Another ‘last chance’ for South Sudan

Violence is spreading

Another round of IGAD-mediated peace talks which should have resumed in Addis Ababa on 15 June is planned while other peace initiatives are springing up: South Africa and Kenya have both put forward peace plans and the African Union (AU) has appointed former Malian President, Alpha Oumar Konare, as its High Representative for South Sudan. IGAD’s biggest challenge is managing the influence exerted by South Sudan’s neighbours in the peace process. “Rivalry for influence, both in the conflict and potentially afterwards, is making it very difficult for IGAD to come up with an acceptable agreement,” said E.J. Hogendoorn of the International Crisis Group (ICG) was quoted as telling VOA. In the absence of a viable peace agreement or respect for the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of 23 January 2014, conflict has steadily increased in many parts of Greater Upper Nile, and most recently spread into Western Equatoria and Jonglei States.

Changed humanitarian context and needs

The consequences and implications of multiple political, economic and social crises is changing the context and increasing needs in South Sudan. The South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2015 Midyear Update, published on 13 June, noted that the economic downturn has generated inflation and shortages of critical goods and services, further compounding the consequences of conflict. A deepening economic crisis is anticipated in the near term despite Government implementing requisite policies.

Between mid-December 2013 and end-May 2015, more than 2 million people had fled their homes as a result of violence, including 1.55 million people internally and 552,000 refugees in neighbouring states. Fighting in recent weeks has affected a further 750,000 people, many of whom are already IDPs having been displaced repeatedly by earlier violence. Their vulnerability is high, and, as the rainy season comes, people on the move will be particularly vulnerable to seasonal flooding.

Over US$275 million was pledged during a high-level conference in Geneva organised by the European Union and UNOCHA on 16 June. Donors reconfirmed their support to the
UNHCR reports a 40 per cent increase in number of South Sudanese refugees who have fled the country over the last two months.

victims of the deepening humanitarian crisis in South Sudan and the region, and called upon those fighting to stop.

The South Sudan Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) technical working group projected 4.6 million people are already facing “Crisis” and “Emergency” levels of food insecurity (IPC Levels 3 and 4) as of May 2015. The combination of global acute malnutrition in excess of the emergency threshold in five of the country’s ten States; significantly elevated rates of mortality in children aged five years and younger; and over one million people in IPC Emergency Level 4 is pushing the situation towards famine level, warns the updated South Sudan response plan. It is estimated that only 150,000 children under five or 60 per cent of the total severe acute malnourished (SAM) caseload nationwide will be assisted. Following a rigorous prioritisation exercise, the current appeal now stands at $1.63 billion, and is 39 per cent funded.

Impact of the South Sudan conflict on region

Trends in South Sudanese refugee influx over the last two months

In Sudan: As a result of intense conflict in Upper Nile and Unity States in South Sudan, UNHCR reports over 13,000 new refugees have arrived in Upper Nile and South Kordofan States in the last two weeks; 7,000 of them in the first four days of June. Given the worsening security and humanitarian situation on the South Sudanese side of the border, UNHCR and its partners are preparing for the refugee influx to grow still further. The upcoming rainy season requires prepositioning of relief items as many of the areas where refugees are located can become inaccessible. Water and sanitation conditions at many of these sites need to be urgently improved.
In Ethiopia: UNHCR reports more than 6,100 South Sudanese refugees were registered in Gambella region in May 2015, while in April the number was 4,800 people. In addition, an estimated 7,000 South Sudanese are at the Pagak and Akobo entry points waiting to be registered. UNHCR, the government counterpart and other partners are developing a new site next to the existing Pugnido refugee camp to accommodate new arrivals and as a contingency measure for future arrivals. More than 47,000 South Sudanese refugees, who had settled in areas that flooded during last year’s severe rainy season, have now been relocated to a new refugee camp in Jeei near Gambella. The former refugee sites of Leitchuor and Nip Nip are being rehabilitated and will be handed over to the host communities.

In Kenya: WFP has announced it is temporarily cutting rations to a half-million refugees in Dadaab and Kakuma camps due to dwindling supplies and funds. The 30 per cent food ration cut, from mid-June to September 2015, will mainly affect general food distribution and nutrition programmes. WFP and partners have continued to experience difficulties to mobilise sufficient resources for the refugee operation.

In Uganda: UNHCR reports some 4,000 refugees have arrived over the last month. Many new arrivals said they fled fighting in and around the town of Malakal, in Upper Nile State, but also cited growing food insecurity and rising prices for basic commodities as the main reasons for fleeing their homes. The new arrivals are being transferred from Nyumanzi transit centre to the newly extended Maaji settlement as well as to other existing settlements. Refugees cite the upsurge in fighting, but also growing food insecurity as the main reasons for fleeing their homes.

**Burundians flee insecurity and cholera**

**New dates for elections announced**

In a decree issued on 9 June, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced new election dates as follows: Communal Councils (conseils communaux) and Members of Parliament (députés) on 29 June; Presidential on 15 July; and Senatorial on 24 July. The move follows calls from the international community to postpone polls to ensure that conditions were conducive to free and fair elections. Civil unrest erupted on 26 April in Bujumbura after the ruling CNDD-FDD party elected President Nkurunziza on 25 April as its candidate for the presidential election originally scheduled for 26 June. Nkurunziza has been in office for two terms since 2005, and a broad array of actors has warned that an attempt to seek a third term would be unconstitutional and contrary to the spirit of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi that ended a decade of civil war in the country. Despite an appeal by the Senate, Burundi’s Constitutional Court determined that President Nkurunziza was eligible for re-election — although the Court’s deputy president fled to Rwanda prior to this decision. A coup d’état was subsequently launched on 13 May in Bujumbura while President Nkurunziza was at an East African Community Summit in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, intended to try to resolve the current crisis in Burundi. The coup was rapidly thwarted, and President Nkurunziza returned to the country.

**Emerging humanitarian concerns and response**

Preliminary results were released of joint assessment missions conducted from 28-30 May in the north (Kayanza and Kirundo Provinces); the south (Bururi, Makamba and Rutana Provinces); and the west (Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural) of Burundi. Conducted under the auspices of the Plate forme nationale pour la Réduction des Risques et des Catastrophes au Burundi, the missions sought to determine if humanitarian needs had emerged in the wake of the current political crisis. Overall, while no major, large-scale humanitarian crisis linked directly to the political impasse was identified, numerous humanitarian concerns were found to be emerging. Exacerbating the situation, chronic, unmet humanitarian needs and an already precarious pre-crisis...
baseline of basic humanitarian indicators meant that highly vulnerable populations could easily find themselves in crisis with a minimum of additional stress. Priority geographic areas for intervention were found to be Kirundo Province (food insecurity), Makamba Province (Nyanza Lac Commune, in particular, due to a cholera outbreak) and the City of Bujumbura (health support and protection concerns).

The Burundi Red Cross on 3 June announced that in light of the current situation, it had activated its Plan de Contingence Elections 2015, effective in all regions of the country, and not just the eight hot-spot provinces that had earlier been identified.

The European Commission announced on 8 June that it was releasing €3 million to meet the needs for assistance and protection of the increasing number of Burundian refugees in neighboring Tanzania. A mission to the region led by ECHO’s Director of Operations Jean-Louis De Brouwer is taking place from 9-12 June to assess the humanitarian situation and the European Commission’s ongoing response. The news followed an announcement on 1 June by the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) that it was releasing US$15 million to support life-saving relief work for thousands of Burundian refugees in Rwanda and Tanzania with the hope of kick-starting funding of the $207 million Regional Refugee Response Plan for up to 200,000 Burundian refugees until September 2015. Nearly 100,000 Burundians have sought asylum in neighboring countries since the beginning of April 2015.

Meanwhile, partners continue to work on initiatives to improve communication with affected communities inside Burundi. Translators without Borders and OCHA Eastern Africa have launched a one-month translation service to translate key health and protection messages, e.g. on cholera awareness and prevention, into Kirundi for community outreach.

**Burundians pour into refugee camps**

According to the latest figures from UNHCR, more than 96,000 Burundians (51,603 in Tanzania, 29,117 in Rwanda, 10,000 in DRC and 6,000 in Uganda) have fled their country as of 5 June 2015.

In Uganda: Media reports the cholera outbreak and worsening sanitation conditions in Kagunga Island and Kigoma refugee sites in Tanzania have forced thousands of Burundians, who had initially fled there, to cross into Uganda. The number of new arrivals has increased from 250 to 300 per day and UNHCR expects the number of Burundian refugees to reach 15,000. Most of the new arrivals are being housed in Nakivale refugee settlement and Nyakabande transit camp. The Office of the Prime Minister and UN partners are struggling to cope with the rate of arrivals and face challenges to rapidly scale up the provision of basic services.

In Rwanda: The Government has allocated additional space for 50,000 refugees who continue to arrive at an average rate of 200 per day. The key challenge for UNHCR and partners is the provision of adequate water and the high number of unaccompanied and separated children and their protection. On public health messaging within the community, the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the Rwanda Red Cross Society are implementing a mobile cinema project showing cholera and malaria prevention messages (among others) and getting feedback.
In Tanzania: Nyarugusu camp, the main camp receiving new arrivals from Burundi, has reached capacity with well over its 40,000-person limit. UNHCR is in negotiations with the Government for a new site.

In DRC: The Government has accepted to grant temporary status to newly-arrived Burundian refugees after high-level discussions with UNHCR. National security considerations, notably the presence of the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) in areas hosting new arrivals, constitute a serious concern for the DRC Government.

In Zambia: Unverified secondary movements of Burundian refugees through Tanzania have been reported.

Yemen crisis response: evacuation and cross-border movements

Impact in Djibouti
As of 12 June 2015, (since 27 March), UNHCR and ONARS, the Government of Djibouti agency responsible for refugees, report 2,005 refugees have been registered since the outbreak of violence in Yemen. According to IOM, this brings the total number of arrivals in Djibouti to 18,807 people. Of these, 9,024 people are Yemeni nationals, 8,046 are Third-Country Nationals and 1,737 people are Djiboutian returnees. Most Yemenis arriving in Djibouti prefer to stay with Djiboutian relatives but may become of humanitarian concern if their access to food and other basic services dwindle. UNHCR and authorities are accommodating new arrivals in Markazi camp in Obock region, but harsh living conditions in Obock (40 degrees and 50 km/h winds in July and August) may force some refugees to leave. Holl Holl camp is being considered as an alternative location for Obock refugees and new caseloads.

The conflict has also triggered the return of many vulnerable Ethiopian undocumented migrants in Yemen who were transiting through the country in order to reach the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Obock region is still an issue of concern with malnutrition rates above the accepted WHO Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 15 per cent.

Impact in Somalia
By 9 June, UNHCR reports 14,457 people (13,299 Somalis, 1,060 Yemenis, 73 Ethiopians, and 25 mixed nationalities) had arrived by boat in the ports of Berbera, Somaliland and Bossaso, Puntland. Of these, 8,112 individuals have been registered at the reception centres in the same location. UNHCR has to date supported 1,154 individuals with onward transportation assistance. Cumulatively, the Puntland New Arrivals Task Force and the business community have assisted approximately 1,749 individuals to return to their areas of origin, primarily located in areas in south-central Somalia regions.

Impact in Ethiopia and Sudan
By 11 June, IOM Yemen had facilitated the return of a number of Third Country Nationals (TCNs) onboard 11 flights from the capital Sana’a in Yemen to Khartoum, Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

Government and humanitarian partners’ response
The Djibouti response plan for Yemen crisis, released on 4 June, seeks US$26 million to meet the needs of an estimated 23,650 refugees from Yemen between April–September 2015. The Government and partners are finding it a challenge to ensure the delivery of basic services to refugees and the host community. UNHCR reports the prevalence of
global acute malnutrition (GAM) among Yemen refugee children continues to largely surpass WHO emergency threshold of 15 per cent.

The Somalia response plan for Yemen crisis seeks US$64 million to meet the needs of a total estimated 43,000 refugees from Yemen between April-September 2015. The inter-agency response will require sustained support from various donors to address critical humanitarian needs both at respective points of entry and in areas of return. The main challenges for assistance are a lack of basic services, limited natural resources in the areas of return and protection needs.

Basic service providers leave north-eastern Kenya

There have been media reports of increasing Al-Shabaab activities, including the targeting of non-local and non-Muslim persons, over the past few months in areas close to the Somali border in north-eastern Kenya. On 25 May, Kenya police were attacked during a suspected Al-Shabaab militant ambush in Garissa County, and one officer killed and five injured after additional security forces were deployed to the county. The incident followed a number of reports on the presence of suspected Al-Shabaab operatives in the area and the 2 April attack by Al-Shabaab on Garissa University College that left 148 people dead.

Due to the insecurity, MSF has evacuated 42 staff from Dadaab refugee camp as a temporary preventative measure and closed two out of four health posts suspending antenatal care. MSF said in a press statement they will only return if the safety of their staff is assured.

Kenya’s position on proposed closure of Dadaab

Kenya appears to have softened its stance on the imminent closure of Dadaab camp which hosts more than a third of a million Somali refugees. Weeks after the Garissa University College massacre, the Deputy President announced the Government would close the camp within three months. The Chair of the Kenya Refugee Affairs Commission, Ali Bunow Korane, acknowledged that Kenya’s policy is to encourage refugees to go back to Somalia, but recognizes that the environment in Somalia is not yet "conducive for mass return". He added Kenya is working with UNHCR and partners to mobilise international support to improve security in Dadaab Camp and build up social infrastructure such as houses, schools and hospitals in nine identified pilot areas in Somalia, in order to make potential areas of return more viable.

Regional food security outlook

Food security still a concern

According to the 40th Greater Horn of Africa climate outlook (GHACOF40), drier than normal conditions are likely to be detrimental to agricultural activities in Ethiopia, and to the regeneration of pasture and water sources in pastoral areas in the region. The late onset of March-May rains is likely to alleviate the situation, and average crop production is expected for August harvests in some areas according to the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) May 2015 update. However, the food security situation remains a concern, with an estimated 12 million people in eight countries facing acute food insecurity and in need of assistance.
Favourable March-May rains have been received in several areas across the region, and will be beneficial to agricultural production in south-central Somalia, Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya, Burundi, and Rwanda. However, Beïg production in Ethiopia and vegetable production in Djibouti could be affected by below-average rains. The rains will further support rangeland regeneration and livestock condition in pastoral areas of south-central Somalia; Karamoja, north-eastern Uganda; and Kenya. The situation will however remain precarious in pastoral areas of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and northern Somalia.

Crisis and Emergency food insecurity remains a concern mostly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); Central African Republic (CAR); conflict-affected States of South Sudan; parts of north-eastern Kenya; north-east Ethiopia; some districts in Karamoja, Uganda; Darfur, Sudan; and IDP sites in Somalia. Conflicts/political tension in South Sudan, Burundi, CAR and eastern DRC; and rebel insurgency in southern Somalia may pose challenges to food security improvement.

In brief

**Cholera outbreaks contained in the region**

**In Kenya:** A cholera outbreak that started in late December 2014 has resulted in a total of 4,295 cases and 81 deaths. The case fatality rate (CFR) was 1.9 per cent as of 9 June. The Ministry of Health reports a total of 15 counties have so far been affected by the outbreak, with Homa Bay County experiencing a second wave of the outbreak. The fight to contain the cholera outbreak has seen enhanced collaborative effort among national and county authorities and partners. Stakeholders decided to use a Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) approach, launched by the Ministry of Health on 21 May, as the best multi-sector strategy to quickly end cholera. The RRI includes priority cholera prevention control, case management, social mobilization and procurement of essential medical supplies.

**In Tanzania:** UNHCR reports a total of 4,408 cases (among Burundian refugees and a few locals) have so far been reported but the number of daily new cases has fallen to around 100 from a peak of 915 on 18 May. “The reduction in the reported cases is largely due to the concerted approach to contain the spread of the outbreak through intensified measures to promote hygiene,” said UNHCR spokesman Adrian Edwards. Around 30,000 refugees have been moved to Nyagururu refugee camp from Kagunga village, one of the epicentres of the outbreak. At the Tanganyika stadium in Kigoma, another epicentre, efforts to improve the water and sanitation situations have also been showing positive results with fewer critical cases appearing. However, both Kagunga and Kigoma are currently facing a shortage of bed nets, and malaria is still a concern.

**In Burundi:** WHO and local health authorities report the cholera situation in Nyanza Lac Commune of Makamba Province, southern Burundi, remains stable. As of 11 June, there were 78 cumulative cases (including six deaths). Earlier reports of a cholera outbreak in neighboring Rutana Province proved to be inaccurate.
In South Sudan: WHO and health partners have begun oral cholera vaccinations campaigns in cholera-endemic South Sudan in a concerted effort to prevent potential outbreaks of the disease with the onset of the rainy season.

Current and projected humanitarian risks in the Horn of Africa

A roundtable discussion was held in Nairobi on 22 May to discuss current and projected humanitarian risks in the Horn of Africa region already under stress. In a worse-case confluence of multiple new risks, stability in the region is under threat. The discussion was attended by the ASG/Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Kyung-wha Kang, the USG/Emergency Relief Coordinator-designate, Stephen O'Brien, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators or their representatives from nine countries in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, Regional Directors from humanitarian organizations, the Office for the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, UNDP and the World Bank. In a joint communique, the participants called upon Member States, regional organizations and the international community to further support the humanitarian collective effort by redoubling efforts to end conflict and instability in eastern DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Burundi; ensuring adequate humanitarian funding to the region to meet the acute needs of people, including the safety and protection of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants; and investing in building resilience and national and regional capacities to address humanitarian needs. The communique voiced concern over measures being introduced in the fight against extremism that may negatively impact humanitarian operations, e.g. the closure of bank accounts of organisations that facilitate remittance flows to the region, particularly to Somalia. In a positive development, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on 18 June directed the Central Bank of Kenya to immediately issue comprehensive regulations that guide the operation of 13 Money Remittance Providers, upon which their suspension would be lifted.

Conflict “hotspots” in the region and number of displaced people