Nigeria with over 400 killed and 5,000 displaced in 2013

Four months following the state of emergency (SOE) declaration in the three northern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, the government continues its military campaign against Boko Haram. Since the declaration of the SOE, the insurgent group has allegedly committed over 46 violent attacks killing an estimated 466 people. An estimated 5,432 people have been displaced away from and within the SOE states and over 6,200 to neighbouring countries. In addition to the impact on civilians, the on-going instability in the north has had an adverse impact on the trade of goods, notably foodstuffs.

An inter-agency assessment was carried out from 18-23 July, in the three SOE states and in four neighbouring states, *viz.* Bauchi, Taraba, Gombe and Jigawa. Participating agencies were the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the National Orientation Agency (NOA), the UN, NGOs and the Nigerian Red Cross. The mission highlighted four key observations, namely that: (1) IDPs reside mostly with host families and not in camps, adding a serious strain on the already over-stretched resources of host families and communities; (2) IDPs fled the SOE States primarily due to increasing insecurity, limited access to social services, and the rising cost of commodities; (3) IDPs were able to move freely with few reports of abuse or harassment and no reported cases of separation of children or abuse; and (4) some state authorities, such as Bauchi, Adamawa and Gombe, have provided relief materials to IDPs, however, such assistance nevertheless remains inadequate due to the scale of the impact on populations and communities.

It remains a challenge to estimate the total number of IDPs as no monitoring mechanism is in place at either the state or federal levels.

Humanitarian priority needs identified in the joint assessment include: (1) support to affected communities, including returnees, with agricultural and livelihood support before the next planting season; (2) prioritization of psycho-social assistance at the community level; (3) provision of temporary shelter or shelter rehabilitation materials for the estimated 2,000 returnees reported from Cameroon, *inter alia*; and (4) mainstreaming of peace-building and reconciliation mechanisms into early recovery programming to encourage dialogue between communities and reintegrated insurgents.

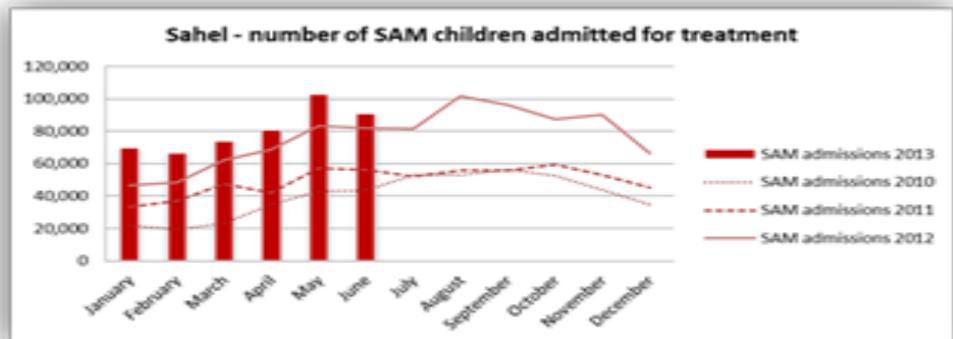
State and national authorities have reportedly begun food and NFI distribution in six of the seven states covered in the assessment; no assistance has yet been reported in Gombe state, where national authorities are reportedly having difficulty in IDP identification.

Humanitarian access is being granted to all three SOE states. ICRC, ACF, UNICEF, WHO, MSF-Belgium, and Save the Children continue to operate in the area. However, lack of security assurances and limited communication (e.g. GSM networks are off in two SOE states) have hampered humanitarian actors on the ground.

Malnutrition: Admission Trends for Acute Malnutrition Remain High

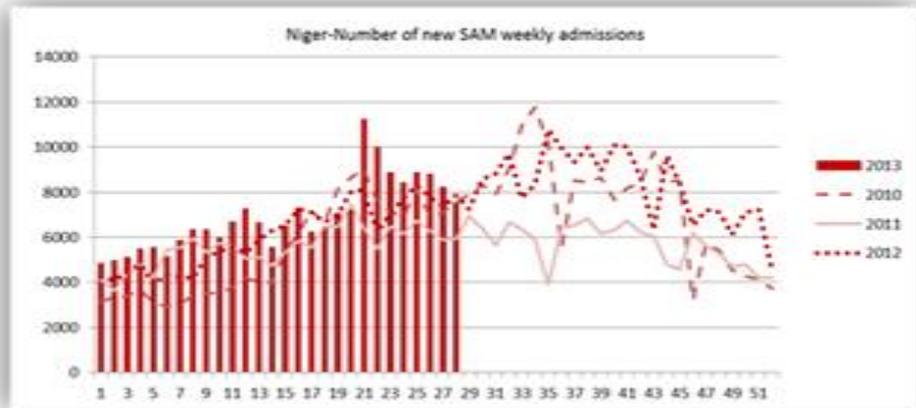
Malnutrition Hotspots in Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Cameroon

As of June 2013, 501,855 severe acute malnourished children < 5 received adequate treatment across Sahel countries representing 43 per cent of annual target caseload of 1,171,500 SAM children.



As of June 2013, trend analysis and price monitoring for 2013 suggest that the nutrition situation remains precarious for the most vulnerable and crisis-affected populations across the Sahel.

During the last quarter, admissions trends are of particular concern in Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Cameroon. Some of these countries reported a very high prevalence of acute malnutrition, surpassing the critical threshold of 15 percent in a majority of regions, and have entered the lean season with unusually high food prices



A SMART nutrition survey was recently conducted in Gao highlighting a ‘serious’ nutritional situation. In the next six months, 22,730 children are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition, including 5,461 children with acute severe cases in this region. With UNICEF’s financial support and in coordination with the Nutrition Cluster in Mali, the SMART survey started on 20 July, aiming to assess the nutritional status of children 0-59 months and estimate the crude mortality rate and mortality rate among children under 5 in all southern regions of Mali (viz. Bamako, Kayes, Koulikoro, Mopti, Ségou and Sikasso)

UNICEF, WFP and partners are continuing to implement a dual-pronged approach with both prevention and treatment activities across the Sahel. These interventions aim to limit the incidence of malnutrition especially during the lean season when rates are at their peak, coping mechanisms are overstretched and services are overrun. In parallel, UNICEF, WFP and partners are continuing to provide SAM and MAM treatment for children and malnourished pregnant women, and nursing mothers as an important nutritional safety net, throughout the year in all Sahel countries.

Mali: Elections and Spontaneous Returns

1,200 Refugees Vote in Malian Elections

On 28 July 2013, national elections were held in Mali for the first time since the March 2012 *coup d’etat* which followed a violent rebel takeover of the northern part of the country. An estimated 49.8 per cent of the voting population turned out to vote in the first round-- 10 per cent higher than any other presidential election in Mali’s history.

In May 2013, Out of Country Voting (OCV) was legalized in Mali with



A Malian refugee in Burkina Faso checks his name on the electoral lists posted in Goudebou refugee camp (UNHCR / H. Caux)

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UNHCR led the effort to facilitate access to vote for Malian refugees, providing both direct support to refugees in accessing voter registration and the polls, to supporting national authorities towards mainstreaming refugees in the electorate. Direct assistance to the refugee population was provided in the form of sensitization of rights and access, transport, and facilitating voter registration by providing translators. UNHCR duly provided institutional support to the government, facilitating transport via unmarked vehicles and logistical access to refugee facilities.

voting requirements for refugees made equivalent to in-country citizens. Voting requirements were three-fold: (1) registration with the National Civil Registration Data (RAVEC), (2) possession of a 'NINA' voter registration card, and (3) and being 18 years of age. Of the estimated 175,282 Malian refugees living across the borders only 10,299 fulfilled all three criteria.

UNHCR led the effort to facilitate access to vote for Malian refugees. 1,220 refugees placed a vote out of the 175,282 Malian refugees living in Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, Togo, and Guinea. The breakdown of voting was as follows: 323 refugees voted in Niger; 811 in Mauritania, and 85 in Burkina Faso.

The organisation reports that 19,020 refugees were successfully registered for the elections and, of those registered; only 10,299 were able to have their identities verified in the RAVEC. The report notes that improved access to NINA cards and improved verification techniques could have increased the participation of refugees.

Little information is available about IDP participation in the elections.

At the time of this writing, ex-Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar won the run-off elections to become the President of Mali; his rival ex-Finance Minister, Soumaila Cisse, reportedly received less than 15 per cent of the run-off vote. On 7 August, Mali's constitutional court dismissed any allegations of fraud or electoral irregularities.

More than 8,000 Malian Refugees and 130,000 IDPs Return Home



A woman sits by the roadside as fighting subsides in Diabaly, January 2013 © Katarina Hojje/IRIN

UNHCR has reported that between 25 June-12 July, an estimated 8,148 refugee-returnees have been registered in Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu regions in northern Mali. The return phenomenon is not unique to refugees-- the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has similarly reported that of the 334,550 IDPs registered to date, an estimated 137,422 people have travelled to the north between January and May

2013. Reasons cited for return for refugees and IDPs have been attributed to the return to relative stability in the north following recent attempts to restore order; the desire to participate in the country's elections; and the desire to survey what was left of homes and possessions, as reported by IOM and the Danish Refugee Council.

UN agencies and their partners are closely working to setup a coherent returns plan which will define minimum assistance packages for returnees and the rehabilitation of social infrastructures such as health centres and schools, *inter alia*.

On 26 July, an inter-agency joint assessment mission travelled to Douekire (northern Mali, near Timbuktu) to follow-up on reports of spontaneous returns to the north from refugees living in Mauritania, Niger and Burkina Faso. The joint assessment was conducted by OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, Merlin, and IEDA Relief. The mission confirmed the existence of at least 226 refugees that had reportedly returned to the Douekire, specifically, to Inalkary, Dongwe-Haussa, Adjowal, and Takumbaout, respectively. The mission also determined that some refugees based at Mberra camp in Mauritania returned to Goundam Circle in Mali.

A SMART survey was also conducted in Gao, Mali, concluding that the nutritional situation in Gao is 'serious' with a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 13.5 per cent, just shy of the emergency threshold at 15 per cent. In addition to looming malnutrition, other issues facing returnee populations are lack of livelihoods, loss of homes, agriculture, and schools, and inter-communal tensions. WFP and its partners are implementing a blanket feeding program which will target 35 thousand children under 5 years from August to December 2013.

To date, the CAP-Mali has received 34 per cent of its funding requirement. The Nutrition and WASH clusters are struggling to meet their funding needs, with only 29 per cent and 16 per cent raised for their respective activities.

Guinea Forestiere: Damage and Displacement

65 Dead, 300 Injured, and 3,500 Displaced from Inter-communal violence

An estimated 65 people have been killed, 331 injured, and 3,538 displaced following violent clashes occurring in south-eastern Guinea. On 15 July, a violent altercation between a member of the Guerze ethnic group (a predominantly Christian group) and a Konianke (predominantly Muslim ethnic group) in Koule (a town in the *Guinea Forestiere* region) erupted into a two-week period of inter-communal violence in Guinea's second largest town, N'zerekore, and the surrounding townships of Clinique de Zao, Beyla and Lola.

A joint UNHCR/LRRC team conducted needs assessment along the Liberia-Guinea border from 18-21 July 2013. Damages tallied by the team included: 160 homes burned in 15 neighbourhoods and 30-40 damaged buildings, including religious buildings. UNHCR registered 3,538 displaced people with another 213 displaced across the border into neighbouring Liberia.

Needs identified by the assessment team included access to medicine, surgical materials, food for the displaced and the hospitalized, and protection and strengthened security measures. To date, humanitarian partners and the Government of Guinea have responded in kind. NFIs assistance-- in the form of hygiene kits, feminine kits, sleeping kits, and WASH-- has been provided to 2,797 people by UNFPA and UNICEF. WFP has provided food to 542 displaced and hospitalized people; and medical assistance, in the form of supplies and support to the regional hospital in N'zerekore, is being provided by WHO, UNHCR, ICRC, and MSF. Private company Rio Tinto is also working with partners to provide assistance to victims in Beyla. The government has been providing security to the area and has reportedly arrested 131 alleged assailants.

On 20 July a non-aggression pact was signed by the conflicting communities in Koule. At the time of this writing, no new reports have been made of continued violence. The *Guinea Forestiere* region is no stranger to instability and inter-communal violence. In February 2010, deadly clashes were reported in N'zerekore, again occurring between the Guerze and the Konianke groups.

Cholera Update: Downward Trend in the Region

Hotspot: Guinea-Bissau

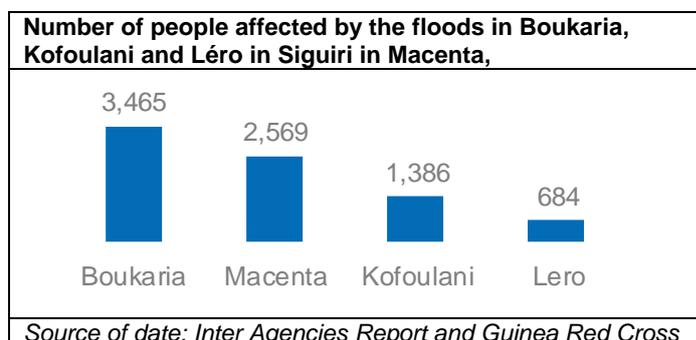
UNICEF reports an overall downward trend in the reported cases of cholera in West and Central Africa since the beginning of the year and also as compared to 2012. This time last year, the agency reported a cholera caseload exceeding 37,000 reported cases. Presently, there are below 22,000 reported cases in the Congo, Niger, and Mano River basins. The decrease in cholera cases is largely attributed to the close monitoring of the epidemic by governments and humanitarian actors and the reinforcement of cholera preparedness and response activities from the onset of last year's outbreak.

Despite such regional prevention and treatment initiatives, not all countries are reporting lower figures: Guinea-Bissau is currently experiencing an increase in the number of reported cholera cases as compared to this time last year-- with 742 new cases and 22 confirmed deaths reported this year.

The epidemic originated in Guinea, with the disease spilling over into Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana and Mali, *inter alia*. Heavy rains have been recently reported along the coasts of Guinea and Guinea-Bissau which is likely to impact the spread of the disease.

Storm Watch

Rainy Season Begins in West Africa



Despite delays, the rainy season has begun in countries in West Africa. Flood risk monitoring reports have highlighted localized floods in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Chad, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Mali in the past 30 days. Whilst most high rainfall has been occurring in rural areas, some high rainfall has been threatening densely-populated urban areas, most notably in the capitals of

Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, Conakry and Bissau, respectively. Siguiri, Guinea has also experienced heavy flooding that has affected over 4,000 people, damaging homes, schools, and agricultural inputs in its wake



Rain has been disparate in countries throughout the region: coastal countries around the Gulf of Guinea have, so far, experienced below average rainfall and parts of Senegal, Burkina Faso and Mauritania are experiencing a rain deficit which could jeopardize agricultural yields.

Countries identified as high risk in the coming months are Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau-- due to the on-going cholera outbreak present in these countries-- and parts of Nigeria due to the recent and high rainfall along the border of Cameroon compounded by high instability in the northeast.

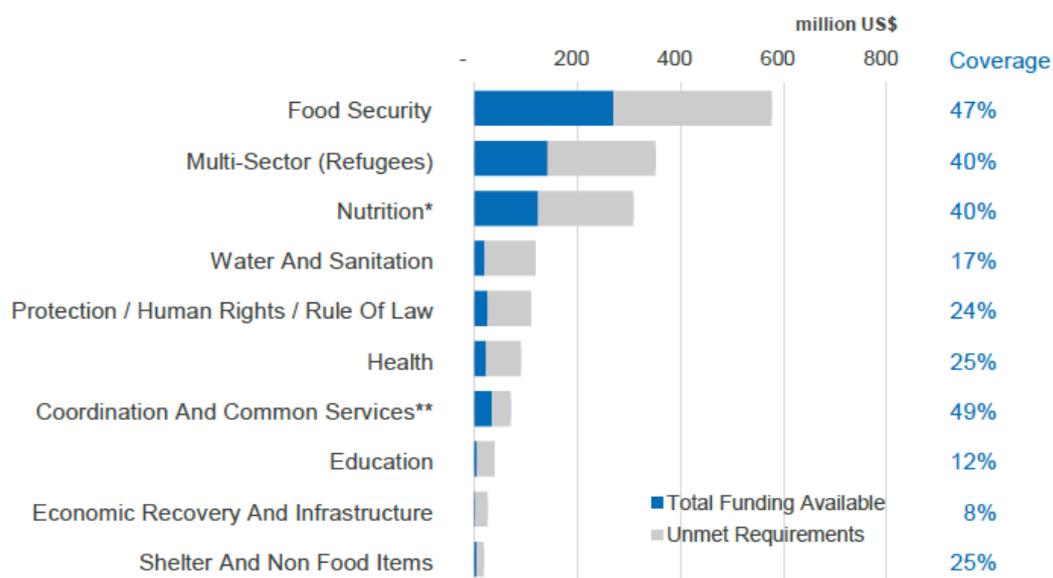
Humanitarian partners have been working with national authorities to best prepare for flood-related disasters. Such support has included simulations exercises with national authorities in Benin's high flood risk areas; the pre-positioning of medical goods by WHO in Ivory Coast; training on coordinated joint assessments in Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Cameroon; and holding joint sensitization sessions with state governments and communities in Nigeria, including visiting flood prone areas with NEMA senior management.

Funding Status Overview

Funding in Sahel Rises to 41 per cent

As of 16 August, the Sahel has received 41 per cent of the US\$1.71 billion requested; this represents nearly a two per cent increase (US\$92 million) as compared to the June 2013 overview. Water and sanitation and education remain underfunded with less than 20 per cent of funding coverage, respectively. More funding is needed to address the pressing needs of the Sahel and to build resilience.

Table: Funding for the Sahel, by sectors, as of 16 August 2013*



* Funding situation is subject to change.