REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN OUTLOOK FOR THE GREAT LAKES & BEYOND

GREAT LAKES OVERVIEW MAP (September 2017)

10.7 million People displaced
6.6 million Internally displaced people
3.5 million* Refugees from Burundi, CAR, DRC and South Sudan
0.6 million Refugees and asylum seekers from other regions

*This includes 2.1 million refugees hosted in the Great Lakes countries shown on this map and 1.4 million hosted outside of the Great Lakes region.

Creation Date: 02 Oct 2017    Source: IOM/DTM, OCHA, UNHCR (as of 30 Sep 2017)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Introduction and Key Takeaways</th>
<th>01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part II: Drivers of Humanitarian Need</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict and political dynamics</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic shocks</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food prices</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climatic shocks and plant pests</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part III: Humanitarian Impact</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of civilians</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecurity and malnutrition</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicable diseases</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part IV: Constraints to Response</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian access</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian funding</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I. INTRODUCTION AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

This report provides an overview of the humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region*, focused on Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Sudan and the cross-border implications of the humanitarian situation in each of these countries, including in Angola, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The report covers: drivers of humanitarian need, including conflict and economic shocks; manifestations of humanitarian need, including displacement, protection concerns, food insecurity and malnutrition, and communicable diseases; and constraints to meeting humanitarian needs, including access impediments and inadequate funding.

The report's key takeaways are as follows:

• Conflict is likely to remain the dominant driver of protracted humanitarian crises in the CAR, DRC and South Sudan, with increasing regional implications. The proliferation of non-state armed actors across conflict-affected countries in the Great Lakes region has led to a geographical expansion of conflict areas within each of these countries and concern regarding the spread of conflict and armed actors across state borders.

• Some 10.7 million people were uprooted, by the end of September 2017 and this figure is expected to rise in the months ahead. This includes: 6.6 million IDPs across DRC, South Sudan, CAR and Burundi; 3.5 million refugees and asylum seekers from these countries seeking protection in the wider region, including 2.1 million hosted in the Great Lakes region; and a further 600,000 refugees and asylum seekers from other regions currently hosted in the Great Lakes. DRC hosts the largest population of IDPs in Africa (3.9 million), while also hosting nearly half a million refugees from other countries, and Uganda now hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa.

• Significant protection concerns are expected to continue to be reported across the region, including targeted attacks against civilians and gender-based violence in CAR, DRC and South Sudan. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator raised the alarm in August 2017 that renewed clashes in CAR may be early warning signs of genocide. Regarding Burundi, the UN Secretary-General has emphasized that while overt violence and armed confrontations have declined, serious human rights abuses continue to be reported.

• There is a deepening food insecurity crisis in the region, largely driven by conflict. Some 17.8 million people were severely food insecure (IPC Phases 3 and above) at the end of September 2017 across DRC (7.7 million people), South Sudan (6 million), Burundi (2.6 million), CAR (1.1 million) and Uganda (400,000). The nutrition situation is also a concern, with over 800,000 children estimated to be severely malnourished. Although several countries may see seasonal improvements in the months ahead, the overall trajectory is of increasing food insecurity.

• The region is battling simultaneous outbreaks of communicable diseases - including measles, cholera and a high malaria burden - which are expected to worsen during the respective rainy seasons. As at the end of September 2017, active transmission of measles was ongoing in DRC, Uganda and South Sudan, while there were cholera outbreaks in DRC, South Sudan and Tanzania, and cholera cases reported in Burundi. A malaria outbreak has been formally declared in Burundi, and malaria remains the leading cause of mortality in South Sudan. Some 12.9 million people are in need of WASH assistance.

• Direct attacks, widespread insecurity and bureaucratic impediments are hampering aid workers’ ability to reach those most in need. At least 25 aid workers were killed from January to August 2017 in the countries covered in this report, including six killed in a single incident in CAR in August 2017.

• Despite rising needs, humanitarian responses are underfunded, with over US$2.8 billion of unmet humanitarian requirements across the region at the end of September 2017 and response to new crises (particularly the Kasai crisis in the DRC and the regional response plans for refugees from DRC and Burundi) attracting inadequate funding to scale-up the response.

*The Great Lakes Region for the purpose of this document is defined as Burundi, CAR, DRC and South Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Unless otherwise specified numbers in this document refer to this geographical region.
II. DRIVERS OF HUMANITARIAN NEED

Conflict is expected to remain the dominant driver of protracted and recurrent humanitarian crises in the Great Lakes Region with increasingly regional implications. Lack of good governance, land issues and insecurity are also disrupting economic activity in the region, leading to economic slowdown, rising food prices and persistent and deep poverty. In some areas of the region, climate change has had an impact on the availability of natural resources, and climatic shocks, such as flash floods and mud slides, have increased needs. Fall armyworm has impacted agricultural harvests in nearly all countries in the region.

CONFLICT AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS

The trend over the nine months of 2017 indicates that conflict is likely to persist and become more entrenched in the months ahead in the DRC, CAR and South Sudan, with spillovers into other countries in the region. All countries in the Great Lakes border one or more countries in conflict and the proliferation of non-state armed actors across the region, coupled with the porosity of borders, has led to increasingly complex conflicts and rising displacement. Since the beginning of 2017, conflict has expanded into previously calmer areas in DRC, CAR and South Sudan, creating new displacement and humanitarian needs. Non-state armed actors operational in these conflicts are not confined to national borders, as illustrated by Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) presence in the border areas of CAR, DRC, and South Sudan; Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) presence in Rwanda and DRC border areas; Seleka and anti-Balaka militias’ presence in border areas of CAR and DRC; and incursions into DRC by former members of the March 23 Movement (M23).
In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a new conflict erupted in the once relatively peaceful Kasai provinces, triggered by a disagreement over traditional authority, displacing more than 1.4 million people from August 2016 to August 2017, including some 30,000 people who sought asylum in neighbouring Angola. Although small-scale returns to limited areas have begun, the situation remains fragile, and people affected by the Kasai crisis are expected to continue to need humanitarian assistance in the months ahead. Elsewhere, escalating inter-communal and militia conflicts in Tanganyika, Haut-Katanga, and the Kivus, continue to cause displacement, with some 3,360 refugees arriving in Zambia – primarily from Haut-Katanga – from 30 August to 3 October. The reported re-emergence of the M23 rebellion at the border between North Kivu, Uganda and Rwanda risks causing new cross-border displacement of civilians. Meanwhile, elections have been postponed until December 2018, perpetuating political uncertainty and the potential for popular unrest in urban areas due to the economic slowdown.

In CAR, there has been a serious deterioration of the security situation in 2017, particularly in regions affected by the conflict which began in 2013. On 19 June 2017, the Government signed a peace agreement in Rome with thirteen of the fourteen major armed groups. However, clashes erupted soon after between various armed actors in Zemio, Bria and Kaga Bandoro, especially between the Seleka and anti-Balaka militias. Two-thirds of CAR is now controlled by various armed groups and the number of people displaced has reached the highest number ever recorded, with some 200,000 people displaced from January to August 2017, bringing the total number of IDPs in CAR to more than 600,000 and the total of refugees to over 500,000 by the end of September 2017. Persistent insecurity has disrupted agricultural and pastoral activities - which are the main sources of employment, income and food for a majority of the population – and humanitarian needs are expected to continue to increase.

In South Sudan, conflict dynamics have evolved in 2017, with new government offensives against SPLA-iO and non-aligned armed groups on the West Bank in Upper Nile and in central and northern Jonglei causing large-scale displacement into Sudan and Ethiopia. Since mid-2016 there have been clashes between government and opposition and opposition-aligned forces in several locations in the Equatoria, and fighting continues to intermittently flare-up around Wau in Western Bahr El Ghazal, causing displacement into Uganda, DRC, CAR and Sudan. From August 2016 to August 2017, an average of 1,800 South Sudanese arrived every day in Uganda, where the number of South Sudanese refugees now exceeds 1 million, making this the largest refugee exodus in Africa since the Rwandan genocide. Clashes and displacement, both internal and across borders, may increase in the upcoming months of the dry season, during which fighting typically intensifies.

Meanwhile, the situation in Burundi remains tense. More than two years on from the constitutional crisis and accompanying violence in 2015, international mediation efforts have gained little traction. Several countries have introduced sanctions on Burundi. The Government of Burundi continues to block the deployment of a UN police component of up to 228 officers mandated by the UN Security Council in July 2016, and the Government announced in October 2016 that it was suspending “all cooperation and collaboration” with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) after its publication of the final report of the United Nations Independent Investigation in Burundi (UNIIB) which noted “a systematic pattern of gross violations of human rights”, some of which, particularly those committed by State agents and affiliates, it found amounted to crimes against humanity. The UN Secretary-General reported to the Security Council in 2017 that, despite a decline in overt violence and armed confrontation, human rights violations continue to be reported, noting that “many Burundians live in fear as a result of widespread repression and increasing intimidation by the Imbonerakure” - the youth wing of the ruling party. There are concerns about the detention of civilians, including children. UNICEF and partner’s advocacy and legal assistance has contributed to the release from detention of 87 children (77 boys and 10 girls). Most of the cases relate to children living on the streets, with the majority of them arrested during police operations.

Economic Shocks

The Great Lakes region is exposed to severe economic shocks, particularly conflict, which are restricting economic growth, perpetuating high levels of vulnerability and deepening needs. It is not only countries in conflict that are impacted, but also neighbouring states. While Uganda has had one of the most successful economies on the continent, growing at about 8 per cent over the last two decades, this growth rate has now halved. All countries in conflict in the region [DRC, CAR, and South Sudan] have multi-dimensional poverty in excess of 75 per cent and in South Sudan over 90 per cent of all children are MPI poor.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the value of the Congolese Franc (CDF) has lost half its value between 2016 and 2017 due to low oil and mineral prices, and there are no signs that the price of extractive commodities, on which the DRC’s economy depends, will improve on the global market in 2017. Inflation skyrocketed from 0.8% in 2016 to 55% in 2017.
per cent in 2015 to 26 per cent in 2016, and has now reached 35 per cent since the beginning of 2017, eroding purchasing power. Food prices rose each month from June to August 2017.5

The conflict in South Sudan has had a significant financial impact. In March 2017, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) assessed that the country is in a deep economic crisis, with real GDP growth declining by nearly 20 percent in the two years through 2015/16, annual inflation peaking at 550 percent in September 2016, and a precipitous currency depreciation. The exchange rate was highly volatile in the second quarter of 2017, depreciating by 51 percent from the first quarter and by 256 per cent from the same period in 2016.6 Year-on-year headline and food inflation stood above 300 percent at the end of the second quarter in 2017, and fuel and food scarcity leave little room for economic recovery. Since December 2015, the South Sudanese pound has lost more than 95 percent of its value against the US Dollar. Rising food prices have contributed to a significant increase in the number of severely food insecure people in urban centres.

In Burundi, several Western donors have suspended budgetary aid and introduced sanctions, including the European Union, which previously funded an estimated half of the annual budget of the Burundian Government. The suspension of direct financial support has impacted the delivery of basic services and the economy. Real GDP declined by 3.96 percent in 2015 and 1.04 percent in 2016. In 2017, the Burundian Franc (BIF) has continued to devalue against the USD and economic growth is expected to remain weak (0.001 percent), potentially resulting in negative effects on per capita income and poverty. Since mid-April 2017, Burundi has faced recurrent fuel shortages with serious consequences for daily life. This is mainly due to the shortage of foreign currency to purchase fuel on the international market.

In the Central African Republic, the IMF notes that the deterioration in the security environment disrupted trade, agriculture and mining in the last quarter of 2016, pushing growth for 2016 down to 4.5 per cent, slightly lower than initially programmed.7 Inflation in CAR is estimated at 4.6 per cent and some 84 per cent of the population in CAR lives on less than $2 per day.

In Uganda, the annual headline inflation rate stood at 7.6 per cent in May due to the high annual food crops, while the headline inflation rate was high in Rwanda (11 per cent) because of rising transport costs and the impact of sluggish local food production. In Tanzania, quarter over quarter food inflation was 11 per cent after erratic rainfall hampered production and the central bank cut lending rates to boost economic growth.8 OPEC’s decision to cut oil production affected those countries in the region that largely depend on crude oil imports from the Middle East: fuel prices rose from 2016 in Tanzania (14 per cent gasoline; 19 per cent diesel), and Democratic Republic of Congo (64 per cent diesel). In South Sudan, fuel remains scarce at official rates and prices rose steeply from Q1-2017 (64 per cent gasoline; 42 per cent diesel).

**FOOD PRICES**

Disruptions to economies due to conflict and lack of regional supplies due to drought in the Horn of Africa have caused rising food prices in the Great Lakes.10 In the Democratic Republic of Congo, although maize prices fell in

---

6 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000019676.pdf
9 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000019676.pdf
Katanga (-6 per cent) during the second quarter of 2017, after the re-opening of the Zambian border and the June harvest replenished stocks, food prices rose in Nord-Kivu amid erratic rains and a volatile security situation (+5 per cent maize; +30 per cent wheat flour; +35 per cent palm oil).11 The price of the basic food basket increased severely in Uganda during the second quarter. Adverse weather in East Africa damaged crop development, and regional demand pushed up prices for cereals and tubers from Q1-2017 (+11 per cent maize; +12 per cent millet; +26 per cent cassava flour). In South Sudan, prices for Staples were three times higher than last year as steep currency depreciation restricted imports, insecurity curbed trade flows and local production failed to provide fresh supplies. Prices reached Crisis level for sorghum and millet in Konyo Konyo and Jau markets. The resurgence of violence and internal population movements in the Central African Republic drove up prices in Bangui (+28 per cent cassava; +10 per cent maize), Ouham Pende (+17 per cent cassava; +23 per cent maize) and Nana-Mambere (+25 per cent cassava; +25 per cent maize) despite favourable production. This caused a high (5-10 per cent) increase in the price of the basic food basket. In Burundi, Season B crop production was average to above average, and consequently increased food availability. However, price spikes in staple foods were still recorded in the second quarter of 2017.

CLIMATIC SHOCKS AND PLANT PESTS

The impact of climate change in the Great Lakes region is inextricably tied to population pressure, with climate change and climatic shocks expected to cause reduced agricultural yields, reduced fish stocks in fresh water bodies, and risk of flash floods and mudslides. Large parts of the population across the region are engaged in small-holder agriculture which, combined with population growth, leaves people particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Central African Republic ranks at the bottom of the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) and Burundi is ranked fourth from bottom.12 The African Development Bank (AfDB) estimates that, principally based on small-holdings, agriculture accounts for 43 per cent of GDP and employs about 90 per cent of the workforce in Burundi.13 Extreme floods and droughts in Burundi are projected to cause a yield decline of 5-25 per cent in the coming decades.14 Scenarios for Tanzania, where agriculture accounts for about half of gross domestic product and employs about 80 per cent of the labour force, indicate that changes in climate could increase poverty and vulnerability.15

The region is also vulnerable to reduced fish stocks in fresh water bodies. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is amongst the five countries deemed most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change on fisheries, while in other areas, fish stocks are being depleted by over-fishing. Lake Tanganyika - the world’s second largest lake (by volume) and second deepest, which cuts across Tanzania, DRC, Burundi, and Zambia - contains 17 percent of the world’s surface freshwater and was recently nominated as the “Threatened Lake of 2017” by the non-governmental organization Global Nature Fund.16 Lake Tanganyika has warmed 0.1 degrees Celsius (0.18 degrees Fahrenheit) per decade or 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) over the past 100 years. With air temperatures across tropical Africa expected to rise as much as 2-5 degrees Celsius over the next 50-100 years, warming lake trends are also expected to continue.

Fall armyworm (FAW), a plant pest that can result in loss of agricultural harvest, has been confirmed in most countries in the region (DRC, Uganda and Tanzania, South Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda). In Uganda, FAW has been identified in 54 out of 116 districts and is spreading at a very high rate. In DRC, it is estimated that FAW will decrease maize production by 20 to 25 per cent.

11 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WFP-0000019676.pdf
12 The ND-GAIN Country Index, a project of the University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), summarizes a country’s vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges in combination with its readiness to improve resilience.
14 Baramburiye et al. (2013)
15 The IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report What’s in it for Africa?
16 By Global Nature Fund, an NGO based in southern Germany, has nominated Lake Tanganyika in central Africa as “Threatened Lake of the Year”
III. HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

Some 10.7 million people had been displaced from and within the Great Lakes Region as at the end of September 2017, and this figure is likely to rise in the months ahead. There is a deepening food security crisis, with 17.8 million people severely food insecure in DRC (7.7 million people), South Sudan (6 million), Burundi (2.6 million), Uganda (0.4 million) and CAR (1.1 million) as at the end of the third quarter. There were also simultaneous outbreaks of communicable diseases, in particular measles and cholera, and high rates of malaria in the region, which may escalate during each country’s respective rainy season.

DISPLACEMENT

The Great Lakes Region faces a major displacement crisis with 10.7 million people uprooted by the end of September 2017, and this figure expected to rise in the month ahead.

This included: 6.6 million IDPs across DRC, South Sudan, CAR and Burundi; 3.5 million refugees and asylum seekers from these countries seeking protection in the wider region, including 2.1 million hosted in the Great Lakes region; and a further 600,000 refugees and asylum seekers from other regions currently hosted in the Great Lakes. The proliferation of armed actors and spread of conflict has resulted in complex internal and cross-border displacement as civilians search for protection and access to essential assistance. Consequently, several countries in the region serve both as sources, and hosts, for refugees. For example, refugees from CAR have sought protection in South Sudan, while a small number of South Sudanese refugees have fled to CAR; while South Sudan, in turn, hosts refugees from DRC at the same time as generating a cross-border exodus of South Sudanese into DRC, Uganda, CAR, Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia.

The Democratic Republic of Congo now hosts the largest number of internally displaced people in Africa, with 3.9 million IDPs within the country, while about a half a million people have sought asylum in neighbouring countries. This includes over 1.4 million people newly displaced since the start of 2017 as a result of clashes in the Kasai region,17 35,000 of whom have sought refuge in Angola. Beyond the Kasai region, inter-communal clashes in the Tanganyika province have displaced thousands of IDPs,18 while over half of the rest of the country’s IDPs are in North Kivu (957,000) and South Kivu (487,000).19 From 30 August to 3 October, some 3,360 refugees arrived in Zambia, primarily from Haut-Katanga and Tanganika. At the same time, DRC is hosting about 475,000 refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries (Angola, Burundi, CAR, South Sudan and Rwanda).

Nearly 2.1 million refugees have fled South Sudan to neighbouring countries. Over 47,000 South Sudanese refugees fled South Sudan into neighbouring countries in September 2017 alone, bringing the total number of refugee arrivals from January to September 2017 to 637,455.20 There are now more than 1 million South Sudanese refugees in Uganda, and outflows to Ethiopia and Sudan have increased since the beginning of 2017. Over 11,000 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Sudan in July, at an average daily rate of approximately 522 refugees. Children bear the brunt of the crisis, with approximately 60 per cent of the refugees under 18 years of age. Humanitarian partners anticipate that there could be as many as 2.13 million South Sudanese refugees by the end of 2017. There is also a major internal displacement crisis in South Sudan, which now has an estimated 1.89 million IDPs. Large-scale offensives and ongoing clashes since the beginning of 2017 have displaced tens of thousands, particularly on the West Bank in Upper Nile, in central and northern Jonglei, and in Central Equatoria.

Renewed fighting in the Central African Republic displaced more than 200,000 people from January to August 2017, a 50 percent increase since the beginning of the year, bringing the total number of people to flee their homes to over a million – more than 600,000 IDPs and 500,000 civilians who have fled to neighbouring countries.21 An estimated 24,000 people were displaced during fighting in Batangafo on 29 July and 1 August,22 including

17 https://www.nrc.no/dr-congo-crisis-sees-highest-global-internal-displacement
18 http://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/statement-and-speech/ERC_USG_per_cent2000per_cent20Stephen_per_cent20O_per_cent20Step00per_cent20Stephen_per_cent20Brien_per_cent20Statement_per_cent20toper_cent20the_per_cent20Memeber_per_cent20States_per_cent20on_per_cent20DRC_per_cent20and_per_cent20CAR_per_cent20- per_cent20O_DRC_per_20Aug2017.pdf
19 https://www.nrc.no/dr-congo-crisis-sees-highest-global-internal-displacement
20 http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/download.php?id=3403
21 http://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/statement-and-speech/ERC_USG_per_cent20Stephen_per_cent20O_per_cent20Brien_per_cent20Statement_per_cent20toper_cent20the_per_cent20Memeber_per_cent20States_per_cent20on_per_cent20DRC_per_cent20and_per_cent20CAR_per_cent20- per_cent20O_DRC_per_20Aug2017.pdf
22 http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/258742/1/OEW33-121382017.pdf
approximately 10,000 people who sought shelter on the grounds of Batangafo hospital. During the fighting, a large part of the city’s main IDP camp was looted and burned, re-displacing people who had sought shelter there. In August, at least 10,000 people fled insecurity in the area around Bema in CAR to seek refuge in the nearby Congolese town of Yakoma. A further 65,000 people have crossed into DRC since May.

There are now more than 192,000 IDPs in Burundi, and nearly 468,000 Burundian refugees in the region. However, the number of people fleeing Burundi fell from about 23,500 per month in the first quarter of 2017 to about 3,000 per month in the third quarter of 2017. Due to stricter border controls in Tanzania, Burundians are fleeing less into Tanzania and continue fleeing into the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. Secondary movement of Burundian refugees to Uganda from both Rwanda and Tanzania has been reported, while Burundi’s Government is proactively calling for the return of refugees currently in Tanzania, Uganda and DRC, in collaboration with the respective Governments and in coordination with UNHCR. Following the President of Burundi’s call for return in Tanzania and a tripartite high-level dialogue (between Tanzania, Burundi and UNHCR) in Dar Es Salaam on 30 August 2017, a resolution was officially signed regarding the voluntary return of refugees to Burundi on the basis of safety and dignity. It is estimated that a total of 20,000 people may go back to Burundi in the next six months. Some 12,000 people have already registered for voluntary returns that will take place in two phases from 7 September to 31 December 2017. As of 30 September, 2,343 people had returned through the UNHCR led repatriation process. An additional unconfirmed number have also spontaneously returned.

Uganda is now ranked among the top three refugee-hosting nations in the world and number one in Africa. It hosts 1.4 million refugees from 13 countries, the majority of whom are from South Sudan. It is expected that Uganda will continue to receive refugees from South Sudan, DRC and Burundi in the remaining months of 2017.

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

There are grave concerns regarding protection of civilians arising from the three main conflicts in the region – South Sudan, CAR and DRC – including due to the escalation in clashes in a number of locations in 2017.

In the Central African Republic, minority groups throughout the country are facing discrimination and attacks based on their ethnicity and religion, and expressed particular concern regarding the plight of children, as one in three children in CAR is still unable to return to school. A mapping report by the UN Human Rights Office and the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), mandated by the UN Security Council, has documented in detail 620 incidents, including: horrific accounts of entire villages being burnt to the ground in reprisal attacks; multiple accounts of gang rapes of women and girls as young as five; extra-judicial killings; deaths following severe torture or ill-treatment in detention centres; serious violence against people on the basis of their religion, ethnicity or perceived support for armed groups; the recruitment of thousands of children by armed groups; and attacks on both humanitarian actors and peacekeepers, among other serious violations.

In South Sudan, attacks against civilians – including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) – remain a defining

feature of the conflict. From March 2015 to March 2017, 4,870 incidents of SGBV were recorded through the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), and these are understood to represent just the tip of the iceberg of the actual number of cases. Children have been severely impacted by the fighting. From March 2014 to March 2017, 83,537 incidents of grave violations were documented in South Sudan using the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations of children’s rights in situations of armed conflict.28 Approximately 17,000 children in South Sudan remain recruited by armed actors and thousands have been separated from their families both inside South Sudan and as they fled as refugees to neighbouring countries. There also continue to be reports of targeted attacks against civilians on the basis of their ethnicity, including in Wau (Western Bahr El Ghazal) in April 2017 and in the Equatorias throughout 2017.

In the DRC, the eruption of fighting in Kasai raised significant concerns regarding the plight of civilians. On 22 June 2017, the UN Human Rights Council expressed grave concern about reports of “a wave of violence, serious and gross human rights violations and abuses, and violations of international humanitarian law in the Kasai regions,” 29 including recruitment and use of child soldiers, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of houses, schools, places of worship, and State infrastructure by local militias, and the existence mass graves. On 25 July, the U.N. Joint Human Rights Office in Congo (UNJHRO) accused “elements” of the Congolese army of digging most of dozens of mass graves discovered in recent months in Kasai.

The Commission of Inquiry on Burundi established by the Human Rights Council has stated that it has confirmed human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, acts of torture and other inhuman and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary arrests and detention and enforced disappearances. The Commission reports that many of these violations have been committed by members of the National Intelligence Service and the police, sometimes assisted by members of the youth league of the ruling party, the Imbonerakure, with a number of such violations possibly amounting to crimes against humanity. The Commission of Inquiry also stated that the rights violations were reinforced by hate speech, sometimes with an ethnic dimension, and that hate speech at levels of authority and the suppression of opposition and dissent had been recorded. The Commission also reported that the that the alleged perpetrators were at large and had rarely been held accountable. After reporting such human rights violations in its report to the 36th session of the Human Rights Council on 19 September, the Commission of Inquiry recommended that the International Criminal Court opens an investigation into these alleged crimes.30 The UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide drew similar concerns to the attention of the UN Security Council, noting “many indicators that show Burundi is running the risk of mass violence”, and warning that “if the current atmosphere of fear and political divisions continues, three could be an increase of violence in which individuals may be more targeted according to their political or ethnic affiliation.” On 2 August 2017, the UN Security Council expressed deep concern over the political situation in Burundi – including increasing numbers of refugees and reports of torture, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings – and strongly urged the Government and all parties to immediately cease and reject violence.31

FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

Some 17.8 million people were now severely food insecure across the region, largely driven by conflict, at the end of September 2017.

An estimated 7.7 million people (10 per cent of the population) were severely food insecure in the DRC as of June 2017, representing an increase of 1.8 million people compared to the same period last year. In the last seven months, the number of food insecure territories has doubled. In the Kivu provinces, more than 60 per cent of the population is food insecure, of which more than 20 per cent is expected to face emergency food insecurity (IPC level 4). There are now more than 1.8 million children estimated to be suffering Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in the DRC, including approximately 400,000 children in the Greater Kasai Region. If insecurity continues, food insecurity and malnutrition may continue to deteriorate in the months ahead.

Food insecurity reached unprecedented levels in South Sudan in June, with an estimated 6 million people (50 per cent of the population) projected to be severely food insecure during the lean season, including 1.7 million on the brink of famine. Although the mobilization of a large-scale multi-sectoral humanitarian response

28 The six grave children’s rights violations include the killing or maiming of children, the recruitment or use of children by armed forces or armed groups, attacks on schools or hospitals, rape or other sexual violence against children, abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access to children.
was able to halt the localized famine declared in Leer and Mayendit in Unity in February, 50,000 people were estimated to be facing Catastrophic (IPC Level 5) food insecurity. In the Food Security and Nutrition Monitoring Systems (FSNMS) survey that was conducted during the peak lean season in July 2017, eight out of the nine states assessed showed global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates above the World Health Organization (WHO) emergency threshold of 15 per cent. The prevalence ranged from 17.7 per cent in Northern Bahr el Ghazal to 23 per cent in Unity. From October to December 2017, the number of severely food insecure people is expected to drop to 4.8 million during the harvest season. However, this is 1.4 million more than at the same time last year, and an estimated 25,000 people in Wau (Western Bahr el Ghazal) and Ayod (Jonglei) are expected to face catastrophic conditions.

In the Central African Republic, 1.1 million people were severely food insecure as of February 2017. Out of fifteen (15) prefectures analyzed, eight are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). The prefectures of Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Lower-Kotto deteriorated from IPC Phase 2 to IPC Phase 3 compared to December 2016, while Ouham has been in IPC Phase 3 and 4 for more than three consecutive years. GAM rates above the WHO 15 per cent emergency threshold are concentrated in 39 sub-prefectures and SAM rates above the 2 per cent emergency threshold have been recorded in 6 health sub-prefectures (Nzangba, Mobaye, Birao, Ouanda-Djallé, Gambo and Ouango).

In Burundi, 1.8 million people were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above) from June to September 2017, while 2.6 million people are projected to be severely food insecure from October to December. It is estimated that 49.6 per cent of children between 6-59 months in Burundi are chronically malnourished, resulting in stunting.

**COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Multiple and simultaneous disease outbreaks in the region (including malaria, cholera/AWD and measles), have cross-border implications and are challenging the region’s already overstretched healthcare facilities.

Cholera had been reported in at least five countries across the region (Angola, Burundi, DRC, South Sudan, Tanzania) by September 2017, highlighting the risk of cross-border spread of communicable diseases. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the cholera outbreak is ongoing, especially in North and South Kivu Provinces. In a statement on 7 September, WHO said the cholera epidemic is reaching worrying proportions in the DRC with 20 of the country’s 26 provinces affected. As of 29 September, 31,646 suspected cases with 629 deaths (CFR 2.0 per cent) had been reported. In Angola, cases were detected in Cabinda (236), Soyo (227) and Luanda (5) between December 2016 and September 2017, with high transmission areas linked to the cholera outbreak in Kongo Central Province in DRC. There have also been reports of cholera in Burundi at the

[32](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20South%20Sudan%20Humanitarian%20SitRep%20%2313%20%2030%20September%202017.pdf)
There are multiple small outbreaks which are, up to now, contained but are the consequence of an increasing shortage of water supply since the beginning of the crisis and the budget reduction in the WASH sector. In **Tanzania**, 3,194 cases, including 52 deaths (CFR 1.6 per cent), were reported on the mainland from 1 January to 1 October 2017. During the same period, Zanzibar reported a total of 358 cases including four deaths (CFR 1.1 per cent), with last case reported as of 11 July 2017. In **South Sudan**, the cholera outbreak which was declared in June 2016 continued into 2017, with 20,568 cases reported as at 24 September 2017, including 378 deaths [CFR 1.8 per cent]. This is the longest and most widespread cholera outbreak since South Sudan became independent. The cholera outbreak has affected 23 counties, with active transmission ongoing in 14. Children are most adversely affected by the outbreak, with 48 per cent of all reported cases being children aged 0 to 14 years.

**Measles** remains a major challenge for the region, including due to inadequate routine immunization coverage due to conflict and shortages of vaccines. In **South Sudan**, there were 1,070 suspected cases of measles reported with 25 deaths (CFR 2.3 per cent) from the beginning of 2017 to 1 October. In the **DRC**, 31,646 suspected cases have been reported since the beginning of 2017, including 629 deaths (CFR 2.0 per cent). However, the incidence of new cases has declined since the current outbreak peaked in early 2017. On 8 August 2017, the **Uganda** Ministry of Health notified WHO of an outbreak of measles in the capital city, Kampala, and adjoining Wakiso District (which is part of the greater Kampala Metropolitan area). As of 18 September 2017, a total 552 cases had been reported from Kampala (309 cases) and Wakiso (243 cases). The outbreak has been attributed to low routine immunization coverage due to shortage of vaccines at the health facility level. Suspected measles cases have also been reported in **CAR** and are under investigation.

**Malaria** continues to cause excess morbidity and mortality in several countries. In **Burundi**, more than 5.9 million clinical cases of malaria were reported from the beginning of 2017 to 26 September, including 2,620 deaths. The northern, central and eastern regions are most affected and ten out of 18 provinces are in epidemic phase: Karusi, Gitega, Muyinga, Kirundo, Kayanza, Ngozi, Bubanza, Cankuzo, Cibitoke and Ruyigi. In **South Sudan**, 1,839,766 cases and 1,734 deaths were recorded in health facilities between 25 September 2016 and 30 September 2017. Increasing trends in malaria cases were reported in 14 counties including; Abiemnhom, Awerial, Aweil Center, Aweil East, Aweil South, Cueibet, Gogrial East, Mayom, Pariang, Rumbek East, Rumbek North, Wulu, Yirol East and Yirol West. There is likelihood of increased malaria cases, as rainfall received in these counties in September 2017 exceeded the third quartile of rainfall for period 2013-2016.  

---

Photo: OCHA/Guiomar Pau Sole 2016

---

IV. CONSTRAINTS TO RESPONSE

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

While humanitarian needs and protection concerns are expected to rise, humanitarians are likely to continue to face challenges in the region as a result of conflict, insecurity and bureaucratic impediments. The operating environment in South Sudan, CAR and DRC has deteriorated since the beginning of 2017 due to rising violence and widespread insecurity. However, coordinated efforts between the Government and the humanitarian community have led to better access in Burundi in 2017.

With rising insecurity in CAR, access constraints and attacks against aid workers have become more prominent. From January to August 2017, at least 11 aid workers have been killed, 13 injured and 3 abducted in CAR.34 On 3 August, six Central African Red Cross volunteers were killed in one attack on a hospital in Gambo.35 During clashes in Batangafo, several aid organisations were reportedly looted. An open letter delivered by major international NGOs to the UN Secretary General on 14 August 2017 identified CAR as the most dangerous country in the world to deliver humanitarian assistance, with the world’s highest level of violence against humanitarian workers, accounting for one-third of all incidents targeting aid workers.36

In DRC, access was a major challenge in the initial stages of the Kasai response and a health facility was damaged in raids by Kamuina Nsapu militia.37 However, by mid-August 2017, access in the Kasai region had improved significantly. In eastern DRC, the widespread presence of armed groups, their fragmentation and criminalization, and increasing communal violence continue to significantly affect humanitarian operations. Humanitarian access remains constrained by fighting and the threat of kidnapping and attacks on humanitarians in North Kivu and Tanganyika. According to INSO, from January to July 2017, two aid workers were killed, six injured and six abducted.

The operating environment has continued to deteriorate in South Sudan, where 729 humanitarian access incidents were recorded from January to August 2017 by OCHA. Of these, 45 per cent (282) involved violence against aid workers and/or assets, including robberies and detentions. At least 17 aid workers were killed from January to August 2017, bringing the total of aid workers killed since the outbreak of the conflict in 2013 to 84. In July, there was a significant spike in looting, with six major incidents against warehouses and trucks in transit, leading to the loss of 670 metric tons of food aid in Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Upper Nile and Warrap. Insecurity led to the relocation of a significant number of staff and suspension of operations. Operational interference and bureaucratic impediments remain key challenges in the country and are expected to continue in the months ahead.

In Burundi, since January 2017 the Government’s recognition of the humanitarian situation, including through engagement in the development of the Humanitarian Response Plan, has led to enhanced cooperation and coordination with the humanitarian community and resulted in significant improvements in access since February 2017. Major bureaucratic impediments have been lifted and the movement of staff into most provinces of the country and for most sectors has been opened, yet constraints remain. The NGO law enacted on 23 January, posing

---

34 Source: INSO and OCHA
stricter financial regulations, has not yet been amended. However, the Government is in ongoing discussions regarding the contested provisions with the humanitarian community. Meanwhile, the UN Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry on Burundi continues to be denied access to the country.

**HUMANITARIAN FUNDING**

Humanitarian funding requirements across the region stand at a record US$4.8 billion, of which only 42 per cent had been received by the end of September.

**Funding levels, however, vary across the appeals.** The South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is the largest and best funded appeal in the region, seeking $1.6 billion of which US$1 billion or 68 per cent had been received by end of September. The Burundi HRP, which calls for $74 million was 50 per cent funded by the same date. This contrasts with the HRPs for DRC and CAR, which were 32 per cent and 34 per cent funded respectively, and the Refugee Response Plans for South Sudan and Burundi, which were 28 per cent funded and 17 per cent funded respectively.

The HRPs for both DRC and CAR have been revised upwards since the beginning of 2017 due to increasing needs. In CAR, the HRP was increased from $399.5 million to $497 million to respond to escalating violence, while in DRC, an emergency appeal for $64.5 million was launched to fund the response to the Kasai crisis, increasing the overall appeal to $813 million. Despite this, the DRC has received the lowest level of humanitarian funding over the past 10 years.

**Under-funding is having an immediate operational impact,** with humanitarian organizations forced to reduce or suspend vital life-saving activities in several locations, particularly in DRC. Due to the Kasai crisis, humanitarian actors in DRC have been forced to deploy vital human resources from ongoing operations, compromising the response in other areas. Under-funding has forced two international NGOs to halt operations in Lubumbashi: after over nine years of presence and service in the area, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) announced the closure of its office there on 31 July 2017 due to funding cuts; and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was due to stop its activities in Lubumbashi by the end of July 2017 in order to respond to urgent humanitarian needs in Tanganyika. Since the beginning of 2017, lack of funding has forced three major international organizations (ALIMA, IRC and CRS) to disengage from Haut-Katanga, Haut-Lomami and Lualaba while these provinces are still affected by armed violence and cholera epidemics.

**Under-funding of refugee appeals has also forced the World Food Programme to halt or reduce food assistance in several areas.** In April, WFP was forced to cut rations by 50 percent in all countries hosting refugees from CAR until more funds are received, while rations of maize meal were reduced to 70 percent in Tanzania where the majority of the refugees and asylum seekers from Burundi reside for July distributions. A pipeline break was anticipated from August for cereals, followed by Super cereal and vegetable oil if funds are not forthcoming. Across settlements in northern Uganda, health clinics are being forced to provide vital medical care with too few doctors, healthcare workers and medicines, according to UNHCR.