Snapshot 04 – 11 February

In **Syria**, violence is ongoing with government bombardments on Aleppo and infighting between rival rebel factions in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh. Between 07-11 February, a temporary ceasefire in the city of Homs allowed for the evacuation of over 1,200 people and the entry of humanitarian convoys into the Old City for the first time in two years. To date, at least 242,000 people are trapped in besieged areas across the country. Meanwhile, the second round of the Geneva II peace talks began, with expectations regarding aid deliveries and the release of prisoners.

In **Central African Republic**, the security situation remains highly volatile in the capital Bangui and in the northwest, with reports of repeated violence, looting, and clashes between rival factions. At least 2,000 people have been killed in the country since the start of the crisis, including 1,118 since early December 2013. An estimated 838,000 people have been internally displaced, including over 413,000 in Bangui alone, and at least 34,400 people have crossed into neighbouring countries since December 2013.

In **South Sudan**, the security situation is reportedly improving across most conflict-affected areas, but sporadic clashes continue to be reported in the east. To date, an estimated 868,000 people have been displaced by the crisis, 130,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia. Meanwhile, the second round of peace talks, which aim to bring about a comprehensive and political agreement between the
In Iraq, fighting is ongoing between government troops and Sunni Islamist militants, over a month after violence erupted in Anbar province. While there seems to be no chance of negotiations, authorities have issued a one-week ultimatum for the insurgents to surrender. Fighting in Anbar has displaced at least 266,000 people, and ongoing military operations continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Last Updated: 11/02/2014 Next Update: 18/02/2014
KEY DEVELOPMENTS
No significant new developments this week.

KEY CONCERNS
- 49,975 Malian refugees reside in Burkina Faso (unchanged since 22 April 2013), including 27,146 children (UNHCR, December 2013).
- 1.8 million people in Burkina Faso remain food insecure and have not yet recovered from the last food crisis which resulted from the 2012 drought (WFP, October 2013).
- 1 million children in Burkina Faso under 5 are affected by stunting due to chronic malnutrition.

Politics and Security

Burkina Faso has generally been politically stable for over two decades but has suffered from the fallout of the political and military crisis in neighbouring Mali. Instability and unrest in Niger and Côte d’Ivoire also continue to have an impact on the country. Political divisions arising from concerns that President Compaoré may push for constitutional changes, allowing him to run again in the 2015 vote, led to a wave of resignations in early January and could lead to further political instability.

A week after the opposition staged the largest demonstration in decades on 18 January, observers predicted that President Compaoré would face an uphill battle to stay in office beyond the 2015 elections. Shortly following the protests, the government issued a statement saying that it remained open to political dialogue.

However, defectors from the ruling party then aligned themselves with the opposition and on 25 January formed a new political movement – the Movement of People for Progress (MPP) – continuing their campaign to force the President to step down next year. The President of the MPP is the former head of the National Assembly, Roch Kabore. Protests have been peaceful thus far, however the country could experience significant upheaval if the President were to push through the constitutional amendments regardless.

On 22 January, a week after resigning from Parliament and leaving the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), Victor Tiendrebeogo, also known as Laré Naaba Tigré, one of Burkina Faso’s most prominent tribal chiefs and former Minister of Moro Naaba held a press conference to explain his departure. Tiendreboyo insisted that even if his former party would come back to the idea of modifying Article 37, he would not return.

On 18 January, the opposition organized marches in the capital Ouagadougou and throughout the country to protest the potential revision of Article 37 of the constitution.

On the 8th of January, it was reported that the 75 dissidents of the ruling Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) are organizing against the Senate. Among them are the former party leader and former President of the National Assembly, Roch Kaboré, as well as the former mayor of the capital, Simon Compaoré, and founding members of the CDP. More resignations from the national political bureau of the ruling party are expected due to deep disagreement over the conduct and current direction of the party. Opposition and dissidents are planning to take to the streets their protest against the release of the presidential term limits. Crisis within the ruling party remains.

Burkina Faso remains threatened by social unrest following an increase in local conflicts over land, traditional leadership and increasing inequalities in 2012. In 2011, a number of violent protests erupted in various cities due to public distrust toward the ruling authorities. The current administration has one year to push through a smooth democratic transition after years of restrictions on political discourse and to prevent a succession battle or a new social uprising.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

As of the 31st of December, OCHA notes that 49,975 Malian refugees reside in Burkina Faso (unchanged since 22 April 2013), including 27,146 children (UNHCR). Refugees are located in seven formally recognised camps and informal settlement sites: Mentao, Damba, Feréiro, Goundebo, Gandafiabou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Ouagadougou. Most camps are in the northern region of Sahel, in the provinces of Soum, Oudalan and Seno, where almost 90% of Malian refugees are settled.

Disasters

As reported by OCHA on 16 September, on the basis of rapid assessments, CONASUR (National Council for Emergency and Rehabilitation) counted a total of 13,057 people affected by floods and winds, in 10 regions of Burkina Faso. In addition, 21 wounded and 4 deaths were recorded as well as 1,554 homeless. To cope with this situation, the government delivered food and survival equipment to meet the urgent needs of the affected populations. ECHO reported on 13 September that the population was in urgent need of food assistance and shelter, while wells and water points needed to be rehabilitated. To date, severe flooding has affected over 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel.
Food Security

Due to favourable weather conditions and government support of the agricultural sector, Burkina Faso had a good national cereal production for the second year in a row – with yield 30% higher than the 2011/2012 production (GIEWS/FAO). According to the WFP, as of 28 October 2013, 1.8 million people in Burkina Faso remain food insecure and have not yet recovered from the last food crisis due to the 2012 drought. The current record in cereal production enables markets to be generally well supplied and coarse grains prices have remained significantly lower than the previous crisis-affected levels. Food prices are forecasted to remain stable in view of relatively high supply levels in neighbouring countries and the declining international rice prices.

Continued food assistance is however needed in the Sahel, North and East regions, as a result of localized rainfall deficits in 2013. Additionally, Oudalan and Soum provinces in the northern Sahel region – already facing food insecurity and high malnutrition rates – are heavily affected by the influx of 50,000 refugees (as of early November 2013) from Mali.

According to FEWSNET as of late November, new crops from ongoing harvests are forecasted to enable most households to replenish their food stocks. Poor households are expected to have regular food access and pursue their normal livelihoods and should thus experience Minimal Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between now and March 2014. Very poor and poor households in the North and East livelihood zones in the Sahelian region, where an estimated 90% of people depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods, should be able to offset the expected shortfall in cereal production without resorting to atypical sales of livestock. These households are expected to experience Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between now and March 2014. Rising prices and increased production will boost household income, particularly income from sales of livestock and cash crops. This will help improve household terms of trade and strengthen livelihoods.

OCHA reported in early July that the arrival of Malian refugees and their cattle had further increased pressure on scarce resources leading to tensions with local communities. A May WFP and UNHCR joint assessment showed that 15% of the Malian refugee households have poor or borderline food consumption, against 13% in the host population. A February FAO/WFP joint assessment indicated an elevated prevalence of food insecurity in Malian refugee camps and in Burkinabe host communities with an estimated 52% of refugees and 58% of host populations affected by food insecurity.

Health and Nutrition

Meningitis

According to UNICEF, 2,479 cases of meningitis and 294 deaths were reported in all 63 districts of Burkina Faso since the beginning of the year until the last epidemiologic report on 15 October 2013 (week 41). The fatality rate rose marginally from 11.8 to 11.9 %. The total number of cases is the lowest in comparison to the past years as there has been no epidemic this year.

Measles

From January to October 2013, a total of 2,832 cases of measles (with 53 new cases from September to 13 October) and 12 deaths (equal to a mortality rate 0.42 per cent) due to measles-related complications such as pneumonia, croup or encephalitis (mortality rate 0.42 per cent), were reported in Burkina Faso. Of these, 976 or 34 per cent of cases (including 8 new cases reported since September) and no deaths were reported in the Sahel region.

HIV

The WFP is providing food rations (maize, beans, oil and a fortified blend of corn and soy) to 12,000 HIV infected people as well as children orphaned by AIDS. Burkina Faso’s HIV epidemic prevalence has dropped from around 7% in the late 1990s to around 1% today. Yet, thousands are infected every year (WFP, Trust.org).

Child Nutrition

In the beginning of January, a major child mortality reduction scheme was launched by Terre des Hommes and the Ministry of Health in a bid to combat one of the country’s greatest challenges. UNICEF estimates that 1 million children in Burkina Faso under 5 are affected by stunting due to chronic malnutrition. The Integrated e-Diagnostic Approach (IeDA) aims to improve the diagnosis for children under 5 and make computerized monitoring systems more efficient.

The 2013 total target annual caseload of children under 5 with severe acute malnutrition (SAM), as reported by UNICEF in late October, is 96,000 children. The number of new admissions in 2013 from January until end of September is 52,921 or 55.1% of the annual target. To date, 49.7% of refugee children suffering from SAM received therapeutic treatment and 72 % of the refugee children aged 6-59 months received vitamin A supplementation. According to OCHA, the number of children with a serious risk of SAM was reassessed on the basis of new admissions recorded between January and July 2013 and increased from 71 to 320 children.

The number of children affected by Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is estimated at 400,000, marking a decrease from January levels, bringing the <5 Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate to 10.9%. According to 2012 assessments, the highest GAM rates were recorded in the regions of Centre North, East, North, Centre and Boucle de Mouhoun. In May, UNHCR and WFP reported that malnutrition is alarming among certain Malian refugee communities, especially in Goudebou, where rates are beyond critical thresholds (SAM: 5.3%, MAM: 19.1%).

Protection

Child refugees and refugee children in host communities face a high number of risks, due to their difficult socio-economic situation. Following research in Soum and Oudalan provinces, a region with a high percentage of Malian refugees, by the Danish Refugee Council/ UNICEF, it was revealed that the main causes of anxiety for parents, children and stakeholders appeared to be linked to some socio-cultural customs incompatible with children’s physical integrity and wellbeing; psycho-social concerns; harsh economic and living conditions and the change of lifestyle induced by the conflict in Mali.
On 28 January, the UN Security Council voted to adopt a resolution which invites the interim Central African Republic (CAR) government to speed up the transition and impose sanctions against those responsible for violent incidents across the country. The UNSC also requested that presidential and parliamentary elections be organized as soon as possible, ideally in the second half of 2014, and no later than February 2015.

On 20 January, the EU approved the deployment of a joint contingent of 500 soldiers to CAR to support French and African Union (AU) forces already on the ground, representing the biggest EU military operation in six years. Troops are expected to start arriving in CAR in late February and will be based in and around the capital Bangui, where they will be active for six months with the task to help stabilize the situation.

Since December, France has scaled up its military presence in CAR from an estimated 450 military to 1,600 soldiers, following a UNSC resolution. The 450 French troops that were formerly stationed in Bangui had a restricted mandate of securing the international airport and protecting French interests and citizens. As of mid-December, an estimated 1,200 French military were stationed in Bangui while the rest of the troops were deployed to other parts of CAR, notably Bossangoa. French troop deployment is done under the code name: Operation Sangaris.

According to French President Hollande, no further troop increase is planned in CAR. French troops and AU peacekeepers stationed in CAR receive logistical support from the US and Great Britain. US assistance is expected to be similar to the support provided to French troops and AU peacekeepers stationed in CAR receive logistical support from the US and Great Britain. In late November, France circulated a UNSC resolution to allow international troops to use lethal force to end the mounting chaos. The resolution aimed to strengthen the African peacekeeping force in CAR as a first step toward turning it into a formal UN peacekeeping mission, amidst increasing calls by UN officials regarding a potential genocide risk in CAR. On 4 December, Paris officially received UNSC authorization to use lethal force to help AU peacekeepers in CAR. The UNSC also implemented a sanctions regime by imposing an arms embargo that requires all countries to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related material to CAR. In late January, targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes, were added to the sanctions regime.

African Union Presence

On 7 December, as the French military presence was scaled up, the AU peacekeeping mission also announced that it would increase its force in CAR to 6,000, notably with the arrival of Burundian troops, up from 3,500. As of early February, both the UN and the AU were trying to raise funds to allow for the scale-up of AU peacekeeping forces in CAR.

As reported by the UN in November, the AU force may be transformed into a full-scale UN peacekeeping operation, numbering between 6,000 and 9,000 troops, with the support of local powers and if local conditions in terms of governance are met. However, UN Security...
Council officials informally confirmed that a decision on the deployment of UN peacekeepers would not be made until after the AU-led force had had a chance to try and stabilize the situation. In addition, the UN indicated that it may deploy an official force, but only if certain conditions are met, including a political transition framework and for the transitional government to distinguish between forces who represent the state and those who do not. In early February, the new interim President Samba-Panza called again for the AU force to be transformed into an UN one as soon as possible.

On 10 October, the UN Security Council updated and reinforced the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA) focusing on five areas: support for implementation of the transition process; support for conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance; support for stabilisation of the security situation; promotion and protection of human rights; and coordination of international actors.

**Political Context**

On 25 January, the new CAR President Samba-Panza appointed Andre Nzapayeke, a former secretary general of the African Development Bank and vice president of the Development Bank of Central African States, as her new Prime Minister. New Prime Minister Nzapayeke appointed a new government of 20 ministers, including several members of the administration of former President Djotodia. The new cabinet reportedly includes both supporters of Christian militias and supporters of the mainly Muslim Seleka rebellion.

Samba-Panza, previously the mayor of Bangui, was elected by members of the National Transitional Council to be interim president on 20 January, about a week after former rebel leader Djotodia resigned as president. His resignation came amid increased pressure from regional leaders, including France. President Samba-Panza, whose appointment was welcomed throughout CAR and by the international community, pledged to meet with armed groups and immediately called for the disarmament of warring factions.

The departure of Djotodia may allow for a fresh start in peace efforts between the different warring parties, although the lack of structure of the different armed groups is likely to make any attempt at structured negotiations complicated.

In August, former rebel leader Djotodia, head of the Seleka coalition that took control of CAR following a coup in late March, was sworn in as the new president. Initially, Djotodia was supposed to head an interim administration for 18 months, with the task of restoring order and organizing elections. However, since the deployment of its troops to curtail the spreading violence in CAR in early December, France indicated that it wanted presidential elections to be brought forward to early 2014, putting an end to the interim period originally scheduled to run into 2015.

In mid-September, President Djotodia officially announced the dissolution of the Seleka, the fragmented armed coalition that allowed him to seize power in March. Various sources indicate that the Seleka numbered an estimated 25,000 fighters, composed roughly of 5,000 core fighters from the largely Muslim northeast, 5,000 foreigners, mainly Sudanese and Chadian, and 15,000 people recruited while the Seleka advanced toward Bangui between December 2012 and March 2013 and in the immediate aftermath of the seizure of the capital. According to local sources, only some Seleka fighters will be officially integrated in the regular CAR Forces (FACA); most of the group is to be disarmed. At present, the disarmament operations are handled by French and MISCA troops after a period of voluntary disarmament ended without much result in mid-September. Since March, disarmament conducted by government troops triggered widespread violence and lootings, and was heavily criticized for its resulting in indiscriminate attacks against civilians, according to international observers.

Initially, violence erupted in CAR in December 2012, when the Seleka coalition, a group of five rebel movements, took up arms against the government, claiming that it had failed to honour 2001 and 2007 peace deals declaring amnesty for fighters who laid down their arms. Throughout March, the Seleka took control of various towns and continued its advance until it seized Bangui on 24 March and toppled President Bozizé who fled to Cameroon.

Since August, several UN reports have documented the weakness of state institutions. To date, authorities are still unable to restore order or even deploy official representatives outside of Bangui while, across the country, new warlords, some foreign, had established dominance over territories out of the authorities’ control.

**Conflict Patterns and Military Operations by International Forces**

Although information remains difficult to ascertain, local reports in early February indicated that an unidentified armed group had formed a new organisation called the Independence Movement of Northern Central African Republic. The stated objective of this new militia is to protect northern interests against neglect and oppression. While the situation remains dynamic, the formation of a group openly advocating independence, or at least autonomy, for the Muslim North may be an early indication of the path the conflict will take in the midterm.

However, this latest development should be considered alongside reports indicating that Muslim ex-Seleka fighters are currently regrouping and establishing strongholds in the northeast after having largely deserted Bangui under pressure from the international peacekeeping force. As reported by unspecified diplomatic sources, the ex-Seleka is at present more fragmented than ever following the forced resignation of Djotodia, its former leader and the country’s short-lived interim President.

On 2 February, following negotiations with ex-Seleka fighters, international troops from Operation Sangaris and the MISCA peacefully retook control of the occupied northern town of Sibut, a gateway to the northeast of the country where many former Seleka fighters are regrouping. The town passed under the control of former Seleka fighters the previous week amidst reports of violence against civilians.

According to latest reports, the international troops are currently deployed in the northwestern provinces of Paoua, Bozoum, Baoro, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bouca, and Kaga Bandoro as well as in Bangui, Yakoke, Boali, Bambari, Ndele and Bangassou.

**Security Context**

The security situation remains highly volatile with rising violence between armed militias, including ex-Seleka units, self-defence/ anti-Balaka (literally anti-machete or “anti-sword”)
groups, and groups loyal to the deposed ex-President Bozize. As of 11 December, according to French official sources, there were an estimated 3,000 to 8,000 armed fighters, mainly ex-Seleka members, members of self-defense militias (mainly Christian anti-Balaka groups), and members from security forces from the former regime who have joined anti-Balaka groups, and different militias in Bangui. French sources state that no reliable estimate regarding the number combatants in the whole country is available.

Fighting has increasingly adopted the characteristics of a sectarian confrontation between Muslim and Christian armed groups. As reported by a UN official in November, inter-sectarian violence was clearly on the rise with former Seleka fighters targeting churches and the Christian population and the latter responding by creating self-defense militias and retaliating against Muslim groups. With violence escalating, the UN suggested that a genocide might develop if the conflict dynamics remain unchanged. As of early February, religious leaders reported that warlords control large swathes of CAR outside the capital. In Bangui, sporadic shooting, looting, and violence continued following the election of new President Samba-Panza. As of early February, a UN death toll indicated that at least 2,000 people have been killed in CAR since the start of the crisis, including 1,118 since early December 2013.

During the first week of February, acts of violence were mostly reported in the 3rd, 5th, and 8th districts of Bangui, but also in the northwest, with reports of reprisal operations by ex-Seleka and anti-balaka militias in Bozoum, Bossangoa, Mbaiki, Bossembele, Nana-Bassaka, and Yakole. On 8-9 February, violence and looting in the capital killed at least 11 people, dead including two Muslims who were reportedly lynched and a Bangui lawmaker member of the National Transitional Council.

On 3 February, reports said at least 75 Christians had been killed and dozens of houses torched following a week of clashes between Muslim and Christian communities in the vicinity of the western town of Boda. Although deaths on the Muslim side were confirmed by local sources, no death count is available. At least 1,500 Christians have been displaced in the area because of the violence. A spokesman for Operation Sangaris reported that violence in the area had been contained, although more violence has been reported from several western, southwestern and northwestern towns, including Ngaoundaye, Berberati, Carnot, and Gamboula this week.

Between 29 and 31 January, three days of violence in Bangui left at least 30 dead and over 60 wounded despite patrols by French and AU troops. International forces continue to report that inter-communal tensions are high, and killings of both Muslim and Christian civilians are being reported.

By 22-27 January, tensions and clashes were reported mainly in three areas of the capital, in mixed or Muslim-dominated neighborhoods, or near the camps where ex-Seleka fighters are confined. To date, the areas of PK-12 and PK-13 are deserted as thousands of Muslim civilians have fled towards Chad. PK-5, the commercial hub of Bangui, saw repeated attacks and looting on hundreds of stores belonging mainly to Muslims.

On 27 January, hundreds of former Seleka fighters left Bangui under military escort after days of clashes between Christian and Muslim civilians, and headed northwards, in the direction of Bossembele. On the same day, eight people were reportedly killed in mob violence in the capital.

On 24 January, anti-Balaka fighters allegedly killed a former Minister, Joseph Kalité, a Muslim reportedly close to ex-President Djotodia. The incident triggered new clashes throughout the capital. On 23 January, two people were reportedly killed in clashes in the northern PK-12 neighborhood. Violence allegedly started when anti-Balaka fighters shot and killed one person at a camp for Muslims IPDs waiting to leave the city. A group then started protesting against the lack of protection from attacks by Christian militias. On 22 January, violence killed at least ten in Bangui, near a prison and a military barracks housing the former rebels.

On 18 January, significant violence was reportedly ongoing in the areas of Bossembele, Sibut, Kella-Doukou, Boali, and Bouar, north of the capital. Ex-Seleka members and anti-Balaka clashed only a few days after both sides signed a truce agreement in Bangui. On 14-16 January, over 50 Muslims were killed, including women and children, in attacks allegedly carried out by anti-Balaka militias in the towns of Boyali and Bossembele, where they assaulted Muslim civilians heading toward the Cameroon border.

According to OCHA on 23 January, 931 people have been killed in violence in Bangui since December. Over 2,000 people are estimated to have been killed since the crisis erupted according to the Multi-Cluster/sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) released by OCHA and WFP in January. This number may be considered a conservative estimation and is likely to rise in the coming weeks as violence is ongoing.

On 13 January, CAR’s new interim leader ordered the deployment of hundreds more troops in Bangui with instructions to shoot troublemakers in an attempt to end months of violence. More violence is expected in the capital.

On 5 January, an explosion in a Bangui market wounded four people, as rumors of an impending attack by anti-Balaka militias, loyal to the deposed President Bozize, continued to stoke tensions. On 1 January, clashes between Muslims and Christians in the capital killed at least three people. According to local sources, former Seleka fighters in civilian clothes attacked Christian houses in a northern district of the city, triggering a reprisal attack by Christian youths. On 30 December, heavy weapons fire was reported in the north of Bangui where inter-religious clashes killed at least four people.

OCHA reported in early January that inter-communal tensions outside the capital were rising, especially in the Bossangoa region where reports have emerged of houses being looted and burned. In Paoua region, local sources report concerns that the emergence of new rebel groups could exacerbate the already complex security and humanitarian situation.

The crisis further escalated in early December 2013 after rival militias, including Christian anti-Balaka groups, ex-Seleka fighters, and militias loyal to the ousted authorities, clashed in Bangui. At least 530 people were killed with hundreds more injured, and an estimated 189,000 people displaced in the Bangui area.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Since the March coup, CAR has struggled to cope with a severe humanitarian crisis.
Several international humanitarian organisations have warned that the situation has worsened since early December. Due to the widespread looting of health facilities and other public buildings, the population is largely deprived of access to basic services. As of early January, 2.6 million people, of an estimated population of 4.6 million, including half of children, needed immediate assistance according to the MIRA released by OCHA and WFP. The MIRA further reported that the whole population of the country, 4.6 million people, was living in affected areas.

MIRA findings indicated that in affected regions outside the capital, health is a priority need, followed by protection, food, and WASH. The MIRA analysis is largely in line with the information provided by key informants who noted health as their main concern, followed by protection and food. While WASH does not appear as a top priority for key informants, five of the six top health concerns are reportedly WASH-related to some extent.

In Bangui and surrounding areas, MIRA reports that the priority sectors, as reported by the population, are respectively food, WASH, health, and protection. The MIRA report also indicated that the two major differences between Bangui and the suburban areas were: the comparative priority of protection for outlying areas, and the lesser importance of food, which drops to 4th behind WASH and health, most likely due to better access to stocks and fields. Shelter is a problem cited by one-third of key informants within Bangui city, but is not cited as a problem by any key informants in the urban sites around the city.

**Access**

In late January, the WFP reiterated that securing the country’s roads was crucial for the provision of emergency food supplies to insecure populations. OCHA reported that the upsurge in violence since early December has had serious consequences for humanitarian assessments and response. In the countryside, the security of humanitarian workers remains dependent on the willingness of local strongmen in control of a given area. Since August, several attacks against humanitarian workers were reported, with two people killed in Ouham district in early September.

As of mid-January, rising widespread insecurity, logistical constraints and the intermittent closure of the border with Cameroon, due to hostile activities by armed groups, are negatively impacting on supply chains and operations. On 23 January, the MISCA sent troops to the border with Cameroon to escort convoys loaded with humanitarian aid toward the central Bangui.

In the large IDP site at Bangui airport, distributions remain dependent on the daily security situation, and on 2 January Médecins sans Frontières significantly reduced its health programs at the airport following shootings close to its clinic.

According to UNICEF, as of early November, health activities were disrupted across CAR with the supply chain completely halted outside of Bangui since the onset of the crisis a year ago. The UN reported massive fuel shortages after most petrol stations have been looted or damaged in the conflict. Fuel is essential to ensure that the cold chain functions properly. The shortages are forcing UNICEF to supply fuel by road.

On 25 October, OCHA reported that logistical constraints were blocking the road between Bangui and Paoua. The use of secondary roads remains challenging because of logistical constraints, and access is largely limited to towns and populations along main roads.

**Displacement**

**Internal Displacement**

Levels of internal displacement in CAR remain hard to ascertain. As of 5 February, OCHA reported that an estimated 838,000 people, a fifth of the population, have been internally displaced, including over 413,000 in Bangui alone.

OCHA reported that, between 24 and 31 December, 142,000 new IDPs were registered at different sites in Bangui, adding to 189,000 registered in the capital earlier in December. At least half of the displaced are reportedly children.

According to UNHCR, living conditions remain appalling in many sites hosting IDPs in the Bangui area, particularly at the airport and at the monastery of Boy-Rabe. To date, with information limited, levels of displacement caused by violence in early December in other parts of CAR cannot be estimated. As reported in the MIRA, the dynamics of the displacement within CAR vary considerably: rural inhabitants flee their villages and seek refuge in the surrounding countryside, while urban inhabitants seek safety in quartiers. IDPs sites are often characterized by the presence of armed elements, according to the MIRA.

In Bangui, as of 5 February, over 413,000 IDPs have been identified living in 66 sites with an additional over 45,000 in host families and 1,500 others considered to be of concern, the latter being mainly people waiting for repatriation to their countries of origin and seeking refuge in embassies. According to the MIRA, the duration of these displacements ranges from a few days to several months.

**CAR Refugees in neighbouring countries**

As of 6 February, the UNHCR reported that over 268,700 mostly long-term CAR refugees were living neighbouring countries, including 114,000 in Cameroon, 81,000 in Chad and 59,000 in DRC. Among those, 34,400 arrived since 1 December 2013, including 16,700 in Cameroon, 2,000 in Chad, and 12,000 in DRC.

**Refugees in CAR**

As of January, the MIRA indicated that there are an estimated 17,800 long-term refugees in CAR, mostly Congolese and Sudanese. In April and May, an estimated 5,000 people crossed into CAR from Sudan’s Darfur region following tribal clashes. According to local media, 2,200 Sudanese refugees from camp Bambiri demanded to be moved from the camp due to deteriorating security and the dire humanitarian and health situation in the camp.

**Third-country nationals fleeing CAR**

As reported by OCHA on 9 January, an estimated 20,000 people of Chadian origin, but often born in CAR, have crossed into Chad as a result of the ongoing violence over the past weeks. As of early February, UNHCR reported that people of Chadian origin were...
Food Security

The exact number of food insecure people in CAR remains difficult to establish. The ongoing crisis has disrupted the livelihoods of the majority of people who rely on subsistence farming.

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

As reported by WFP on 16 December, the number of food insecure in CAR is as high as 1.3 million people, and the figure is likely to further rise in the coming months. As of late January, FAO reported that out of these 1.3 million people, approximately 60% are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 40% are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The areas most affected by food insecurity are the districts of Ouham, Nana-Gribizi, and Mbomou. Following December episodes of fighting, the situation is also likely to have deteriorated to IPC Phase 4 in the four additional districts of Lobaye, Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, and Ombella-Mpoko. Most IDPs groups are currently facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels.

As reported by FEWSNET in January, IPC Phase 3 levels of food insecurity will prevail until June 2014 for 20% of the population in Bangui and in northwestern and southwestern regions.

According to the MIRA findings, food reserves are almost non-existent. 60% of interviewed households reported to have completely exhausted their food stocks, while the remaining households declared that their food reserves could cover their requirements for up to two weeks in urban areas and one month in rural areas. In early November, WFP expressed concerns that the coming lean season, which usually starts in May after food from the previous harvest runs out, may begin as early as the start of 2014.

According to an EFSA analysis, based on data collected countrywide in September/October 2013, Ouham and Ouham-Pendé provinces in the northwest host the most food insecure people while the prevalence of ‘poor’ and ‘borderline’ FCS (Food Consumption score) is particularly high in Ouham, affecting 50% of households. In November, WFP assessments indicated significant food shortages in the northwestern Nana-Gribizzi province and the northern Yakawa and Bamingui-Bangoran provinces.

As of January, the iNGO Action Contre la Faim reported that insecurity on the roads is limiting the circulation of commercial transporters and the import of additional stocks toward the capital Bangui. The large-scale exile of the Chadian and/or Muslim population is raising fears that the local economy will collapse, as market supply chains and business in general are operated by the Muslim community.

In late January, FAO reported that market supplies were tight and food prices volatile and at high levels, due to the severe and widespread market disruptions caused by the deterioration of security, notably in Bangui and Ouham province.

In December, FAO had reported that, in particular, maize prices in Bangui rose by 31% between January and November 2013, while millet prices increased by 70% between March and October in Ouham province, an important sorghum and millet producing area in the northwest. As reported by FAO in November, the average inflation rate, which surged from 1.3% in 2011 to 5% in 2012, is forecast to rise further to 8% in 2013.

Health and Nutrition

The situation in the health sector was critical even before the eruption of the current crisis, with MSF documenting mortality rates that were well above the emergency threshold in several regions. In June, the iNGO Merlin reported that 3.2 million people were living without access to basic health care.

On 25 October, OCHA stated that 60% of health facilities had been vandalised, looted or destroyed, and over 80% of the local medical doctors had moved to Bangui from the countryside. In mid-October, ICRC reported that no health facilities beyond those provided by humanitarian organisations were operating outside Bangui and drug supplies were running short.

Measles

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

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

Malaria

According to MSF, the number of cases of malaria in the northwest has almost doubled, notably because of the impact of insecurity. Between January and June, MSF recorded 36,910 cases of malaria in Bogoula, a region 50 km from the Chadian border, compared with 19,498 cases during the same period last year. Malaria is estimated to be the cause of 54% of the deaths of children <5 in CAR.

HIV/AIDS

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

Malnutrition

According to the nutrition cluster in late January, malnutrition rates remain high with an estimated 28,000 children <5 suffering from SAM, and 75,000 affected by MAM. A recent
exploratory mission in southwest CAR, in Nola, Boda, Berberati, Gamboula, and Gadzi, revealed increased levels of GAM, ranging from 6%-10.3%. In May, as reported by an IPC seasonal analysis, the prevalence of SAM in children <5 was above the WHO emergency threshold by 2% in nine of 16 prefectures.

Protection

In late October, Amnesty International published a report expressing deep concern about serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the armed conflict. Documented violations included attacks, executions and torture of civilians, indiscriminate shelling, sexual and gender based violence, and forceful recruitment of children. Since March, several international organisations have expressed similar accusations.

On 22 November, UNICEF reported that the number of forcefully recruited child soldiers having joined the ranks of various armed groups amount to between 3,500 and 6,000. This suggests that the number has more than doubled in recent months, a development UNICEF ascribes to the rise of self-defence militias created to counter waves of attacks by former rebels. Humanitarian partners, including UNICEF, have indicated that children, notably among IDPs, are exceptionally vulnerable to abuses. In particular, the re-recruitment of children by armed groups, some of whom had been recently demobilised, remains an issue.

Education

An estimated 2.3 million children have been affected by the ongoing violence.

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

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

WASH

According to the MIRA findings, significant WASH concerns persist in the majority of displacement sites where the concentration of IDPs surpasses the displacement sites limited facilities.

Updated: 11/02/2014

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO  CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

5 February: According to UNHCR, an estimated 6,200 Congolese returnees fleeing violence in South Sudan have been recorded since December 2013 in several localities of Haut-Uele, Orientale Province. Most urgent needs included food, NFIs, education, and health.

4 February: Rwandan Hutu rebel group FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kigali but UN peacekeepers said they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet.

4 February: The Congolese parliament approved the amnesty law included in the peace agreement signed between the Congolese Government and the M23 rebellion in November 2013. It grants amnesty for acts of insurgency, acts of war, and political offenses dating back to 2006. International envoys welcomed the approval and commended the new law for excluding amnesty for crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- At least 6.7 million people are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity (FSNWG, December 2013).
- Ongoing conflict and a fragile security situation in the eastern provinces (mostly North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Orientale).
- Ongoing large-scale displacement with an estimated total of 2.9 million IDPs (OCHA December 2013).
- Impact of CAR crisis: an estimated 56,000 CAR refugees and 3,000 Congolese returnees have fled into DRC (UNHCR, January 2014).
- Impact of South Sudan crisis: an estimated 6,200 Congolese returnees have fled to DRC (UNHCR, February 2014).
- A reported 19,000 cholera cases with 337 deaths between January and October 2013. Katanga is the province worst affected by the epidemic (OCHA, October 2013).

**Politics and Security**

Despite two separate dialogues aimed at tackling the current political, social, and military crisis, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains highly unstable. The country is struggling with a proliferation of armed groups mainly located in the volatile eastern region, with ongoing conflicts in North-Kivu, Katanga, and Orientale provinces. The country is also affected by the security situation in Central African Republic, Sudan, and South Sudan and long standing tensions with its eastern neighbours.

**International and Regional Context**

On 23 January, in a briefing to the UN Security Council, the Group of Experts on the DRC released its final report confirming that M23 are receiving support from Rwanda, including recruitment, troop reinforcement, ammunition deliveries, and fire support. The Group of Experts also indicated that it had received credible information that sanctioned M23 leaders were moving freely in Uganda and that M23 continued to recruit in Rwanda. Both Uganda and Rwanda have been repeatedly accused of backing armed groups active in DRC. Kampala is allegedly sheltering two M23 political and military leaders, and the Ugandan military is currently holding nearly 2,000 former M23 rebels who crossed the border after being routed by DRC’s troops early November.
On 17 January, the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) launched a UN-backed offensive against the Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF/NALU) militia in Beni, North Kivu. The ADF/NALU has been blamed for a spate of attacks and kidnappings around the town of Beni in North Kivu which killed at least 60 civilians in December. The ADF/NALU, believed to number up to 1,400 fighters, is an alliance of groups opposed to the Ugandan government that has operated from bases in eastern Congo since the mid-2000s, undermining Kinshasa’s control in the area. Kampala has previously said it would share intelligence and capture fleeing rebels but would not intervene directly in operations on the ground in the DRC.

On 2 January 2014, a senior military officer, Colonel Ndal, and three other soldiers were killed in an ambush. ADF/NALU rebels were first accused by the Congolese government but some observers suggested it could have been linked to internal strife within the DRC armed forces. A military commission of inquiry is currently gathering information.

In a briefing to the UN Security Council on 13 January, Martin Kobler, Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO), warned that ADF/NALU and the Rwandan Hutu rebel group FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) still pose a serious threat to Congolese civilians. On 4 February, FDLR’s interim leader indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kigali but UN peacekeepers said they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet. Claims by the FDLR rebel group came as UN forces prepared to target the insurgents in coming months.

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

Amid this fragility in the region, the UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, said in a briefing to the UN Security Council on 13 January that the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, signed by 11 nations in February 2013, remains the best chance to achieve sustainable peace, security, cooperation, and development in the Great Lakes Region. The framework includes both national and regional levels of responsibility. It calls for political reforms in Kinshasa, and requests neighbouring countries to stop fostering instability in DRC.

**National Context**

On 30 December 2013, Congolese security forces repelled a wave of coordinated attacks in the capital Kinshasa and other cities in fierce gun battles. DRC troops killed 95 fighters. Eight government soldiers were also killed in the clashes, according to DRC government. Armed youths believed to be loyal to pastor Mukungubila, who challenged President Kabila in elections in 2006, stormed the state television station, the international airport and the military headquarters with the purported aim of ousting the president. On 7 January, the Military Justice of Katanga arrested 57 suspects in Lubumbashi accused of carrying out attacks the attacks in Kinshasa.

Despite the end of fighting between FARDC and the M23 in November 2013, other conflicts drag on in the country, including in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Equateur provinces.

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

On 13 January, despite the signing of a peace agreement between the Congolese Government and the M23 rebellion in Nairobi on 12 December 2013 Martin Kobler, Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in DRC told the UN Security Council that there was evidence to suggest that the M23 rebel group is still recruiting combatants and resuming activities, notably in Ituri. He called on the Congolese Government to speed up disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of M23 ex-combatants and urged neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda to prevent M23 elements from sheltering training troops. In a public statement addressed to Kobler, M23 rebels denied the UN’s accusations.

The peace deal signed in December included the dissolution of M23 as an armed group and the intention of DRC’s government to work for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration into society of former combatants and the drafting of an amnesty law. Approved by the Congolese Parliament on 4 February 2014, it grants amnesty for acts of insubordination, acts of war and political offenses dating back to 2006. International envoys welcomed the approval and commended the new law for excluding amnesty for crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The end of the M23 uprising was followed by several waves of fighters surrendering in the east, including militants from other groups active in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Katanga, namely the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura, the Hunde-dominated Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo, and the Nduma Defence of Congo. The opening of the reintegration process has led other rebel groups such as Raiya Mukombozi and Raiya Mutomboki to announce the end of their rebellion on the condition that their fighters could join government forces.

These latest developments could allow for the gradual stabilisation of the east. However, other armed groups including the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), and various Mayi Mayi militias continue to terrorize the population across eastern DRC. Following one particularly gruesome attack, MONUSCO discovered on 13-14 December the bodies of 21 civilians brutally slaughtered, including children and women, some mutilated, others raped, in Musuku village in the Rwenzori area of Beni, North Kivu Province. The ADF/NALU is suspected to be responsible for these atrocities.

In line with MONUSCO’s new offensives on those rebel groups still active, the UN deployed unarmed surveillance drones early December to monitor rebel activities on the Rwandan and Ugandan borders. On 11 December, the 20,000-strong peacekeeping force announced that its troops have launched a military operation against the FDLR. Ongoing operations to neutralise armed groups in the east also plan to target the ethnic Ngiti.
Patriotic Resistance Force of Ituri (FRPI) and the Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FLPC).

**North Kivu Province**

In Kitchanga (80 km northeast of Goma, Masisi territory) tension between FARDC and elements of the Patriotic Alliance for Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) erupted into armed clashes on 17-18 January. The two armed parties have opposed in the localities of Ngwinge, Butsaluitisi, Kibarizo, Matovu and Muhanga, causing a movement of population to Kitchanga center.

On 16 January, FARDC launched an offensive, dubbed ‘Sokola’ (“clean out in Lingala”) in the eastern Kivu region of Beni to wipe out the ADF/NALU militia. The operation follows the successful November routing out of the M23 militia after a joint UN-FARDC exercise.

On 14 January, Mayi Mayi Sheka rebels, an armed group operating from bases in Walikale territory (North Kivu province), attacked the village of Pinga, leading to a gun fight with FARDC. MONUSCO said four Congolese soldiers were killed in the incident. Around 1,000 civilians initially sought refuge around the UN base in Pinga, but when the fighting subsided, most returned to their homes.

In May 2013, violence escalated in North-Kivu, which harbours over 20 different armed groups. The M23, which has led a rebellion since April 2012, engaged in heavy fighting against government troops, causing the deaths of an estimated 900 people including 700 rebels, between May and early November. At the end of October, M23 rebels suffered a series of severe military defeats that precipitated the effective end of the insurgency. With the support of the UN Force Intervention Brigade, established within the MONUSCO, this victory marked the army’s first over a significant rebel group.

**Katanga Province**

On 29 January, the head of MONUSCO expressed concerns about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Katanga, the country’s wealthiest province. According to OCHA, there are now 400,000 displaced people in the province, a dramatic increase in the last two years. Most affected is the “Triangle of Death”, an area between Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto where more than 600 houses in 11 villages have been destroyed since October 2013. Most attacks in the region were allegedly perpetrated by Mayi-Mayi Katanga rebels.

Since 6 January, violent clashes broke out between FARDC and Mayi-Mayi Kata-Katanga secessionist rebels in Kipushi and Pweto territories, near DRC’s second city Lubumbashi. At least 26 people were reportedly killed. Over the last two months, renewed clashes between Mayi-Mayi militias and government forces have resulted in the burning of whole villages in Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories. The extent of the subsequent displacement is hard to quantify, but hundreds of families have sought refuge in at least eight nearby villages, according to MSF.

**Oriental Province**

On 1 February, OCHA reported that the offensive launched by FARDC against ADF/NALU rebels since mid-January in Beni area (North Kivu), is starting to have negative effects in Ituri district (Oriental). Some elements of the ADF/NALU are said to have retreated into Mambasa forest and Irumu territory. Some observers fear the deterioration of security situation in Mambasa region, where the Mayi-Mayi Morgan rebels also remain active.

The province has been affected by the LRA, a Ugandan militant movement operating in DRC since 2005 and was responsible for 122 incidents from January to September 2013. According to OCHA on 31 December 2013, the last quarter of 2013 saw a sharp increase in LRA incidents with 52 attacks, 14 deaths and 99 reported abductions. Most attacks (65%) occurred in Dungu territory of Haut Uélé district, where attacks have been reported every month since January.

According to ECHO on 10 December, movements of the ADF/NALU from North-Kivu to Ituri caused population displacement. As of 20 November, OCHA reported that violence between FARDC and the FRPI has affected 300,000 people in Sud Irumu since August, displacing 200,000. Sporadic clashes have been reported in the area since 23 August, when four days of fighting in Walendu-Bindi, Bavi, and Olongba reportedly caused a first wave of displacement of 80,000 people.

On 19 November, OCHA reported that attacks from a rebel group caused internal and cross-border displacement in Arru territory, on the border with Uganda, while young civilians reportedly joined into self-defence militias to cope with the absence of the national army in the area. Further west, local sources reported that clashes between the army and an unknown armed group in Wamba caused significant population displacement.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

Access is limited across large parts of DRC, mainly in the east. Insecurity poses a major constraint to the delivery of assistance. According to humanitarian partners, over 250 incidents against humanitarian workers were recorded in 2013.

According to MSF on 9 January, violent clashes over the past two months between Mayi-Mayi militias and government forces in Katanga province have hindered access to medical care and humanitarian assistance. UNICEF reported that Shamwana, Kisele, and Kiambi axis, territory of Manono, remain inaccessible to humanitarian aid. In Shabunda territory, South Kivu, OCHA reported that Raiya Mutomboki rebels were hampering access to medical supplies, potentially affecting 25,000 people.

In Walikale Territory, North Kivu, OCHA reported illegal checkpoints on many roads. On
the Musenge - Hombo axis, southern Walikale, Raiya Mutomboki rebels reportedly erected over thirty barriers on a 35km section where local populations and humanitarian partners are subject to taxes.

Physical and infrastructural impediments to delivering aid are significant due to mountainous and volcanic terrain and a lack of asphalted roads in some areas, especially in Maniema province. On 28 January in Beni territory, North Kivu, OCHA reported that the Semuliki bridge collapsed, cutting off the only secure road connecting Beni, Kasindi and Uganda and impeding access to Kamango and Nobili areas where more than 80,000 people are currently displaced.

Displacement

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

IDPs

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

North-Kivu Province

As of late December, OCHA reported that North Kivu is the most affected province with 1,123,500 IDPs, representing 38% of the total IDP population in the country. As of August, 63% of IDPs were living with host families, 22% in public buildings, and 15% in camps.

Beni territory has been particularly impacted by violence in the last months. Increasing activity of suspected ADF/NALU groups in Kamango and Nobili (north-east area of Beni) continues to raise concerns among humanitarian partners. According to UNICEF, in early January, 60,000 people have been displaced following repeated attacks in the area since July 2013. These figures are expected to increase. Access to Kamango and Nobili remains limited because of insecurity and major administrative constraints.

On 2 January, UNICEF indicated that a reinforced MONUSCO and FARDC presence in Walikale territory led an estimated 22,600 people to return to Pinga Center in early December.

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

South Kivu Province

According to OCHA as of 31 December 2013, there are currently 579,607 IDPs in South Kivu, a decrease compared to September due to improved security in Shabunda territory. Clashes between Nyatura and Raiya Mutomboki in mid-October in Kashovu (Masisi, North Kivu) were the main cause of displacement with 21,000 IDPs.

Since 13 January, OCHA reported that over 4,300 people (872 families) fled violence perpetrated by Raiya Mutomboki rebels in Babira-Bakwami (Punia territory, Maniema Province) to seek refuge in Mapimo (Shabunda territory, South Kivu). Despite the beginning of a process of disarmament of Raiya Mutomboki in Shabunda Territory, protection of civilians has not improved. In 2013, this area recorded an increase in incidents of protection of about 51% (2858 against 1894 in 2012), reflecting a deterioration in the protection of civilians.

As of 2 January, UNICEF reported that over 10,800 people fled Basimukindje II, Bijumbo, and Kigoma (Uvira Plateaux) in December, fleeing clashes between FARDC and Burundian National Forces of Liberation (FNL). As calm was restored, people have started to return, but many of the IDPs goods, including harvests were systematically looted. Meanwhile, almost 90% of the inhabitants of Mutarule (Uvira territory) have returned home, after 7,180 were displaced last August in the areas of Luvungi, Nyakabere, and Sangle localities.

Orientale Province

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

According to OCHA on 22 January, the military operation launched by FARDC against the ADF/NALU in North Kivu on 16 January is starting to affect Ituri District. As reported by local authorities, thousands of people have crossed into Ituri since December. The humanitarian community is highly concerned as capacities are already over-stretched in the district. An estimated 10,000 IDPs from North-Kivu are said to have preventively moved towards Mambasa territory (Ituri), fearing ADF/NALU from neighbouring Beni region (North-Kivu). According to ECHO on 10 December, movements of ADF/NALU from North-Kivu to Ituri caused the displacement of 30,000 people. OCHA expressed serious concerns that Ituri district may turn into a reservoir for both ADF/NALU and persistent M23 forces and further contribute to the deterioration of the already precarious security situation in southern Ituri.

Ituri is facing a crisis in South Irumu Territory, where FRPI militias continues to launch targeted actions against FARDC positions. On 29 December, FRPI rebels attacked Soke (50 km from Bunia), which led to the displacement of 30,000 persons from the city to the forest. An atmosphere of permanent insecurity prevents returns. In November, OCHA reported that violence between FARDC and FRPI had displaced 200,000 people in South Irumu since August, when a first wave of clashes had caused the displacement of 80,000 people.

On 21 January, local media reported that an estimated 12,000 people remain displaced in the forest of Balobe (Bafwasende territory, 260km from Kisangani, Orientale Province). They originally fled clashes between FARDC and Mayi-Mayi.
Following attacks by LRA rebels on 25 December in the villages of Baday and Nambala (Bas-Uele District), Caritas reported the presence of 5,000 IDPs in Bulumasi (Bondo Territory), all urgently needing humanitarian assistance. As of 7 January, over 40 deaths were recorded by Caritas. This influx of IDPs is threatening the food security of local communities.

**Katanga Province**

OCHA reported at the end of December that the number of returnees in Katanga was 232,841 with an increase of over 50,000 returnees in the past three months. This number increased by more than 85%, from 24,000 in June 2012 to 167,000 in September 2013 due to the surrender of several armed groups usually active in the province and the subsequent decrease in violence.

OCHA reported in late December that the number of IDPs in the province had increased from 359,400 in September to 402,000 in December, due to a surge in violence in Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto. Pweto is considered to be the territory most affected by violent events and hosts up to 40% of the IDPs in the province. More than 60% of the displaced are victims of Bakata Katanga fighting and attacks.

According to OCHA on 22 January, more than 4,100 people were forcibly displaced in Kalemie Territory following orders from the Congolese authorities preparing to conduct operations against FDLR and other armed groups. Most IDPs (75%) gathered in a spontaneous site in Kampunda (40 km north of Kalemie). Others are living with host families.

In early January, UNICEF reported that an estimated 36,000 people from Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories had fled fighting and massive human rights violations, including arson attacks, by Mayi-Mayi rebels.

**Maniema Province**

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

**Equateur Province**

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

**Refugees**

The worsening security situation in CAR has resulted in significant refugee movements to DRC, mostly Equateur, despite the closure of the border in December. As of 31 January, the UNHCR said an estimated 56,000 CAR refugees had fled into DRC, including 5,870 in December. Most are staying in three refugee camps along the north-western border.

In late December 2013, UNHCR reported that DRC was hosting over 254,600 refugees among whom 185,000 were from Rwanda and over 15,000 others from Burundi, Sudan, and Uganda.

Roughly 71,750 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 candidates registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 candidates who have opted for local integration. UNHCR also reported that an estimated 430,000 Congolese refugees currently live in neighbouring countries, including 152,900 in Uganda, 72,000 in Rwanda, and 65,000 in Tanzania, and 43,000 in Burundi.

**Returnees**

Following the upsurge of violence in CAR, an estimated 3,000 Congolese returnees were registered by UNHCR in Zongo, North-western Equateur. Another 6,000 Congolese nationals from Batalimo camp were expected to return voluntarily in brief delays.

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

**Food Security**

According to the results of the 10th analysis report on Integrated Food Security Phase Classification undertaken in December 2013, 6.7 million people face food insecurity crisis. The figure represents an increase of 300,000 people compared to June 2013. Despite a slight improvement in North Kivu, the number of regions affected by severe food insecurity has increased. The most severely affected populations (IPC Phase 4) are localized in five territories of three provinces, namely: Katanga (Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories); Maniema (Punia territory); and Orientale Province (Sud Irumu territory). In June 2013, five territories were classified in phase 4 but only in two provinces: North Kivu (Rutshuru, Nyiragongo, Masisi, Walikale); and Katanga (Manono). A relative reduction was reported in the number of territories classified in crisis phase (IPC phase 3) from June to December 2013, from 82 to 68.

Extreme poverty and limited livelihood options are the main reasons for food insecurity across the territory. However, in the conflict-affected eastern areas, food security and livelihoods are negatively impacted by insecurity and displacement, which in turn disrupt agricultural and income generating activities. Host areas of CAR refugees also affect food security in the region. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, lack of social infrastructure, and the effect of aggravating economic shocks. Overall, the whole country experiences a lack of basic infrastructure and general problems related to rural development.

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Cholera**

According to local health authorities, 27,000 cholera cases were recorded in 2013, including 491 deaths, reflecting a fatality rate of 1.8%. In 2012, 30,753 cholera cases, resulting in 709 deaths were recorded, reflecting an increase from 21,700 cases in 2011. The surge in cholera cases is largely the result of limited access to safe drinking water, poor hygiene conditions, and poor sanitation. The critical period for the emergence of new cases usually extends until end March.

According to OCHA, the cholera epidemic continues to gain ground in Katanga Province. As of 23 January 2014, the province had recorded 407 cases including 12 deaths, in 15 health zones, with a case fatality of 2.9%. Kabalo health district reached critical levels with 50 cholera cases recorded between 23 December and 7 January. Katanga is the province most affected by cholera with 13,726 cases and 348 deaths registered in 2013 against 6,930 cases and 223 deaths in 2012. The health district of Lubumbashi alone recorded almost half of cholera cases in the province.

Cholera outbreaks in North and South Kivu Provinces persist, due primarily to consumption of contaminated water, as municipal sanitation systems have fallen into disrepair. According to local sources as of 17 January, 224 suspected cases of cholera, including three deaths, have been registered in three weeks in Sange, Ruzizi health zone - South Kivu. OCHA reported 108 suspected cholera cases including 11 deaths in Masisi health zone, North-Kivu between 26 December 2013 and 15 January 2014.

**Malaria**

Over four million cases of malaria have been reported since the beginning of 2013, 8,500 deaths were registered as of 17 June (21,000 deaths in the whole 2012). As of late November, OCHA reported a threefold increase in the number of malaria cases recorded in the former M23 rebel stronghold of Rutshura (North Kivu) compared to past years. While the cumulative number never exceeded 25,000 per year between 2009 and 2012, over 76,000 cases have been recorded in the area so far in 2013.

**Measles**

According to local health authorities, DRC recorded over 89,000 cases of measles in 2013, including 1,392 deaths.

**Malnutrition**

The national rate for Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) stands at 11%. According to UNICEF as of December 2013, an estimated two million children <5 suffer from SAM. Local capacity to respond to malnutrition is limited, and health stakeholders struggle to monitor epidemics and displacements, key contributors to the high rates of acute malnutrition. Early January, UNICEF reported alarming rates of GAM in Katanga, especially in Manono (19.8%), Malemba Nkulu (19.3%) and Kambove (18.8 %).

**Protection**

Insecurity remains a key concern across all conflict-affected areas of DRC, with both armed groups and armed forces accused of repeated abuses against civilians, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, looting, violence, and executions. Sexual violence and conscription of children are considered the two main protection issues.

*Updated: 11/02/2014*

**Djibouti ** **Food insecurity**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**


**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement:** The continued influx of refugees from Somalia is leading to an increase in humanitarian needs in both rural and urban areas. UNHCR reported that as of 10 September, there were 18,725 Somali refugees in Djibouti, including 630 who had arrived since January 2013.

**Food Security:** Several consecutive years of drought have led to a critical food security situation in Djibouti where an estimated 70,000 people are classified as food insecure. Most households affected by severe and moderate food insecurity are concentrated in the rural areas of Ali Sabieh, Dikhil and Obock.

As of November, FEWSNET reported that food security has been improving for most pastoral households, which currently experience Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2). The July to September rains were near average to above average and well distributed, which should allow food security to remain at steady levels from November through March. Staple food prices remained generally stable from September to October, and availability of resources and income from the current season is supporting minimal consumption requirements.

Continued stressed acute food insecurity is expected for most poor households in Djibouti City’s urban areas of Baabla, Radiska, and Baulaos and is anticipated to heighten through December. High unemployment rates (up to 48%) and high staple prices are causing urban to peri-urban migration to areas such as Baabla. The food voucher programme for vulnerable households (from July through September covering Ramadan and Eid), in addition to humanitarian and food assistance programmes, has reportedly improved access to food.

**Health and Nutrition:** According to FEWSNET and WFP, as of August, GAM rates for children <5 stood at 17.9%, while chronic malnutrition was 35.2%. Roughly 33% of children <5 are underweight, and 15% of women of reproductive age are acutely malnourished.

*Reviewed: 22/01/2014*

**Gambia ** **Food Insecurity**
Key Developments

30 January: OCHA reported that 285,000 people are at risk of food insecurity, caused by both flooding and drought exacerbated by a lack of proper irrigation and poor land use practices which have led to low productivity.

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

Key Concerns

- 285,000 are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA).
- 48,800 children suffer from malnourishment, an increase of 19,300 in comparison to the July 2013 figures (OCHA).

Politics and Security

On 3 October, the UK Foreign Office released a statement saying it very much regrets that the Gambian government has withdrawn its membership of the British Commonwealth. Gambia’s withdrawal was accompanied by statements branding the UK and most of its former colonies a neo-colonial institution.

Humanitarian context and needs

Disaster

Heavy rainfall caused damaging floods in the Sahel region. Compounded by a lack of Early Warning Systems, the floods affected 3,300 Gambians. Two were killed, 216 persons were displaced, and many others were left homeless or with compromised livelihood options. OCHA indicates that as of 30 January, the affected population still remains vulnerable.

Displacement

OCHA reported as of 30 January, that 8,300 refugees, mostly Senegalese from the Casamance region, reside within Gambia. Smaller numbers of refugees come from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Togo.

Food Security

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 285,000 people are at risk of food insecurity, caused by both flooding and drought exacerbated by a lack of proper irrigation and poor land use practices which have led to low productivity. In November, FAO reported that continued food assistance is needed, especially for vulnerable populations. Coping mechanisms have eroded due to the 2011 Sahel Crisis and heavy flooding in July/October 2012 and August/September 2013, leaving households vulnerable. Access to food continues to be constrained by high food prices and the lingering effects of the Sahel food crisis. Two thirds of households in the pocket of the country face food insecurity, of which 5.5% suffer from ‘moderate’ or ‘severe’ food insecurity.

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

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

Health and Nutrition

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

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

OCHA reports that poor health service delivery, limited coverage of sanitation, and low access to clean water are leading causes of water-borne diseases as diarrhoea (among children <5), cholera, and meningitis.

Updated: 10/02/2014

MALI CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 February: A visiting delegation from the UN Security Council met with both President Keïta and representatives of the three main armed groups and called upon both sides to push forward with peace talks. The UNSC express concerned that a failure to do so could risk a further radicalization of fighters and undo fragile security gains made in recent months.

KEY CONCERNS

- The security situation, particularly in northern Mali remains volatile. Civilian rule was re-established in the summer of 2013, but a truce with Tuareg separatists in the north remains fragile. Banditry, car-jacking and kidnapping incidents have been reported in the north and access to aid workers is limited. Security in and around the northeastern region of Kidal, where French military troops are largely based, is of particular concern due to a lack of law enforcement.
- 218,000 people remain displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. Mali is also hosting over 14,000 refugees from countries such as Ivory Coast and Mauritania (OCHA).

- At least 800,000 people across Mali are classified as severely food insecure, 2,300,000 are considered moderately food insecure (OCHA, 27 January).

- An estimated 4,500 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in the Bamako, Koulikoro and Segou districts (UNICEF).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Mali is facing several challenges in 2014, among else security consolidation in the north and further strengthening of the constitutional order after the presidential and legislative elections.

On 3 February, a visiting delegation from the UN Security Council met with both President Keïta and representatives of the three main armed groups and called upon both sides to push forward with peace talks. The UNSC express concerned that a failure to do so might risk a further radicalization of fighters and undo fragile security gains made in recent months. On the same day, AFP reported that according to the jihadist communications monitoring SITE Intelligence Group, a new Mali-focused jihadist media body should be created to counter ‘flawed reporting’ on the military situation in Mali.

Following a second round of parliamentary elections in December, many polling stations reported voter turnout as low as 15% due to factors such as fears about security and voter fatigue. Results declared President Keïta’s party, the Rally for Mali, as winning most of the votes. European Union observers said that the elections had met international standards.

The second round of voting was seen as important due to the low number of determined seats established in the first round. The financial aid pledged by donors to rebuild Mali should now be unlocked and used to develop

A June 2013 ceasefire agreement led to residents of Kidal, an MNLA stronghold and lawless desert north, being allowed to vote in both rounds of the presidential election in July and August.

On 19 January, during a meeting in Algiers, Malian President Boubacar Keïta welcomed the Algerian governments’ initiative to hold exploratory talks with Malian rebel groups in preparation of possible inclusive peace negotiation talks with the Malian government.

On 14 January, President Keïta concluded a working visit to Mauritania aimed to improve security and military cooperation, and the organisation of and support for (voluntary) return of Malian refugees from Mauritania.

Security Context

In January 2012, armed conflict which Tuareg rebels took control and declared the secession of a new state. The conflict was then complicated by a military coup in March 2013 and, later, fighting between Tuareg and Islamist rebels. In response to territorial gains and a push south by Islamist fighters, and at the request of the Malian government, the French military launched Operation Serval January 2013. Malian and French forces have now recaptured most of the north, but the security situation remains volatile.

Security incidents and human rights violations, including reprisals against returnees and others, continue to be reported. A number of so-called “self-defense militias”, which were formed in 2012 in opposition to the separatist and/or Islamist armed groups and function outside state-controlled security structures, remain active in the northern regions. In addition, the security in and around Kidal is of specific concern, since no law enforcement mechanisms are operational in this area.

The end of December was marked by renewed tensions in the north of Mali, including jihadi attacks, inter-communal violence, and clashes between Malian forces and local armed groups/armed banditry. The security situation in the northern region, where al-Qaeda linked militants are known to be operating, remains volatile. Additionally, unexploded ammunition and landmines remain a significant threat.

Moreover, counter-terrorism and security measures were scaled-up ahead of the December parliamentary elections, especially following an earlier announcement on 29 November by the rebel Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) that the group was ending the ceasefire and taking up arms. While no major incidents were reported, the elections followed a recent upsurge in rebel attacks against African troops in the north, resulting in low voter turnout, some as low as 15%, in most polling stations.

On 29 November, the MNLA ended the ceasefire and took up arms, marking a rupture in the ongoing process to honour the June peace deal, which had led the creation of an alliance of three Tuareg and Arab rebel movements to form a united front in the peace talks with the government. Before the MNLA, the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA) announced their merger and committed to the national dialogue, President Keïta created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region to seek solutions to the Tuareg issue, an lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion.

International Presence

One year after French and African military intervention recaptured northern Mali from Islamist and separatist armed groups the stability of this Sahel region is still heavily reliant on the presence of armed foreign troops. A multitude of military actors, namely Malian and French armies, The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) contingents, and MNLA troops are maintaining a presence in Kidal, where insecurity linked to terrorism remains of concern.

At the request of Mali’s transitional government, French military forces began a major intervention by air and land on 11 January to counter an offensive by Islamist militia moving from northern to central Mali, the Oxford Research Group reports. West African and Chadian troops joined the French troops in the second half of January. Eight NATO air forces plus Sweden and the UAE provided non-combat assistance with air transport, aerial
refuelling and reconnaissance. Over four weeks, French-led forces recaptured all of the towns in the northern half of Mali, which had been seized by Islamist and separatist militia in March-April 2012.

On 22 January, French forces killed at least 11 suspected Islamist fighters and seized large amounts of weapons and ammunition during an operation a hundred kilometres north of Timbuktu. French troops continue to conduct security operations across northern Mali to locate and ‘neutralise’ suspected Islamist militants. In late February, French and Chadian troops captured the main Malian rear base of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), in the Ifoghas massif close to the Algerian frontier, killing its emir in the Sahara, Abou Zeïd. Reduced numbers of French forces now support Malian and African forces, rebadged in July as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

On January 15, the second contingent of Chinese peacekeepers arrived in Mali to support the efforts of the MINUSMA mission. On 20 January, five Chadian MINUSMA peacekeepers, were slightly injured when their car hit a landmine during a patrol about 30 km north of Kidal.

On 14 January, President Hollande confirmed France’s military presence will remain at 1,600 soldiers in February and 1,000 by the end of spring (RFI)

Humanitarian Context and Needs

The outbreak of armed conflict between the government and Tuareg rebels in northern Mali in January 2012, a military coup in March 2013 and ongoing French military operations against Islamist fighter in the Kidal region, have led to large-scale displacement and a deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Mali, notably in the north.

Access

State authorities and humanitarian aid workers are impeded from working in the northern regions due to the volatile security situation. In the central and southern regions, according to OCHA, humanitarian access continues to improve and aid is increasing in accessible parts. The destruction of infrastructure, and a lack of materials to support basic services are also major challenges.

Displacement

IDPs

On 27 January, OCHA reported that 218,000 people remain displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict in the country. This figure marks a decrease of over 35,000 from the end of December and is a reflection of improving security conditions. The situation however remains volatile, notably in the northern areas. The capital Bamako hosts the largest number of IDPs (62,500), followed by the northern regions of Gao (47,000), Timbuktu (45,000) and Kidal (34,000).

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

Refugees

To date, 168,000 Malian have taken refuge in neighbouring countries. Mali is also hosting over 14,000 refugees from countries including Ivory Coast and Mauritania.

Returnees

On 21 January, USAID and IOM report that from 12 to 18 January, 195 displaced Malians returned to the south from the northern region. At the same time, 3,105 displaced returned to the northern regions. The majority of people returned to Timbuktu (1,942) and Gao (1,046).

As of 9 January, UNHCR states the security situation in northern Mali remains volatile. There is a risk of reprisal attacks for refugee and IDP returnees. Additionally, socio-economic conditions have not yet been restored to pre-conflict levels. In light of the normalisation in the southern regions, UNHCR is no longer calling for a suspension of forcible returns for those who had their claim for international protection rejected. Therefore, claims for international protection will now be assessed in accordance with established asylum procedures taking into account individual circumstances.

On 14 January, IOM announced an airlift to evacuate 550 Malian migrants (of a total of 3,000) from the Central African Republic, following a request from the Malian government. 541 Malians were evacuated previously, including a special flight of 260 Malian nationals (mostly women and children) on the 6th of January. 750 others are in urgent need of evacuation. Malian authorities will assist destitute and traumatized migrants upon arrival.

Food Security

On 1 February, eleven humanitarian organizations called upon the international community to respond to a large- looming food crisis in the country, particularly in the north.

On 27 January, OCHA reported that approximately 3 million people are affected by food insecurity. More than 800,000 of them are in a critical situation. Many households are expected to continue to face food insecurity due to the bad result of the last crop year in some areas, and the consequences of the 2012/2013 conflict. The estimated results of the agro-pastoral season, according to the Government and its partners, indicate a total drop of 9% in agricultural outputs compared to the five-year average (2008-2013), and a drop of 6% compared to the difficult 2011-2012 crop year.

On 20 January, NGO Afrique Verte stated the number of people facing food insecurity and in need of immediate assistance in the northern region stands at an estimated 1.3 million. Return of displaced populations continues to put pressure on local resources. In Mopti, in the Inner Niger Delta region, the situation in 16 municipalities (Bandiagara and Koro) are classified at risk of food shortages, and 18 (Djenne, Mopti and Douentza) are in economic difficulties.
On January 16, FAO published a report stating cereal production in 2013 was affected by irregular rains and civil insecurity in the northern part of the country. Moreover, agriculture has been seriously damaged in recent months in parts of the country due to significant population displacements and labour shortages accordingly; disruptions in commodity movement and cross-border trade; a lack of agricultural support services; fragmentation of the markets and other difficulties related to the civil strife. In the northern part of the country, the strife and lingering effects of the 2012 food crisis had an adverse, longer-term impact on household assets and savings, leaving them therefore in need of food and non-food assistance to restore livelihoods. These problems have been exacerbated in 2013 by erratic rains and extended dry spells throughout the growing season of September-October 2013, which caused a reduction in planted area and affected yields. Additionally, FAO states that rice prices have been following a downward trend for several months, which may affect rice producers’ income and food security.

On 16 January, OCHA reported that the region around Bandiagara, Mopti region, is increasingly struggling with a crisis of poor harvests and near-total collapse of its tourist industry. A December 2013 food-security assessment by the government and partners showed Bandiagara at crisis levels (Phase 3) with 167,479 inhabitants either at crisis or emergency levels.

Health and Nutrition

The Global Nutrition Cluster on 27 December, presented an infographic describing instances of severe acute malnutrition in Mali, stating the worst regions are Bamako, Koulikoro and Segou with over 4,500 children affected. Suffering from moderate acute malnutrition are 3,000 to 4,499 children in the regions of Kayes, the west of the Bamako district, Timbuktu, and the western parts of Gao district.

As of 16 January, according to local sources, the shortage of cash in rural areas has prevented people from seeking treatment for malnutrition in Bandiagara and other towns in Mopti region, and access to basic water, education, and health services remains limited.

As of late November, a SMART Survey indicated GAM stands at 8.6% in the southern regions. Due to insecurity in the north, the survey was only conducted in the region of Gao, where the GAM rate reportedly stood at 13.5%. According to UNICEF in July, an estimated 660,000 children <5 suffered from acute malnutrition in 2013, including 210,000 from severe acute malnutrition.

Protection

From January 2012 to December 2013, OCHA reported that the Protection GBV-sub-cluster identified nearly 6,000 cases of violence affecting women and girls, including 532 cases of sexual violence, 521 cases of physical aggression, 827 cases of psychosocial violence, 1,201 cases of denial of resources, 1,233 cases of violence related to traditional practices (i.e. forced marriage, FGM). Additionally, OCHA stated that GBV still remains widely unpunished, because of the weakness of the legal system in the crisis affected northern regions, as well as the victim’s failure to report these cases out of fear for stigmatization.

Updated: 05/02/2014
role in supporting strategic options for the continent’s development of the post-2015 UNFPA agenda were discussed. Mauritania’s upcoming African Union presidency in the field of production/export of electricity was also discussed, specifically with regard to the improvement of road infrastructure and better access to electricity.

On 3 January, President Abdel Aziz reinstated Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghda as the Prime Minister. Being the President’s trustee since the 2008 coup in which he seized power – only to be elected a year later – the extension of Laghda’s position does not come as a surprise.

As of early January, Bloomberg reports that Mauritania’s economy has grown more than 6% for a third consecutive year in 2014. The central bank aims to spur economic growth and keep inflation stable by fighting poverty and boosting employment opportunities.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

**Refugees**

Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali. As of 31 December, OCHA reported that Mauritania currently hosts 66,392 Malian refugees. UNHCR reports that almost all refugees live in Mbéra camp, a remote desert location on the border with Mali with significant security challenges. According to UNICEF, 60% of camp residents are women and children and many have been in the camp for almost two years, resulting in overlapping emergency and medium-term needs. This remote area of Mauritania, where Mbéra camp is located, is poor, has high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, and has few government services. Given security problems and the inaccessibility in areas north of Mali, there are no clear return figures. At the moment, a tripartite agreement is being prepared between UNHCR, Mali and host countries to facilitate safe return of refugees (UNHCR).

**Disasters**

As of early October, weeks of consecutive rainfall since mid-August had caused flooding in much of the capital, Nouakchott, and the six surrounding regions of Brakna, Tagant, Hodh Ech Chargul, Assaba, Inchiri, and Adrar. According to the Department of Civil Protection, damage caused by the flooding is unprecedented in the region. IFRC notes that over 5,600 people were affected by the flooding; 2,305 people were displaced and at least eight people died, according to OCHA.

**Food Security**

On 30 January, OCHA reported that 470,000 people are at risk of food insecurity, marking a decrease of 90,000 compared to January 2013. Another 140,000 are still affected by the 2013 floods. Overall vulnerability of these food insecure and drought affected populations is exacerbated by increasing food prices and a scarcity of resources. Limited access to water and hygiene services is aggravating the spread of epidemics, such as Rift Valley fever, cholera and meningitis, especially during the rainy season.

On 28 January, FAO reported that despite the 2013 above-average harvest, the food security outlook remains uncertain in various regions due to the ongoing impact of last year’s erratic rains and the presence of 66,392 Malian refugees in the east of the country.

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

Harvesting of the 2013 cereal crops was completed in December. In spite of irregular rains in certain areas, an above-average cereal harvest was recorded for the second year in a row. The 2013 cereal output was estimated by a joint CILSS/FAO/FEWSNet Crop Assessment Mission to be at some 297,000 tonnes, similar to last year’s bumper crop and 33% above the previous five years average. By contrast, pastures have been affected by insufficient rains in several regions, notably in Brakna, Gorgol, and Guidimaka.

As of late November, according to FEWSNET, Mauritania is expected to face Minimal Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 1) in most parts of the country due to pastoral conditions and harvests generally comparable to those of an average year, regular and adequate supply markets, ability to access food reinforced by functional assistance programmes and favourable terms of trade. In the northwest, rain-fed crops areas (central and northern Guidimaka, eastern and northern Gorgol and northern Brakna) anticipate a sharp decline in rain-fed cereal production, the only resource for most of poor households. Poor livestock conditions in Guidimaka (North) and Brakna (South-West) will also lead to early transhumance in February/March 2014, compared to April/May in a normal year. Grain prices are relatively stable compared to October, but remain above the average of the last five years (20-40%) due to high prices in Mali’s source markets. All this will result in Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) for this group of households between January and March of 2014.

A locust outbreak that started in November in northwest Mauritania has almost been contained following intensive control efforts which include ground control operations against hopper groups, bands, and adult groups treating nearly 15,000 hectares in northwest Mauritania (FAO). Locust infestations declined by end December, however, scattered immature adults are still present in the northwest and one immature swarm formed in the Banc d’Arguin National Park. Breeding is likely to occur in north- and northeast Mauritania due to December’s mid-month rains, as well as on a small and limited scale in certain areas with conditions favourable to locusts. Mauritania experienced a large locust attack in 2004 in which 16,000 km² of crops were ravaged, threatening nearly a million people with starvation.

**Health and Nutrition**

On January 11, the Mauritanian government stated it was determined to reduce maternal (600:100,000 - PANA) and infant death rates as well as intensify efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and contagious diseases.

**Malnutrition**
As of 30 January, OCHA reports 31,000 children suffer from SAM with another 95,000 children suffering from MAM. According to ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan for Sahel 2014, over 114,000 Mauritanian children affected by Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) needed therapeutic treatment in 2013. Findings from the July SMART survey indicate that six regions have reached or exceed the emergency threshold of 15% for GAM. The national MAM rate remains below 12.8%. The estimated caseload for 2014 is 125,263 children with GAM, including 30,741 children with SAM. This is an increase of more than 25% from 2013.

Updated: 10/02/2014

SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new development this week. Last update was: 24/01/2014

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity remains widespread across Somalia, particularly in the south central areas where armed non-state actors are active.

- Insecurity and bureaucratic impediments continue to affect humanitarian access. Recurrent attacks on aid workers pose a serious constraint, and the movement of personnel and commodities is frequently disrupted by events of violence across the country.

- An estimated 1.1 million Somalis are IDPs and reside mainly in the south central region, with high concentrations in the capital Mogadishu (UNHCR). Additionally, more than 1 million Somalis are registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, mostly in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Yemen.

- An estimated 857,000 people at Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4), 74% of whom are believed to be IDPs. Additionally, 2 million people are considered to be at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2), which represents one-third of Somalia’s population. More than 203,000 children <5 are acutely malnourished, most of them in South Central Somalia (FSNAU, February).

Politics and Security

Political Context

On 21 January, Prime Minister Ahmed nominated a new Cabinet, following a vote in the Somalia Federal Parliament. Following the dismissal of Prime Minister Shirdon on 2 December, Somalia’s President Mahamud appointed Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed as a new PM on 12 December, ending a governmental crisis which raised significant concerns over the security situation. Infighting between presidents and prime ministers has been a recurrent issue for previous Somali governments, and while the swift replacement of Shirdon is seen as a positive development, the political situation remains tense and unstable. The choice of new PM Ahmed, an economist, is in line with the government’s effort to fight corruption, following reports accusing Somali officials of economic and political collaboration with Al Shabaab militants.

Security Context

Instability has characterized Somalia for over two decades, with conflict intensifying significantly from 2006 onward. Amid the context of multiple competing powers across the country, violence is widespread across the country with South-Central Somalia especially affected by the activism of armed non-state actors, including the militant Islamist group Al Shabaab, and the northern territories of Puntland and Somaliland plagued by inter-communal violence.

On 2 January, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a twin bombing which killed 11 people in the capital Mogadishu, and said the attack represented the start of its 2014 insurgency campaign. On 27 December, a suspected al-Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab bomb attack killed at least eight people in the Daynille district of Mogadishu. Although Al Shabaab did not claim responsibility for the attack, the group has carried out several large-scale attacks against various targets across the country over the past year.

On 10 December, suspected Al Shabaab militants attacked the Ministry of Social Affairs in the southern city of Kismayo in the Jubaland region, killing a security guard. The Jubaland region, which borders Kenya and Ethiopia, has been repeatedly affected by violence due to rivalries between multiple forces including clan militias, Al Shabaab, and Kenyan and Ethiopian soldiers. In June, fighting between rival Somali warlords claimed an estimated 100 lives and injured more than 350, in the heaviest clashes the city had seen in over four years. In the aftermath of the June clashes, the central government called for the withdrawal of Kenya Defence Force troops from Kismayo believing that they sided with one of the militias.

On 6 December, a Member of Parliament was killed by a car bomb in the capital Mogadishu, three days after an attack on the Intelligence and National Security Agency in the capital Mogadishu, Hiraan region, in an attempt to seize control of the area at the end of November.

In early November, a suspected Al Shabaab car bomb attack killed at least four people in Mogadishu, including a government official, and injured 15 others. On 3 September, Al Shabaab ambushed President Mahamud’s military-escorted motorcade, firing rocket-propelled grenades at the convoy. The President reportedly escaped unhurt. In mid-June, Al Shabaab militants launched a high-profile assault targeting the UN compound in Mogadishu. The attack killed 15 and caused all UN missions outside Mogadishu International Airport to be suspended for 24 hours.

Until late-2010, Al Shabaab still controlled a significant part of Mogadishu and surrounds, but the past three years marked considerable strategic gains by the joint Somali and AU-led campaign, especially since 2011 with the involvement of Ethiopian and Kenyan troops. The expansion of the federal government has pushed Al Shabaab to expand both...
southwards and to the northeast, and even though the number of attacks and fatalities has decreased between 2010 and 2013, Al Shabaab retains strongholds in parts of rural southern and central Somalia and in the mountains of the northern semi-autonomous Puntland region. Although security in the capital Mogadishu has improved since its lowest point in August 2011, attacks by Al Shabaab in urban centres and along transport axes are common. Besides Al Shabaab’s activism, the capital is also witnessing sporadic violence perpetrated by other unidentified armed groups targeting mostly soldiers and security forces.

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

Puntland

On 8 January, former Somalia Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali was elected as president of Somalia’s semi-autonomous region of Puntland, in a tightly contest poll unseating the incumbent President Farole. The elections were initially set for July 2013, but were postponed due to the risk of violence and tension between the central government and Puntland’s authorities. The region, which is home to 2.5 million people, declared itself to be semi-autonomous from Somalia in 1998, at a time when fighting raged through most of the country. In late August, the President Farole said the central government was undermining plans to create a federal system, and that he would develop potential oil resources in his area even without a revenue-sharing deal with Mogadishu. On 5 August, Puntland cut all ties with the central government in a clear sign of distrust toward Mogadishu, on the grounds that central authorities refuse to share power and foreign aid with the region.

Puntland is also struggling to uproot Al Shabaab from the region and has scaled up operations in the Bari area, from where insurgents launch their attacks. On 5 December, a suspected Al Shabaab car bomb targeting a military vehicle reportedly killed 10 people and wounded 30 in Bossaso town. A month earlier, 40 insurgents staged a failed attempt to free militants convicted in the same locality. On 29 September, the defence forces of Puntland raided Al Shabaab positions in the Galgala Mountains, reportedly inflicting casualties.

Military Operations and International Presence

In the beginning of October, US Special Forces raided Barawe, Lower Shabelle, to capture Abdikadar Mohamed Abdikadar, the alleged link between the Al Shabaab Islamist group in Somalia with Al-Qaeda and Kenya militants. Al Shabaab has controlled the town since 2008. According to residents in Barawe, Al Shabaab sent 200 masked fighters with heavy machine guns as reinforcement in response to the US operation. On the same day as the raid in Somalia, US forces seized alleged Al-Qaeda leader Anas Al Liby from the Libyan capital Tripoli. On 28 October, an air strike in southern Somalia close to Barawe killed two senior commanders of Al Shabaab.

On 19 September, African Union (AU) troops backed by Somali government forces reportedly captured Mahaday district (Middle Shabelle region) from Al Shabaab, marking the third town in the region to be taken after Jowhar and Balca. According to local sources, heavy clashes between Al Shabaab and government forces aided by AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops continued in Mahaday on 2 October.

According to the AU on 9 May, an estimated 3,000 AU peacekeepers had been killed in Somalia since 2007. Despite recent success by Somali forces and AU peacekeepers against Al Shabaab fighters, tensions exist between the different military forces involved and local authorities to the extent that, on 22 April, Ethiopia officially announced its wish to remove troops from Somalia. However, it has no plans for a complete withdrawal from the fight against Al-Qaeda linked insurgents. During March-April, the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Hudur, a town in the southern Bakool region, led to its immediate occupation by Al Shabaab.

In early March, the UN Security Council agreed to maintain deployment of the AU Mission until February 2014 and partially lift its 20-year weapons ban for a year to boost the government’s capacity to fight off Al Shabaab insurgency. In a similar move, the US declared that Somalia was again eligible to receive defence articles and services, which may be seen as a tangible illustration of improving relations between Washington and Mogadishu.

As threats from Al Shabaab persist and attacks continue both in Somalia and the Horn of Africa, the AU's Peace and Security Council endorsed in November the recommendation to boost AMISOM with an additional 4,400 soldiers, taking its total strength to more than 22,000. The UN Secretary General urged member nations to provide AMISOM with financial and military support. Following the Westgate attacks in Kenya, the UN envoy for Somalia called for additional AU troops to counter the 5,000 Al Shabaab fighters, which the UN said posed an international threat.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Humanitarian Access

According to OCHA as of mid-January, insecurity continues to affect humanitarian work, with reports of aid workers being targeted through arrests and detention by armed groups in late December and early January in the areas of Bakool, Bay, Lower and Middle Juba. In southern Somalia where floods affected the population since November, humanitarian access is reportedly hampered by bureaucratic impediments restraining the recruitment of staff and the implementation of assistance operations.

As of late September, Al Shabaab continued to interfere with relief operations in rural areas across southern Somalia, particularly in Middle Juba region and parts of Bakool, Bay, and Gedo regions. In southern and central Somalia, humanitarian access remains challenging. The withdrawal of Al Shabaab from key towns in southern Somalia has enabled an increased international presence in some areas. Insecurity in these areas, however,
continues to affect trade and market activities and the delivery of humanitarian assistance. FSNAU notes that conflict has disrupted the movement of food and other basic commodities in most parts of these regions, particularly in Bakool. Attacks on aid workers pose a serious constraint for humanitarian operations.

On 14 August, MSF who had been operating in Somalia since 1991 announced an immediate stop to all operations in Somalia as a result of increased attacks on its staff. On August 15, the government urged MSF to reconsider its withdrawal stating that the decision will directly affect the lives of thousands of vulnerable people and could lead to a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. On 15 August, Al Shabaab militants looted MSF hospitals in Dinsor (Bay region) and Mararey (Middle Juba region) towns.

Displacement

Internal Displacement

According to UNHCR, an estimated 1.1 million Somalis are IDPs and reside mainly in the South-Central region, with high concentrations in Mogadishu where 369,000 people live in makeshift camps to shelter from cyclical drought, famine, and armed conflict. In January 2013, the authorities announced their plan to relocate IDPs from the capital to camps outside the city, as a consequence of urban development. As a result, the UN estimates that several thousands of displaced persons were evicted during August and September 2013. According to UNHCR, about 27,000 people were evicted from different settlements in Mogadishu in November and December, and while the official relocation plans had been put on hold by the government, trends show that eviction of IDPs by private land-owners has recently increased. The proposed solution is to move the displaced to the Deynile district, west of the city centre. This area is considered particularly insecure due to Al Shabaab’s activism, and ownership issues raise the question whether the land is public property and thus available for relocation purposes.

Refugees

As of October, UNHCR reported that more than one million Somalis are registered refugees in neighbouring countries, mostly in Kenya (around 582,000), Ethiopia (246,000), and Yemen (240,000). On 10 November, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish the legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. Since the attack on the Westgate Mall in September, the Kenyan government has pushed to expedite the return of these refugees, citing national security concerns. The international community has warned that a premature return could result in these refugees becoming IDPs in Somalia, where they would face the same protection challenges as IDPs currently living in and around Mogadishu. On 23 November, the Kenyan government ordered the shut-down of the Dadaab refugee camps, and requested that all UN agencies supporting refugee operations in Kenya move their programmes to Somalia, on the grounds that the repatriation process had begun. On 25 November, UNHCR declared it will not close the camps, as these measures were not part of the agreement signed earlier in November.

Disasters

According to OCHA as of mid-January, seasonal rains in the Ethiopian highlands and across Somalia caused flooding in Middle Shabelle region, affecting over 80,000 people, mainly in Jowhar district. The FAO reported that an estimated 8,000 hectares of land were inundated, and the Food Security Cluster included an additional 30,000 people in its November programming. According to AMISOM, the situation has been further compounded by the early seasonal outbreak of clan fighting. Due to insecurity in the area, a breach in the Shabelle river embankment could not be fixed, resulting in flood water continuing to pour into the plain. Water has contaminated wells, disrupted markets, destroyed crops and delayed planting crucial to the next crop season. Additionally, a major front line between AU troops (AMISOM) and the armed group Al Shabaab is limiting access and the provision of assistance. As of 3 December, FAO reported a significant reduction of rainfall activities, downgrading the flood risk level to moderate for the Shabelle river and minimal for the Juba river basin.

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

Food Security

While the situation has improved since the 2011 famine, when the number of people requiring urgent assistance peaked at 4 million, FSNAU reported that there has been only a very marginal improvement since August 2013, due to insecurity, disasters and a below average harvest.

As of February, and according to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit’s (FSNAU) reporting on an assessment conducted in November-December 2013, the food security situation has slightly improved. The number of people projected to be at Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity in the first semester of 2014 decreased from 870,000 to 857,000. The number of Somalis at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2) reduced to 2 million people from 2.3 million, however their situation remains fragile, and any significant shock could put them back at Crisis or Emergency levels.

An estimated 74% of the people experiencing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity are considered to be IDPs. Most of them are located in rural and urban areas in the northern regions of Sanaag, Sooil, Bari, and Nugaal, the central regions of Mudug, Galgaduud and Hiran, and the southern regions of Middle Shabelle, Middle and Lower Juba.

In the northeastern regions of Bari and Nugaal in Puntland, the areas hit by a devastating
cyclone last November, the widespread loss of assets, livelihoods and livestock still present a challenge to the local population. In the south of the country, a deterioration of the food security situation is expected in parts of Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle and Hiran regions. This is mainly due to the recent floods and the poor performance of the Deyr rainy season (October-November) which affected production levels, and caused displacement and livelihood disruption. In most urban centers, the population is expected to remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels due to the relative stability of food prices.

Health and Nutrition

Malaria

Malaria is a major health problem and represents the leading cause of death in <5 children, while tuberculosis incidence in Somalia is one of the highest in the world with 25,000 expected cases every year, trending upward. Cholera outbreaks are recorded mainly in the Central and Southern zones, and coincide with the dry season.

Wild Polio Virus

The first confirmed case of the wild poliovirus since 2007 was reported in Mogadishu on 9 May. The total number of confirmed cases in Somalia now stands at 183 cases as of 14 November. The polio epidemic has spread to neighbouring countries with 14 in Kenya, six in Ethiopia, and three cases reported in South Sudan. The first vaccination campaign began on 14 May. However, fighting in Kismayo halted the polio vaccination campaign planned for July, targeting 24,000 people. Large insecure areas of south-central Somalia have not conducted immunization campaigns since 2009, leaving 600,000 children vulnerable, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. The risk to populations across other areas of Somalia is high, due to substantial population immunity gaps.

Malnutrition

Nutrition indicators in Somalia have improved since the 2011 famine. However, according to a FSNAU report released in February, the prevalence of malnutrition remains critical – i.e. above the WHO’s emergency threshold of 15% for Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). An estimated 203,000 children under 5 are acutely malnourished, a slight decrease since January 2013, when the caseload stood at 215,000. However, FSNAU indicated that, as of January 2014, the malnutrition caseload included 51,000 children suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), which represents an increase from 45,000 at the same time last year. Most of the malnourished are said to be found among the non-IDP populations in south central areas of Somalia, where high rates of malnutrition are attributed to an inadequate health infrastructure and poor feeding practices.

At the start of August, FSNAU reported critical levels of GAM (≥15% and <30%) in North East, Central and South Somalia. In Kismayo, 19% GAM rates were reported in a recent flashpoint area for tribal fighting that also hampered the polio vaccination campaign. The nutrition situation in Kismayo suggests a decline in acute malnutrition and improved nutrition when compared with results from the December 2012 assessment, which reported a GAM rate of 28%.

Updated 05/02/2014

SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

07 February: The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) delegation reported back to the Special Envoys in Addis Ababa to provide recommendations before the beginning of the second round of peace talks between Juba and the rebels, which is set to start 11 February. The team was deployed on 2 February to initiate the establishment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism of the implementation of the ceasefire and assess the security situation in the main flashpoint towns of Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu.

As of 06 February, the displacement figures remain stable compared to last week. OCHA reported that an estimated 868,000 people have been displaced by the crisis, 130,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia. Most IDPs are located in the northern state of Unity (190,300) and the northeastern states of Upper Nile (152,000) and Jonglei (129,600). An estimated 75,000 people are sheltering in ten UN bases.

As of 04 February, health partners reported 19 suspected cases of measles in the Yida refugee camp, Unity state.

04 February: A contingent of 266 additional peacekeepers arrived in South Sudan, and the arrival of additional battalions is expected in the coming weeks. This latest deployment is pursuant of the UN Security Council resolution voted on 24 December, which authorised increasing the number of peacekeepers in the country to 12,500.

Early February: Clashes were reported in the states of Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity. In Jonglei, local sources reported that at least 25 people were killed in Bor county on 5 February by armed men suspected to be associated with insurgents loyal to Machar. In Lakes state, OCHA reported clashes in the area of Rumbek East, while in Unity state, clashes continued in Guit and Leer counties. In Upper Nile, access in and around Malakal town reportedly improved, and in Central and Eastern Equatoria states, the security situation remained tense but relatively calm. As of 6 February, humanitarian partners reported that over 5,100 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds since mid-December.

As of early February, the security situation is reportedly improving across most conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian partners were able to access the towns of Bentiu – Unity state, Bor – Jonglei state, and Malakal – Upper Nile state, where assessments and relief efforts were initiated. In rural areas, security and physical impediments reportedly continue to constrain assistance.

Late January: Humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people currently face Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority of them located in the eastern states worst affected by the crisis. Meanwhile, up to seven million people are expected to be at risk of food insecurity over
KEY CONCERNS

- Fragile security situation. Ongoing conflict and clashes, particularly in Lakes and Unity states.

- Reports suggest civilians are being targeted in the violence. Over 5,100 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds (WHO).

- UN claims that both rebels and government forces are obstructing humanitarian aid.

- Over 868,000 displaced, including 130,000 in neighbouring countries and 75,000 people sheltering in ten UN peacekeeping bases (OCHA).

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

- Humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people are currently facing Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority of them located in the eastern states worst affected by the crisis.

Politics and Security

Sudan – South Sudan

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

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

National Context

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

Peace negotiations

Despite the signing of a ceasefire between the GoSS and insurgent representatives on 23 January, renewed fighting erupted, with both sides trading blame for violating the truce. As of early February, clashes were still reported in the states of Jonglei, Lakes, and mostly in the Unity counties of Leer and Guit. The ceasefire was expected to be implemented within 24 hours of the signing, but observers showed scepticism regarding the ability of both sides to overcome the depth of political and ethnic grievances, due to the involvement of renegade army units, militia forces and civilians in the violence.

While the two sides had agreed to meet again for a second phase of negotiations on 10 February, the talks were reportedly postponed and are expected to be challenging, since they are supposed to bring about a comprehensive and political agreement to solve the current conflict.

Against the backdrop of continuing violence, the IGAD dispatched a 14-person strong joint technical committee, comprised of both representatives from the GoSS and rebels, who refer to themselves as the SPLM/Army in Opposition, to assess the situation in the main flashpoint towns of Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu. The team was deployed on 2 February to initiate the establishment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism of the implementation of the ceasefire and was expected to meet with state and non-state stakeholders. On 7 February, the delegation reported back to the IGAD Special Envoys in Addis Ababa to provide recommendations before the beginning of the second round of peace talks between Juba and the rebels, which is set to start on 11 February.

On 29 January, South Sudan’s government released seven of 11 political detainees, but vowed to put on trial a remaining four key leaders accused of attempting to topple President Kiir. The release of the 11 former GoSS officials, who became political detainees in mid-December, has been a major sticking point throughout the negotiations, and the fate of the remaining four leaders is set to be part of upcoming negotiations. According to latest reports, the seven political figures released in late January will take parts in the second round of talks.

Security

By early February, GoSS forces had reportedly retaken control of major towns which had been captured by insurgents over the last few weeks. Although the ceasefire, signed on 23 January, was expected to be implemented swiftly, both sides immediately started trading accusations of violating the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The continuing fighting is attributed to the deep distrust between President Kiir and rebel fighters, including forces loyal to Machar, notably the White Army, and autonomous armed groups.
In the first week of February, clashes were reported in the states of Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity. While Jonglei remained relatively calm, local sources reported that at least 25 people were killed in Bor county on 5 February by armed men suspected to be associated with insurgents loyal to Machar. In Lakes state, OCHA reported that clashes in the area of Rumbek East caused temporary suspension of movement on the axis between Rumbek and Yirol. In Unity state, OCHA indicated that clashes continued in Giit and Leer counties. Additionally, local sources reported that nine people were killed in an attack on a reported civilian convoy in Mayom county on 10 February. Local authorities blamed the attack on anti-government forces, an accusation denied by the insurgents. In Upper Nile, access in and around Malakal town reportedly improved, and in Central and Eastern Equatoria states, the security situation remained tense but relatively calm.

To date, casualty numbers cannot be verified due to limited access, but thousands of people are believed to have been killed or injured since the conflict started over a month ago. The International Crisis Group estimated the death toll to be 10,000. As of 6 February, humanitarian partners reported that over 5,100 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds since mid-December. As of mid-January, reports indicated that civilians are being targeted in attacks and killings, forcing many to flee.

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

**Inter-communal violence**

Current unrest is occurring against the backdrop of years of inter-communal violence, concentrated in Jonglei state and the central tri-state area of Lakes, Unity, and Warrap, with incidents also reported in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal and Western Equatoria.

On 31 January, the Jonglei-based rebel leader David Yau Yau signed a ceasefire agreement with the government in Juba which could signal the end of one of the longest-running insurgencies in the country. Early January, a ceasefire was announced between GoSS forces and the South Sudan Democratic Army (SSDA), the 6,000-strong armed rebellion led by Yau Yau and operating in Jonglei’s Pibor county.

While the talks are set to continue for a few weeks, the two sides have agreed to set up a monitoring and verification team composed of members of the church mediators, the UN Mission in South Sudan, and a joint military unit comprised equally of Goss and rebel soldiers. The peace pact was signed months after Yau Yau engaged in negotiations with leaders of his Murle ethnic group, and then with church leaders appointed by President Kiir, but many issues are still under discussion, including a request by the rebels to split Jonglei into two states to improve chances of success for the peace deal.

The eastern state of Jonglei has a long history of sporadic violence and is considered most affected by the lack of basic infrastructure, chronic insecurity rooted in cattle raids, conflict over natural resources, and armed hostilities between the national army and non-state actors. The state is home to six ethnic groups, with the Dinka and the Nuer numerically and politically dominant. Tension and violence often focus around the Nuer, based in northern Jonglei, and the Murle, a minority group based in the south of the state.

Inter-clan animosity stems from competition over water resources and grazing land and is considered to have become more violent since the second Sudanese civil war with widespread militarisation of the population and availability of small arms. As a result, deaths resulting from inter-communal fighting have increased, along with attacks and abductions of civilians and significant population displacement. In 2013, the rise of ethnic violence in Jonglei forced 120,000 people to flee to the bush, where they are cut off from aid and face severe food insecurity. According to observers, the lack of state-provided authority, security and justice mechanisms had pushed many Murle to join Yau Yau’s SSDA.

After 20 years of conflict and the 2011 referendum formalising the country’s independence from the north, South Sudan’s stability is still challenged by the polarisation of divergent ethnic and political communities and the activism of armed groups and militias. In late November, the GoSS announced that it had succeeded in integrating a dozen former rebel groups in its regular army, but also in other security organs and civil services. Following several months of behind-the-scene negotiations, presidential orders pardoning militant groups have seen a significant reduction in insurgency concentrated mostly in the Greater Upper Nile region. As of November, 13 armed groups responded to a general amnesty, with five and eight movements joining the reintegration process in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Juba underscored that efforts must continue to bring on board the rebels still at large, and also called on tribal leaders of the Murle, Nuer and Dinka to address the protracted violence affecting their communities, in order to bring sustainable stability to the eastern state of Jonglei.

In early February, local sources reported that at least 42 people were killed in attacks on two separate areas in Warrap state’s Tonj North county. While it remains unclear who carried out the attacks, an unknown number of cattle were reportedly raided by the assailants.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

The crisis which erupted in South Sudan in mid-December caused significant population displacement across the east of the country and toward neighbouring countries. Insecurity and armed clashes are reportedly hampering the delivery of assistance and disrupting livelihoods and access the food.

**Access**

As of early February, the security situation is reportedly improving across most of the conflict-affected areas. According to OCHA as of 6 February, humanitarian partners were able to access the towns of Bentiu – Unity state, Bor – Jonglei state, and Malakal – Upper Nile state, where assessments and relief efforts were initiated. In rural areas, security and physical impediments reportedly continue to constrain assistance.

Since mid-December, active hostilities posed major access challenges to humanitarian assistance, with insecurity affecting mostly the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile, Unity, and Central Equatoria. Additionally, poor infrastructure and lack of logistics capacity continued to hamper humanitarian access nationwide.

As of 6 February, OCHA reported that fighting in Rumbek East, Lakes state, temporarily
suspended movement on the axis between Rumbek and Yirol. In Unity state, clashes were reported in Guit and Leer counties, preventing the delivery of assistance in the area.

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

Between 20-23 January, OCHA reported that over 100 aid workers in Lakes state had to be relocated due to insecurity and ongoing clashes, causing the suspension of aid operations targeting some 85,000 people in Awerial county.

OCHA reported as of 30 November that 293 violent incidents had been recorded since January 2013. As of 12 September, Upper Nile and Jonglei states are the worst affected in terms of access incidents, with repeated violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, active hostilities, and interference in implementation of relief programmes. Insecurity led humanitarian actors to halt distributions of food assistance twice during August. Following widespread violence in July that affected over 140,000 people, aid workers had reached close to 21,000 people with food distributions as of 18 August, but had to stop programming to review operational constraints, including guarantees of safety for civilians receiving assistance and for aid workers supporting them.

Displacement

As of 6 February, the displacement figures remain stable compared to the previous week. OCHA reported that an estimated 868,000 people have been displaced by the crisis, 130,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries.

IDPs

Humanitarian partners indicated that displacement figures are still considered to be an underestimate due to the fluidity of displacement patterns and the limited access to rural areas affected by the violence. The most pressing needs of those displaced include water, food, and sanitation. In the UN bases, where many IDPs are seeking shelter, a lack of space and common facilities is causing sanitation concerns and tensions due to overcrowding.

To date, the number of IDPs in South Sudan now stands at 738,000, with most located in the northern state of Unity (190,300), and the northeastern states of Upper Nile (152,000) and Jonglei (129,600). An estimated 75,000 people are sheltering in ten UN bases. According to UNICEF on 5 February, 345,600 children <18 are among the IDPs.

As of 6 February, humanitarian partners reported that improved security in Jonglei state is allowing some IDPs to return to their home villages. The number of people sheltering in the UN base in Bor is reportedly decreasing.

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

Refugees in South Sudan

As of 31 January, UNHCR reported South Sudan hosts an estimated 231,000 refugees mostly from neighbouring Sudan who reside mostly in Upper Nile state and Unity state, which record 123,000 and 77,000 Sudanese refugees respectively.

Returnees

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

South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries

The number of South Sudanese who fled to neighbouring countries since mid-December stands at over 130,000, including 62,000 people into Uganda, 29,000 into Ethiopia, and 14,000 into Kenya. Aid agencies also reported that an estimated 23,500 people crossed into Sudan since 15 December, while some 2,600 people have arrived in the contested Abyei area since the beginning of the crisis.

Disasters

As of late January, OCHA indicated that up to 300,000 IDPs are currently living in 33 sites which are at risk of flooding. Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people currently reside in flood risk areas.

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

Food Security

As of late January, humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people currently face Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority located in the eastern states worst affected by the crisis. This represents almost four times the pre-crisis estimate of one million food insecure. Meanwhile, up to seven million people are expected to be at risk of food insecurity over the course of 2014.

The conflict is affecting major supply routes, displacing traders and leading to a rise in food and fuel prices. Local markets, which are vital to farmers, fishers and populations dependent on livestock, are also disrupted. Given that 78% of the rural population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, this disruption is concerning. As of mid-January, FAO warned that ongoing violence is threatening to hamper the upcoming March planting season for maize, groundnuts, and sorghum.

While the food security situation has slightly improved over the last two years, FEWSNET reported that people in conflict-affected areas, particularly Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity
states, are likely to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and possibly Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity in the coming months if violence continues to hamper food production and food access.

Health and Nutrition

While the east of the country is affected by armed violence and subsequent displacement, OCHA reported in early January that IDPs living inside and outside UN bases in Bentiu, Bor, and Malakal are in urgent need of primary healthcare services. Overcrowding in camps and inadequate sanitation facilities are also causing threats of cholera outbreaks. Ongoing gun battles has meant an increased need for surgical capacity in the conflict flashpoints.

Measles

As of 4 February, health partners reported 19 suspected cases of measles in the Yida refugee camp, Unity state.

As of 23 January, health authorities raised the alarm about a possible outbreak of measles in the UN base in Bor, Jonglei state, where thousands of people sought protection from the violence. Over 30 children reportedly died over the past 10 days.

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

Wild Polio Virus

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

Hepatitis E

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

Malnutrition

According to OCHA, as of mid-June, the <5 GAM rate stood at 18.1%. In August, using MUAC measurements, WFP estimated the average national malnutrition rates to be at around 11% with Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states showing serious to critical levels ranging from 14% to 21%.

Updated: 11/02/2014
on political partnership between the warring parties.

KEY CONCERNS

- Tensions continue to run high with the ongoing conflict in neighbouring South Sudan, and Khartoum is concerned about an influx of refugees and arms.

- Internally, Sudan is facing a protracted insurgency waged by several coordinated armed groups across Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

- 6.1 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance across the country, including 3.5 million people in Darfur and 1.2 million in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States (SKBN) (OCHA December 2013).

- Humanitarian access remains a significant problem due to insecurity, the presence of mines and ERW, logistical constraints and the important restrictions placed by the authorities.

- There are an estimated 2.8 million IDPs in Sudan and an estimated 4.2 million people face Crisis and Emergency levels food insecurity, with most of the food insecure people located in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile states and the contested Abyei area.

Politics and Security

On the regional level, tensions continue to run high between Sudan and South Sudan, where ongoing conflict since mid-December is affecting oil transit and causing population displacements. At the national level, Khartoum is dealing with numerous protracted insurgencies, waged by several coordinated armed groups across the states of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The east of the country stands in contrast and has not seen a deadly conflict since 2006, but is still challenged by infighting within the alliance of armed groups Eastern Front (EF), another indication of the relative stability of the country.

Sudan – South Sudan

Ongoing violence in South Sudan is increasing tensions between Khartoum and Juba, disrupting the oil flow through Sudanese territory and causing an influx of South Sudanese refugees. After over a month of unrest in the South Sudanese states of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity, Khartoum is concerned that the disruption of oil flows through Sudanese territory could continue and adversely impact its own economy. Landlocked South Sudan, which gained independence from Sudan in 2011, pays fees to Sudan to refine its crude oils and export it from Port Sudan on the Red Sea, making oil trade an important source of income for both countries. Sudanese officials also said they were concerned about an influx of refugees and arms.

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

On 26 November, Khartoum hosted the fifth meeting of the Joint Security Committee, where Sudanese and South Sudanese members discussed their respective complaints and claims relating to the presence of rebel groups in both countries. Despite reports about the decrease of support to rebels, both Khartoum and Juba have been trading accusations that each side had been harbouring insurgent groups since independence in 2011. Both sides now say they want to move forward with the implementation of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement, which established a buffer zone, created a joint force to monitor and ensure security of the common border, and laid the groundwork for the re-launch of crude oil exports from South Sudan.

While there has been a gradual improvement of relations in March 2013 - when a technical agreement for the implementation of all elements from the 2012 cooperation deal was signed - tensions rose again in June, with disputes arising about the alleged support by Juba to rebels in Sudan, and accusations that Khartoum was backing the rebels fighting in Jonglei state, South Sudan. This destabilisation of bilateral relations once again threatened to disrupt again the oil and transit fees that make up both countries’ main source of foreign income.

In September, the two sides issued a joint statement in which they agreed to expel rebel groups from the demilitarised zone on the border between the two countries and open crossing points for oil export. The next meeting of the Joint Security Committee is set to be held in Juba in mid-January 2014.

Insurgent Groups

While sporadic border clashes and oil export disruption threaten to revive tensions between Sudan and South Sudan, Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups in the southern states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur. In late 2011, an alliance of opposition groups was formed under the name Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), with the stated aim of organising new elections to end the current regime, although internal disagreements prevail. It comprises the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) mainly active in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, as well as Darfur’s three largest rebel groups, namely Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Army led by Abdel Wahid Al-Nur (SLM-AW), and the Sudan Liberation Army led by Minni Arkou Minnawi (SLM-MM). While violence in Blue Nile and South Kordofan grew significantly after adjacent South Sudan won independence in 2011, insurgents in Darfur have been reportedly active since 2003, when they took up arms accusing the government of neglecting the region, which led to a counter-insurgency campaign which continues today.

On 7 November, SRF representatives began a tour of Europe, to meet notably with French, German and UK representatives and discuss the humanitarian situation in rebel-held areas of Sudan. The leaders of the rebel groups called on the European Union (EU) to support their call for a comprehensive peace process to end armed conflicts in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, but representatives of the EU reportedly dismissed meeting the insurgents, on the grounds that it could not accept any new forum for negotiations outside the framework of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD). The African Union
Peace and Security Council recently called on Darfuri rebels to join the DDPD negotiating table, and warned that they would take measures against the insurgents, while demanding that the UN Security Council take similar sanctions if they did reject its appeal.

Because the SRF demands a holistic process while the government is only willing to discuss the conflict in Darfur, peace talks have remained deadlocked. In mid-November, the Sudanese defence ministry announced the beginning of extensive military operations, which aim to end rebellion in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile by the end of next summer. Despite Khartoum’s recent peace gestures towards separate rebel factions, a large-scale military campaign was reportedly ongoing in the three restive areas at the end of January 2013.

Instability in the East

Whilst the much lower level of violence in the east of the country stands in contrast to the violence recorded in Sudan’s marginalised southern states, it remains one of the poorest regions and is challenged by increasing divisions between the various armed groups which form the Eastern Front (EF). Despite being home to the largest gold mine and Port Sudan, where all the country’s oil exports transit, and while the region has seen no deadly conflict since the signing of the 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA), it is currently challenged by increasing divisions between the various armed groups which form the Eastern Front (EF), an alliance which signed the agreement seven years ago. Indeed, due to Khartoum’s alleged failure to implement the core elements announced in the ESPA and the spreading conflict in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur, various factions of the EF have been calling for a regime change, and claim they wish to join the southern and Darfuri-based SRF. Already in 2012, activists demanded separation from Khartoum and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Eastern Sudan, on the ground that the government was exploiting the region’s resources for its own gains and neglecting the development of eastern states. In an attempt to maintain its dominance over the region, the government is reportedly buying off tribal leaders by allowing local militias to arm and boosting support to Arab tribes, raising fears of renewed inter-communal violence.

Humanitarian context and needs

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

Humanitarian Access

Humanitarian access for international relief organizations generally remains a major problem, particularly in the conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian operations are heavily hampered by insecurity, the presence of mines and ERW, logistical constraints and government restrictions, notably in sensitive areas across Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

In January 2014, in the latest restriction on foreign aid workers in the country, the government of Sudan announced it suspended the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross as of February, on the grounds that the organization did not respect the guidelines for working in the country.

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

On 21 August, the Sudanese Interior Minister announced that the government would introduce new rules governing the work of foreign relief organisations. Authorities will now only allow national organisations to work for human rights, excluding foreign humanitarian groups and UN agencies. The imposition of additional restrictions on foreign actors underlines Khartoum’s lasting discomfort with international organisations that it has repeatedly accused of exaggerating the magnitude of conflicts in the country, disseminating false information, and spying.

Access for humanitarian actors to affected populations, and access of affected populations to aid, is severely hampered by the presence of mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). According to UNMAS, 250 locations, an estimated 32 km², are covered by mines and ERW, with the greatest concentration in Kassala, Gedaref, Red Sea, Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur states.

Displacement

According to OCHA as of 31 December, an estimated 2.6 million people are either refugees, or internally displaced, due to conflict, food insecurity and environmental conditions.

Internally Displaced

An estimated 2.9 million Sudanese are currently internally displaced due to food insecurity and conflict.

Sudanese refugees in other countries

As of late December, UNHCR estimated that there are 350,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad, 208,000 in South Sudan, 33,000 in Ethiopia and some 5,000 in Central African Republic.

Refugees residing in Sudan

According to the UNHCR, by late December Sudan was hosting 156,000 refugees, mostly from Eritrea, with smaller numbers from South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Chad.

Since fighting broke out in South Sudan in mid-December, violence has spread to six out of ten states. Violence is reportedly most intense in the north eastern states of Upper Nile and Unity, which has raised fears about a significant influx of refugees and also the potential return of around 200,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, who are currently residing in refugee camps in Unity and Upper Nile State. As of
late January, the Government of Sudan’s Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that the number of South Sudanese refugees who arrived in Sudan is estimated at 8,100 people, with most of them located in White Nile State. Humanitarian partners reported a higher number, indicating that up to 22,000 people may have crossed the border, while IOM reported that an additional 2,500 people are believed to have arrived in the contested area of Abyei.

On 19 January, the Sudanese Emergency Coordination Committee in White Nile State estimated that 12,500 people have crossed the border from South Sudan since mid-December. Elsewhere, up to 20,000 people are believed to have crossed into Sudan and the contested Abyei area, a number which will be adjusted as registration is ongoing in South Kordofan, West Kordofan, White Nile and other areas.

**South Sudanese returnees**

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

**Food Security**

As of January, FEWSNET reported that an estimated 3.3 million people in Sudan face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. This figure is expected to increase to 4 million in March/April, due to the early onset of the lean season, rising food prices, and the impact of conflict in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur States.

The IDP population is considered most at risk from food insecurity, representing an estimated 80% of the total food insecure in Sudan. Harvest prospects for the 2013/14 main agricultural season have been revised downwards and are expected to be 30-35% below the national average level.

This year’s low production is mainly due to late and insufficient rains during critical times in the season. In eastern and central Sudan, rainfall totals over the course of the season were 20-50% below average, according to FEWSNET. The late start of the rains resulted in delayed planting, from July to August/September, something which increases the risks of wilting. In total, the areas planted across Sudan are 20-30% below the five-year average according to a September assessment by FEWSNET, FAO, USAID/FFP and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MoA&I). Production deficits are also linked to ongoing insecurity and open conflict during the harvest, which is expected to lower harvest prospects, as well as cause continued destruction of assets and displacement.

Although food prices decreased during the December harvest period, staple food prices continued to rise across most markets, with sorghum and millet prices being on average 30% above their 2012 levels, and 104% above their five-year averages. According to FEWSNET in January, these prices are likely to increase even more throughout March 2014, as supply will start decreasing.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles**

On 24 November, Sudan’s Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) launched a nationwide measles catch-up campaign targeting some 15 million children aged between nine months and 15 years old, OCHA reports. Sudan has experienced a resurgence of measles outbreaks since 2010, mainly due to population growth. Measles has spread across the country, and caused a major outbreak in Kassala state in 2012.

**Malnutrition**

According to the WHO, child mortality due to malnutrition reached 40% in Sudan in late September 2013. Nationally, GAM levels for children <5 stand at 16.4%, above the emergency threshold of 15%. In mid-June, the Sudanese Ministry of Health issued a report noting that 33% of Sudanese children are chronically malnourished and 5.3% suffer from SAM. An estimated 500,000 children <5 suffer from SAM and up to two million children are stunted, according to a recent report on malnutrition produced by the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and partners. Malnutrition rates in east Sudan (Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref states) are the highest in Sudan, with 28% of children suffering from moderate or severe acute malnutrition in Red Sea state.

**Darfur**

**Politics and Security**

For over a decade, the southwestern Darfuri states have been affected by various conflict dynamics, including fighting between government forces and rebels groups, and inter-tribal fighting. The region also faces rampant banditry and criminality.

**Insurgent Groups – The Darfur Peace Process**

The Darfur peace process is currently stalling due to the fact that it does not include all the parties aligned in the Sudan Revolutionary Front, and because insurgents groups request a comprehensive settlement for the whole of Sudan, and not a partial dialogue for Darfur only. On 26 January, Sudanese President Al Bashir reportedly met with the leader of the former rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), in a bid to resolve a conflict over the implementation of a peace deal signed in April 2013. On 24 January, JEM announced it suspended its participation in the meetings related to the implementation of power sharing and security arrangements agreements, accusing the head of Darfur peace implementation of voluntarily slowing the process. The JEM also underlined the delay in the formation of the ceasefire commission, and added that UNAMID did not yet start the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process (DRRP).

On 9 December, the three-day All Inclusive Peace and Security in Darfur Technical Workshop began in Addis Ababa. Aimed to draw the Darfur rebel movements that did not sign the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) to the negotiating table and revive the peace process, the workshop reportedly gathered government representatives and two SRF-affiliated groups, namely the SLM-MM and the JEM. Mediators indicated that the SLM-AW refused to participate. Initial reports stated that parties first discussed the humanitarian situation in Darfur as well as the lack of access to affected populations, and
the JEM reiterated its demand for a comprehensive solution for the whole of Sudan, and not a partial dialogue for Darfur only. On 11 December, JEM and SLM-MM restated their demand for a comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable negotiated peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflicts at the closing of the workshop.

On 13-16 November, the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur visited Juba, South Sudan, where he met with the Vice President of South Sudan and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Security to discuss the ongoing efforts to bring peace in Sudan’s troubled western region. The visit was part of a larger tour that included a number of Sudan’s neighbours and was an attempt to build consensus around the importance of regional cooperation to implement measures announced in the DDPD. Like the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA), the DDPD has only a minority of the rebel movements as signatories – the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), and JEM-Mohamed Baasher, a splinter group from the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

On 20 November, the Sudanese government and the non-SRF-affiliated LJM signed an agreement aiming to integrate 3,000 former rebels in the army and police forces, thereby concluding long discussion brokered by the UNAMID (the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in the western Sudanese region) over the implementation of a security agreement signed in July 2011 as part of the DDPD.

While such progress has been made, the Darfur peace process is challenged by the fact that it does not include the parties aligned in the SRF, namely the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM), the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), and the JEM. These Darfur movements have continuously rejected the Doha process, and are responsible for ongoing clashes with government forces across the state since April. On 3 November, dozens of government troops were reportedly killed in clashes initiated by an ambush undertaken by the faction SLA-MM in the area of Nimra, East Jebel Marra. The rebels reported that they lost 11 men and claimed to have killed 187 army soldiers and militiamen. Although the exact numbers remain uncertain, multiple local sources suggest that the violence caused an unusually high toll for the troubled region.

Military Operations

Since the beginning of August, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have carried out regular air raids targeting East Jebel Marra in South Darfur, and Kadja and Dady areas of North Darfur. Security has reportedly deteriorated significantly since late December with almost daily air strikes in these areas. According to local sources, on 26 January two children were killed in an alleged military bombing on the Konjara-Kushena road in East Jebel Marra. On the same day, the SAF bombarded areas east and west of Jebel Marra, destroying water wells, killing an unknown number of livestock and setting fire to farmland and pastures. According to local sources on 20 January, aerial bombardments targeted East Jebel Marra, notably the areas of Kadareik and Um Laouta. While no casualties were reported, army troops reportedly carried out raids on villages, looting property and crops, and accusing the population of supporting the armed insurgency. According to local sources on 16 January, SAF launched several air raids in areas south of Nyala, South Darfur, causing displacement, injuries and widespread damage on three villages. On 10 January, similar raids in East Jebel Marra killed one person. According to UNAMID, ten were killed in aerial bombardments near Shangil Tobaya and Sharafa in East Jebel Marra on 29 November, but government troops denied they carried out the attack. On 5-6 November, SAF reportedly launched intensive air raids causing widespread destruction in the valley of Jebel Deng, north of Dady. An unknown number of people were killed in the raids and hundreds were reportedly displaced. According to local media reports, intensive air raids on 23 October killed one and injured at least 12 people, destroyed 30 houses and a school in East Jebel Marra, affecting the villages of Tangarara, Hillat el Dum, and Arashu. In early September, at least seven people were reportedly killed in similar air strikes against Darfur’s East Jebel Marra in the vicinities of Kined, Silo, and Shangil Tobab. A European international organisation, the Society for Threatened People (STP), has condemned what it described as indiscriminate air raids on civilians in the Jebel Marra Mountains that forced thousands of people to flee the area in late August.

Tribal Violence

The five Darfuri States – plagued by a decade of conflict – remain affected by insecurity, notably due to intensified violence between local tribes which traditionally fight over resources. On 2 February, representatives from the African Union (AU), the Government of Sudan, the United Nations and the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the 17th Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNAMID meeting. Concern was expressed about the deterioration of security in Darfur throughout 2013. Tribal conflicts across the region continue to impact on the humanitarian situation for civilians and humanitarian access. On 9 September in Khartoum, Darfuri leaders took part in a conference to discuss the root causes of the recent tribal conflicts and seek solutions for peaceful coexistence amongst tribes. Participants recommended both disarmament and the establishment of laws regulating relations between farmers and pastoralists, as well as the settlement of disputes over land resources. This was the first event organised by UNAMID, after the UN Security Council renewed its mandate late July 2013 until 31 August 2014, to address the causes of the escalating violence across Darfur.

South Darfur

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

Central Darfur

Localised fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central Darfur state has flared up over the past months. The fighting is primarily linked to a long-standing conflict over access to resources, including land. In the latest expression of inter-tribal conflict, unverified reports suggested that more than 50 people were left dead and many others wounded following violent clashes mid-November in the Abuazar camp for IDPs, in the area of Um Dukhun town, while significant damage was caused to shelter and activity centres. The violence in the IDP camp followed only a week after more than 100 people were left dead and many injured over three days of clashes between the same tribes on 6-8 November. Heavy fighting between the Salamat on one side and the Misseriya and their Taaysha allies on the other caused markets and roads to close, and there were reports of civilian abuse by the combatants. As is recurrently the case, the recent fighting escalated following cattle rustling, with tit-for-tat attacks ostensibly carried out as revenge. At the
same time, fierce fighting reportedly took place in Amar Jadid in Mukjar. Unconfirmed reports suggest that nine soldiers of the Chadian army were killed during clashes with Salamat tribesmen who were trying to flee Sudan after violent battles in Central Darfur. The Chadian troops were part of a joint force with Sudan and were allegedly killed around Um Dukhun, on the border with Chad.

Following the escalating conflict between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes, on 17 November, the Central Darfur State Government Security Committee and the Governor visited Um Dukhun as an attempt to facilitate dialogue between the belligerents and reinvigorate the peace agreement they signed in July. This previous reconciliation agreement was yet another unsuccessful attempt at curbing the inter-ethnic violence and implement a lasting peace, and was followed by 230 people killed in two weeks of fighting.

In separate violence, local sources reported that 50 people were killed on 1 December in inter-tribal fighting between herdsmen from the Mahariya and Bishesh tribes in the area of Jebel Jou, north of Zalingei. Clashes allegedly broke out when one of the tribes took revenge for the killing of three of their tribesmen by members of the other tribe.

**East Darfur**

On 3 December, the AU-UN Joint Special Representative concluded his visit in East Darfur, where he met the state authorities and the traditional leaders of the Rezeigat and Maaliya tribes, which are currently engaging in a reconciliation process to end the violent tribal-clashes ongoing since August.

From mid-July, tensions over land ownership and cattle increased between Rezeigat and Maaliya tribes in Kulaykil Abu Salama in the Adila locality. On 23 October, local media reported that three people from the Maaliya tribe were killed in an attack by members of the Rezeigat tribe in Bakhit, Abu Karinka locality. In September, similar clashes caused the death of over 40 people and dozens of injured, despite the signing of a peace deal between the two Arab tribes on 22 August, aimed to end several weeks of deadly fighting and prepare for a reconciliation conference in Al-Tawisha, North Darfur. Early August, violence ignited between the two nomadic pastoralist groups and killed over 300 people in four days of clashes. As of 12 September, the Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that these events displaced an estimated 144,000 people.

**North Darfur**

Since the start of 2013, rival Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes have clashed violently over control of the Jebel Amer gold mine in Al Sarief Beni Hussein, leaving 839 people dead, according to authorities as of late August. The UN also reported that an estimated 150,000 were displaced. The gold mine death toll is over double the number of all people killed by fighting between the army, rebels, and rival tribes in Darfur in 2012, according to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's quarterly reports to the Security Council.

As of late November, negotiations between the two tribes were ongoing, with both sides stating that they will only fight in self-defence. On 26 July, Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes signed a comprehensive peace agreement in El Fasher, and on 18 August, the treaty allegedly came into effect with the reopening of roads linking Saraf Omra with Al Sarief Beni Hussein. The two tribes agreed to cease hostilities, hold accountable outlaws from any side, and return all stolen agricultural lands.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

OCHA reported in late December that 3.5 million people, over a third of Darfur’s population, are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the decade-long conflict. This figure include 2 million IDPs, 1.2 million non-displaced who are severely affected by ongoing violence, and 136,000 returnees or refugees from neighbouring countries.

**Humanitarian Access**

Access to the Darfur region remains restricted due to on-going hostilities and insecurity, including the direct targeting of aid workers and peacekeepers. According to the UN, 16 peacekeepers were killed in hostile acts in Darfur throughout 2013, which represents a 50% increase compared to 2012, and which brings the number of personnel killed to 57 since UNAMID was deployed in 2008. According to OCHA, two peacekeepers were killed on 29 December when a UNAMID patrol was ambushed by armed men in South Darfur. On 29 November, the UN reported that two Sudanese health ministry workers helping to vaccinate children in the Darfur region had been killed. On 24 November, a UNAMID convoy came under attack by unknown armed men on the road from Kabkabiya to Saraf Umra in North Darfur. One Rwandan soldier was shot and killed. On 23 October, the head of a national NGO was killed by unidentified gunmen in South Darfur, according to OCHA. On 13 October, three Senegalese peacekeepers were killed and one injured after being ambushed by members of an unidentified armed group in West Darfur. According to UNAMID, the police unit came under attack while escorting a water convoy in West Darfur. On 11 October, a UNAMID military observer from Zambia died in the North Darfur capital El Fasher following an attack by armed men who stabbed him and hijacked his vehicle. These incidents came barely four months after seven Tanzanian peacekeepers were killed and 17 injured in what was described as the worst-ever single attack in the troubled region since 2007.

Inaccessibility due to insecurity is a major concern in North Darfur, particularly in conflict-affected areas of Jebel Amir, namely Elsereif town, Kabkabiya and Saraf Omra. In South and East Darfur, particularly in Jebel Marra, access has been a concern for operational relief organisations. In Central Darfur, insecurity is hindering the movement of humanitarian supplies by road especially to the southern corridor localities of Um Dukhun and Bindisi.

**Displacement**

**Internally Displaced**

According to OCHA on 31 December, there are nearly 2 million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 who were displaced in 2013, as a result of inter-tribal fighting and clashes between the SAF and armed movements since January. This figure is more than double the number of people internally displaced in Darfur in 2011 and 2012 combined.

In South Darfur, the Government’s Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that between March and November 2013, an estimated 55,000 people were displaced due to inter-tribal fighting in the state. An assessment conducted in mid-December indicated that...
most pressing needs for those displaced include water, non-food items and health services.

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

In Central Darfur, according to humanitarian organisations, more than 25,000 people have been internally displaced since April, when fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes over resources started. There is little information available about civilian displacement caused by the recent fighting in early November, although local media reported population movements from Central to South Darfur. Between April and June this year, fighting between the two tribes forced over 55,000 people to flee their homes, including an estimated 22,000 IDPs and 30,000 displaced to Chad and 3,300 people to Central African Republic (CAR), according to UNHCR.

Refugees

According to the UNHCR as of 22 November, around 36,200 Sudanese refugees from Darfur have arrived in Chad since January 2013, which brings the estimated number of Sudanese refugees in Chad to 346,000. In addition, 3,400 new Sudanese refugees arrived in Central African Republic from Central Darfur since January 2013.

Food Security

As of January, FEWSNET reported that continued violence in Darfur is impacting harvests and access to markets and food assistance. The IDP population is considered most affected, with at least 30% of those recently displaced (and who missed cultivation in 2013) not yet receiving any humanitarian assistance. Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) are expected in the region over the course of January-June.

As of October, according to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification jointly undertaken by several humanitarian actors, 2,743,362 people in the Darfur states face Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels food insecurity, of whom 527,827 are in South Darfur, 1,023,611 in North Darfur, 468,891 in West Darfur, 492,933 in Central Darfur, and 230,100 in East Darfur.

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity will persist among new IDPs in East, Central and South Darfur states due to displacement, loss of assets and livelihood strategies. In addition, some 20% of existing IDPs in Darfur will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout March 2014, according to FEWSNET.

Health and Nutrition

Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL)

At least 25 people, among them eight children, diagnosed with visceral leishmaniasis (VL) have died in Kerenik (West Darfur) and Um Dukhun (Central Darfur) in October, according to local media. Local reports indicate that VL, scabies, and ringworm have increased since 2012, resulting in a surge of patients in hospitals and health centres in the region.

Blue Nile, West and South Kordofan States

Politics and Security

The southeastern states of Blue Nile, West Kordofan and South Kordofan are affected by the activation of armed groups, and violence grew significantly after adjacent South Sudan won independence in 2011.

Insurgent Groups

The states are mainly affected by the activism of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), which is an offspring of the politico-military group which initially led the southern rebellion during the 1983-2005 civil war and which is now in power in the newly independent state of South Sudan. In mid-January, South Kordofan’s governor called on traditional leaders to convince rebels to lay down their weapons and join the ongoing efforts to develop the region, and proposed to hold a conference for peaceful coexistence between the different components of the district where different tribes reside.

In January, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) invited the Sudanese government and the SPLM-N to resume talks on 13 February. The dialogue on the two areas is expected to unfold along the lines of the 2012 UN Resolution 2046, which aimed to end the three-year conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states and move both sides towards the signature of a peace agreement and a framework agreement on political partnership.

Initially, Sudanese President Bashir rejected the framework agreement, but indicated that he is now willing to negotiate on the basis that once the SKBN conflict is settled, SPLM-N will partner with the government of Sudan to work to establish a democratic government and end the ongoing conflict in Darfur on the basis of the separate Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. In a statement released on 26 January, the SPLM-N demanded that the humanitarian crisis in SKBN and Darfur regions be discussed before any other issue, and expressed once again that conflict dynamics across the country should be ended through a comprehensive political solution including all political and rebel forces as well as civil society groups.

Back in April, talks about a possible ceasefire between the rebel SPLM-N and the Sudanese government stalled over the issue of humanitarian access corridors. According to the insurgents, the adjournment of the negotiations was linked to Khartoum’s insistence on linking the humanitarian issue to the political one, a condition the rebel group strongly rejects.

Security Context

Armed clashes between SAF and rebel forces of various groups under the rebel alliance Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) in South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Blue Nile continue
to result in the death and displacement of an unknown number of civilians. While aerial bombardment by the SAF has reportedly escalated over the last months, tensions have also intensified seasonally as roads become passable after the rainy season, starting from mid-November.

According to an INGO report released in January, South Kordofan has seen the highest number of bombings and civilian casualties in more than two years, with an estimated 25,000 people who have fled their homes, notably from the mountainous northeastern El Abassyia and Rashad counties, and the northcentral Al Sunut and Delling counties.

According to the same report, Sudanese government forces suffered heavy losses of life and equipment in early January in South Kordofan, near the border with South Sudan. Since mid-January, the military refocused their operations on Blue Nile, increasing air strikes on ground attacks.

In South Kordofan, local sources reported on 26 January that SAF warplanes launched air strikes against the rebel-held town of Kauda, reportedly causing no casualties. On 31 December, the Sudanese army reported that it had recaptured several rebel-held areas bordering South Sudan. However, the rebels from SPLM-N denied losing any position in the state. Accurate information has been difficult to verify as the Sudanese authorities severely restricted access the fighting zone.

Early December, the HAC reported early December that SAF airstrikes and renewed fighting between the army and SRF caused new population displacements in South Kordofan. Local sources reported that these events also cost seven lives including 6 children. Between 21-25 November, aerial bombing and ground fighting was reported by local sources in several parts of SPLM-N controlled areas, including Kaling, Habilia, Al Buram, Talodi as well as Karka and Kondikar areas in Dilling. The attacks caused the displacement of a large number of people, while the number of deaths and material damage remain uncertain to date. On 19 November, local media reported that an air raid killed at least six people in Kujurya village, Dilling locality. According to unconfirmed reports on 22 October, SAF planes attacked Umdorain county, causing civilian casualties and destroying homes and farmland. An August report by Sudan Consortium (a coalition of 50 Africa-based and Africa-focused NGOs) reported at least 23 civilians killed and another 81 injured in the state due to aerial bombardments since January 2013. Meanwhile, SPLM-N reportedly shelled South Kordofan's regional capital Kadugli on 19 November, and announced that it will continue to do so as a response to SAF aerial bombardments in the region. Two days before, rebels reportedly struck a town near the border of South Kordofan state.

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

Armed clashes in West Kordofan between members of the Hamar and Ma’aliya tribes were reported on 5 December in the Um Deibut area, near the border with East Darfur State. According to local reports, at least 38 members of the two tribes were killed in the violence. The fighting reportedly stopped following the deployment of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to the UN and humanitarian partners in late January, 1.2 million people in Government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 433,000 non-displaced who are severely affected by the violence. In non-Government controlled areas, the SPLM-N estimates that 800,000 people are either displaced or severely affected by the conflict, but limited humanitarian access is making verification impossible.

**Humanitarian Access**

Due to insecurity and the important restrictions placed by the authorities, international humanitarian access to insurgent-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states is virtually inexistent. As of mid-October, there was no humanitarian access from Sudan to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan.

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

**Displacement**

**Internally Displaced**

As of 30 June, OCHA stated that 231,000 people in South Kordofan and 120,000 people in Blue Nile were displaced or severely affected by conflict in government-controlled areas. In SPLM-N areas, 700,000 people in South Kordofan and 90,000 in Blue Nile are displaced or severely affected by conflict according to local estimates. The UN reports that it has no presence in SPLM-N controlled areas and is unable to independently verify these figures.

As reported in the last OCHA bulletin, an estimated 2,800 people, including 1,850 children and 600 women, have fled fighting and food insecurity in the Jugo, Seen, Com Reg and Bobuk areas in Bau locality in Blue Nile state, and taken shelter in the El Gerri area, north of El Roseires locality.

As reported in local media in early December, renewed tribal fighting in the Um Deibut area in West Kordofan triggered the displacement of over 6,000 people to El Taboun and Babanusa in West Kordofan, and Adila in East Darfur.
According to HAC on 1 December, heavy fighting in South Kordofan between government troops and rebels caused the displacement of an estimated 12,500 people within one week. OCHA reported that humanitarian organisations have so far been unable to conduct assessments due to ongoing military operations, and no assistance has yet been delivered to the newly IDPs. According to unconfirmed statements by the SPLM-N, the aerial bombardments and ground attacks by government forces and militias between 21 and 25 November in rebel-controlled areas have displaced 24,920 people.

Sudanese refugees in other countries

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

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

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in January, the ongoing fighting in SKBN areas is likely to trigger further displacement and disrupt market access and thus have a further adverse effect on the food security in the peripheral southeastern states. Conflict-affected areas in SKBN show the highest levels of food insecurity. Additionally, the 2013-2014 winter harvest is expected to be below-average in the region. In SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan, food security is likely to deteriorate to Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4) by the beginning of the March-April lean season.

As of October, according to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification jointly undertaken by several humanitarian actors, 104,240 people in South Kordofan, and 100,107 people in Blue Nile face Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels food insecurity.

According to FEWSNET, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity are likely to persist among IDPs and poor residents in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile. At least 30% of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan are estimated to remain at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity due to displacement, loss of assets and livelihood strategies, and lack of access to humanitarian assistance. Another 20% of poor residents in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and IDPs in GoS-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states will remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels.

Health and Nutrition

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

Wild Polio Virus

Sudan’s Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) had announced that the polio vaccination campaign in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and Blue Nile should start in December. As of January 2014, negotiations between the government and the SPLM-N on this issue reportedly never materialized. In late October, the Government of Sudan announced a 12-day cessation of hostilities in non-government controlled areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, beginning on 5 November 2013, in order to facilitate a polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation campaign for children <5. However, the efforts to initiate the vaccination campaign failed due to outstanding disagreements over the logistics of the operation. The UNICEF and WHO-led campaign, originally planned for October, was due to target 147,000 children <5 in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and 7,000 children in Blue Nile who have not been vaccinated since the ongoing armed conflict began in 2011. If the vaccination campaign is to be implemented, it will be the first cross-line access into SPLM-N areas from within Sudan since 2011.

Yellow Fever

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

Updated: 05/02/2014

CHAD FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 30/01/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- Chad remains at the junction of four major regional crises: Sudan, CAR, Nigeria and Libya. An estimated 448,500 refugees are currently living in Chad (UNHCR, December 2013).

- 2.4 million people remain food-insecure including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity (OCHA, November 2013 and January 2014).

- High prevalence of malaria: deaths have nearly doubled in 2013, with more than 2,000 fatalities registered and around 780,000 cases diagnosed (OCHA, November). Significant increase in endemic areas (Logones, Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, Chari Baguirmi).

- High prevalence of malaria: deaths have nearly doubled in 2013, with more than 2,000 fatalities registered and around 780,000 cases diagnosed (OCHA, November). Significant increase in endemic areas (Logones, Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, Chari Baguirmi).
Politics and Security

Crisis in Central African Republic

Following the outbreak of sectarian violence and intense diplomatic pressure, CAR President Michel Djotodia and Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye both resigned from office on the 10 January. On 20 January, Central African Republic’s transitional parliament elected the mayor of Bangui, Catherine Samba-Panza, as the interim president. Samba-Panza is tasked with ending months of sectarian killings and guiding the country to elections.

Chadian soldiers were originally deployed under the umbrella of the African Union (AU) to contain the violent unrest that has wrecked the country. The unrest was triggered by coup by mostly Muslim Seleka rebels in March 2013 who installed Michel Djotodia as interim president. Soldiers from mainly Muslim Chad have been accused of siding with the Seleka force. The aftermath of the coup saw many former rebels, including some from Chad, targeting Christians, who in revenge set up vigilante squads.

Some observers fear that the presence of Chadian soldiers within the AU contingent may further complicate the fragile situation in CAR. On 14 January, a UN Human Rights team travelled to CAR to gather evidence and testimonies relating to allegations that Chadian citizens, including peacekeepers, reportedly carried out mass killings during the recent upsurge of violence in the country.

According to the Chadian embassy to Bangui, anti-balaka forces have killed 8 Chadian soldiers. Some 57 Chadian civilians have been killed and dozens are still missing. The situation remains highly volatile.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Humanitarian Access

According to OCHA, humanitarian organisations in the area of Tissi (Southeast) and in the landmine-affected region of Tibesti (North) have limited access due to the two unstable borders, heavy rains, and general insecurity.

Displacement

Refugees

Chad remains at the junction of four major regional crises - Sudan, CAR, Nigeria and Libya -, which has resulted in an upsurge of population movements. More than 87,000 new arrivals (refugees and returnees) from Darfur, CAR, Nigeria and Libya were recorded in the first half of 2013. According to OCHA in January, Chad was hosting some 467,000 arrivals (refugees and returnees) from Darfur, CAR, Nigeria and Libya were recorded in January. As of late November, 4,243 new CAR refugees had settled in the existing Dosseye camp. Further influxes of refugees are foreseen for 2014, as the security and humanitarian situation in CAR continues to deteriorate.

Following tribal clashes in Darfur region of Sudan, an influx of around 30,000 Sudanese refugees and 22,000 Chadian returnees have arrived at the border town of Tissi in the South East of the country. The new influx of refugees from Sudan required the establishment of a new camp in Abgadam, a remote area in eastern Chad. The displaced fled a conflict over gold mines in eastern Darfur between Maaliya and Rizeigat ethnic groups. Another wave later crossed into Chad fleeing inter-communal violence between Salamat and Misseriya ethnic groups in Um Dukhun, Central Darfur. In December, the total number of Sudanese refugees in Chad was exceeding 362,000 people.

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

Returnees

As a result of the violence in neighbouring CAR, the international media reported that Chad had stepped up the evacuation of its citizens, many of whom are reportedly being targeted by Christian militia who accuse them of having links to the Seleka. According to UNICEF on 27 January, an estimated 47,000 Chadians, mostly children and women (who represent more than 80% of the returnees) have been repatriated in recent weeks – both on emergency flights and with land convoys. According to the Government, 264 children have been registered as separated from their families. Returnees have mostly fled to N'Djamena (13,890) and the southern towns of Sido (14,100), Doyaba (7,710), Bitoye (5,100), Doba (3,100) and Gore (2,700). Many of the transit centres are of poor quality shelter with limited sanitation access to clean water. According to international media sources on 5 February, around 6,000 returnees from the CAR have been transferred to Zafala refugee camp (located at the Gaoui site in N’Djamena) by Chadian authorities amid efforts to evacuate overcrowded social centres in the capital. Many more Chadians are expected to return from CAR as the violence ongoing, over-stretching the humanitarian capacity in Chad, a country many of them have never lived in. Many returnees entering Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship since they were born in the country, which may cause specific concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee).

As of late November around 150,000 Chadian returnees from Libya have arrived since the start of the Libya Crisis in 2011, according to OCHA. Sporadic arrivals continue in Faya-Largeau and areas of northern Tibesti region.

Clashes between Nigerian Military and armed groups in northern Nigeria have caused an influx of about 3,500 returnees and 553 Nigerian refugees in Western Chad around Lake Chad. A new influx of returnees to Tissi and the proximity of the border with transit and resettlement sites is a major concern of Protection. Returnees from Nigeria hosted in Ngouboua are mostly unaccompanied children from fishing villages in Bagakawa. According to OCHA, returnees are dispersed across two other locations: Bol and Mao.
**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

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

Another 91,000 IDPs have returned to their homes, integrated locally or settled somewhere else in the country. Only limited information is available on their current situation.

**Food Security**

Two consecutive years of continued climatic shocks, including poor rainfall in 2011, caused significant food security concerns in Chad in 2012 that continued in 2013. In January 2014, OCHA reported that 2.4 million people remain food-insecure in Chad including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity. The Chadian Government, WFP and the FAO conducted a food security assessment between October and November 2013 which showed that the Sahelian region (Central Chad) is twice more affected (with 1,321,000 people) than the Soudanian region in the south (697,900). The worst affected region is Wadi-Fira (eastern Chad) with 61% of the population reported to be food insecure.

As of late November, FEWSNET reported that the average cereal production of 2013-2014 crops is forecasted at 12% above the five-year average. However, localized areas of Kanem, Wadi-Fira, Bahr El Ghazal, and Hadjer Lamis saw 2013/14 crop production deficits of nearly 50% compared to average. Below-average household food stocks and agricultural labour incomes, along with abnormally high food prices, will cause consumption gaps for the poor during the peak of the lean season in July.

However, some regions (Kanem, Wadi Fira, Bahr El Ghazal and Hadjer Lamis) will likely face a significant deficit (around 50%) due to the late start of the planting, poor rain distribution and early cessation of rains compared to normal.

Food security for households dependent on rain-fed cereal production is improving due to the ongoing harvests. Replenished cereal stocks coupled with increased levels of farming products will enable households to diversify their food sources between October and at least December 2013. During this period, the country will face Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1). However, cereal stocks in Wadi Fira, parts of the northern areas of Ouara, Kanem, northern Batha, North Guera, Hadjer Lamis and Bahr El Gazel, will start to deplete from January 2014, one to two months earlier than usual.

According to FAO early December, crops and pastures in the Sahelian countries of West Africa (Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal) have been affected this year by late onset and early cessation of rains. The situation could lead to a new surge in food insecurity and malnutrition in the 2013/14 marketing year.

Moreover, atypical cereal price increases will further limit food access for very poor and poor households. During this period, they will have reduced food consumption and will remain at Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2). Later, during the peak of the lean season (June-September 2014), food security is expected to decrease in Wadi Fira and Bar -El- Gazel due to significant food deficits. Households in these areas are expected to face Acute Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 3).

Despite a net cereal production surplus form the current harvest season, production deficits have been registered in some structurally food-deficient regions of the Sahel belt. The main reasons are: drought, crop diseases, and destruction by birds. In southern Chad, deficits are largely a result of floods.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles, Polio and Meningitis**

UNICEF reported on 24 January that the border region with CAR is prone to recurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, and meningitis. The level of immunization among returnee children is unknown but believed to be low, heightening the risk. A suspected case of measles is currently under investigation in Sido transit centre.

**Malaria**

Malaria remains a major health problem in Chad, with a prevalence rate of nearly 30% across all age groups and about 36% among children younger than five years, according to UNICEF. According to IRIN, malaria deaths have nearly doubled in Chad in 2013, with more than 2,000 fatalities registered and around 780,000 cases diagnosed. Late November, OCHA reported that malaria cases increased in endemic area (Logones, Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, Chari Baguirmi). Erratic rainfall with intermittent dry spells may have encouraged the breeding of mosquitoes and the development of larvae into adult insects.

Since July, local media have regularly reported the dire conditions in refugee camps hosting Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. On 12 September, it was reported that the refugees of camp Djabal have complained about the high incidence of malaria and diarrhoea, especially affecting the youngest and older persons, while camp authorities reported 22 deaths during August.

**Malnutrition**

The nutritional situation in Chad’s Sahel belt is at critical levels with a GAM rate surpassing the emergency threshold of 15% in 9 of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The most affected areas are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22% GAM), Salamat (22% GAM), Beg (21% GAM), and Kanem (21% GAM). UNICEF forecast that an estimated 147,000 children would suffer from SAM in 2013.

Updated: 05/02/2014

**ETHIOPIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**
03 February: UNHCR reported that over 29,000 South Sudanese refugees – most of them from Jonglei state – were said to have registered in Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan in mid-December.

KEY CONCERNS

- Ongoing armed insurgencies in the southeast Ogaden region. Frequent outbreaks of violence due to clan and inter-communal tensions.

- Ethiopia is now hosting over 431,000 refugees from countries including Kenya and South Sudan (UNHCR).

- An estimated 2.7 million people are in need of food assistance, which represents a 12% increase compared to the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia, Somali, Amhara, Tigray, and Afar (FAO, November).

Politics and Security

Ethiopia is considered comparatively stable, but two decades of deadly conflict in the south-eastern region of Ogaden have had a severe impact on the Ethiopian-Somali population, especially after five years of a relatively successful government counter-insurgency campaign. While there are signs that the peace process may restart in the coming months, deep clan tensions and intra-communal violence remain against the backdrop of wider regional rivalries involving neighbouring states of Somalia and Kenya.

The Somali militant group Al Shabaab has been repeatedly threatening Ethiopia since 2011, and Addis Ababa recently pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is maintained. So far, no attacks have materialised. The government has to date been able to suppress protests and contain armed insurgencies in the Ogaden and Oromo regions, but has yet to address the root causes of the violence. On 13 October, a bomb blast killed two people in the capital Addis Ababa. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the government has thwarted plots of attacks blamed on rebel groups based in the south and southeast of the country, and on the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab which Ethiopia has been fighting alongside African Union forces since 2011.

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Refugees

The UNHCR reported that Ethiopia is now hosting over 431,000 refugees, including 24,800 Somalis, 84,200 Eritreans, 68,400 South Sudanese, 33,800 Sudanese and 4,230 refugees from other countries. December saw the arrival of more than 3,600 refugees, mostly from Eritrea. In addition, as of 3 February, UNHCR reported that over 29,000 South Sudanese refugees – most of them from Jonglei state – were said to have registered in Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan. Local authorities and humanitarian partners say they expect as many as 60,000 refugees to arrive by end of March.

As of 20 January, fighting which erupted in December 2013 in Moyale, Kenya marked a significant escalation in violence on the north-central border with Ethiopia. To date, tribal clashes between the Borana community and a joint force of Burji and Gabra tribes in the districts of Marsabit and Moyale displaced an estimated 72,000 people, mostly across the border with Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, latest reports indicate that some displaced are still staying with host families. An assessment determined that priority needs include food, WASH, shelter and health care services. In early September, ECHO had already reported that similar clashes in the same area had displaced over 25,000 people in July-August, mostly across the border of neighbouring Ethiopia.

Returnees

Since late December, Ethiopia has been dealing with the large-scale return of nearly 150,000 migrants who were been deported from Saudi Arabia. The migrants have been arriving back in the country over the past month, following the end of an amnesty period for illegal migrant workers in the Kingdom. OCHA has indicated that the recent surge in arrivals is causing congestion in transit centres and, due to poor sanitation in some of them, the risk of a disease outbreak has increased. The most urgent needs for the migrants include food, sanitation and health services.

Food Security

According to the latest assessment by the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFFS) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) released in September 2013, 2.7 million people were estimated to need food assistance due to consecutively below average belg and sugum rains, low crop production, deterioration of livestock, and asset depletion. This represents a 12% increase compared to the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia (897,000 people in need), Somali (690,970), Amhara (548,000), Tigray (321,400), and Afar (152,600).

Other estimates suggest that the total number of people affected by food insecurity might be as high as 3.5 million. Recent reports indicated that East and West Hararghe zones in eastern Ethiopia have deteriorated into food insecurity Crisis (IPC Phase 3) following two consecutive, poorly-distributed rainy seasons and a below average meher harvest in October-November 2012. Crops in most agro-pastoral areas in Afar, northern Somali, and the lowlands of Bale, Guji, and Borena zones in Oromia region are performing well.

According to the FAO, at the start of 2014, rainfall was generally abundant and well-
distributed which led to good, above average, *meher* season cereal crop harvests. Less production was reported in some marginal producing areas of Tigray, Amhara and Oromia regions, where the yields were said to be less than the national average. Additionally, due to improved pasture and water availability in most places, livestock conditions and milk production are generally at a satisfactory level throughout the country.

According to FAO early November, food security conditions are gradually improving with the beginning of the *meher* harvest in October. In western areas, harvest labour opportunities increase the purchasing power of poor households and improve the access to food. However, food access is likely to deteriorate in areas which received below average rains, including SNNPR, north eastern Amhara, eastern and southern Tigray, and central and eastern Oromia regions.

According to FAO, prices of the main cereals continue to follow the upward seasonal trend that started at the beginning of 2013, with prices of maize increasing by 6-20% from June to August. FAO reported on 10 September that in Addis Ababa, prices of maize and red sorghum were 24% and 35% higher, respectively, than a year earlier. Prices of wheat, white sorghum and teff were at around the same levels.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Polio**

A new case of polio was reported in the third week of December, bringing the total caseload in Ethiopia to seven. All cases were reported in Woredas which shares borders with Somalia where the polio outbreak in the region started in May. A new immunization campaign to target over 3 million children is planned for 24-27 January 2014.

Further cases of measles were reported across the country. Over 660 cases were reported in the third week of December. 75% of them in SNNPR. OCHA reported as on 16 December that 2,860 cases had been confirmed between January and October. Nationally, with children under five constituting 37% of the affected.

**Malaria/Dengue**

According to ECHO as of 6 December, some 9,258 cases of dengue fever have been reported in Dire Dawa city since the beginning of the outbreak in mid-October.

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

**Malnutrition**

OCHA reported on 28 August that in East Hararge zone (Oromia region), admission of children suffering from SAM to therapeutic feeding programs decreased by 24% between July and August, and 13% between August and September, bringing the monthly number of admissions to 2,403, consistent with the downward trend seen in the zone since February. September’s rate is still 7% higher than the SAM caseload in September 2012.

**WASH**

According to the UN, critical water shortages continue in Afar region. Water availability has deteriorated over the past month in Tigray region. Water shortages were reported in Adadle and Kebridehar woredas. Though seasonal rains have fully replenished water sources in Somali and SNNP regions and in nearly all woredas of Oromia and Amhara regions, over 566,000 people still need water trucking across Ethiopia, down from 720,500 people in March.

*Updated: 05/02/2014*

**NIGERIA**

**INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**5 February:** ECHO reports 524 cases of cholera, including 10 deaths, in Kano and Nassarawa State, in the Middle Belt and in Northern Nigeria, during the first three weeks of January. This represents a massive increase compared to the same period last year. UNICEF reports that since November 2013, 2,165 cases have been detected with 71 deaths. In 21 Local Government Areas 89 cholera high risk wards have been identified. Moreover, 16 cases of Lassa fever, including 6 deaths, were reported in Taraba, in Nassarawa, and in Bauchi states.

**5 February:** Agreement on the 2014 budget is still being held up due to a personal clash between Finance Minister Okonjo-Iweala and the Parliament. The government said it could theoretically continue using last year’s budget for another six months but, if the crisis remains unresolved, could enter into shutdown.

**3 February:** Gunmen killed about 30 people in an early morning raid on two villages in central Nigeria in the latest violence to hit the region. The police in Plateau state, which has been hit by repeated communal violence, confirmed the attack but could not provide details of casualties.

**1 February:** Shaikh Adam Albani, a Muslim leader critical of the militant group Boko Haram and supportive of a Nigerian military campaign against them, was shot dead in Zaria, Kaduna State. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the killing.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 50,000 people internally displaced due to ongoing clashes between Nigerian Army and Boko Haram militants, flooding and intercommunal violence in the Middle Belt, predominantly in Kaduna and Nassarawa (ECHO 15 November).
- Nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water (UNICEF).
- Food insecurity significantly increased in mid-December. Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) reported in the northeast states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa, where insecurity is driving food prices upwards.
- As of mid-December, 2,880 cholera cases had been reported in 2013 across 16 states, which represented an eight-fold increase compared to the same period in 2012 (OCHA).
Politics and Security

Internal political divisions on whether President Goodluck Jonathan should seek another term in office continue to stoke tensions. Critics say Goodluck’s re-election would violate the unwritten rule that every two terms of governance should rotate between the largely Muslim north and Christian south.

Over the past four years, the Nigerian army has been involved in a fight against Boko Haram, an Islamic militant group leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in Nigeria’s mostly Muslim north. Another group raising security concerns is the less operational group Ansaru, a splinter faction of Boko Haram which targets the Nigerian military and Western targets, and is also thought to be linked to Al-Qaeda. In late November, the International Criminal Court (ICC) qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war.

Political Context

Alongside fears of a possible military failure in the fight against the Islamist-led insurgency of Boko Haram, political instability could arise due to pressure from opposition factions on President Jonathan Goodluck, and questions around his intention to run again in the 2015 elections.

On 5 February, agreement on the 2014 budget was still being held up due to a personal clash between Finance Minister Okonjo-Iweala and the Parliament. The government said it could theoretically continue using last year’s budget for another six months but, if the crisis remains unresolved, could enter into shutdown. Meanwhile, the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) called for a public hearing with the Finance Minister to question her performance previous to a budget vote.

On 3 February, Nigeria’s former VP Atiku Abubakar left the People’s Democratic Party to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) opposition party, stating he believes in a two-party political system for Nigeria.

On 24 January, the Electoral Commission announced that presidential and parliamentary elections would take place on February 14 next year and governorship elections a week later. The day after the announcement, the Nigeria State Security Service (SSS) arrested the Deputy National Secretary of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and former Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai. After an interrogation about his allegedly inflammatory remarks made in a Nigerian daily warning of electoral violence in the presidential polls, El-Rufai was released on bail on 28 January.

On 24 January, Nigeria’s main opposition party – the All Progressives Congress – called upon its MPs to block all legislation including the 2014 budget until rule of law was restored in Nigeria, and more specifically, in the oil-rich Rivers state. Politics in the Rivers state, which has a history of instability, are paralysed due to a rift between the state’s governor and the President.

On 16 January, Bamanga Tukur, the chairman of the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) resigned following significant pressure from opposition factions. As a close ally of the President, Tukur’s resignation aims to settle party divisions which continue to rock the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan.

On the same day, President Goodluck Jonathan, fired all his military chiefs and appointed an air force officer from the troubled north-east as the top military commander, in a major shakeup of the high command. Military high commander, Admiral Ola Ibrahim was immediately replaced by Air Marshal Alex Badeh. A state of emergency was imposed in three northern states in May 2013, giving the military wide-ranging powers to end the Islamist Boko Haram insurgency. The dismissals now come amid growing concern about the military’s failure to end the Islamist-led insurgency.

Years of conflict have led to public distrust toward the current administration, due failure of the state to ensure public order or implement peace building measures, economic decline, and growing inequalities. President Jonathan is also facing an open rebellion against his leadership within his own ruling party, which is divided over whether he should run for a second full term in 2015.

Security Context

In early January, a small bomb blast went off in the High Court in Ahaoda, in the southern coastal state of Rivers. While the incident caused no casualties, it underlined once again the growing risk of violence ahead of the upcoming elections. Two of Nigeria’s main political parties accused each of the attack, saying they suspected the other side of sabotaging the court, which was due to hear a case over the disputed leadership in the state national assembly.

Boko Haram insurgency

Boko Haram (BH) is an Islamic militant group founded in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state, over a decade ago and has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in Nigeria’s mostly Muslim north. Since April 2013, attempts by military forces to engage with the militants resulted in excessive use of force and massive destruction in civilian areas. In May 2013, the group took control of part of Borno state, prompting authorities to deploy large numbers of troops. In order to contain the BH insurgency in mid-May 2013 a state of emergency (SOE) was declared. The SOE was extended for six months in November 2013.

According to OCHA, the insurgency has cost over 4,000 lives since 2009, and already 1,200 since May 2013. Fighting between government troops and the BH has intensified in the last months, particularly in remote areas. January 2014 attacks by suspected members of Boko Haram have already claimed over 200 lives.

On 1 February Shaikh Adam Albani, a Muslim leader critical of the militant group Boko Haram and supportive of a Nigerian military campaign against them, was shot dead in Zaria, Kaduna State. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the killing.
On 26 January, suspected Boko Haram Islamist militants attacked worshippers at a church service in Waga Chakawa village in Adamawa state, reportedly killing 45 people and destroying surrounding houses. Later that day, a further 52 people were killed, 16 wounded and around 300 houses burned down when Boko Haram militants attacked a market place in Kawuri village, Borno state.

On 22 January, Boko Haram militants attacked two villages in Imo state. In Njaba village, ten were killed, and five wounded. The next day, the militants shot dead eight people in neighbouring Kaya village, before razing it to the ground.

On 15 January, five people were killed in Kayamula village in the troubled Borno State following an attack by Boko Haram militants. Four days later, on 19 January, more than 15 people in Gashigar village died in attacks by militants also believed to be Boko Haram. Hundreds have fled their homes for safety.

On 14 January, Boko Haram claimed responsibility for a car bomb which killed at least 19 people in Maiduguri, capital of the north-eastern Borno state and considered to be the epicentre of Boko Haram activity. 16 January, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said the bombing had left at least 40 dead and 50 wounded.

On 13 January, Boko Haram attacked a market in Kayamula, Borno State, using Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The attack left eight people dead, wounded several others, and left houses and shops destroyed.

According to observers, BH may be taking advantage of the porous borders with Chad and Niger that allow criminal groups, including weapon dealers, to freely migrate between the countries. With regard to these developments and the emergence of BH, the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force – formed in 1998 by Nigeria, Chad and Niger – was expanded to include counter-terrorism in April 2012.

In the period between mid-August and December 2013, BH coordinated several reprisal and retaliation attacks on military barracks and on villages in Borno, Kano, Yobe and Adamawa state. The Nigerian security forces carried out raids on rebel strongholds in Kano and Bita. The attacks of 2 December against the military barracks in Barna and Maiduguri, heavily damaging the sites and killing soldiers and civilians, are considered the biggest strike against the military in months, raising concerns on further conflict escalation.

Encouraged by the Nigerian government, civilians have formed bands of vigilante groups/self-defence militias, causing for repeated retaliation attacks by BH. Moreover, BH’s targets have expanded their initial military and security targets to include Christians, Muslims, students, politicians and others opposing BH’s ambition to impose Sharia.

So far, the Islamist group has dismissed the possibility of participating in a peace resolution committee set up in April to frame potential peace talks with authorities.

Niger Delta

On 25 January, an attack on a security patrol boat on the Nembe-Bassanbiri waterways in Southern Bayelsa state was carried out by the rebels of the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta. This movement, an umbrella organisation made up of several armed groups, is one of the largest militant groups in the Niger Delta region. It has threatened to reduce Nigerian oil production to zero by 2015 and further claims to expose exploitation and oppression of the people of the Niger Delta, and devastation of the natural environment by public-private partnerships. It claimed responsibility for this attack, stating it served as a reminder of the rebel group’s presence in the oil rich delta.

Inter-communal violence

The Middle Belt area which is divided between the Islamic North and the more secular Christian/animist south, is home to a number of minority groups and inter-communal and ethno-religious violence remains a persistent threat. According to local sources, on 9 January, a raid on Shonong village in Riyom local government area in central Plateau state, was carried out by ethnic Fulani herdsmen killed 34 people, injured 24 and displaced 600. Around 56 houses were burnt down in the incident.

On 3 February, 24 people were killed in separate attacks on Atakar and Dajat communities of Ganawuri, in Plateau State, Central Nigeria.

On 7 January, three were killed and 12 others injured in a mosque attack in Kwanwason village, Kano state. Investigation has commenced, as the identity of the attackers and their motives are unknown. This attack follows raids on four villages in central Plateau state in November 2013, and inter-communal conflict which triggered population displacement in September 2013. Plateau state roughly falls on the dividing line between the Christian dominated south and mainly Muslim north of the country, and has been plagued by a decade-long sectarian conflict which has left thousands dead.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

The ongoing conflict in north eastern Nigeria has displaced a significant number of people, restricted population movements, disrupted food supply, and limited agricultural activities. An interagency assessment was conducted in September in seven northeastern states – including Borno, Yobe and Adamawa where an SOE was declared in May 2013 – affected by the violence between BH and the Nigerian army. On a total of 6 million people affected, 4 million people reside in Borno state. According to the UNHCR, women and children represent half of the population of concern, and most urgent needs include food, WASH, and protection.

Access

In late December, OCHA reported that most humanitarian actors had withdrawn from the northeast region due to insecurity. Furthermore, limited communication and continued armed attacks are hampering humanitarian activities on the ground.

Displacement

Refugees

On 28 January, UNHCR reported nearly 6,000 people had fled the Logone-et-Chari area and other parts of northern Nigeria due to ten days of violent attacks by the Boko Haram militants. Moreover, thirty people were killed, villages were bombed and two villages were...
burned to the ground during this period of intense violence.

A government census released last November showed that some 37,000 people – including 8,000 Nigerians and 30,000 Niger nationals living in Nigeria – had been displaced into the bordering Diffa region in Niger since May 2013. Temporary refugee status has been granted to those Nigerians fleeing the three states under a state of emergency (Boko, Adamawa and Yobe). The UNHCR has advised against forced returns to the northern areas. Cameroon is now hosting 12,428 Nigerian refugees.

According to UNHCR, the influx of refugees and the violence spill-over is creating cross-border tensions. In response, the Cameroon authorities implemented a policy of refoulement in October. In a further development, Niger and Nigeria established a Joint Border Patrol Command to address the security challenges related to displacement and rebel activity in the area.

**IDPs**

On 17 January, ECHO reported 50,000 people had been internally displaced due to ongoing fighting and insecurity. On 14 January, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) reported that almost 17,000 IDPs were officially registered and living in various camps across several states in Nigeria.

The ongoing violence continues to trigger internal and international displacement, particularly in Borno and Yobo states. As of August 2013, the most updated IDP figures stand at 5,400 according to UNHCR.

**Returnees**

In the beginning of January, 150 Nigerian citizens were evacuated from conflict-ridden CAR, but more are expected.

**Food Security**

As of mid-December, OCHA reported that severe flooding, which occurred between 14 April and 17 August, had affected an estimated 81,500 people in the country. According to the National Emergency Management Agency, the worst affected states are Abia, Bauchi, Benue, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kano, Kogi, and Zamfara. An estimated 2.3 million people affected by the floods are still food insecure. Recovery among poor households has been slow, particularly along the floodplains of major rivers in the country, where Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels are recorded.

Moreover, as of mid-December, OCHA reports that food insecurity has significantly increased, with Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) reported in the northeast states of Yobe, Borno and Adamawa, where insecurity is driving food prices upwards. In late November, FEWSNET reported that conflict-affected areas were likely to remain at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels between January and March 2014, due to violence impacting on market and farming activities. In the rest of the country, a favourable growing season should allow for households to stay at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels of food insecurity until March.

**Health and Nutrition**

On 5 February, the UN said that persistent attacks by Boko Haram have caused the healthcare system in Borno State to collapse. Dozens of clinics have been shut down and doctors have fled, leaving residents to seek cross-border medical attention, for example in Cameroon. These developments could have a detrimental impact on the reliability of epidemiological surveillance systems and the quality of care still being delivered. For instance, routine vaccinations as the polio campaigns are now limited to the Maiduguri metropolis. A break in procurement chains for anti-malarial drugs and bed nets is another concern.

In mid-August, ECHO reported that 492,000 children in the civil insecure northern regions of Nigeria were severely malnourished. According to UNICEF, GAM rates are with 16.2% the highest in Sokoto state, in the extreme northwest of Nigeria, while Kano state, at 9.2%, has the lowest.

**Cholera**

On 5 February, ECHO reports 524 cases of cholera, including 10 deaths, in Kano and Nassarawa State, in the Middle Belt and in Northern Nigeria, during the first three weeks of January. This represents a massive increase compared to the same period last year. UNICEF reports that since November 2013, 2,165 cases have been detected with 71 deaths. In 21 Local Government Areas 89 cholera high risk wards have been identified. Moreover, 16 cases of Lassa fever, including 6 deaths, were reported in Taraba, in Nassarawa, and in Bauchi states.

According to OCHA, as of mid-December, 2,880 cholera cases have been reported in 2013 across 16 states, which represents an eight-fold increase compared to the same period in 2012. The outbreak has cost 145 lives so far, and the north western state of Zamfara is considered the most affected. According to reports from UNICEF, nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water, and a third does not have access to sanitation services. The 2010 and 2011 rainy season epidemics killed nearly 2,000 people over two years.

**Polio**

Following statements by UNICEF that Nigeria is on the verge of being polio-free, UNICEF reports that there are 49 cases of polio so far in 2013. This represents a decrease compared to the 102 cases reported over the same period in 2012. 72% of the cases are recorded in Borno, Yobe, and Kano states, where insecurity is slowing the polio immunisation campaign.

*Updated: 05/02/2014*

**SENEGAL FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

7 February: ECHO reports on the food security crisis in the Sahel region, following the deterioration of the food security situation in Mali, Niger, Northern Nigeria, and Senegal,
indicate a dramatic increase – from 11.3 million in 2013 to 20 million in 2014 – of those expected to be food insecure.

**30 January:** OCHA reports that 2.2 million are at risk of food insecurity in Senegal. Recurrent shocks because of droughts, floods, poor infrastructure, and inadequate social safety nets continue to increase the overall chronic vulnerability of the population while households and community resilience continues to erode due to poor coping strategies.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- As of 30 January, 2.2 million are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA).
- Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in children <5 remains a key concern. The estimated SAM burden for 2014 of 78,888 children (UNICEF) was already topped by the recent figures of 79,000 SAM children, presented by OCHA on 30 January.

**Politics and Security**

Although Senegal enjoys a reputation for stability in a largely volatile region, the country has yet been unable to resolve the conflict in the Casamance area. Separatist movements continue to oppose the authorities along Senegal’s southern border with Guinea-Bissau in a conflict that is dormant. In March 2013, attempts to restart talks between the warring parties were undertaken. However, rebels of the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamance (MFDC) have not agreed on demining as part of the peace negotiations yet.

**Disaster**

In Senegal, flooding affects 300,000 people each year causing significant damage to crops and property. Most recently, heavy rains in August and September 2013 led to severe flooding in the centre and northern parts of Senegal, affecting 74,000 people and damaging houses and infrastructure. The most affected regions include Louga, Matam, Diourbel, Kaffrine, and Fatick. Crop production in parts of the country has been affected by both the heavy rain and by prolonged dry spells.

**Displacement**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 14,200 refugees reside in Senegal. Most are from Mauritanian descent, with a few from Rwanda and other countries.

**Food Security**

ECHO reports from 7 February on the food security crisis in the Sahel region, following the deterioration of the food security situation in Mali, Niger, Northern Nigeria, and Senegal, indicate a dramatic increase – from 11.3 million in 2013 to 20 million in 2014 – of those expected to be food insecure.

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Recurrent shocks because of droughts, floods, poor infrastructure, and inadequate social safety nets continue to increase the overall chronic vulnerability of the population while households and community resilience continues to erode due to poor coping strategies.

OCHA reports the cereal production has decreased by 17%, consequently resulting in high food prices. The Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN) reported in June 2013 that rural food security levels have generally deteriorated since 2010. Rural households are more at risk (25.1%) with the regions of Casamance showing very high levels of food insecurity (Ziguinchor 68%, Sedhou 67%, and Kolda 50%), and the regions of Matam and Kédougou following with high prevalence of food insecurity at 48% and 45.6% respectively.

According to the FAO in early December, erratic rains disrupted groundnut, cowpea, and cereal production. Agricultural production and output remains uneven across the country, with crops in Dakar, and the northern areas of Fatick and Kaoack reportedly the worst affected. Agriculture lands were submerged by floodwaters in Fatick and Kédougou. In Kédougou, Senegal agricultural lands were flooded by the Gambia River and in Fatick agricultural lands were reportedly flooded by flash floods. The post-flood situation could lead to an increase in food insecurity and malnutrition in the 2013/14 marketing year.

In October, the National Agricultural Statistics Service forecast a below-average cereal harvest for 2014. Despite the good 2013 crop, coarse grains prices have remained relatively high. Millet prices in August 2013 in Dakar were 6% higher than last year’s. Higher prices are also reported in cereal producing regions such as Fatick and Kolda. By contrast, prices of imported rice have remained relatively stable in recent months. Rice prices increased steeply in the country from December 2011, but Government intervention in the form of price control has kept prices stable since April 2012. Senegal still relies heavily on rice imports from the international market to meet its food requirements. Domestic production covers only about half of the country’s cereal utilisation requirements, so its rice imports amount to an average 900,000 tonnes per annum.

According to FEWSNET, because of the availability of the October to December harvest and continued regular income earning activities, poor households will remain in minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) through March 2014.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Malnutrition**

On 7 February, ECHO reported that in the Sahel region in 2014 an expected 20 million people will be food insecure, including five million acutely malnourished children <5.

As of 30 January, OCHA reports that 79,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Another 261,000 children suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). These figures represent an increase when compared to 2013, in which 63,323 SAM and 255,675 MAM were reported.

Following the Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN) assessment conducted in June 2013, 17 out of 45 departments were found to be in a nutritional crisis. Furthermore, ENSAN showed a critical prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) in all three departments of Matam (Matam 21%, Kanel 18%, Ranerou 16%) and in the bordering
department of Podor (17%) in St. Louis Region. Bakel (2.7%), Goudiry (2%), Medina Yoro Foula (2.2%), Bounkiling (4.6%), Mbour (2.3%) had a critical prevalence of more than 2% SAM. Twelve more departments affected seriously, having a prevalence between 10-15% GAM.

Eleven out of 14 regions, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sedhiou, Tambacounda, and Thies, were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2013 due to a prevalence of GAM and aggravating factors such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections.

The number of of health centres focusing on nutrition services (541 to 941), treatment and reporting (5 to 11 regions), and facilities with the WASH minimum package (154 to 591) increased in the period between January and December 2013.

In October 2013, Senegalese authorities launched a policy of free health care, primarily concerning children <5, who can get free treatment in nutritional facilities and health centres.

Tsetse fly

On 10 January, FAO reported that Senegal had radically reduced the numbers of tsetse flies which transmits human sleeping sickness and devastates livestock. The most affected area is Niayes near the Dakar capital. Senegal say they aim to eradicate the tsetse fly population completely in the first block of 2014.

WASH

According to UNICEF, the city of Dakar suffered from an important water shortage at end September and beginning of October. An estimated third of the population of the capital had no access to water for as long as three weeks. The risk of illness was aggravated by the recent flood season which led to the contamination of many water sources being used by the population as a last resort.

Updated: 11/02/2014

CAMEROON FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1 February: the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) – a UN-backed panel on border demarcation – held its 32nd Session in Abuja. Nigeria’s Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Mohammed Adoke, stated that the government had urged the Cameroonian government to allow Nigerians living in the Bakassi Peninsula, (deemed by the International Court of Justice in 2002 to belong to Cameroon) to be able to earn a living and live in decent conditions without fear of discrimination, irrespective of their legal status.

KEY CONCERNS

- The impact of the 2011-2012 drought it still being felt across the country and chronic food insecurity remains in the northern parts of the country. Around 615,000 people are still at risk from food insecurity and malnutrition (CFSVA).

- Ongoing fighting in Mali, CAR and Nigeria has led to an influx of refugees into Cameroon - 90,400 from CAR (UNHCR) and between 10,000 (ICRC July 2013) and 20,000 (Civil Society Sources) Nigerians.

- Further risk of violence fuelled by concerns that militants from Nigeria’s Boko Haram and rebel fighters from CAR could cross into the country and create further insecurity for civilian populations.

Politics and Security

Cameroon continues to be affected by ongoing instability in a number of neighbouring countries. The spillover from fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants continues to impact Cameroon and threatens regional security. The influx of refugees from neighbouring Mali and Nigeria is also putting pressure on already limited resources in the northern regions of Cameroon.

1 February: the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) – a UN-backed panel on border demarcation – held its 32nd Session in Abuja. Nigeria’s Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Mohammed Adoke, stated that the government had urged the Cameroonian government to allow Nigerians living in the Bakassi Peninsula, (deemed by the International Court of Justice in 2002 to belong to Cameroon) to be able to earn a living and live in decent conditions without fear of discrimination, irrespective of their legal status. On 12 June 2006, President Obasanjo and President Biya signed the Greentree Agreement concerning transfer of authority and withdrawal of troops from the Peninsula. The CNMC was created to monitor the implementation of the agreement.

Moreover, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for West Africa and Chairman of the CNMC, Said Djiniit, stated that the United Nations (UN) has commended Nigeria and Cameroon for their resolve in ensuring completion of the peace agreement and transfer process in Bakassi, concluded on 14th August 2013, in accordance with the terms of the Greentree Agreement.

On 17 January, Cameroonian villages along the northern border with Borno State in Nigeria, were reportedly left deserted as people fled heavy fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram insurgents. Boko Haram is an Islamic militant group founded in 2002 in Borno state, Nigeria. The group has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in Nigeria’s north, which is predominantly Muslim.Five people were believed to have been killed in the clashes and 30 others from both Cameroon and Nigeria, were wounded. Houses were also said to have damaged and destroyed. Amchide village on the border with Cameroon and Nigeria was the most badly affected in the incident.

In December, troops from Cameroon’s military were deployed to the border with Nigeria to prevent Boko Haram militants fleeing into the country. On 31 December, gunmen suspected to be from the Central African Republic (CAR) attacked a small military base in...
eastern Cameroon, along the border with CAR. Reports indicated that seven people died in the fighting, including two Cameroonian soldiers. According to local sources, the attackers were suspected former members of the Seleka, the rebel coalition which seized power in Bangui in March and was disbanded last September. Military sources reported that several ex-rebels had been arrested over the last few weeks in the east of the country, where thousands of CAR refugees have been crossing the border to escape the violence.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

**Refugees**

As of 15 November, UNHCR reported that an estimated 90,400 refugees from Central African Republic (CAR) are living in Cameroon. Around 5,280 refugees have arrived in the past year.

In addition, since June 2013, Cameroon – mainly the regions of Mayo Sava, Logone Chari and Mayo Sanaga - have been accommodating Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram attacks and the on-going military offensive against the insurgent group. The attacks have led to a significant deterioration of the security situation in the region.

On 24 January, the UNHCR reported that recent clashes between the Nigerian army and the militant group Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria had caused over 4,000 people to flee into Cameroon over the past three weeks. Most of the refugees have taken shelter in the Logone-et-Chari area of Far North Region. Local authorities say this latest influx brings the total of Nigerian refugees in Cameroon to 12,428. Out of that number, 2,183 have been transferred to a UNHCR camp at Minawao (130 kilometres further inland). The needs among the refugees are largely WASH, health and nutrition related.

**Food Security**

The impact of the 2011-2012 drought it still being felt across the country, and chronic food insecurity remains in the northern parts of the country due to recurrent climatic shocks, which have negatively impacted agricultural activities in the two Sahelian regions North and Far North. According to the findings of the 2011 comprehensive food security and vulnerability assessment (CFSVA), around 615,000 people still at risk from food insecurity and malnutrition. Moreover, since May 2013, the North and Far North regions received more than 8,000 Nigerian refugees, increasing pressure on resources.

GIEWS and FAO reported on January 16 that cereal production improved in 2013. In the absence of official forecasts, the 2013 aggregate cereal production is tentatively put at about 3.1 million tonnes: 5% up on last year’s output, and 10% above the average of the previous five years. In mid-October, FAO reported that harvesting of the 2013 main season and the planting of the second season maize crops are underway concurrently in several bi-modal rainfall areas of the Centre and South. Abundant precipitation during March to July, the main season planting and growing period, benefited crops. On the other hand, below average rainfall in August and September may have negatively impacted planting activities of second season crops, for harvest in December/January, and rainfall amounts and distribution in the coming months will be crucial for crop development and performance.

Following the September 2013 IMF report on Cameroon, stating economic growth is projected to increase gradually over the medium term under current policies (i.e. GDP growth predicted to increase from 4.4% in 2012 to 5.5% in 2018), despite policy inertia due to multiple elections. Growth in recent years has had no significant impact on poverty, but it has been relatively inclusive. Following years of volatility, the country’s economic recovery improved in 2012. Inflation rates rose to 3 percent in 2011 and remained stable at 3% in 2012 and 2013. Risks for medium-term macroeconomic stability could be, among else, the protracted global slump; rising fuel subsidies; widespread unemployment; delays in the implementation of the public investment program; and slow progress in raising non-oil revenue.

**Health and Nutrition**

A malaria outbreak in the Far North region was declared in early December. Prior to this, 182,400 cases of malaria were reported between January and September 2013, representing a 10% increase in cases recorded during the same period in 2012. Authorities blamed the recent upsurge on low bed nets use, heavy rains, weak medical services and widespread poverty.

UNICEF reports that the nutrition situation for 2013 is similar to that in 2012 due to a structural vulnerability of populations in the northern Cameroon, which has increased with each consecutive crisis. As of 30 June, an estimated 83,300 children <5 years old suffered from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 134,700 suffer from Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).

**Wild polio virus**

On 21 November, WHO reported that the wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been confirmed in Cameroon. The case is the first wild poliovirus in the country since 2009. Wild poliovirus was isolated from two acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases from West Region. According to WHO, this event confirms the risk of ongoing international spread of a pathogen wild poliovirus slated for eradication. Given the history of international spread of polio from northern Nigeria across West and Central Africa and subnational surveillance gaps, WHO assessed the risk of further international spread across the region as high.

Updated: 05/02/2014

**IVORY COAST FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

2 February: The Ivorian government released 70 senior army officers and politicians who had been detained whilst awaiting trial for crimes including murder, kidnapping and corruption. The release of the 70 detainees, all of whom are close to the deposed president Laurent Gbagbo, was considered a goodwill gesture as part of the ongoing political détente and reconciliation process.
KEY CONCERNS
- 220,000 people are in immediate need of food assistance (FAO, WFP Oct 2013) More than half a million people remain food insecure in the west and northern areas of Ivory Coast (FAO).
- Ongoing concern about general malnutrition and food security. One in four children suffers from chronic malnutrition (UNICEF/ Food Security Cluster, September 2012).
- Concern about Zanzan, on the eastern border with Burkina Faso and Ghana, where 60% of the population live below the poverty line and three quarters of the population are lacking access to safe drinking water.
- Agricultural production still impacted by over a decade of civil unrest.

Politics and Security

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On 23 January, the largest opposition party PDCI held a political rally to discuss with activists and party members how to regain power in the 2015 elections. The government and the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), whose founder, the ousted president, Laurent Gbagbo faces war crimes charges at the International Criminal Court, met as part of ongoing direct dialogue between the two sides. However, many issues remain unresolved, and further meetings are expected. In the framework of the dialogue, initiated over a year ago between the Ivorian government and the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), the two sides met on 15 January for the first time since September 2013. Ahead of the meeting, the FPI reportedly requested to convene the general assembly as a way to tackle issues related to the preparation and organisation of the presidential elections set for 2015. While both government representative Kouadio-Ahoussou and FPI President N’Guessan said the discussions were fruitful, Abidjan reportedly rejected the FPI’s request, arguing that FPI should join the dialogue in the existing dialogue framework, alongside the eleven other opposition parties.

Tensions between the current administration and the FPI date back to the 2010-2011 Ivorian crisis, and remained strained due to the FPI’s position regarding current President Ouattara’s eligibility for the 2015 campaign, due to doubts surrounding Ouattara’s nationality.

On 13 January, the UN Human Rights Council published its findings on the human rights situation in Ivory Coast for the period May 4 to December 30, 2013. Whilst there has been some improvement, the security situation remains fragile due to a persistent culture of violence and a large consistency of ex-fighters who have not yet benefited from programs of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In the beginning of 2011, the Ouattara government estimated there are more than 100,000 former combatants eligible for DDR. However, this figure is based on what was widely seen as a flawed and inflated census. The government promised to reintegrate 64,000 ex-combatants over two years but so far roughly 2,000 have been reintegrated into working for the prison system. Others were promised to be reintegrated into civil service divisions.

Following several appeals in October and November 2013 on 80,000 people in exile – of which 300 are soldiers – on 14 January, President Ouattara reportedly removed the ultimatum and abandoned the threat of radiation for the military exiles. Moreover, he announced the government would prioritise the facilitation of return for all, including safety guarantees. Another issue impacting security is the continued assumption of sovereign security functions by the Dozo, a group of traditional hunters in northern Ivory Coast.

On 13 January, OCHA reported that the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) in its two-year mandate was weak in addressing divisions stemming from an armed rebellion in 2002 which divided the nation. Despite the CDVR issuing a report outlining human rights violations and causes of a decade-long socio-political crisis, investigations and public hearings are still to be carried out still and the mandate renewal has yet to be confirmed by the president. Additionally, in his report of December 2013 following his fifth field visit in October 2013, the independent expert of the UN Human Rights Council called upon President to renew the CDVR mandate and ensure the better alignment of its activities and to push towards lasting national reconciliation.

On 8 January, the Council of Ministers announced the creation of a permanent Special Investigation and Examination Unit (CSEI) by presidential decree, to replace the Special Investigation Unit (CSE) that was in charge of the judicial proceedings connected to the post-electoral crisis. The new unit will continue investigation into crimes committed by all parties during the 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis.

In November 2013, preparaions for 2015 presidential elections began despite disagreements on election mechanics. Following negotiations between government and 11 political groups, under the Framework for Permanent Dialogue (CPD) in September and October, on 9 December, the first political dialogue in a decade was kicked off by the Ivorian Popular Front and Rally of Republicans.

Humanitarian context and needs

Besides political turmoil and economic instability, the violent post-election phase described above has resulted in destruction of public/private assets and caused mass population displacement of around 500,000 people within Ivory Coast and across its borders. Despite recent intermittent attacks in the western region, which has been the worst affected, peace and security however seems to have been considerably restored and the situation is expected to improve further in 2014.

An area of particular concern is Zanzan, on the eastern border with Burkina Faso and Ghana. Not only does nearly 60% of the population live below the poverty line, three quarters of the population are lacking access to safe drinking water. The presence of humanitarian organisations remains low in comparison with populations’ needs. Most
pressing needs include child protection and gender-based violence (FGM), access to water and health facilities, malnutrition, education and birth certificate issuance/provision.

Despite government measures to grant access to public health clinics providing primary health care, access to basic rights remains problematic for people of concern (Liberian refugees affected by cessation clauses; and 350,000 stateless people) due to a lack of proper documentation. For 2014, UNHCR prioritized finding solutions for Liberians and Rwandans whose refugee status has ceased by facilitating local integration or undertaking resettlement assessments; others will continue to receive international protection.

Displacement

IDPs

At the beginning of 2013, UNHCR reported that 36,500 IDPs had returned home. Up until 30 October 2013, 222,265 refugees had returned. Around 97% of the returnees reside in the western district mountains - 52% in Cavally and 47% in Tonkpi, as reported by UNHCR in October 2013. Humanitarian needs are pressing for another 45,000 displaced people, as well as their host communities, within this western district.

Ivory Coast has been selected as a pilot country for the UNSG’s Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions, which means profiling of the displaced population, hosting- and vulnerable communities will take be undertaken.

Returnees

On 19 October, President Ouattara called upon some 58,000 Ivorian refugees residing in Liberia to return, having signed a peace and security agreement with President Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia that same day. Voluntary repatriation programs by the UNHCR and the Liberian Refugee Commission (LRRRC) in Liberia assisted 16,232 refugees to return, mostly from camps and communities in Grand Gedeh, Nimba and Marlyland counties, doubling the total repatriation figures for 2011 and 2012. Towards the end of 2013, the trend of return has slowed down with a monthly average of 1,300 returnees. Stated reasons for a hesitation to return among 54,000 Ivorian refugees in Liberia, as well as those in Ghana and Togo, are a fear of reprisal and lack of safety guarantees, or a lack of access to land.

Food Security

The instability and unrest of the past decade has affected food security and economic stability of the population, leaving households more vulnerable.

At present, more than half a million people live in a state of food insecurity in the western and northern regions of the country. This is largely due to structural problems such as repatriation/ late return of farmer households, insecurity and population movements, delay/early end of rains, and crop loss due to flood. Most affected are households repatriated after the agricultural season, those displaced during the sowing period, those affected by floods, and those with precarious livelihoods.

The October 2013 assessment by FAO, WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture, indicates that 500,000 in the western and northern parts of the country are food insecure. The most affected area is the Moutains District (Toulepleu, Blolequin and Tai) where 387,000 people face food insecurity. 123,000 of them are in need of immediate assistance. Possible repatriation by UNHCR of another 22,000 may burden this district further. 193,000 in the Savanes District are facing food insecurity, of which 99,000 in the heavily populated area around Korhogo are at immediate need of assistance.

Health and Nutrition

The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) from 2012 reports that their essential drugs were often out of stock in health facilities at all levels.

Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is a major concern - only 17% of patients received adequate treatment in the form of oral rehydration, and malaria (17% was treated with artemisinin-based combination therapy) (ACT).

In 2011, the WHO reported that a year-round exposure and risk to diarrhoeal diseases accounted for a high proportion of childhood and adult illness and death in Cote d’Ivoire. Compounded by a high rate of malnutrition and limited health care (including basic rehydration facilities), the burden of morbidity and mortality associated with diarrhoeal diseases is high: 15% of all deaths of children under age 5 years in 2000-3, 5% of deaths of neonates in 2000, and 16% of deaths of people of all ages in 2002 were due to diarrhoeal diseases in Cote d’Ivoire.

Inappropriate feeding practices are also a problem due to poor hygiene, limited access to potable water and health services. Ivory Coast therefore continues to have the highest neonatal mortality rates (41:1000), and maternal mortality (614:100,000). Additionally, only 36% of HIV-positive pregnant women is receiving treatment.

Malnutrition

In September 2012, a situation report by UNICEF/Food security cluster stated that 1 in 4 children is suffering from chronic malnutrition. According to statistics published by the National Nutrition Programme (August 2013), malnutrition is the cause of 54% of deaths and 35% of diseases among children <5.

Protection

Extended periods of instability and a volatile security situation have resulted in humanitarian needs often being left unaddressed and overshadowed by political and security concerns. High risks of violence and abuse against children and women remain with continued impunity of perpetrators. A recent report expressed deep concern over the increase in sexual violence and trivialisation of the offence within the jurisdiction of the Assize Court. As is the case with rape, comprehensive data is hard to come by. The UN peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast verified and documented 59 cases in the first three months of 2013. However, this is believed to be a fraction of the total of cases.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS

03-04 February: Local sources reported that clashes erupted between the authorities and Muslim youths in the coastal city of Mombasa following a police raid on a mosque in which two people died and over 100 were arrested. The operation was initially launched after the police received information about an alleged jihad convention taking place in the mosque.

03 February: The UNHCR reported that an estimated 14,000 South Sudanese refugees from Jonglei State have now crossed over into Kenya since violence erupted in neighbouring South Sudan in December. The refugees are currently residing in the northwestern area of Kakuma along the Kenya-Sudan border. The daily rate of arrival is as high as 500 and latest reports indicated that the most pressing needs include protection for separated children, registration and health services.

KEY CONCERNS

- Ongoing conflict in the northeastern region where 63% of violent attacks have been attributed to the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab.

- Steady increase of inter-communal violence in 2013, when 491 people were killed and 47,000 displaced because of tribal conflicts. Most affected counties are Tana River, Mandera, and Marsabit.

- Kenya is hosting more than 582,000 refugees, including at least 475,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the northeastern Dadaab refugee camp (UNHCR, August 2013). Most recently, an estimated 14,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into the country (UNHCR, February).

- Drought is affecting 20 counties. 1.6 million people could need urgent food assistance in the first half of 2014 (Government of Kenya, November 2013).

Political and Security

National Context

Kenya is considered relatively stable in the Horn of Africa and held peaceful presidential elections in March 2013. However, the country remains deeply divided, ethnically polarised, and has been continuously affected by two decades of conflict in neighbouring Somalia. The country’s political stability is facing major challenges including the implementation of the devolution process, land reform, and national reconciliation. Institutions are perceived as weak, and minority groups are said to use politically motivated violence to influence the devolution process, which creates risk of polarising the country further at a time when the 47 newly established counties are seeking to tackle socio-economic inequalities. The political scene is also likely to be dominated by the planned trial of the president and vice-president at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the coming year.

Al Shabaab Insurgency

While regional and socio-economic inequality threatens Kenya’s national stability, the Northeast province is concentrating most of the conflict drivers. The region dominated by ethnic Somalis has suffered for more than 30 years from unequal development, and a history of insurgency, repression, chronic poverty and poor infrastructure. It also experiences 63% of violent attacks attributed to the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab, which has built a cross-border presence and clandestine support network among the Muslim population in the northeast, Nairobi, and the coast.

On 10 December, gunmen killed eight Kenyans, including five policemen, in an ambush near the border town of Liboi. While the identity of the perpetrators remains unclear, such attacks against police and security forces are routinely blamed on the Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab insurgents. The group has been active in the country prior to Kenya’s intervention in Somalia, but the frequency and scale of attacks has increased dramatically since 2011, and the nature of the violence has changed, with 40% of events targeting civilians. In September, an unprecedented attack was conducted by Al Shabaab fighters on a shopping mall in Nairobi, raising fears of increased communal tensions and discrimination against Somalis in particular, and Muslims in general. While the government is focusing on counter-terrorism policies, observers suggest that the main challenge remains the increasing radicalisation of the ethnic Somali Muslim population, which is allegedly fuelled by systematic ethnic profiling and discrimination from part of the government forces and the Kenyan population.

Back in September, the Society for Threatened People reported that this latest attack by Islamist extremists may have serious consequences for the Muslim population - which comprises about 11% of the 40 million inhabitants, and for the Somali refugees in Kenya. On 25 October, Kenyan authorities have called for Somali refugees to be repatriated, claiming that refugee camps were being used as a safe haven for Islamist militants and are a threat to national security.

On 3-4 February, local sources reported that clashes erupted between the authorities and Muslim youths in the coastal city of Mombasa - Kenya’s second largest, following a police raid on a mosque in which two people died and over 100 were arrested. The operation was initially launched after the police received information about an alleged jihad convention taking place in the mosque. According to local security forces, mosques have been at the heart of Al Shabaab’s attempts to radicalise Kenyan Muslims, and Kenyan authorities have reportedly been dismantling recruitment networks among the Muslim minority communities.

Over the past year, five Muslim clerics were killed in Mombasa on allegation that they were terror suspects recruiting in mosques for the militant group Al Shabaab. Early October, Mombasa erupted in riots after the killing of a Muslim preacher. Rising sectarian tensions also affect the city’s Christian community, as shown by the two separate attacks conducted on 19 October, which claimed the lives of two Christian clerics.
Inter-Communal Violence

According to OCHA, inter-communal violence has increased over the course of 2013, and escalated significantly toward the end of the year, notably in December in the northern county of Marsabit, where tribal clashes erupted along the border with Ethiopia and caused significant population displacement. In 2013, 491 people were killed and another 1,235 injured in inter-communal violence fuelled by competition over political representation and resources. This number represents only a marginal decrease compared to 2012, when 503 were killed and 1,315 injured in similar events. However, records showed that population displacements due to inter-communal conflicts were significantly lower year-on-year, from 116,000 in 2012 to 47,000 in 2013.

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

As of 20 January, fighting which erupted in December 2013 in Moyale marked a significant escalation in violence on the north-central border with Ethiopia. To date, tribal clashes between the Borana community and a joint force of Burji and Gabra tribes in the districts of Marsabit and Moyale displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and across the border with Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, local authorities are concerned with the threat of retaliatory attacks. The Government of Kenya had reportedly deployed troops, allowing the situation to stabilise, while authorities established a Directorate for Cohesion and Non-state Coordination, in an effort to promote peace building and reconciliation in the area.

Armed clashes between the rival communities previously flared up in July-August, and stem from long-standing disputes over land, water and land-grazing rights. The long-standing rivalry has taken on new dynamics, with the Rendille and the Garri communities also being drawn into the conflict, amid political antagonism following the March 2013 general elections. In 2012, over 40,000 Kenyan sought refuge in Ethiopia due to similar unrest, and due to increased human and livestock population, cattle raiding and violent events have become more frequent. The region is also affected by the availability of small arms, due to its proximity with Somalia. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front rebel group is said to have made several deadly incursions into Kenya.

In the northeast of the country, inter-clan violence erupted early December on the West Pokot-Turkana border, where pastoral communities clashed over resources, causing more than 20 deaths and displacing hundreds of families.

The northeast of the country is also affected by fighting between the Garre and Degodia ethnic Somali clans, which have been feuding in Mandera county since March 2012. Tension and conflict between the two communities has historically revolved around competition for natural resources. Since March 2013, emerging tensions are attributed to political disagreements over governance issues under the new devolution structures. Inter-clan violence has spread to neighbouring Wajir county. Leaders from the warring Garre and Degodia clans signed a peace agreement on 23 June to stop the clashes, but violence resumed on 24 June. The Kenyan Red Cross reported that conflict between Garre and Degodia clans in Mandera County had left over 85 people dead as of 25 June.

In unrelated violence in western Kenya, tension is high along the West Pokot and Turkana county borders after two people were killed early October by raiders suspected to be Turkana. At the end of June, a raid killed three herdsmen, and repeated incidents in August and September caused an unknown number of families to flee the area of Bargoi in Samburu county. Motives behind the attacks are unclear, but are suspected to be in retaliation for the killing of a Turkana boy by Samburu raiders. The western province saw a surge in indiscriminate attacks by various armed groups and gangs in early May, affecting the cities of Bungoma and Busia. However, the two communities recently held talks where they agreed to resolve peacefully feuds between them.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Internal Displacement

According to OCHA on 20 January, fighting which erupted in December 2013 in Moyale has now displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and across the border with Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, weeks of sporadic violence has impacted the households’ food security and livelihoods at the very beginning of the dry January-March season.

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

Refugees

According to the UNHCR on 3 February, an estimated 14,000 South Sudanese refugees from Jonglei State have now crossed over to Kenya since violence erupted in the neighbouring country in mid-December, and are currently residing in the northwestern area of Kakuma. The daily rate of arrival is as high as 500 and latest reports indicated that the most pressing needs include protection for separated children, registration and health services.

As of August, UNHCR notes that Kenya hosts more than 582,000 refugees, including at least 475,000 Somali which reside mostly in the north eastern Dadaab refugee camp complex (388,000), the northwest camp of Kakuma (54,000) and in the capital Nairobi (32,000). On 10 November, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish the legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. The Kenyan Government estimated the number of Somali refugees in Kenya at 600,000 as of late June 2013 and has been pushing to expedite the return of these refugees since the attack on the Westgate Mall in September, citing national security concerns and calling for the closure of the Dadaab camp complex.

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

The effects of food insecurity are likely to linger throughout the first semester of 2014, and could lead to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity during the 2014 lean season (August – October).

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

In the northwest of the country, a drought report released on 27 January by local authorities indicated that the semi-arid Turkan region – which is home to 850,000 people, has now reached an emergency stage. An estimated 440,000 people are affected by hunger and need urgent food assistance. In October, a food security assessment in the semi-arid Turkana region indicated that more than 346,000 people were in urgent need of food assistance. Over 500,000 herds of cattle are also at risk as water and pasture run out.

Health and Nutrition

Polio (WPV)

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

Malnutrition

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

Updated: 05/02/2014

NIGER FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

30 January: The UN said that since early 2012, up to 37,000 people – both Nigerians and Nigeriens – have fled into Niger due to ongoing clashes between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian military in north eastern Nigeria. Most of the refugees are sheltering with families in Niger. The government process to grant the new arrivals with refugee status has been slow.

KEY CONCERNS

- 3.9 million people (3,617 villages) considered at risk from food insecurity, including 2,000 villages in the agricultural regions of Tillabery and Zinder (GIEWS/FAO).
- A cereal deficit in the agricultural regions of Tillabery and Zinder has led to an increase in the prices of major local cereals (+30% in comparison to 2012) and millet and sorghum (+25% in comparison to 2012) (GIEWS/FAO).
- In late November, 41 cases of diphtheria (including 16 deaths) were registered in Tillabery. The 5-14 age group has so far recorded the highest number of cases.
- The impact of population movement in water-scarce Tillabery region, notably from Mali, remains a concern. In terms of the national caseload, the region accounts for 33% of measles, 70% of cholera, 98% of diphtheria and 17% of malaria cases (OCHA).

Politics and Security

Political Context

On 1 February, production resumed in two uranium mines in the Arlit region, operated by the French company Areva. A month earlier, Areva had closed the mines due for maintenance which further exacerbated tensions between the energy giant and the multinational which have been growing over disputes around tax law and distribution of revenue.

On 27-28 January it was reported that police had detained several journalists following a press conference with the Minister of Justice in which he stated the government would no longer tolerate inflammatory criticism by the press. Press and broadcasting associations have expressed concern about the detention of media representatives, demanding the immediate and unconditional release of the detained journalists, notably Soumana Idrissa Maiga (editor of the daily l’Enqueteur), Abdoulaye Maman (journalist and host of debates on TV Hausa Gaskya Bonferey), Ousmane Dambadji, editor of newspaper l’Union, Zakari Adamu, host of TV Channel 3, and Nayoussa Dijmaraou.

On 19 January, negotiations between Areva, a French energy multinational, and the government stalled due to disputes over tax issues. The head of the Nigerien government delegation in Paris said the disagreement largely centred around the application of the 2006 tax law. Negotiations are set to continue throughout February but the temporary closure of the mines will have a significant impact on the country’s economy. Niger is a...
leading producer of uranium and the negotiations on uranium extraction with Areva could represent a test case for cases involving western interests, Africa’s natural resources and the benefits for the resource-rich countries themselves.

The new parliament opened on 4 October yet the final composition of the presidential majority remains unclear. Political parties remain divided over participation in a new national unity government. Therefore, on 5 October an opposition coalition of 15 parties was formed, named the Alliance for the Republic, Democracy and Reconciliation in Niger (ARDR).

On 14 August, President Issoufou appointed a national unity government, in an attempt to reinforce political stability, address regional security threats, and deal with corruption, impunity, demographic and economic challenges. Civil society organisations and representatives have shown to be willing to fight for democracy. However, several of them have been co-opted by the ruling elite as well.

Since May 2013 onwards, Niger’s regional environment has been deteriorating and internal dynamics make for its stability being questioned more and more. There is question of communal tensions, a democratic deficit and rural societies are increasingly marginalised. The fragile socio-economic and political environment is compounded by terrorist spill over from its crisis-ridden neighbours: 2011 Libyan civil war; 2012 Mali crisis; military confrontations between government forces and Boko Haram in northern Nigeria; threats from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) suspected because of kidnapping of foreigners; and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Recent incidents of violence include suicide attacks on army barracks in Agadez and on an Areva mining site in Arlit, on May 23; and a violent prison break on June 1.

On 28 December, thousands of protesters from the Alliance for the Republic, Democracy and Reconciliation (ARDR) took to the streets to express their discontent over the failure of the government to improve living standards. It was the largest public protest since three years, since a ban on opposition marches was lifted a month ago.

Niger endured austere military rule for much of its post-independence history and is rated by the UN as one of the world’s least-developed nations. President Tandja changed the constitution to stay in power, but was ousted in a coup in 2010. Polls were held in January 2011 to restore civilian rule.

Security Context

Niger is essential to the French military operation in Mali; to the EU’s Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel (on 12 November EU announced Filip de Ceuninck will be the new Deputy Head of Mission of EUCAP Sahel Niger); and to U.S. assistance and presence within the region. Involvement has led to increased military expenditure (i.e. on 13 January it was reported that France delivered two of the expected twelve UAVs), reallocating resources at the expense of weak social sectors. Historically, the military is quite influential, having intervened in institutional deadlocks as well. In late November, French forces arrested Cheibani Ould Hama in Mali. Cheibani is an alleged terrorist preparing attacks in Niamey, who had escaped from Niamey prison in June during attacks of Islamist militants.

The Tuareg insurgency issue has not been resolved in Niger. Divided along social fault lines, clan and generations, some members of Tuareg society are integrated into the administration. However, others have been waging a low-level war in an attempt to achieve greater autonomy for the North. Kidnapping of foreigners has led to fear of Al Qaeda activity, taking advantage of some of Niger’s disputed boundaries/borders.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

On 2 January, OCHA updated its map on humanitarian access in Niger, indicating that humanitarian workers travelling from the southern regions towards the border with Mali, Chad and Libya need military escorts. When travelling towards Algeria, OCHA recommends humanitarian teams to travel in convoy.

Displacement

Refugees

On 30 January, the UN said that since early 2012 up to 37,000 people – both Nigerians and Nigeriens – have fled into Niger due to ongoing clashes between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian military in north eastern Nigeria. Most of the refugees are sheltering with families in Niger. The government process to grant the new arrivals with refugee status has been slow.

On 24 January, UNHCR reports that the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency and army offensive in neighbouring Nigeria continues to lead to an influx of refugees fleeing over the border. According to UNHCR nearly 6,000 people have fled the northern parts to neighbouring Cameroon and Niger in the past 10 days due to violent attacks by Boko Haram. An estimated 1,500 people sought refuge in the southern border region of Diffa.

A government census released last November showed that some 37,000 people – including 8,000 Nigerians and 30,000 Nigerien returnees – have been displaced into the Diffa region since May 2013. The majority of these displaced are women and children, and live with host families in Bosso, Abadam, Main Soroa, Diffa, Kabalewa, Tchoukoudjani, Garin Amadou and Baroua. In early December, the Niger government issued a decree granting temporary refugee status to Nigeriens who fled the three states under states of emergency in Nigeria.

On 23 December, the ICRC reported a growing influx of refugees (450 over two days) from the conflict in north-east Nigeria into Diffa, the south-easternmost area of Niger. Recent floods have isolated the Diffa area, as well as destroying homes, schools and health-care centres. Moreover, farmland in was affected in large areas, and poor security conditions almost halted trade with Nigeria, therefore causing a leap in the prices of basic necessities. Another aggravating factor, is the fact that annual crop and livestock figures for the Diffa region were already poorer in comparison to the rest of the country (ICRC).

According to UNHCR as of end of October, an estimated 49,601 Malian refugees are registered in Niger as a result of the military intervention in Mali. UNHCR also reported that 5,124 Nigeriens returned to Niger, bringing the total number of those displaced from
the Malian conflict into Niger to over 54,000. Most of these people (77%) live in three
refugee camps (Abala, Tabareybarey, and Mangaize), and in the Intikane hosting area. Malian refugees continue to place significant stress on the country with most settling in regions hardest hit by the nutrition and food security crisis.

**Smuggling and human trafficking**

In late October, the bodies of 92 migrants were found in Niger’s northern desert after they had died of thirst just a few kms from Algeria, their planned destination. Following this incident, international media reported on 3 November that at least 127 migrants were arrested as they attempted to cross into Algeria through the Sahara desert. Government officials have announced their plan to close illegal camps in the north of Niger, as they blame the migrant deaths on illegal trafficking.

**Food Security**

On 21 January, ACTED said it had distributed 2,630 goats through a traditional rotation system in November and December. The move came in response to chronic vulnerabilities faced by households throughout Niger. On 17 January, FEWSNet published an updated Niger Price Bulletin which stated millet, maize, cowpea, and imported rice remain the most important food commodities.

Up to 300 hectares of crops were destroyed following heavy flooding in August-September in the southern region of Diffa.

The border regions of Maradi, Tounfafi and Diffa are key areas for cross-border trading and have sizeable markets selling regional produce. These areas are particularly frequented by those living in cereal deficit areas - both from Niger and other countries in the region. People in the towns of Nguigmi and Abalak remain heavily dependent on cereal markets for their food supply, particularly during the rainy season.

GIEWS/FAO reported in early December that, despite a cereal deficit, the food situation was generally stable due to the presence of the winter crop. However, 3,617 villages (or 3.9 million people) remain at risk, including 2,000 villages in the agricultural regions of Tillabery and Zinder. In Zinder, the prices of major local cereals (+30%) and millet and sorghum (+25%) are very high compared to the same period last year. Combined with an agricultural deficit in several production areas, the food situation is expected to become more difficult. In Maradi, the food situation needs to be monitored closely, since 304 agricultural villages reported losses of more than 50%. In Tillabery, 1101 villages are predicted to face a precarious food situation in the months to come.

As of late November, FEWSNET reported that the average crop production is allowing households to meet their food needs and that most of the population is and will remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) levels of food insecurity through the end of December. In the south and southwest of the country, certain parts of Tillabery, Tahoua, Zinder and Diffa are expected to experience Stressed Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 2) between January and March 2014, as a result of depletion of cereal stocks, high cereal prices and decline of livestock market value.

According to a statement made by Niger’s Prime Minister Brigi Rafini on 10 November, after an initial evaluation, about one million people in Niger face severe food shortages due to poor harvests after drought and flooding. Figures about the actual needs are expected to be published shortly. According to OCHA on 19 July, 2.9 million people are food insecure in Niger.

FAO reported on 26 August that since Niger depends on food imports from Nigeria during the lean season, the current insecurity in the northeast that has disrupted trade with surrounding countries is affecting food availability.

**Health and Nutrition**

The impact of population movement in water-scarce Tillabery region, notably from Mali, remains a concern. In terms of the national caseload, the region accounts for 33% of measles, 70% of cholera, 98% of diphtheria and 17% of malaria cases (OCHA).

**Diphtheria**

With 41 registered cases, of whom 16 have died, diphtheria has returned to Niger seven years after the last epidemic in 2006. The recent epidemic has been confirmed by local health officials in Tillabery 120 km northwest of the capital. The most affected age group is 5-14 years, with 26 registered cases.

**Malnutrition**

According to WHO at the end of October, the cumulative number of GAM cases reported nationally since the beginning of the year stood at 625,486 and 254,364 for SAM. This is an increase compared to the 567,859 GAM cases and 213,509 SAM cases reported for the same period in 2012. UNICEF reported in mid-October that more than 2,500 children <5 died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

Updated: 05/02/2014

**ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new development this week. Last update was on: 21/01/2014.

No accurate or verified data relating to the food security situation or food price levels in Eritrea is available. Therefore, Eritrea is not included within the Global Overview prioritization.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and religious freedom are still a major concern in Eritrea.

- Ongoing serious human rights abuses are prompting thousands of Eritreans to
flee the country every year. In December, Ethiopia was hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean refugees (OCHA).
- Over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished in 2013 (WFP).

Political and Security Context

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), Eritrea is still plagued by human rights abuses, including torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and religious freedom. Military conscription is compulsory and can last for an indefinite period of time.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 political prisoners are being held in this country of over six million people. The UN Human Rights chief has accused the Eritrean government of torture and summary executions.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

There is a lack of updated and reliable data on the humanitarian situation due to limited humanitarian access and a ban on humanitarian organizations assessing needs. As reported in ECHO’s HIP released in October, due to limited access and humanitarian space in Eritrea, providing direct humanitarian assistance remains a challenge in this country.

Displacement

Eritrean Refugees

According to UNHCR, Eritrean refugees crossing to neighbouring Ethiopia are on the rise while the number entering Sudan has dropped compared to 2012. In December, OCHA said Ethiopia had registered the arrival of 3,043 new refugees from Eritrea. As of 31 December, OCHA indicated that Ethiopia is hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean refugees mainly settled in four camps in the northern Tigray region and two others in the Afar region in north-eastern Ethiopia. As indicated in ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) released in October, the high proportion of unaccompanied minors who cross from Eritrea to Ethiopia is an especially high priority problem in need of solid action.

According to UNHCR, eastern Sudan receives an average 500 Eritrean refugees per month in 2013, down from 2,000 a month in 2012. Sudan reportedly shelters at least 114,500 Eritrean refugees.

Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

Moreover, hundreds of Eritrean refugees are currently being hosted in Yemen. In early January, an exiled Eritrean political organisation, the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO) called upon Yemeni authorities to stop deporting Eritrean political refugees.

Refugees in Eritrea

According to UNHCR, as of 10 September, Eritrea is currently hosting 3,468 Somali refugees.

Food Security

According to the FAO’s 2013 ‘State of Food Insecurity in the World’, over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished during the period 2011-2013.

As indicated in ECHO’s October HIP, as a result of access restrictions imposed by the authorities, no data on food security in Eritrea is available. However, it is estimated that Eritrea produces only 60% of the food it needs and the markets do not seem to be functioning properly. These two factors suggest that a significant part of the population may be in need of food assistance. In addition, local food and fuel prices are likely to remain high, putting severe pressure on vulnerable groups’ coping mechanisms. The government of Eritrea officially denies any food shortages within its borders and refuses food aid.

Health and Nutrition

Malnutrition remains a widespread problem. As reported by UNDP, quoting the Food Security Strategy (2004) report, 38% of Eritrean children experience stunting; 44% are underweight while 50% suffer from anaemia. About 59% of the Eritrean population consume less than the daily calorie requirement.

Reviewed: 06/02/2014
progress has been made to kick start official peace negotiations.

2 February: The Afghan election campaign officially started amidst widespread concerns about the country’s ability to hold elections in an increasingly turbulent environment. According to international observers, there are currently no favourite candidates to succeed President Karzai.

Late January: ECHO reported that heavy snowfall and low temperatures continue to affect northern Darz Aab and Qush Tepa districts of Jawzjan province where at least 10 people have been killed by the severe weather. Previous reports indicated that IDPs across Afghanistan were also severely affected and in urgent need of shelter.

KEY CONCERNS

- Throughout 2013, the Taliban intensified attacks against foreign and local military and humanitarian targets as the country prepares for the withdrawal of the NATO-led ISAF troops from the country. In 2014, violence is expected to further escalate ahead of the upcoming April presidential elections that are likely to represent a litmus test for the stability of the country.

- Prolonged conflict has triggered massive displacement in Afghanistan with over 5 million Afghans sheltering in Pakistan and Iran. In addition, over 612,000 people are currently internally displaced in Afghanistan, with some 113,000 having been displaced in 2013 (UNHCR).

- Other main humanitarian needs are also conflict-induced. To date, an estimated 7.7 million people within Afghanistan are in need of protection and some 2.2 million are classified as severely food insecure. The conflict is also causing widespread disruption to health services (OCHA).

Political and Security Context

International and Regional Political Context

In mid-December, while visiting India, President Karzai again requested the extensive supply of military, including heavy weapons from New Delhi, and reiterated his view that a stable Afghanistan is key to the stability of the whole region. The Afghan President’s visit to India, a country that has been competing with other regional powers for influence in Afghanistan over the last decade, may be seen as another example of Kabul’s multi-vector diplomacy and Karzai’s intention to strengthen regional ties in the run-up to NATO’s withdrawal from the country. To a large extent, the visit may also be seen as an attempt by Afghanistan to put pressure on Pakistan, a country expected to play a pivotal role in possible negotiations between Kabul and the Afghan Taliban.

Regional Security Context

As of mid-January, police and militant sources said at least two Afghan Taliban commanders had been killed in recent weeks in the Pakistani city of Quetta. It is unclear whether the two commanders were targeted by the Afghan/Pakistan security forces or killed as a result of infighting within the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban movements. The Pakistani Taliban recently appointed a new leader that reversed his predecessor’s stance by refusing peace talks with Islamabad. Within the Afghan branch, disagreements on possible talks with the authorities also intensified. Taliban sources from both sides of the border have blamed the killings on Afghan and Pakistani security sources. Since the beginning of 2013 at least 18 other Afghan Taliban have been killed in similar attacks.

International Military Presence

On 14 December, President Karzai restated that he had no intention of backing down from the demands he outlined before agreeing to sign a bilateral security agreement (BSA) with the US. The proposed agreement would allow for a contingent of US troops to remain in Afghanistan after 2014. Despite mounting pressure from Washington throughout January, Karzai is still refusing to sign the BSA ahead of the April elections. On 25 January, Hamid Karzai seemed to further toughen his stance openly stating that, in exchange for the BSA, the US should be able to restart peace talks with the Taliban. The Afghan leader further added that Washington should leave if it is unable to do so. Some observers believe that Karzai is thus wishing to leave the choice of signing the BSA to his successor.

On 24 November, the assembly of local elders, the Loya Jirga, issued a much awaited endorsement for the BSA, a security pact with the US that is to lay the groundwork for an American military presence in Afghanistan after 2014. Following this, Karzai still refused to unreservedly support the deal before the April 2014 presidential elections, unambiguously outlying new conditions to be met by Washington, including an immediate end to US military raids of Afghan homes and the need for a clear US commitment to peace talks with the Taliban. The hand-over of the remaining Afghan detainees from Guantanamo Bay has also been reportedly put forward as a demand by Kabul. In late November, the Afghan leader had additionally requested a commitment from Washington to refrain from bombing any candidate in the upcoming elections, a stark reminder of the earlier blame he placed on the US for meddling in the 2009 presidential elections.

While Karzai’s reluctance to sign the BSA is seen as a high-risk gamble by the international community, his local supporters argue that his move is aimed at appeasing the Taliban, at a time when Kabul is trying to engage in peace talks with the insurgents. Local opponents of the Afghan leader continue to accuse him of trying to use the security pact to secure influence in the coming elections and of attempting to dissociate himself from the US before leaving power.

In response to Karzai’s ongoing demands, US officials have repeatedly indicated that, without the prompt signature of a security pact, Washington would implement the so-called “zero option”, a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan similar to the pull-out of US troops from Iraq in 2011. As part of the BSA, according to official sources, the US planned to leave more than 10,000 troops in Afghanistan for counter-terrorism and training of Afghan forces. Additionally, the failure to sign the bilateral pact could lead to the end of the US’s financial support to the country, along with the disruption of broader western aid. To date, Washington has reportedly not made any decision on the matter, nor has it indicated a deadline regarding when it intends to abandon ongoing talks with Kabul and commit to an entire withdrawal. Official government sources suggested the US are likely to give
In fall, the Taliban officially announced that it will boycott the 2014 presidential elections and continue fighting until all foreign troops leave the country. On 11 January, according to official sources in Kabul, it was announced that Afghan forces would provide security for the vast majority of polling stations in the upcoming presidential elections in April. The elections, when an increase in attacks is expected, should prove a key test of Afghanistan's stability against the background of international troops' withdrawal.

On 9 January, the Afghan authorities announced they would release all but 16 of 88 prisoners despite the fact the US deems them dangerous and linked to the killing of foreign troops in Afghanistan. Detained at the jail at the Bagram air base north of Kabul, control of which has only recently been handed to Afghan authorities by the US, the release is likely to further worsen bilateral relations between Kabul and Washington that are already stressed because of the lack of an agreement over the BSA. On 27 January, the dispute over the prisoners release further escalated as Washington officially protested the scheduled release of 37 detainees in the coming days.

**Peace Talks with the Taliban**

A spokesman for Afghan President Karzai confirmed on 5 February that the government has been holding talks with the Taliban in the hope of paving the way for peace negotiations. According to official sources, talks took place in Dubai three weeks ago between representatives of the government and the Taliban who flew from Doha.

To date, it remains unclear to which extent any concrete progress has been made. Western and Afghan officials both say the talks have borne little fruit so far and no peace negotiations have been opened. The US said it welcomed any talks that would bring peace to Afghanistan.

In August, tentative peace talks staged by the US in Qatar with the Taliban were interrupted after Kabul was outraged by the fact that the talks were not Afghan-led. In mid-August, a senior Afghan peace negotiator and former Taliban diplomat, now working with the Karzai government, reported that the resumption of peace talks in Qatar with the Taliban looked unlikely. Fresh talks in Turkey or Saudi Arabia appear to be a more realistic option for Kabul.

Throughout autumn of 2103, Kabul made several attempts to reach out to the Taliban through Pakistan. On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad was likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace talks. According to all observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. Besides, the comment also suggests that there is some reluctance on the Taliban's side to engage with the Karzai administration. The Afghan authorities are trying to engage Taliban leaders in Pakistan to reach to Taliban groups in Afghanistan while the rift between Kabul and Washington is widening.

On 30 November, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif met Afghan President Karzai in Kabul as part of ongoing efforts to launch a peace process in Afghanistan before NATO troops withdraw next year. Sharif, visiting Afghanistan for the first time since he took office in May, promised that he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and...
Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, who was captured in Pakistan in 2010, is considered by Kabul as key to reach to moderate Taliban commanders and involve them into peace talks.

Following a meeting between President Karzai and Prime Minister Sharif in London in late October, a delegation of senior officials from Afghanistan’s High Peace Council travelled to Karachi to kick-start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and meet notably with Baradar, who had been released by Islamabad in September but remained under close Pakistani supervision. During the visit, the Afghan delegation reportedly met with the former Taliban commander, but the discussions failed to come to any significant conclusion. Earlier, Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, (including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah), but they were not directly handed over to Afghan authorities. The release of influential Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan is seen by the Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Security Context

Since they vowed to start a new campaign of attacks in April 2013, using insider attacks as a key tactic against foreign and Afghan military force targets, the Taliban have intensified offensives in Afghanistan throughout the “fighting season”, amidst the ongoing withdrawal of ISAF troops. Since May, insurgents have largely targeted foreign military and humanitarian personnel and deliberately targeted civilians who are seen to cooperate with the government. A spokesperson for the Taliban indicated in June that the insurgents have no intention of changing their tactics despite possible peace talks and the scheduled presidential elections. The east and the southeastern parts of the country are most affected by violence with however an increasing numbers of attacks hitting the northwest and the capital city Kabul. With the onset of winter, the number of militants’ attacks has however decreased in the past two months.

On 3 February, two bomb blasts were reported in Kabul with little information available to date. On 2 February, two members of the election campaign team of Abdullah Abdullah, one of the presidential candidates, were shot dead in the western Herat city in an early indication of how the country’s volatility will impact looming elections.

On 26 January, a Taliban suicide bomber attacked an Afghan army bus in Kabul, killing four people and wounding another 22, according to local police sources. On 25 January, two people were also wounded in a militants’ bombing in the northern part of the city. On 17 January, in a high-profile attack, a Taliban suicide bomber attacked a Lebanese restaurant in Wazir Akbar Khan, Kabul’s diplomatic district. According to last estimates, 21 people, including 13 foreigners – some being UN and IMF workers, in the assault that proved to be one of the deadliest to date for the expatriate community in Afghanistan. On 4 January, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack on a military convoy belonging to the NATO-led ISAF security force in Kabul. No casualties were reported. In a separate incident on the same day, a NATO soldier was reportedly killed in eastern Afghanistan by an insurgent suicide attack.

On 27 December, a Taliban suicide bomber detonated a car next to a western military convoy in Kabul, killing three NATO soldiers and injuring six civilians. The previous day, two Taliban rockets landed inside the US embassy compound in Kabul, causing no casualties, but underlying the volatility of the security situation in the capital. In early December, the number of attacks by militants have decreased in Afghanistan. On 11 December, a Taliban suicide bomber attacked a convoy of German troops in the vicinity of the Kabul international airport. No casualties were reported. The heavily-guarded airport was an extremely ambitious target for the militant group. On 2 December, local authorities reported that a suicide car blast killed four police officers in the eastern province of Wardak.

In November, militants’ attacked were recorded across various parts of Afghanistan, notably hitting, in addition to southern areas, targets in Kabul, northern Herat province, southern Uruzgan province, and northern Baghlan province.

According to a July UN report, the number of civilians killed and injured in Afghanistan rose by 23% since early 2012, with homemade landmines the principal threat to Afghan civilians. From January to June 2013, 1,319 civilians were killed and a further 2,533 injured. The UN reported that 74% of casualties were caused by insurgents, 9% by pro-government forces, and 12% by ground fighting between the two sides. These numbers represent a significant increase compared to the first half of 2012 and close to the record casualties recorded during the same period in 2011.

Military Operations

Military operations are ongoing in the country. According to a US report, Afghan troop casualties climbed by 79% during key fighting months this year, as the Taliban intensified attacks amid NATO’s ongoing withdrawal from Afghanistan. In parallel, NATO casualties fell by 59% during the April-September period. While US officials acknowledged that Afghan troops’ combat capabilities have improved, the report still suggests that the Afghan National Security Forces would be at risk without international support after 2014. In August, Afghan military sources reported that insurgent numbers were up around 15% on last year’s summer fighting months.

On 15 January, new tensions arose between Kabul and Washington after the Afghan president blamed the US over an air raid in Panwan province that killed Afghan civilians. Although the NATO-led ISAF reported that a joint force of Afghan troops and foreign soldiers killed 19 people and wounded another 22, Afghan officials alleged the strike was on a school and a hospital. Since May, militants have largely targeted foreign military and humanitarian personnel and deliberately targeted civilians who are seen to cooperate with the government. A spokesperson for the Taliban indicated in June that the insurgents have no intention of changing their tactics despite possible peace talks and the scheduled presidential elections. The east and the southeastern parts of the country are most affected by violence with however an increasing numbers of attacks hitting the northwest and the capital city Kabul. With the onset of winter, the number of militants’ attacks has however decreased in the past two months.

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Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Active hostilities and threats of violence continue to impede humanitarian access, with contested areas remaining the most problematic. Movement restrictions are increasingly applied to aid workers, and relief organisations are reviewing security protocols. The humanitarian space in Afghanistan continues to shrink, as security is increasingly precarious.
On 21 January, unknown gunmen seized more than 60 Afghan workers of the British demining group The Halo Trust who were clearing Soviet-era anti-tank mines in western Herat province. According to unconfirmed sources, the kidnapped people were released shortly afterward following negotiations between local elders and the kidnappers.

As of 30 November, OCHA has recorded 266 incidences against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets in Afghanistan so far this year, including 37 deaths, 28 arrests and detentions, 47 injuries and the abduction of 80 personnel. Earlier OCHA reports indicated that, as of October, over 55% of the incidents are attributed to insurgent elements, but there is reportedly a significant rise in incidents attributed to pro-government forces, especially in contested areas of the South, East and Central provinces. With notably high-profile attacks against ICRC and IOM compounds occurring in May, security incidents involving aid workers have been on the rise in 2013 compared to 2012 when only 175 incidents, including 11 deaths, were recorded over the whole year.

According to OCHA in October, 24 violent incidents against humanitarian personnel and assets were registered across 15 Afghan provinces, with two staff deaths and ten abductions. This represents a decrease compared to September when 34 incidents against humanitarian personnel, including one death, were recorded in 16 provinces. The October number is at levels comparable to August when 25 violent incidents against aid workers were recorded.

In September, the majority of incidents were recorded in the eastern region where increased hostility towards aid agencies continued to interfere with aid workers in rural Nuristan, Nangarhar, and Laghman. Conflict related hostilities in Badakhshan, Wardak, Kabul, Logar, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kandahar, and Helmand provinces continued to impede access. September saw the highest number of incidents against health facilities and personnel this year, with 11 incidents reported from Wardak, Helmand, Nuristan, and Kunar provinces.

In 2012, according to the Aid Worker Security Report released in October, Afghanistan was one of the most dangerous countries for aid workers, topping the ranking in the absolute number of attacks and number of kidnappings. Afghanistan’s south and southeastern provinces are particularly vulnerable, ranking high in numbers of security incidents, civilian casualties, and conflict displacement, and low in health and nutrition indicators. An estimated 7.7 million people in Afghanistan are in need of protection. The security situation across the country is becoming increasingly volatile.

Displacement

IDPs

In 2013, conflict-induced displacement has led to the emergence of acute humanitarian needs, with a marked increase in previously stable provinces in the north, particularly in Faryab and Badakhshan, noted OCHA. As of 30 November, there were 612,000 conflict-induced IDPs in Afghanistan. In mid-December, OCHA reported that the number of people internally displaced each year has risen overall from 80,000 in 2011 to 113,000 in 2013. Most parts of the country are highly vulnerable to new waves of displacement, due to both the conflict and natural disasters. In 2013, an estimated 60,000 people had been displaced in northwestern Faryab province because of conflict according to OCHA as of 30 November. Reports also mention large numbers of IDPs being hosted in southwestern Heart province.

In early December, additional displacement was recorded in Ghor, Daykundi and Bamyan provinces in the central highlands following drought like conditions and crop failures. As of 30 November, an estimated over 4,700 people were displaced around Herat and Ghor areas and had registered for assistance since early October.

Refugees

According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 31 December, there were an estimated 2.4 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants in Iran, including 1 million undocumented Afghans. An estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, reside in Pakistan. An estimated 200,000 Afghan refugees are registered in other countries. The protracted Afghan refugees’ crisis is placing an increased humanitarian burden on neighbouring countries and triggering tensions as Iran and Pakistan push for their repatriation.

As reported by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in late November, Afghan refugees in Iran are facing increasing persecution, including arbitrary arrests, detentions, beatings and harassment, by the authorities. In parallel, Pakistan agreed this summer not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June. At an UN-backed meeting, Kabul and Islamabad also reached an agreement to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation while Afghan refugees, 60% of whom are hosted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, are also triggering tensions in restive Pakistan.

Disaster

Although accurate information is scarce, various humanitarian sources have reported that the beginning of the winter season has put many Afghans at further risk, especially the more than 612,000 IDPs. The affected people are reportedly in immediate need of shelter and food. Humanitarian sources report that the government response is lacking.

In late January, ECHO reported that heavy snowfall and low temperatures continue to affect northern Darz Aab and Qush Tepa districts of Jawzjan province where at least 10 people have been killed by the severe weather.

Food Security

According to OCHA in mid-December, an estimated 2.2 million people were classified as severely food insecure. A further 8 million people are considered food insecure. Households in the extreme northeast, especially in Badakhshan province, central highlands, low-income and disaster-affected households across the country, and IDPs are especially vulnerable to food insecurity.

As reported by OCHA in late September, vulnerable families are facing a tough winter after dryness in the growing season caused crop failures in Ghor, Daykundi, and Bamyan provinces in the central highlands of Afghanistan. A WFP/ FEWSNET mission reported that 80% of rain-fed areas and 24% of irrigated areas were affected. In October, an
estimated 2,700 people needed food assistance in eastern Ghor and Herat areas and had moved to urban centres in search of income to buy food.

According to a mid-August WFP report, a preliminary forecast put the 2013 wheat production at 4.9 million tonnes, slightly below the 2012 harvest, which was the second highest on record for 35 years. However, large differences exist between provinces. Smaller wheat harvests were gathered in Faryab, Ghor Jawzjan, and Khost due to dry spells and early rains combined with wheat rust in some areas.

As reported by WFP in November, the average wheat grain retail price in main Afghan urban centres has been increasing from August 2012 to March 2013, before decreasing from April to June and again slightly increasing between July and October. In particular, the October average price of wheat in main Afghan urban centres was slightly higher by 4.3% in comparison to the same time last year, and remained relatively stable – recording only a 2.2% increase – compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. In parallel, the October wheat flour average price was slightly lower by 0.3% compared to the same month last year, while remaining fairly stable – only a 6.4% increase – compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. The October average retail price of rice, the second main staple food in Afghanistan, was slightly higher by 7.1% compared to the same month last year and considerably higher by 23.4% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. By comparison, the October average price of high quality rice was considerably higher by 17.2% compared to the same month last year, and by 34.9% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

Health and Nutrition

According to OCHA, the number of people in need of access to health services had increased from 3.3 to 5.4 million. Conflict-related hospital admissions increased by 42% from January to April 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. In Helmand province, there has been an almost 80% increase in hospitalised injuries caused by conflict this year. The Health Cluster reported a 40% increase in security incidents from January to April 2013 compared to 2012. 2013 saw a 60% increase in the numbers of people being treated for weapon wounds, stretching trauma care needs beyond the existing capacity. The conflict is causing widespread disruption to health services.

Malnutrition

According to figures from OCHA in mid-June, 125,692 children <5 suffer from GAM, including 28,650 suffering from SAM.

Updated: 06/02/2014

SYRIA CIVIL WAR

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

11 February: An estimated 1,200 people, mostly women, children and older persons, left Homs city in the second and third rounds of evacuations. The temporary humanitarian truce broke on Saturday as the UN was poised to deliver aid to the besieged city, with both GoS troops and opposition forces accusing each other of breaking the ceasefire.

10 February: The second round of the Geneva II peace talks commenced in Switzerland bringing representatives of the Syrian Government (GoS) and opposition leaders to the table once more. International mediator, Lakhdar Brahimi, is expected to push for agreement on aid deliveries and the release of prisoners.

07 February: 83 civilians were evacuated from besieged opposition-held areas of the city Homs, which have been under siege for 600 days, after a surprise deal was brokered by the UN that led to a temporary ceasefire. Convoys entered the Old City, delivering aid for the first time in two years.

05 February: Another key deadline was missed in Syria’s chemical weapons disarmament programme. In addition to 700 tonnes of the most lethal chemicals that were due to leave Syria on 31 December, 500 tonnes of category two chemicals was supposed to have been shipped out on 5 February. Only two small shipments of chemicals have left from Lattakia port, accounting for less than 4% of the country’s declared arsenal of most dangerous chemicals.

KEY CONCERNS

- Over three million people in Syria are living in areas which are difficult to reach. At least 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the GoS or opposition forces. Humanitarian conditions in inaccessible locations are reported to be deteriorating (OCHA).

- A Joint Rapid Food Needs Assessment (JRFNA) found that 9.9 million people, or approximately half Syria’s current population, are vulnerable to food insecurity and unable to access sufficient food to meet their basic needs.

- According to UNHCR, an estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced within the country.

- A total of 17 polio cases have been confirmed in Syria with one previously confirmed case withdrawn after review and a new case was confirmed in Al-Hasakeh in January. The lack of available medicine, particularly for chronic diseases, continues to be a huge problem. According to the prime minister, 41 of Syria’s 91 public hospitals, 674 medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged and are out of service.

- Half a million people in Al-Hasakeh governorate, of whom 250,000 are IDPs, are estimated to be in critical need of food, medicine, clothes, and shelter.

Politics and Security

Overview
The UN-brokered ceasefire in Homs allowed for brief humanitarian access and evacuations from the longest held siege in the conflict days before representatives of the Syrian Government and opposition leaders came together for the second round of Geneva II peace-talks after the initial conference was widely seen to be a failure.

Armed conflict

The heavy bombardment of Aleppo continues, and Government ground troops have made gains in the south and east of Aleppo. Elsewhere in the governorate, fighting for Aleppo prison has been fierce, with opposition forces gaining control of it for several days before it was retaken by GoS forces. Fighting between the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and an alliance of opposition groups has been ongoing and has spread to new fronts in Deir-ez-Zor and Al-Hasakeh. Fighting in Homs was halted for a brief ceasefire, brokered by the UN. A large military build-up of GoS troops in preparation for progress toward Yabrood has been reported, and a battle for the highly strategic town is expected to take place soon.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

An inter-agency mission that took place in Al-Hasakeh, Tartous and Homs on 19-24 January found a worsening humanitarian situation in Al-Hasakeh, with basic food items in short supply or sold at exorbitant prices. As a result, half a million people, of whom 250,000 are IDPs, are estimated in critical need of food, medicines, clothes and shelter in the governorate. Meanwhile, the sudden escalation of violence along the Dar’a - Damascus highway at the end of January has affected WFP’s capacity to deliver aid to the southern governorates.

OCHA’s latest figures from the SHARP appeal published mid-December put over three million people in areas hard to reach due to access limitations in dire need for humanitarian assistance, of whom 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the GoS or opposition forces including Nubul and Az-Zahraa in Rural Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Moaadamiyah in Rural Damascus, the Old City in Homs and Yarmouk Camp in Damascus.

Security incidents at border crossings between Syria and Turkey could potentially lead to the borders being permanently closed, shutting off a vital supply of aid into Syria. As ISIL gains territory along the border areas, it is becoming increasingly likely that the borders will be closed by the Turkish authorities. International humanitarian activities in the north of Syria would be seriously impacted, perhaps halted. This would particularly affect IDP communities in tented settlements in Idleb governorate.

Displacement

Revised estimates indicate that the total number of people in need in Syria has increased to 9.3 million, up from the April estimates of 6.8 million. A recent Syrian Centre for Policy Research study on the socio-economic impact of the crisis estimates that over half the population now lives in poverty, of whom around 4.5 million live in extreme poverty and are unable to fully meet their basic needs. On 16 December, the UN launched an US$ 6.5 billion appeal to cover the needs in Syria and refugee hosting countries in 2014. Restrictions to entry remain in place, with Lebanon being Syria’s only neighbouring country that has not imposed restrictions at its borders. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq opened its borders, which had been closed since September, on 5 January and allowed 2,500 Syrians to enter.

IDPs

An estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced within the country with the highest concentration of IDPs in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Tartous, Hama, and Deir-ez-Zor.

Airstrikes in Aleppo have pushed masses of people from several opposition-held areas in the east of Aleppo city, but routes have become increasingly hazardous because of the fighting between opposition groups and ISIL. Some IDPs have reached the Turkish border while others have fled to GoS-held areas of Aleppo. The numbers of affected are unknown at this time. Thousands of civilians continue to flee escalating violence in the area of Adraa Umaliyeh, in Rural Damascus, seeking refuge in nearby villages and collective shelters. Due to insecurity in Al-Hasakeh governorate over the past few weeks, approximately 1500 families have reportedly fled to Tal Hamis, Tal-Braq, Jaza’a, Kharab Askar, and Al Hol, extremely poor rural areas in south-eastern areas of the governorate. They have mostly sought refuge in Quamishly.

Thousands of IDPs have also fled the area of Qalamoun over the last three months, reaching more secure locations in rural Homs and Homs city. In January, approximately 5,000 people reached various locations in Homs city after fleeing the besieged neighbourhood of Al Wa’er, which had been under partial siege since mid-October and was last reached by WFP food assistance in early November.

Refugees

As of 10 February, the total number of Syrians registered and waiting to register as refugees outside of Syria stands at 2,477,814. Over 915,000 Syrians are registered or awaiting registration in Lebanon (government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total, including a large number of Syrian migrants). There are over 598,500 in Jordan (government estimates 600,000 Syrians in total), over 595,000 in Turkey, over 217,000 in Iraq, and nearly 133,500 in Egypt (government estimates up to 300,000).

According to UNHCR, there is now an average of 127,000 people pouring out of Syria each month. Added to the current number of registered refugees, the total is expected to surpass four million by the end of 2014. UNHCR said that across the region, 400,000 refugees live in formal camps and nearly two million reside outside formal settlements.

Health

In Homs, all three of the city’s public hospitals have been destroyed. The only hospitals functioning are seven private facilities that normally charge for their services. Medical provisions needed to treat injuries have not been available locally, so even patients with the means to pay for services could not obtain them. Of 12 public hospitals in the Homs governorate, the four that are still operational are outside the city itself. Similarly, of 215
Primary healthcare centres only 103 are functioning. In addition, at least 70% of Homs governorate’s medical doctors have left Homs. In Rural Damascus, 24 hospitals of 44 private hospitals are out of service, as are three public hospitals.

Health centres have cited an increasing number of people falling ill due to the cold weather, especially in areas such as Aleppo and Al-Hasakeh, where exposure to the cold has been significant and heating resources are hard to come by. Over the past month, three medical facilities in Aleppo have reported new cases of chilblains, gastroenteritis, urinary tract infections, bronchitis, laryngitis, tonsillitis, chest pain, and epileptic seizures.

The lack of available medicine, particularly for chronic diseases continues to be a huge problem across the country. According to the prime minister, 41 of Syria’s 91 public hospitals, 674 medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged and are out of service. The shortage of intravenous fluids is worsening. Insulin, oxygen, anesthetics, and intravenous fluids are no longer available in many parts of Syria. Before the crisis, Syria produced 90% of its needed medicines. The conflict has led to a 70% decline in production of medicines. With the currency depreciation also taken into account, the price of medicine has increased by 25 to 50%.

A report by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) found that explosive weapons have been responsible for half of all the civilian deaths in Syria since fighting began and that 90% of those persons killed or injured by explosive weapons in Syria were civilians, with an average of 24 civilians killed or injured in every incident that took place in a populated area. Handicap International released a report based on a small sample survey that found that almost half of those interviewed had sustained injuries related to the current conflict. One in five of these people were under the age of 17. The people harmed by explosive weapons were often suffering from severe physical injuries.

**Polio**

A new case of polio was confirmed in Al-Hasakeh governorate. The total number of confirmed polio cases in Syria remains at 17 as one previously confirmed case was withdrawn after review. The Ministry of Health initiated the second phase of polio vaccinations, targeting children <5.

**Food security**

According to WFP, the prices of the commodity it monitors (wheat flour, bread, butane, etc) across Syria have remained relatively stable over the last week of January and the beginning of February in the areas where improved access resulted in a relatively regular flow of market supplies. However, in areas where there are high levels of insecurity or where armed groups are present, the supply chain is disrupted by the conflict and roadblocks and prices have soared, particularly in the north-east. In Deir-ez-Zor the price of wheat flour increased by 56%, while the price of butane showed a 170% increase. In Ar-Raqqa a 160% increase in the price of diesel was observed over the last two weeks of January. Price increases of both food and non-food items were also reported in Al-Hasakeh; the most significant increase registered was the price of butane, which rose by 90% in Al-Hasakeh city.

The first results of the December 2013 JRFNA indicated that 9.9 million people, or approximately half Syria’s current population, are vulnerable to food insecurity and unable to access sufficient food to meet basic needs. Of these, an estimated 6.3 million are highly vulnerable and in critical need of sustained food and agriculture assistance; an increase of more than 50% since the last estimate of four million presented in June 2013.

**Shelter**

Temperatures in Syria during winter can fall to as low as 3-5 degrees Celsius at night, creating dire conditions for IDPs. In both Syria, and the neighbouring countries hosting refugees, many displaced persons are living in makeshift shelters or informal settlements that do not offer sufficient protection from the harsh winter conditions. An IRC study found that a warm blanket costs around 93% of an average monthly income, making it completely unaffordable for most refugee families.

**WASH**

The cities of Hama and As Salamiyeh in Hama governorate have been without drinking water for three weeks as the sewage from Al Waer neighborhood has contaminated the water network which feeds the two cities with water.

**Education**

According to UNICEF, nearly 2.3 million children in Syria have stopped attending school. Across the region, more than 60% of the 735,000 school-aged refugee children are not enrolled in school.

_Updated: 11/02/2014_

**Yemen CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

4 February: Houthi Shi’ite insurgents and Sunni Hashid pro-Salafi tribesmen agreed to a local ceasefire in northern Yemen following clashes between the two sides that killed up to 150 people in the past week. To date, it remains to be seen if the ceasefire, the second one in a month, will hold.

1 February: Armed disgruntled tribesmen bombed Yemen’s main oil pipeline in the Serwah district in the central province of Ma’rib, halting crude flow to the country’s main export terminal less than a month after it was repaired.

31 January – 4 February: Several bombs blasts were reported in the capital Sana’a, killing at least two people. Meanwhile, two foreigners have been kidnapped in Yemen by unidentified gunmen over the past week.

31 January: At least 15 soldiers were killed and four wounded by suspected Al-Qaeda militants in an attack on an army checkpoint in southeastern city of Shibam, in the province of Hadramout.
KEY CONCERNS
- Violence and insecurity continues in Yemen with regular attacks by local Al-Qaeda branch secessionists and operations by government forces in the south. Various tribal groups, notably Houthi militants in the north, also engage in acts of violence.
- Ongoing conflict has triggered massive displacement with over 300,000 people currently internally displaced across the country (UN).
- The humanitarian needs in Yemen are enormous. An estimated 14.7 million people (58% of the population) in Yemen will need some form of assistance in 2014 (OCHA).
- As of December, Yemen hosts almost 243,000 refugees. 22% are reportedly women and girls who have been victims of repeated gender-based violence (UNHCR, IOM).
- Priority areas include food security, with an estimated 10.5 million people – amounting to nearly 45% of the population – being food insecure, as well as access to basic healthcare and WASH (WFP, OCHA).

Political and Security Context

Yemen continues to face three concurrent security challenges: the presence of Houthi militants in the north, southern secessionists, and the increasing presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants throughout large portions of the country. In addition, urban centres of the west and central governorates have seen spates of civil unrest. Meanwhile, Yemen has staged a National Dialogue Conference as part of a political process aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in February 2014.

Political Context

Yemen is undergoing a political transition process, which is aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in February 2014. The National Dialogue Conference (NDC), aimed at finding a common political agreement and making recommendations for a new constitution and voting system was due to complete its work on 19 September, but was postponed on several occasions because of disagreements and violent incidents. However, all 565 NDC participants have agreed to install Yemen as a federal state.

On 25 January, participants in the National Dialogue Conference agreed upon plans to move from a republic to a federation, draft a constitution and hold elections. The possibility of creating a federal Yemen, originally introduced as a solution to the grievances of southern secessionist groups in the formerly independent south, subsequently led to demands for autonomy from other dissatisfied regions, including the rebel-held far north. All 565 NDC participants have agreed to install Yemen as a federal state.

On 21 January, Yemen’s political factions extended interim President Hadi’s term by a year and approved a new federal system, at the end of 10-month national reconciliation talks. Hadi’s initial mandate was originally set for two years and was due to end with elections in February, but delays in the transition period required a one-year extension for Hadi to oversee the drafting of a new constitution and move to a federal system designed to accommodate southern separatist demands for more autonomy. The interim President was also reportedly mandated to reshuffle the cabinet and restructure the Shura Council to give more representation to the south and to Shi’ite Muslim insurgents in the north.

In early December, the UN Security Council welcomed the progress made in Yemen’s ongoing political transition process, including the NDC. However, the Council raised concerns about the significant delays in concluding the NDC, calling on all parties to engage constructively to address the remaining critical issues necessary to conclude the dialogue.

Security Context and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

Yemen remains highly strategic for the US as it tries to provide stability to a country that flanks top oil producer Saudi Arabia and major shipping lines. Against this background, the US, supported by Yemeni authorities, have intensified drone strikes against militants over the past months. To date, Yemen continues to face three concurrent security challenges: the presence of Houthi militants in the north, southern secessionists, and the increasing presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants throughout large portions of the country. In addition, urban centres of the west and central governorates have seen spates of civil unrest.

AQAP is extremely active in Yemen, relying on its strongholds in the south and east, despite counterinsurgency operations conducted by local military backed by US drone strikes. Pursuing a campaign started in 2012, AQAP targets senior officers from the army and various security services. According to local sources, an estimated 80 officers have been killed since 2012. Against this background, the group has also regularly targeted oil pipelines, interrupting exports earlier this year. Militants have also abducted several foreigners, particularly in large cities, including Sana’a. There have been at least 10 abductions/attempted abductions of expatriates in Sana’a since February 2013.

On 4 February, at least two people were killed and two others injured after a bomb hit a bus carrying Yemeni soldiers in the capital Sana’a. On 2 February, three explosions near the French embassy, the Defence Ministry and the Central Bank were reported in Sana’a, injuring at least four people. Meanwhile, two foreigners have been kidnapped in Yemen by unidentified gunmen over the past week. On 31 January, at least 15 soldiers were killed and four wounded by suspected al-Qaeda militants in an attack on an army checkpoint in southeastern city of Shibam, in the province of Hadramout.

On 22 January, in Sana’a, unidentified gunmen assassinated a prominent member of the Shia Muslim Houthi delegation to the NDC. Back in November, another Houthi representative to the talks died in a similar attack. The Houthi group is fighting Sunni Salafis in northern Yemen since October.

On 16 January, militants attacked an army base in the city of Radda, south of the capital Sana’a, triggering clashes which killed nine soldiers and retaliatory strikes from the air force. In a separate incident in the southern city of al-Buraiqa, unidentified gunmen in a car ambushed and killed a high-ranking official from the country’s domestic security services.
On 8 January, local media reported further clashes in the Sanah area of Al-Dhale governorate between unidentified gunmen and the army’s Brigade 33 in violence which had lasted for three weeks. The affiliation of the gunmen remains unclear. Nevertheless, some observers suggested that they might be affiliated to the Southern Movement, a group of separatists. The area has also witnessed ongoing anti-government protests.

Military Operations and US Drone Strikes

Despite international and local criticism, the US continues to regularly launch drone strikes in Yemen. Since late July, drone attacks have killed over 70 people in Yemen.

On 24 January, three suspected al-Qaeda militants were killed in Maarib province, east of the Yemeni capital Sanaa, in a reported US drone strike. On 8 January, two suspected al-Qaeda militants were killed in another US drone strike in the southeastern province of Hadramout. The last series of strikes indicate that Washington is increasing such type of attacks amidst growing insecurity in Yemen.

On 12 December, another drone strike targeting senior al-Qaeda militants killed an estimated 17 people in the town of Radaa in al-Bayda province. According to reports, although the strike reportedly killed several al-Qaeda fighters, most of the victims were civilians, a development that is likely to add traction to the growing criticisms over the drone war. Although the attack was not officially attributed to Washington, such attacks are usually carried by US military. According to government sources, the authorities have promised to local tribal groups to investigate the attack.

During the 2012 military offensive carried out by the US-backed Yemeni army, Islamist militants were largely driven out of former strongholds. The Islamists have since allegedly regrouped and continue fighting to set up an Islamist state in eastern Yemen. Since early August, local security forces have been on high alert amid fears of an imminent attack by al-Qaeda in Sana’a, and have bolstered security around main government and possible foreign targets.

Conflict in Southern Yemen

On 27 January, a clash between Yemeni troops and southern separatists, who were demonstrating against the country’s reconciliation talks, left four people wounded according to local sources. Earlier, the talks concluded with a plan to turn the republic into a federation, draft a constitution and hold elections.

On 17 January, clashes between Yemeni troops and secessionist militants killed four people in southern Yemen, two of them soldiers. Fighting broke out when the militants, reportedly affiliated to the Southern Movement, ambushed a military vehicle in the town of Daleh.

Tensions in southern Yemen re-intensified in mid-December following deadly clashes in which secessionists stormed a governor’s office to raise the flag of the former South Yemen. On 27 December, local sources in South Yemen reported that government forces had shelled a funeral tent for the deceased, killing 19 people, including four children, according to militant sources.

Conflict in Northern Yemen

On 4 February, Houthi Shi’ite insurgents and Sunni Hashid pro-Salafi tribesmen agreed to a local ceasefire in northern Yemen following clashes between the two sides that killed up to 150 people in the past week. To date, it remains to be seen if the ceasefire, the second one in a month, will hold.

On 2 February, Houthi fighters had managed to overrun strongholds of the rival Hashid tribesmen following two days of fierce fighting in Omran. The violence in Omran dates back to January 5 when Houthis tried to seize Hashid strongholds.

To date, casualty figures are difficult to ascertain, but at least 300 people, including 210 people who died in more than two months of clashes near the city of Dammaj, were killed on the Salafi-Hashid side since 30 October. The casualty figures for the Houthi group have not been released. Fighting around Dammaj was curtailed earlier in January after a Government brokered ceasefire on 8 January, although violence continued in other areas.

On 29 January, pro-government Hashid tribesmen clashed with Houthi Shiite rebels north of the Yemeni capital in three days of intense fighting. The deadliest clashes were reported in the Arhab region just north of the capital Sanaa, where the tribesmen said they had recaptured high ground overlooking the international airport. The clashes came after Houthi rebels attacked members of the Hashid tribe on 27 January, reportedly in retaliation for the tribe’s supporting Sunni Islamist groups fighting the Houthis in the Sa’ada provincial town of Dammaj.

The insurgents have reportedly been pushing out from their stronghold in the mountains of the far north to other areas nearer the capital. Some observers believe that it is an attempt to claim their own autonomous unit in a promised federal Yemen. Over the past weeks, the Houthis have however faced stiff resistance from pro-government Hashid tribes after having battled Sunni hardliners in other parts of the north since early September.

On 22 January, 20 people died in clashes between Shi’ite insurgents and gunmen from the powerful Hashid tribe in the northern province of Amran. Heavy fighting was reported in the Hashid strongholds of Wadi Khaywan and Usaimat, and receded the following day as mediators made a new attempt to broker a ceasefire. According to local sources, Hashid gunmen succeeded to retake a number of positions which had been previously seized by Shia Houthi fighters in the north in anticipation of the conclusion of the national dialogue that is set to turn Yemen into a federation of regions.

Clashes between Shia Houthi rebels and their Sunni Salafi rivals initially broke out on 30 October in the northern town of Dammaj in Sa’ada governorate. The conflict started after Houthi fighters, who control most of the area, accused Salafi groups of recruiting foreign fighters to prepare an attack against them. In December, reports indicated that the fighting between the tribes has attracted Salafi-affiliated tribesmen and spread to Al Jawf, Amran and Hajjah governorates. OCHA also reported that both sides might be reinforcing their front lines in preparation for a protracted conflict, with a significant numbers of fighters coming in.

On 8 January, OCHA reported that the humanitarian situation was becoming critical in the conflict-affected northern Yemeni villages due to tribal violence escalating around the
areas of Dammaj and Kitaf. Although information remains scarce because of access constraints on humanitarian actors, the UN reported in December that the conflict was affecting up to 29,000 people around Dammaj, as well as thousands of other people in Kitaf. Given the lack of access to the area, information remains scarce, but renewed displacement has been reported around Kitaf. Meanwhile, UNICEF has reported increasing human rights violations, notably against children with to the forced recruitment of minors into combat forces, in Sa‘ada Governorate.

Tribal clashes over scarce resources frequently result in casualties. The recent escalation comes despite a year-long ceasefire agreement reached between tribesmen loyal to the Al-Houthis and tribesmen loyal to the Salafis Al-Ahmar family on 14 September.

**Attacks on Oil Pipelines**

On 1 February, armed tribesmen bombed Yemen’s main oil pipeline in the Serwah district in the central province of Maarib, halting crude flow to the country’s main export terminal less than a month after it was repaired. According to observers, local discontented tribesmen stage such attacks to pressure the government to provide jobs, settle land disputes or free relatives from prison.

Three similar tribal attacks were recorded in the southeastern Hadramout province in early January. The area, a centre of Yemen's oil production, has also been hit by intermittent fighting between government forces and a big tribal confederation, after a senior tribesman was killed in a shootout at an army checkpoint in December.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

An estimated 14.7 million people (58% of the population) in Yemen will need some form of assistance in 2014, according to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the 2014 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

As indicated in the HRP, published by OCHA in December, nearly all 2 million people residing in northern Yemen, including Sa‘ada and Al-Jawf governorates, require humanitarian aid following years of conflict that has destroyed local infrastructure. Landmines and explosive remnants of war still remain a major problem.

The western governorates of Al Hudaydah, Raymah and Mahwit – with an overall population of 5.8 million - continue to register high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition. To date, over 50% of the residents – 3.8 million people, including 82,000 IDPs – are in need of humanitarian assistance.

As reported in the HRP, the central governorates of Amanat Al Asimah, Al Bayda, Dhamar, Ibb, Marib, Sana‘a, and Taizz - with a total population of 11.3 million - have the highest levels of food insecurity in Yemen. Other critical needs include access to improved water, adequate sanitation and primary healthcare. An estimated 6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the area.

The HRP also indicates that the south and east of Yemen, including the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al Dhale’e, Shabwah, Hadramaut and Al Mahrah with a total population of 4.89 million people, will also need some forms of humanitarian assistance. The area is characterized by a large number of returnees, pockets of instability and limited livelihood and income opportunities.

**Access**

Humanitarian access remains highly impeded in large parts of Yemen. OCHA reports that in various governorates, armed conflict, terrorism, crime, civil unrest, natural hazards and impediments put in place by non-state actors have prevented humanitarian workers from reaching those in need.

Due to tribal conflict in Sa‘ada governorate, OCHA reported on 7 January that the need to access people affected by the ongoing clashes in the north remained urgent. However, parties to the conflict reportedly continue to restrict humanitarian access, cutting off assistance to vulnerable IDPs already living in camps and host communities, as well as to people newly displaced by the ongoing conflict in the northern governorates.

On 6 January, ICR reportedly managed to evacuate 34 injured people from the area of the tribal clashes. In December, the ICRC reported being able to secure sporadic access, which enabled the evacuation of 126 wounded people, while many more reportedly need urgent immediate assistance. In addition, OCHA reported that fuel was in short supply in Sa‘ada because roads were blocked, hindering access to civilians in Dammaj and Kitaf who were running out of food, water and medical supplies.

Since the start of the NDC, civil disobedience campaigns have disrupted humanitarian work and educational institutions in southern Yemen, where access has also been hampered by armed conflict over the last two years, notably in Abyan and in parts of Shabwah governorates. Other governorates with severe access constraints include Al Jawf in the north, Al Dhale’e in the south, Al Mahwit and Raymah in the west, and Al Maharah in the east.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

As a result of widespread conflict, the UN reported that almost 307,000 IDPs remain in Yemen’s north, including Sana’a. An increase in displacement, following renewed tribal fighting in December and January, has been reported across the north. This figure is likely to soon increase. According to local sources on 20 January, about 10,000 Salafis are homeless in Sana’a as a result of an agreement reached between the Salafis and the Houthis earlier this month, which stipulated that 15,000 non-local Salafis residing in the northern area of Dammaj, Sa‘ada governorate, had to leave the town. While the government, which had appointed a committee to broker the agreement, committed to provide housing and transportation for the displaced, they reportedly did not receive support, and are said to be staying in mosques and tents in the Sawan district of the capital. An estimated 5,000 other Salafis left Dammaj for other parts of the country.

Improved security has allowed 162,000 IDPs to return to their areas of origin in the southern Abyan governorate and neighbouring areas. Further returns are ongoing, according to UNHCR, despite authorities’ challenges in meeting the needs of these returnees.
Refugees

As of early December, almost 63,000 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants have arrived in Yemen from the Horn of Africa this year, according to UNHCR. Although this number marks a decrease compared to figures for the same period last year, 88,533, the Gulf of Aden remains one of the world’s most travelled sea routes for mixed migration, UNHCR reports. Moreover, the overall number of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants in Yemen has been rising for the past six years. The large majority are from Ethiopia (51,687) and Somalia (10,447). The latter group is automatically recognised as refugees by the Yemeni authorities.

UNHCR states that Yemen hosts almost 243,000 refugees as of early December. According to IOM, 22% are women and girls who have been victims of repeated gender-based violence.

As of early December, according to IOM, an estimated 400,000 Yemeni migrant workers have returned from Saudi Arabia since April as part of a crackdown on undocumented migrants. The Yemeni government says it expects at least another 400,000 jobless returnees in coming months. The majority are undocumented migrant workers with daily arrivals numbering 600-700 people in September, with most traveling through the Al Tuwal border crossing in Hajjah governorate. The returns place a burden on Yemen’s fragile political transition, conjuring up memories of the 1990 expulsion of more than 800,000 Yemenis from Saudi Arabia, which contributed to the unravelling of a 1990 unification pact between the former North and South Yemeni states and led to the 1994 civil war.

Disaster

Heavy rains and flooding starting in mid-August affected 26 districts in nine governorates of Yemen. The number of affected has reached 50,000 people in southern and central regions. Since mid-August, 37 people have been killed. Affected governorates include Taizz, Hajjah, Al Hudaydah and Ibb, and the Arqa area between Al-Shabwah and Abyan governorates. Though information remains limited, there are reports of displacements and loss of livestock, livelihoods, and infrastructure in several regions of Yemen. In some areas, scarcity of drinking water has been reported. The flash floods had a severe impact on three IDP camps near Haradh in Hajjah governorate, affecting about 12,000 people and destroying half the tents.

Food Security

Although there is an improvement in acute food security compared to the crisis year of 2011, when conflict significantly disrupted food access, high levels of chronic food insecurity persist in Yemen. As of early January, the total number of food insecure people in Yemen is estimated at 10.5 million, amounting to nearly 45% of the population, according to WFP and OCHA. WFP reported a decrease in the number of severely food insecure people, from five million people identified by the 2012 Comprehensive Food Security Survey to 4.5 million people in September 2013. Despite the national trend of decreasing food insecurity, some parts of the south, particularly Abyan and neighbouring Al-Shabwa, were reportedly worse in June 2013 than in 2011. Food security conditions are also of major concern in adjacent governorates of Aden and Lahij, where 90% of households are food insecure and 30% severely food insecure.

The primary underlying causes of food insecurity are extreme poverty, high unemployment, volatile food and commodity prices, compounded by conflict and insecurity. Populations of greatest concern include the displaced or recently returned.

According to FAO, recent surges in prices that reached their highest level since 2011 in April were likely due to conflict in several southern areas.

Despite the below-average March-May rains in the main cropping areas of the west, the preliminary crop production estimates suggest that the 2013 cereal harvest is forecast to be 13% higher than the five-year average.

Recent reports indicate that the desert locust situation has worsened in Yemen. By January, OCHA said the locust outbreak has spread to Hajjah, Hadramaut, Shabwah and Lahj Governorates, destroying acres of fruit trees and other vegetation. Local authorities estimate the locusts have destroyed about 90% of the sesame and millet crops in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah. There is a risk the locust infestation will also spread to Al Jar District in Hajjah and destroy this season’s mango crop.

According to all estimates, the locust situation in Yemen remains very serious as indicated by FAO in December. Although Yemen imports up to 90% of its staple food, local harvests are an important contributor to the diets of many vulnerable Yemenis. The locust infestation is not however expected to have a large impact on domestic food prices and availability.

Health and Nutrition

A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 severely disrupted access to health services, clean water, and basic sanitation. As of January, OCHA reported that there are an estimated 8.6 million people in Yemen without access to healthcare.

As of November, the UN reported that an estimated six million people did not have access to health care across the country. In 2012, 170 children died from measles.

Malnutrition

As of 7 January, UNICEF reported that 1,060,000 children <5 are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 279,146 suffer from severe malnutrition. Previously, UNHCR reported that 998,000 children <5 are acutely malnourished, with the 15% emergency threshold exceeded in six governorates. According to the 2014 HRP, Al Hudaydah and Raymah governorates have the worst levels of acute malnutrition among children under 5 years in Yemen.

WASH

As of 7 January, OCHA reported that an estimated 13.1 million people in Yemen do not have access to safe water and sanitation.

Updated: 06/02/2014
KEY DEVELOPMENTS

8 February: The Governor of Anbar province officially issued an ultimatum giving the militants controlling Fallujah one week to surrender and promising them amnesty if they do so. According to the senior official, the authorities have, however, no intention of negotiating with militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The statement comes after over a month of protracted conflict over Fallujah and Ramadi between militants and security forces.

As of 5 February, the UN reported that fighting in Anbar has displaced an estimated 266,000 people, although it also indicated that the figure might be underestimated. To date, humanitarian access is heavily hindered by the ongoing military operations in Anbar province as well as by logistics and administrative constraints.

5 February: Iraqi authorities reported that trucked exports of oil from Iraq to Jordan have been halted due to deteriorating security in Anbar province. Although Iraqi oil exports are modest, representing only a small share of the country’s overall exports, the halt is likely to increase concerns about the impact of the deteriorating security across Iraq on Baghdad’s plans to rebuild the national oil industry.

4 – 7 February: Baghdad has been plagued by a string of daily deadly car bombings that killed at least 68 and injured over 150 people. In high-profile assaults, militants managed to strike with rockets the heavily fortified “Green Zone” in the capital, home to the prime minister’s office and several Western embassies, as well as stage several bombings around this area. Overall, these blasts in Baghdad have largely targeted Shi’ite neighbourhoods. Militant attacks were also recorded north of the capital in the cities of Tuz Khurmatu and Baiji.

KEY CONCERNS

- In 2013, with over 8,800 people killed, tensions and violence between Iraq’s Shi’ite, Sunni Muslim, and Kurdish communities have escalated to levels unseen since 2008 (UNAMI).

- Heavy fighting in the majority Sunni Anbar province, where al-Qaeda militants took control of the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi in December, has led to large-scale displacement of over 250,000 people (UN).

- Prior to the displacement triggered by the violence in Anbar province, between 1.13 and 1.3 million people were already internally displaced in Iraq following sectarian strife (UN, IOM).

- The conflict in neighbouring Syria continues to impact on Iraq, strengthening Sunni militancy and forcing thousands to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkabour crossing in Duhok governorate. Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq’s Dohuk governorate houses over 70,000 Syrian refugees in critically overcrowded conditions (UNHCR).

Political and Security Context

International and Regional Context

In early November, visiting Washington for the first time in two years, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki openly blamed the resurgence of al-Qaeda affiliated armed groups in Iraq on regional unrest rather on issues within Iraq. Most observers believe, however, that the unrest in Iraq is mainly related to the divisive policies implemented by authorities in Baghdad. During his trip to the US, Maliki also discussed possible increased military assistance to Iraq amidst growing displeasure in Washington over his handling of the country. On 27 January, the Obama administration stated its intention to sell 24 Apache attack helicopters to Baghdad in an effort to strengthen Iraqi efforts against al-Qaeda affiliated militants.

On 5 February, Iraqi authorities have reported that trucked exports of oil from Iraq to Jordan have been halted due to deteriorating security in Anbar province. Although Iraqi oil exports are modest, representing only a small share of Iraq’s overall exports, the halt is likely to increase concerns about the impact of the deteriorating security across Iraq on Baghdad’s plans to rebuild the national oil industry.

Political Context

Escalating violence in Iraq is linked to a long-running political dispute between the authorities and armed militias opposing the allegedly sectarian policies of the Shia-led government. Since the start of 2013, the widespread discontent of the Sunni Muslim minority has fuelled unrest, with tensions at their highest since US troops left the country two years ago.

On 4 November, the authorities passed a new election law, opening the way for the parliamentary polls to be held in April 2014 and alleviating concerns that the parliamentary elections would be delayed due to the rising insecurity. The voting on the election bill had been long delayed because of an ongoing dispute between the central authorities and ethnic Kurds, who run their own region in the north. The upcoming general elections are seen as a litmus test of the country’s political stability, amid growing sectarian strife.

In April, the provincial or governorate elections, the first ones held since the departure of US troops, served as a proxy indicator of the country’s stability ahead of the 2014 national elections. Although it failed to win a majority in any district, the current Prime Minister’s State of Law coalition came top in the elections.

Security Context and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)

Violence in Iraq surged in 2013 to its worst level in five years, bringing the country closer to general destabilisation due to increasing sectarian tensions with Iraqi authorities increasingly blamed for their inability to diffuse the sectarian strife. Most observers expect violence to increase ahead of next year’s elections. The civil war in Syria is an important contributing factor to tensions between Sunni, Shi’ite, and Kurdish communities in Iraq.

In 2013, the UN reported that over 8,800 people, including over 7,800 civilians and police,
were killed in violence, making the last year the deadliest one in Iraq since 2008. In 2013, July was the deadliest month to date with over 1,050 killed and 2,320 wounded, the highest casualty numbers recorded since April 2008. In 2013, the Baghdad area was one of the most affected by violence.

According to Iraqi authorities, over 1,000 people, including almost 800 civilians, have been killed and over 2,000 wounded in Iraq in January. As reported by UNAMI, 759 Iraqis, including 661 civilians, were killed and another 1,345 were wounded in acts of terrorism and violence in December. Both estimates do not incorporate the casualties resulting from the violence in Anbar province due to limited information. A large part of asymmetric attacks conducted in Iraq are attributed to the Sunni militant ISIL.

On 10 February, ISIL, a group formerly being al-Qaeda's branch in Iraq which is also active in neighbouring Syria, has withdrawn its forces from Syria's oil-rich eastern province of Deir al-Zo, according to local and militant sources. The move follows several days of heavy fighting with rival militant groups in the area. According to observers, this development may also be related to the statement released on 3 February by al-Qaeda's general command that indicated that it has officially broken all links with ISIL. The decision was largely seen as an attempt by al-Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria by bolstering the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front following months of tensions with ISIL, which al-Qaeda criticized for fighting other Islamist insurgents in Syria over control for territory and resources. It remains unclear how this shift will impact on the situation in Iraq.

According to observers, a growing rift between ISIL and al-Qaeda was perceptible even before the former extended its reach into Syria. In April 2013, ISIL tried to force the al-Nusra Front into a merger before being rebuked by al-Qaeda's general command. In addition, ISIL had already been a source of controversy among Islamists since 2003. The group has been criticized for staging attacks with heavy civilian casualties and alienating part of the local population when it took control of the Sunni-dominated Iraqi Anbar province after 2003.

In Iraq, most asymmetric attacks have been claimed by ISIL and rely on strongholds in Anbar, Nineveh, Kirkuk, most of Salaheddin, and parts of Babil, Diyala, and Baghdad areas. The Sunni militant group, the largest one in Iraq, allegedly seeks to create an "Islamic state" across the Iraq-Syria border.

Since December, ISIL has been involved in an open confrontation with Government forces in Anbar province while it continues to target government security facilities and checkpoints as well as public places such as cafes and markets. While both Shi'ite and Sunni populated areas have been heavily hit over the past months, ISIL appears to have further stepped up attacks on Shi'ite targets since November-December.

**Situation in Anbar Province**

Since late December, sporadic fighting has been reported in the mainly Sunni Anbar province, where Islamist militants took control of two key cities in central Iraq, west of Baghdad. Armed fighters, mainly ISIL, have been tightening their grip on the province, and have captured positions in the provincial capital Ramadi and the city of Fallujah on 1 January. The two cities in Anbar province were a bastion of the Sunni insurgency following the 2003 US-led invasion and the current standoff represents the most direct challenge to the government since the departure of American forces two years ago.

On 8 February, the Governor of Anbar province officially issued an ultimatum giving the militants controlling Fallujah one week to surrender and promising them amnesty if they do so. According to the senior official, the authorities have, however, no intention of negotiating with ISIL. In early February, Prime Minister Maliki had stated that the conflict in Anbar was drawing to an end, though he restrained from announcing an offensive over Fallujah. According to observers, Baghdad is threatening an imminent assault on Fallujah, because it remains concerned that any delay would allow the insurgents to further strengthen their positions.

The statement comes after over a month of protracted conflict over Fallujah and Ramadi between militants and security forces. Daily shelling and combat operations are reported from the area. In recent weeks, government forces have been reportedly able to make progress in retaking some militant-held areas of Ramadi -- enjoying notably local tribal support. However, they have only enforced a loose siege over Fallujah fearing, according to observers, that an assault would lead to a prolonged urban conflict with high casualties.

As of early February, the situation on the ground remains difficult to assess.

To date, the death toll and the humanitarian impact from over a month of fighting in Anbar province is difficult to determine, as reports are scarce and humanitarian access to the area curtailed. In late January, the authorities reported that Iraqi troops and allied tribesmen had killed 57 Islamist militants after several days of intense fighting near Ramadi, which has been shelled daily since January.

According to UNAMI, as of 30 January, Fallujah and Ramadi hospitals reported 126 killed and 666 injured following three weeks of fighting. On 21 January, reports indicated that violence had killed at least 250 people, among them civilians, security forces, tribal fighters and insurgents. Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused fighters from both sides of causing civilian casualties and damaging property. HRW alleged that government forces were using indiscriminate mortar fire, while al-Qaeda and its local allies were launching attacks from populated areas.

As of 5 February, OCHA quoted UNAMI as reporting that internal displacement in Anbar province continues to increase. To date, fighting in the area has displaced an estimated 266,000 people, although the UN reported that the figure might be underestimated. To date, humanitarian access is heavily hindered by the ongoing military operations in Anbar province.

The deadly clashes in Anbar ignited in early December, with the arrest of a Sunni politician sought on terrorism charges, followed by the government’s dismantling of an anti-government Sunni protest camp in Ramadi, Anbar province, an area which has been at the heart of the ongoing insurgency since the 2003 US-led invasion. While many tribes in Anbar shared a common goal with US troops to rout al-Qaeda, the resurgence of the extremist group has divided the tribes, some sympathising with and supporting the Islamist militants, others vowing to help the government regain control. ISIL has also emerged in Syria’s civil war as an affiliate of the international al-Qaeda network and has become a powerful force among Sunni Muslim rebels seeking to oust Syrian President Assad. In Iraq, ISIL relies on strongholds in Anbar, Nineveh, Kirkuk, most of Salaheddin, and parts of
Babil, Diyala, and Baghdad areas, and allegedly seeks to create an "Islamic state" across the Iraq-Syria border.

Militant Attacks

Over the past week, Iraq was again rocked by deadly violence, largely hitting Shi'ite areas of Baghdad, with most attacks attributed by the authorities to ISIL, although the group has not officially claimed responsibility.

On 7 February, nine people were killed in attacks on Baghdad and north of the capital, in Tuz Khurmatu, where a car bomb killed five and wounded 27 others, and in Bajai, where a blast next to an army patrol killed three. Meanwhile, local media noted that in Baghdad an election candidate, who was reportedly a supporter of powerful Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, was murdered. It was the first killing of a candidate standing in the upcoming April parliamentary elections, although over a dozen election candidates were killed ahead of the 2013 polls. On 6 February, a string of deadly car bombings hit commercial areas in Baghdad, killing at least 17 people, marking a third deadly day of widespread blasts in the capital. According to observers, four of the neighbourhoods hit are populated mostly by Iraq's Shia majority, while the other two were in the commercial Karrada district of central Baghdad.

On 5 February, an estimated 40 people were killed and over 110 injured in a series of blasts in Baghdad, including next to the heavily fortified "Green Zone", home to the prime minister's office and several Western embassies. The deadliest attack, when two car bombs went off just across the street from the Foreign Ministry building, killed seven and wounded another 15. On 4 February, several car bombs were recorded across Iraq's capital mostly Shi'ite districts, including southwestern Shurta, killing at least ten people. In a high-profile attack, two rockets hit Baghdad's "Green Zone" killing one soldier.

On 3 February, four car bombs targeting Shi'ite areas in Baghdad and the town of Mahmudiyyah, just south of the capital, killed at least 16 people, according to police sources. Separately, two Iraqi soldiers were killed in clashes with unidentified gunmen in the northeastern city of Baquba. On 30 January, eight men, including at least six suicide bombers, attacked the Ministry of Transportation building in northeast Baghdad, took hostages and killed at least 20 people including themselves. The previous day, at least 19 people were killed in car bombs in mainly the predominantly Shi'ite districts of Jadidah, Shuala, and Talibiyah in Baghdad.

On 25 January, at least 17 people were killed in violence across the country, with car bombs in the Baghdad area, mortar bombs exploding near the northeastern Iraqi city of Baquba, and bombings near the northern city of Balad and the disputed northern town of Tuz Khurmato. On 20 January, seven bomb explosions killed 26 people and wounded another 67 in Baghdad, with five of the attacks targeting mainly Shi'ite districts of the capital, while two took place in mostly Sunni areas. This followed half a dozen car bombs that exploded across the capital on 15 January, mostly in Shi'ite neighbourhoods where 34 people were killed and 70 were injured. On the same day, a bomb blew up in a funeral tent near the northern town of Baquba, killing 40 mourners who were marking the death of a Sunni pro-government militant. On 14 January, three attacks in Shi'ite areas of Baghdad and mortar rounds in Garma, northwest of the capital, killed at least 12.

On 13 January, a series of car bombs killed at least 25 of people in Baghdad, including in an attack in the mainly Shia district of Shaab which cost 21 lives. The day before, three people were killed and dozens injured in a car bomb attack targeting a stadium in Tuz Khurmatu, 170km north of the capital. On 9 January, a string of car bomb attacks killed six people and wounded ten others in eastern Ramadi and north of Baghdad, in Buhriz and Tikrit. In a separate event, a suicide bomber killed 23 Iraqi army recruits and wounded 36 in Baghdad, in an attack targeting men volunteering to join the government's struggle to crush ISIL in Anbar province. The attack came one day after fighters killed 12 soldiers and wounded four more at a military site in Al-Adhim, north of Baghdad. On 5 January, car and roadside bombs killed at least 20 people and wounded dozens in the mainly Shia areas of Baghdad, with attacks in the northern Shaab neighbourhood, in the eastern district of Sadr City and in the central Bab al-Muadham neighbourhood. On 4 January, gunmen set up a fake checkpoint on the main road between Baghdad and Kirkuk, killing six people.

In December, Iraq was marred by recurrent militant attacks, concentrated in the Baghdad area and other urban centres such as Tikrit, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Tarmiya. Shi'ite Muslims were especially targeted. In a high profile event in late December, at least 22 Iraqi detainees, all facing terrorism charges, escaped from a Baghdad prison after killing at least one prison guard. The jail break was the latest in a series of prison escapes since the beginning of the year with at least 500 inmates, including several al-Qaeda leaders, having escaped since July.

In early December, a string of execution-style killings, with at least 41 people found dead in one week, has been registered in Baghdad. New targeted assassinations were reported from various parts of the country in January. According to the authorities, such attacks have been happening on a smaller scale for the past two months with probably Sunni al-Qaeda affiliated groups and Shi'ite militias involved in the killings. Execution-style killings with bodies dumped in public places were widely used when the sectarian strife peaked in Iraq in 2006-2007.

Iraqi Kurdistan Political Context

While tensions persist between central authorities in Baghdad and in Kurdistan, both sides have made attempts to move closer as exemplified by the passing of the new election law in early November. Better relations with the Kurds should help ease pressure on Iraq's Shi'ite leadership, which is facing increased sectarian strife that it blames on Sunni Islamist insurgents.

As of late January, Baghdad continues to supress Kurdistan's push for greater economic independence by reasserting its control over the oil resources in the region. Baghdad insists that it has the sole right to export Iraqi resources, including those from the northern Kurdish region that gained de facto autonomy in 1991. Among other countries, Turkey is currently engaged in negotiations with Kurdish authorities to begin oil exports.

In September, Kurdistan's main opposition party came in second in the semi-autonomous region's parliamentary election, beating the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Democratic Party (KDP) of regional President Barzani came largely ahead. Since 2005, KDP and PUK have ruled through a coalition government as part of a wider deal that has seen them divide up posts in Irbil and Baghdad. As of late October, it was unclear how or if the results would affect the long-standing power-sharing agreement.
The regional government has delayed local presidential elections to 2015, extending the term of Kurdish leader Barzani, a move that the opposition has denounced as illegal.

**Kurdish Regional Security Context**

On 16 November, President Barzani called on Turkish Kurds to back the fading peace process with Ankara in his first visit to the Turkish southeast in two decades, ostensibly showing his support to Prime Minister Erdogan. Amid shared concerns over the activism of Kurdish militias in Syria, Barzani and Erdogan announced in mid-November their wish to establish a regional interim administration on the model of the Iraqi Kurdistan and settling the issue of the stalled peace process in Turkey. Iraqi Kurds are also concerned over retaining the regional leadership of the Kurds from the Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD) that has links to the Turkish Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK). While Barzani was calling for more Kurdish support to Ankara, a counter rally by the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was denouncing Ankara’s regional policies in Diyarbakir, the main city of Turkish Kurds.

To date, the withdrawal of PKK militants from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan has stopped, with fighters citing failures by the government to take steps agreed under the now stalled peace process that has not moved forward since the March ceasefire declaration. Despite the start of the withdrawal on 14 May, the Turkish authorities stated in August that only 20% of PKK fighters had left Turkey, and they were mostly women and children. On 15 November, the eve of Barzani’s visit to Turkey, the Turkish authorities reported that Kurdish milita attacked a military convoy near the Syrian border in one of the most serious breaches of the ceasefire to date.

The Kurdish problem continues to be a regional one with the Syrian conflict largely impacting the situation of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. While the arrival of former PKK insurgents is likely to strain already tense relations between the regional Kurdish authorities and Baghdad, it remains unclear how the withdrawal of PKK groups from Turkey will impact on the Syrian civil war where armed Kurdish groups have been increasingly active, pursuing their own political agendas. Although a senior Iraqi Kurdish official indicated in August that Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region had no plans to send troops to Syria to defend fellow Kurds as fighting between Kurds and Islamist anti-government forces in northern Syria continues, the region is becoming increasingly dragged into the Syrian conflict as various regional Kurdish groups try to assert transnational leadership of the Kurds.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

In early February, humanitarian access to Anbar province remained restricted due to ongoing clashes between government troops and Islamic insurgents. To date, humanitarian access is heavily hindered in the area.

As reported by OCHA and ICRC, main roads are impassable due to fighting and several bridges in the province, including one linking the city of Fallujah to Baghdad, have been destroyed. In addition, several humanitarian partners have reported that humanitarian access is also hindered by administrative constraints.

Although humanitarian access is less restricted in most parts of Iraq, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, the north, the central governorates, and the Disputed Territories. According to reports, access to Al Qa‘im refugee camp remains difficult, though missions can be carried out by helicopter.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

The UNHCR has warned that the significant increase of sectarian violence across Iraq threatens to spark a new internal displacement of Iraqis fleeing insecurity.

The recent outburst of violence in Anbar province has triggered population displacements from Ramadi and Fallujah. As of 5 February, OCHA quoted UNAMI as reporting that internal displacement in Anbar province continues to increase with fighting in the area displacing an estimated 268,000 people, although the UN reported that the figure might be underestimated. Thousands people are reportedly trapped in what are being described as siege-like conditions. According to latest reports from OCHA and IOM, many IDPs have scattered around Anbar, Iraq’s largest province, which shares a long border with Syria. But some have moved into the neighbouring Salah ad-Din, Kerbala, Baghdad, and Najaf governorates. Up to 15,000 have reportedly sought refugee in the northern semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. According to local sources, the influx of refugees imposes a significant burden on host communities.

The government blockade of both cities has resulted in limited access to food, water, and fuel for the population. As reported by UNAMI on 30 January, shelter is becoming a pressing need as the humanitarian consequences continue to mount.

According to the IOM, prior to the outbreak of violence in Anbar province, an estimated 1.3 million people were already internally displaced in Iraq. In 2013, the UN had estimated that only 1.13 million people were internally displaced in Iraq.

**Syrian Refugees**

Syrian refugees continue to cross into Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkabour crossing in Duhok governorate, following the re-opening of the border on 15 August after a closure in mid-May. As of 27 January, over 217,000 people had crossed into Iraq from Syria. Between mid-August and early October, an estimated 60,000 people, mainly women and children, had entered Iraq from Syria. On 5 January, aid agencies reported that 2,500 Syrians sought refuge in Iraq following the reopening of the border between Syria and the Iraqi Kurdish region, which had been closed since November. Iraqi Kurdistan currently hosts an estimated 90% of Syrian refugees in Iraq.

The situation at Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq’s Dohuk governorate, is worrying. The camp houses over 70,000 Syrian refugees in critically overcrowded conditions. Another 90,000 refugees are scattered in and around urban centres in Iraqi Kurdistan while several camps and centres are currently under construction in the Kurdistan region, many of which are on former military bases with a danger of unexploded ordnances, mines, and other
explosive weapons.

**Returnees**

Over 68,000 Iraqis have returned from Syria since mid-July 2012, with Baghdad receiving the largest number.

*Updated: 11/02/2014*

**MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late January:** FAO reported that the food situation across Myanmar is generally improving. Nevertheless, the negative effects of localized flooding last year, particularly in Kayin State and Bago Region, have increased the levels of food insecurity for flood-affected households. In addition, 649,000 IDPs across Myanmar remain at risk from food insecurity.

**Late January:** OCHA said that inter-communal tensions and restrictions on movement continued to isolate many communities in the restive Rakhine State, leaving them with minimal access to livelihoods and basic services. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in Myebon Township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The western state of Rakhine remains tense after repeated outbreaks of communal bloodshed between Buddhist and Muslim communities since 2012. Tensions continue to run high in the area where human rights abuses against the Muslim minority have been reported (UN).

- Over 649,000 people are currently internally displaced as a result of years of ethnic internal conflict. An estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, are displaced in western Rakhine state because of inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012 (OCHA).

- The Myanmar authorities are currently engaged in peace negotiations with all of the country’s ethnic and regional insurgency groups, aiming to reach a nationwide ceasefire in the coming weeks.

**Political and Security Context**

**Political Context**

In early January, the UN welcomed another presidential amnesty granted to political prisoners convicted of various offences under seven specific laws, including unlawful association, treason and sedition in Myanmar. The pardon, the first one this year and the sixth since the beginning of 2013, reportedly extends to over 200 political prisoners and various other categories of detainees. Local media reported that another amnesty is likely to be granted in mid-January.

As with the amnesties granted on 11 December and 15 November, when the prominent Karen women human rights activist Naw Ohn Hl was released, this recent pardon represents another goodwill gesture on the part of the authorities against the backdrop of reform and ongoing peace talks with several armed insurgent movements.

In September, several amnesties led to the release of members of ethnic minority armed groups with whom the government is seeking peace deals. In July President Thein Sein promised to free all prisoners of conscience by the end of 2013, a promise that might now only be completed in 2014. But while recent efforts by the Myanmar authorities to improve the country’s human rights record has been welcomed, local activists continue to report that the prosecution of dissidents is continuing.

**Peace Negotiations**

On 23 January, local media reported that the draft framework for a nationwide ceasefire – the result of a summit between ethnic leaders in Lay Wah on 21 January – has been approved by the representatives of 16 ethnic armed organisations, but awaits endorsement from the Shan State Army – South (SSA-S) and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). To date, available information remains limited. On 29 January, the groups met with the authorities’ chief negotiator to try and move the process forward.

The conference in Lay Wah was the latest in an ongoing series of peace talks aimed at ending the civil conflict that has plagued Myanmar for nearly six decades. In 2013, President Thein Sein promised a nationwide ceasefire by the end of year, but this has so far not been reached.

In late 2013, according to local media sources, the government had signed separate ceasefire agreements with all major ethnic armed groups with the exception of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), and the ethnic Ta’ang army. The government says it hopes to now consolidate these agreements into a nationwide ceasefire deal, potentially during meetings in January and February. 16 of the insurgent ethnic armed groups are represented by the umbrella group Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) that should be instrumental in reaching a nationwide ceasefire.

**Security Context**

Multiple violent incidents have been reported with fresh inter-communal violence between Buddhists and Muslims surging near Yangon in early October and in Thandwe, a coastal township in western Rakhine state, in late September where it led to casualties.

Between 9 and 17 January, at least 40 people, including women and children, were reportedly killed in government attacks on Rohingya Muslims in the western state of Rakhine. As reported by the INGO Medecins Sans Frontieres, it had treated 22 people in Myanmar’s western Rakhine state who had apparently been wounded around the same time as a reported massacre of Rohingya Muslims, an incident the government denies...
while stating the clashes took place. The UN are calling for an investigation into the incident while tensions remain high in the area.

In June and October 2012, sectarian confrontations between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority shook western Rakhine state, displacing tens of thousands of people. According to reports, clashes between Buddhists and Muslims since June 2012 have killed at least 237 people, including 192 in Rakhine state. In recent weeks, human rights infringements were reported, and tensions remained high with authorities imposing restriction measures on the displaced Muslim minority in an increasingly tense local context.

On 26 December, government troops launched a renewed offensive against ethnic Kachin rebels (KIA) in the north of the country. Local media reported artillery shelling between government troops at a frontline outpost near Nam Lim Pa village in Mansi Township, in southern Kachin State. Accurate information regarding these clashes remains scarce and it remains unclear how this spike in violence will have an impact on the ongoing peace negotiations.

Military Operations

On 18 November, Kachin campaign groups called for an immediate end to clashes between government troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), violence that has reportedly affected and effectively trapped an estimated 2,300 people, including children and IDPs, with limited food and shelter in the remote Bhamo-Mansi area of Kachin state, near the northern border with China. According to sources within Kachin armed groups, clashes have been ongoing in the area since October, but the violence would not derail the tentative peace process.

Between 22 and 28 October, violent clashes had already been reported from Kachin state’s Mansi Township between government troops and KIA. Renewed fighting happened less than two weeks after authorities and Kachin insurgents signed a fresh ceasefire in mid-October. No report on casualties is available to date.

Heavy fighting in northern Kachin state and in the northern part of neighbouring Shan state was reported in September as the authorities reinforced their troops in these areas. Local and international organisations reported various human rights abuses being committed in Kachin state.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

OCHA said that inter-communal tensions and restrictions on movement continued to isolate many communities in the restive Rakhine State, leaving them with minimal access to livelihoods and basic services. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in Myebon Township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe.

OCHA also reported that, in the second half of 2013, community resistance against international organisations working in Rakhine State increased. Rising anti-aid worker sentiment has created a difficult operating environment and in some areas it is affecting the ability of international actors to provide assistance to Rakhine and Muslim IDPs and vulnerable communities. In some cases, humanitarian assistance has had to be temporarily interrupted. In addition, according to recent monitoring reports, there has been a rise in incidents affecting humanitarian operations across Rakhine State, with local community resistance proving the biggest barrier to effective programme implementation.

Access has reportedly improved as major highways in Kachin state, closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the government and the KIA in 2011, were reopened on 17 March following the renewal of talks between the two sides.

Displacement

As reported by OCHA in November, over 649,000 people are currently internally displaced in Myanmar because of violence.

In western Rakhine state, an estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, are displaced because of inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012. According to reports from human rights groups, Rohingya Muslims face ongoing tension, abuses and movement restrictions and a large part is considered crisis-affected and needing humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, the Muslim minority in Myanmar is subject to many forms of persecution, discrimination and exploitation.

On 21 November, Myanmar authorities rejected a UN resolution urging them to grant citizenship to the Rohingya Muslims, accusing the UN of encroaching on its sovereignty. The government continues to officially state that the estimated 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims are migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, who are excluded from citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law.

Rohingya Muslims, many of whom have been in Myanmar for generations, are also rejected by neighbouring Bangladesh and are therefore stateless. To date, the majority of Rohingya are also denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities. While an estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims live in official camps where they are assisted by aid agencies, another 200,000 refugees reside in unofficial camps or Bangladeshi villages where they get little to no humanitarian assistance and almost no protection from abuses. According to investigation reports published by international human rights organizations in early December, Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar are also subject human trafficking in neighbouring Thailand.

In early November, UNHCR reported that an increasing number of people, at least 1,500 over the last week of October, from Rakhine state, mainly Muslims, are setting out to sea on smuggling boats from the Bay of Bengal. Although numbers remain difficult to ascertain, such forced departures often result in disasters as boats capsize.

In central Mandalay region, near Meikhtila, an estimated 5,500 people are displaced following violence in March and April.

An estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern Shan states, including over 53,000 in areas beyond government control. Many have been displaced for up to two years, triggering renewed and additional needs for provision of
basic services, livelihoods, and protection. The most urgent needs in displaced communities include education, health care, renovation of shelter, replacement of NFIs, and WASH facilities. In late October, an additional up to 1,500 people have been displaced by violence near the Mann Si Township.

Up to 400,000 people across 36 townships continue to be displaced in the southeast following years of conflict, according to OCHA.

In June, UNHCR reported that 28,000 Rakhine Muslims were registered as refugees in Malaysia. However, according to groups representing them, the real number of Myanmar Muslim immigrants is much higher and has surged this year because of the violence.

**Disaster**

According to the UN, heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have displaced almost 50,000 people across the country this year, though most people have since returned home as of late September. During the monsoon season, heavy rains and flash floods were reported in different parts of Myanmar, notably in Yangon in late August and in the northern parts of the country in the first half of September. In September, WFP reported that affected rural people would require food assistance until the harvest season in November-December as floods have destroyed food stocks and paddy fields. An estimated 70,000 acres of farmland have been flooded or destroyed this year.

**Food Security**

In late January, FAO reported that the food situation across Myanmar was generally improving. Nevertheless, the negative effects of localized flooding last year, particularly in Kayin State and Bago Region, have raised the levels of food insecurity for flood-affected households. In addition, 649,000 IDPs across Myanmar remain at risk of food insecurity.

**Health and Nutrition**

As noted by OCHA in mid-July, a vulnerability mapping exercise showed that 36,000 people in 113 isolated villages in Rakhine state have no or limited access to basic services, including markets, education, and health care. Access to services is impeded by ongoing tension and restrictions on freedom of movement. This is in addition to the estimated 140,000 people displaced by 2012 inter-communal violence.

**Dengue**

Even though the numbers of dengue cases and related deaths were lower than expected for this year’ rainy season, health authorities still recorded 16,000 cases and 75 deaths in September 2013. In June, the cumulative number of dengue cases had surpassed the total for all of 2012, and officials feared that the monsoon season would worsen the epidemic.

Updated: 06/02/2013

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**21-27 January:** According to OCHA, 53 Palestinians were injured in clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in the West Bank, notably in the governorates of Jerusalem, Qalqiliya, and Safal. These incidents bring to 129 the number of Palestinian injured in similar incidents since the beginning of 2014. During the same period, eight settler-related attacks were recorded across the West Bank, resulting in injuries and property damage.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip means the access and movement of people and goods is limited. Recent operations to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai has included imposing severe restrictions on movements of people through the Rafah Crossing and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian-Gaza border.

- Shortages of affordable fuel used to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions, such as emergency rooms, operating theatres, and neo-natal care in the Gaza Strip.

- An estimated 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities.

- In 2013, an estimated 1.6 million people – a third of households in the OPT, were considered food insecure, compared to 1.2 million in 2012. Approximately 770,000 of the food insecure reside in the West Bank.

- The number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by the Israeli army and security forces since 2006, and annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013. In the OPT, an estimated 315,000 Palestinian are vulnerable to violence from various parties to the conflict, including 130,000 people considered at high risk (OCHA).

**Political and Security**

**Israeli-Palestinian peace talks**

In early January, US Secretary of State John Kerry wrapped up four days of intense shuttle diplomacy between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, saying the two sides had made progress despite failing to agree on a framework for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

US-brokered peace talks began in July after a three-year deadlock, and an initial deadline to reach an agreement has been set for April, amid deep skepticism a deal could be achieved. The peace talks have also been hampered by a rise in violence in the past few
months, with at least 19 Palestinians and four Israelis killed in the occupied territories since the negotiations began.

The United States is trying to broker a “framework” of guidelines addressing core issues such as borders, security, the future of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem, but Israeli officials commented that wide gaps remain in peace talks. Palestinians want to create a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and are seeking a written framework agreement. On the other side, Israel is reportedly looking for a less rigid deal, expressing concerns that any formal agreement could stoke opposition from hardline members of the Israeli government. This came after far-right members of Israel’s governing coalition threatened to topple the government if Netanyahu caved to Palestinian territorial demands.

In late December, Israel informed the US of plans to release about two dozen prisoners, the third group to be freed since the talks resumed in July. In all, 104 long-serving Palestinian inmates are to go free, once a fourth group of prisoners is released at a later time in 2014. However, in a move that could jeopardise the peace talks, Israel also announced a push for more construction in Jewish settlements, again timing the announcement of these plans to offset the anger of far-right political partners at the release of Palestinian allegedly jailed for deadly attacks. Additionally, Israeli negotiators expressed their wish to extend talks beyond the agreed April deadline to January 2016, in return for freezing some settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

On 7 January, the U.S. ambassador to Israel stated that Kerry would return soon to continue his talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Local Political Context

While the negotiation process is expected to be lengthy, an ease of access and movement for the population in the OPT and for goods is pressing as recent action to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai has included imposing severe restrictions on movements of people through the Rafah Crossing into the Gaza Strip and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian-Gaza border.

Gaza’s economic situation is deteriorating with several thousand jobs in the construction industry affected, livelihoods eroded, and prices increasing. In November, the EU reported that over 250,000 workers lost their job across all sectors.

The Rafah Crossing opened for 5 days on 21-23 and 26-27 January, following a two-day opening early January and a three-day opening in late December. While the crossing normally remains closed for the import of construction materials and other goods, these items were briefly authorised entry on 19-25 January. As of early January, OCHA reported that the waiting list for people registered to travel outside the Gaza Strip now exceeds 5,000 people, including those seeking urgent medical treatment. Last month, the number of people exiting Gaza via the Rafah Crossing was only 15% of the monthly average recorded during the first half of 2013, dramatically decreasing from 20,340, to 3,000 people exiting in December.

No medical shipment or other humanitarian consignment has entered Gaza via Rafah during January. The crossing has been closed since 6 and 7 November when it was last open for the movement of humanitarian cases. The Rafah Crossing remains the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians. Movement across the other crossing points Erez and Kerem Shalom in northern Gaza Strip has been severely restricted since September 2000. Kerem Shalom, the only functioning official crossing for goods to and from Gaza, was closed for 52 days during the first four months of 2013.

Egypt announced its intention to destroy the network of smuggling tunnels used to deliver goods to the Gaza Strip, on the grounds that Palestinians have been using the underground passages to help Sinai militants. The Sinai Peninsula has seen frequent battles between the Egyptian military and Islamist gunmen. Due to the closure or destruction of these tunnels, the Gaza Strip suffers from a severe lack of basic goods such as fuel for cooking and heating, affecting businesses, agricultural production, and health services, according to the UN. It is estimated that in November, less than 20,000 litres of fuel per week entered Gaza via the tunnels, compared to nearly 1 million litres per day until June 2013.

As a result of the blockade, the Gaza Power Plant (GPP) was forced to shut down completely on 1 November after it had used all its fuel reserves. UN reports that Gaza is affected by one the most serious energy crises in recent years, with potentially serious humanitarian ramifications. OCHA reports that for the last month, all of Gaza’s 1.7 million residents have been living without power for most of the time, with electricity blackouts across the Gaza Strip having increased to up to 16 hours per day. The total amount of electricity currently available covers only 30% of the demand. The Gaza Electricity Distribution Corporation (GEDCO) has warned that electricity distribution will likely be more complicated with the coming cold winter season, as demand on electricity is expected to increase.

In addition to already existing restrictions, Israel’s freeze on the shipment of building materials into Gaza since mid-October continues for a tenth consecutive week. The measure was implemented after discovering what Israel says is a sophisticated “terror tunnel” into its own territory from Palestinian land. Israeli authorities did not say how long the ban would remain in force. The Israeli army said the tunnel was buried 18m underground, made of concrete and ran for 1.7km with 450m extending into Israeli. Hamas Islamists in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for the tunnel beneath the heavily fortified Israel-Gaza frontier. The suspension of transfer of construction materials for those consecutive weeks has affected humanitarian operations: UNRWA has reported the suspension of 19 out of its 20 building projects in the Gaza Strip due to the lack of building materials. Furthermore, the suspension has directly affected more than 4,000 construction workers employed in different humanitarian projects, including rehabilitation or construction of housing, schools and health clinics.

Security Context

Settler-related violence in the West Bank and Israeli military operations continue to undermine the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians in the OPT.

At present, OCHA estimates that 110 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of over 315,000 people, are vulnerable to violence from various parties to the conflict. Of these, almost 60 communities (over 130,000 people) are at high risk. In early January, human rights groups reported an increase in Israeli military training exercises being held in
Palestinian towns and villages and condemned Israeli soldiers for taking up positions in Palestinian homes during mock raids in the West Bank, and detaining civilians for hours without explanation.

**Settler-related violence in the West Bank**

According to OCHA in January, the number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by Israelis since 2006, and annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013. More than 17,000 Palestinians, 342 settlers and 37 soldiers have been injured, while 10 Palestinians and 29 settlers were killed in these attacks.

OCHA reported that between 21-27 January, eight settler-related attacks were recorded across the West Bank, resulting in injuries on both sides, and causing property damage.

**Armed violence in the OPT**

In 2013, 28 Palestinians were reportedly killed during military operations conducted by Israeli forces in occupied territories, the majority of them in the West Bank.

On 29 January, Israeli soldiers shot a Palestinian in the West Bank, with the army alleging he had opened fire at them. On 24 January, Israeli troops allegedly killed a Palestinian man and wounded another in a cross-border confrontation with protesters in the Gaza Strip. Tensions had been rising after Israeli forces killed two Palestinian militants in Gaza on 22 January, blaming them for a rocket attack during the funeral of Ariel Sharon earlier in the month.

On 19 December, the Israeli army reportedly conducted two separate raids, a town and a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. In the northern town of Qalqilya, a member of the Palestinian security forces was killed during an overnight arrest. Also in the north, in Jenin refugee camp, clashes erupted after a similar arrest operation, where another Palestinian—a reported member of the Islamic Jihad—was shot dead and several people were wounded.

Between 7-13 January in the Gaza Strip, rocket-fire by Palestinian armed groups towards southern Israel, alongside tank shelling by Israeli forces, continued intermittently along the border fence. On 8 January, a Palestinian militant from the group Islamic Jihad—the second largest faction in Gaza—was reportedly killed by an Israeli attack in the Gaza Strip, a charge rejected by the Israeli military.

**Impact on civilians**

Excessive use of lethal force is also impacting civilians in the OPT.

OCHA reported that between 21-27 January, 53 Palestinians—including 10 children, were injured in clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in the West Bank, notably in Abu Dis—Jerusalem governorate, Kafr Qaddum—Qalqilya governorate, and Wadi Qana—Salfit governorate. These incidents bring to 129 the number of Palestinian injured in similar incidents since the beginning of 2014.

On 16 January, Israeli air strikes in the Gaza Strip reportedly left four children and a woman wounded. One of the strikes targeted a camp allegedly used for training by the Ezzedine al-Qaddam Brigades, the armed wing of the territory’s Hamas rulers. On 9 January, a Palestinian child was reportedly injured due to an Israeli tank shell, shot in response to Palestinian shooting. On 24 December, a child was reportedly killed and at least six people wounded in a series of Israeli air and tank strikes on the Gaza Strip, which allegedly came in response to the shooting of an Israeli along a security fence separating Gaza and Israel. Two other air strikes were reported in northern Gaza on militant positions, where they caused no casualties. On 14 December, a Palestinian from the Gaza Strip was reportedly wounded by Israeli gunfire after approaching a border fence.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to OCHA, 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities. Longstanding protection threats affecting the Palestinian population, including movement and access restrictions, continue to generate high levels of humanitarian need.

**Access**

Heavy Egyptian military deployment along the border combined with severe access restrictions on people and vehicles into the border area has resulted in a dramatic decline in the transfer of goods and fuel through the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza has been reported.

On 20 September, Israeli forces seized a vehicle carrying tents from an international humanitarian organisation destined for Khirbet al-Makhul, West Bank, where 48 Palestinians, including 16 children, urgently needed emergency shelter following repeated demolitions by Israeli authorities. The forces confronted members of the humanitarian and diplomatic communities who were present on site. The UN and the European Union have condemned the halt of humanitarian aid to the population in need.

**Disasters**

According to OCHA in December, the OPT experienced one of the strongest winter storms in recent decades, with extreme weather conditions exacerbating already fragile living conditions and livelihoods among a significant number of Palestinians. Extensive damage was caused to greenhouses and animal shelters, resulting in production losses which adversely impact the food insecure population, approximately 1.6 million people.

In the Gaza Strip, heavy rains triggered flooding and widespread power outages in low-lying areas, resulting in the temporary evacuation of 10,000 people, and causing damage to an estimated 21,000 houses. The weather conditions also reportedly caused the collapse of some 70 tunnels.

In area C of the West Bank, herders and Bedouins were also reportedly affected by rains, especially due to the precarious nature of their housing and animal shelters.

**Food Security**
Over 770,000 people are estimated to be food insecure in the West Bank alone, according to the UN. Prior to the tunnel closure, the WFP Socio–Economic and Food Security Survey revealed an increase in the food insecurity in Palestine, showing that 1.6 million people (34% of households in Palestine) were food insecure, a rise from 27% in 2012. The deterioration was most pronounced in Gaza, where food insecurity levels surged from 44 to 57%. Economic pressure on Gaza could impact the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The unemployment rate, which is normally around 30%, is expected to rise as construction and tunnel-trade employment stagnates.

The shortages of electricity and fuel, as well as of building materials, have further undermined people’s livelihods, particularly those employed in construction, agriculture and fishing. Additionally, the halt in the smuggling of food products via the tunnel has triggered an increase in food prices – 11% for bread, 33% for rice, and 7% for vegetable oil. These factors combined are expected to be reflected in an increased number of families affected by food insecurity. Figures for 2012 indicate that 57% of the population is affected by food insecurity, up from 44% in 2011. About 1.1 million people (about 65 % of the population) are already receiving food aid.

As land preparation for the upcoming growing season is starting, shortages and high prices of fuel in Gaza Strip lead to higher production costs and a greater risk for farmers who plan on growing crops will need (supplementary) irrigation.

Health and Nutrition

Shortages of affordable fuel used to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions, such as emergency rooms, operating theatres, and neo-natal care, OCHA reports. All health facilities, including 30 hospitals and over 135 health clinics are affected.

Access to health care is further affected by the chronic shortage of drugs. Lack of sufficient funding and coordination between the Gaza and Ramallah authorities are main underlying reasons for this development. The restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the Rafah Crossing, which has served as the main entry point for most medical donations has further exacerbated the situation. As of late November, 30% of the essential drugs and 52% of medical disposables are at zero stock (141 types of medication and 469 types of medical disposables), according to OCHA.

WASH

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 600,000 people in the Gaza Strip may not have access to adequate and safe water and sanitation services as a result of increased power outages and lack of fuel.

There is an acute shortage of fuel to power standby generators at 291 WASH facilities across Gaza, including water wells, ground tank pumps, booster stations, desalination plants, sewage pump stations and wastewater treatment plants. OCHA states that this has resulted in reduced water supply to households, with only 15% of the population supplied every day, 25% once every four days, 40% once every three days, and 20% every two days, with supply cycles lasting 5-6 hours.

In November, OCHA said that fuel shortages, combined with unreliable electricity supply, continue to disrupt the provision of basic services, including water supply, sanitation, health and transportation. For example, the operation of 291 water and sewage facilities has been severely affected, and access to running water has already declined across the Gaza Strip.

When water is supplied, delivery lasts for only six to eight hours. Consequently, many families are forced to purchase unsafe water from unregulated water vendors and distributors. Initial reports indicate that people, mostly children, are filling jerry cans from these desalination units during night hours (when the electricity is on), raising protection concerns.

Updated: 06/02/2014

PAKISTAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT, EARTHQUAKE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

6 February: The first formal meeting between Pakistan’s government and a Taliban-nominated team has been held in Islamabad. Over the past week, international and local observers have voiced concerns about the potential for success of the meeting, which was initiated by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

4 February: Official sources said the US has cut back on the number of drone strikes in Pakistan as peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban get underway. However, the Obama administration said it would still continue carrying out strikes on senior Al Qaeda officials in the country, should threats against US interests be identified.

2 – 4 February: On 4 February, a suicide bomber killed at least eight people and injured 42 near a mosque frequented by minority Shi’ite worshippers in a neighbourhood of the northwestern city of Peshawar. Two days earlier, a Peshawar cinema was hit by two blasts that killed five people and injured at least 31.

Late January: Local media quoted a December WFP survey as expressing concern about serious malnutrition in the remote Neelum valley in the mountainous north of Pakistani-administered Kashmir. An estimated 21% of children – which is much higher than the national average – were found to be malnourished in the region.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Military operations against the Taliban in the country’s northwestern tribal areas and militant attacks in urban centres are ongoing and continue to have an impact on civilians. To date, peace talks between the Pakistani Taliban and the authorities have still not officially started.

- An estimated 1 million people are internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
and the tribal belt as of mid-December. While numbers are difficult to ascertain, there are an estimated 2.5 million documented and undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan (UNHCR).

As of December, other priority humanitarian needs in Pakistan were related to access to basic health care with an estimated 1.21 million in need of health assistance, nutrition assistance with an estimated 1.59 million people being in need, and food security with an estimated 1.06 million people, almost exclusively IDPs, needing immediate assistance (OCHA).

- Pakistan is an extremely hazard-prone country. In September, an estimated 185,000 people were severely affected by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Baluchistan province (OCHA).

Political and Security Context

The security situation in Pakistan remains volatile as militants’ attacks in urban centres and military operations against the Taliban in the country’s tribal belt are ongoing. To date, the Pakistani authorities were unable to start comprehensive peace talks with the insurgents, although a preliminary meeting with representatives of the insurgents was held in early February, while the Pakistani Taliban remain a fragmented movement. Meanwhile, Pakistan’s relations with neighbouring countries, as well as the US remain tense.

US-Pakistan Relations and US Drone Strikes

On 4 February, official sources said the US has sharply cut back on drone strikes in Pakistan as peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban get underway. However, the Obama administration indicated that it would still continue carrying out strikes on senior Al Qaeda officials in Pakistani territory if any immediate threat to the US was identified.

Over the past six months, official and public outrage over drone strikes has intensified, with local leaders saying they constitute a breach of the country’s sovereignty. However, as NATO winds down combat operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s support remains essential for Washington.

In early December, following protests in Pakistan over US drone strikes, Washington was forced to halt ground shipments from Afghanistan via its main Pakistan supply route. The affected route, which connects Torkham Gate at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to the port city of Karachi, is crucial to ensure the ongoing withdrawal of the US combat mission from Afghanistan while the alternative Northern Distribution Network – a grid of supply lines running through Central Asia and Russia – is far more costly and politically challenging to use. According to US official sources, Washington is hoping that it will be able to resume cargo shipments through Pakistan in the near future. To a large extent, Hagel’s visit to Islamabad aimed to resolve this issue. A long-term suspension of the supply lines running through Pakistan could potentially derail the whole US regional strategy.

In November, the death of the Pakistani Taliban’s leader Mehsud, as well as the general continuation of drone strikes, had significant repercussions for short-term US-Pakistan relations. These events may also undermine recent improvements that were signalled by the resumption of US security assistance to Pakistan that had been largely suspended since 2011.

In Pakistan, several politicians had called for a suspension of US military supply lines into Afghanistan as witnessed between November 2011 and July 2012.

On 21 November, the day after Pakistan’s Foreign Minister indicated that the US had committed to cease drone strikes whilst the government tried to re-engage the insurgents in peace talks, another drone attack was carried out against an Islamic seminary in the Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The strike killed a senior member of the Taliban-linked Haqqani Network (HN), Maulvi Ahmad Jan, and four other people. HN has come under pressure following the shooting of its chief financier in Islamabad on 11 November by unidentified men. Although the authorities gave no official comment, Washington has long called for the Pakistani authorities to crack down on the group blamed for high-profile attacks in Afghanistan and listed as a terrorist organisation by the US since September 2012.

The drone attack on 21 November was the first one to be conducted in Pakistan since the 1 November, when Hakimullah Mehsud, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban, was killed in a US drone strike in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), probably in North Waziristan, along with three other militants. The strike occurred as Pakistani authorities started negotiations with the TTP. In the aftermath, Islamabad openly denounced the attack as a US bid to sabotage the peace talks and the hardliner Mullah Fazlullah that assumed command of the TTP immediately rejected negotiating with authorities. On 4 November, US Secretary of State Kerry officially endorsed the attack that killed Mehsud.

Prime Minister Sharif has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes against militants, although such attacks have led to the deaths of several senior TTP leaders. Nevertheless, an increasing number of drone attacks in FATA have been reported, with at least nine occurring since Sharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by Pakistani authorities in late August, 339 drone attacks have been recorded since 2004 resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2,200 people, including 400 civilians and 200 victims deemed probable non-combatants in FATA. No official US data on the number of people killed in drone strikes is available, though numbers released by Islamabad have been questioned by independent organisations. In late October, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released separate reports voicing criticisms over the recourse to drone strikes and detailing the deaths of dozens of civilians in such attacks. In January 2014, western sources stated that the number of civilian casualties in 2013 in Pakistan was much lower than Pakistani estimations, based on the study of news reports, field investigations and research by iNGOs.

India-Pakistan Context

On 8 October, despite the holding of talks aimed to calm bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi, India’s military continued to accuse Pakistan of helping insurgents to push into Indian Kashmir as foreign forces withdraw from neighbouring Afghanistan. Pakistan denies it is helping militants to cross into the Indian part of the contested region.
On 29 September, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, amid heightened tensions over their shared Kashmir border. During the meeting, both leaders announced intentions to restore calm as an initial step toward reconciliation. On the eve of these talks, on 26 September, new fatal incidents were reported across the Line of Control, which marks the de facto border in the disputed region, after heavily armed militants reportedly crossed from Pakistan into India. Since 6 August, tensions have been running high in Kashmir, with international observers fearing that the November 2003 ceasefire and stalled peace talks between the two countries may be put into question. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for the incidents that, as of early September, killed at least 44 members of the security forces since the beginning of the year, up from 17 for all of 2012, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which monitors the violence.

In mid-August, several sources in the Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba commented that the group is preparing to reignite the fight over Kashmir once Western troops leave Afghanistan next year. The bombing of the Indian consulate in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on 3 August, for which the Taliban has denied responsibility, might be an early indication of this change of strategy.

**Afghanistan-Pakistan Context**

On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume stalled peace talks between the Afghan authorities and the Taliban in April after Hamid Karzai steps down following presidential elections. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan.

The comments from Pakistan could indicate that there is some reluctance on the part of the Taliban to engage with the Karzai administration. The Afghan authorities have asked Taliban leaders in Pakistan to reach to Taliban groups in Afghanistan as the rift between Kabul and Washington is widens.

On 30 November, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif met with Afghan President Karzai in Kabul as part of renewed efforts to revive Afghanistan’s peace process before NATO troops withdraw next year. PM Sharif, who visited Afghanistan for the first time since he took office in May, promised that he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, who was captured in Pakistan in 2010, is seen by Kabul as key to reach to moderate Taliban commanders and involve them into peace talks.

In late October, a breakthrough in negotiations between President Karzai and Prime Minister Sharif was reportedly achieved at a meeting in London. In the aftermath, on 20 November, a delegation of senior officials from Afghanistan’s High Peace Council travelled to Karachi to start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and meet notably with Baradar, who had been released by Islamabad in September but reportedly remained under close Pakistani supervision. During its visit, the Afghan delegation reportedly met with the former Taliban commander, but no discussion was effectively conducted. Earlier, Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not directly handed over to Afghan authorities. The release of influential Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan is seen by the Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table.

**National Political Context**

On 27 November, Lieutenant-General Raheel Sharif was nominated as the country’s new army chief. Considered a moderate, Sharif is mostly known for his role in the reshaping of the country’s strategic policy in 2007, when he turned the focus away from the rivalry with India, and pushed for a more nuanced policy which considered the internal threat from militants as equally pressing. To a large extent, the nomination may be seen as another attempt of the civilian authorities to put pressure on the influential military establishment.

The trial of former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf, who is facing allegations of treason, opened in Islamabad on January 1. The trial represents a landmark event that may further test the balance of power between an increasingly assertive civilian government and the influential military establishment who ruled Pakistan under Musharraf and still retain significant power. On 18 November, Pakistani authorities decided to put Pervez Musharraf on trial for treason for suspending the constitution and declaring a state of emergency in 2007 while he was in power. The decision is the latest development in a lasting imbroglio of intertwined legal cases against the former ruler since he returned to Pakistan from voluntary exile to participate in May polls.

**Pakistan's Taliban Insurgency and Peace Talks with the Taliban**

On 6 February, the first formal meeting between Pakistan's government and a Taliban-nominated team has been held in Islamabad, officials said. The first meetings should officially allow for the establishment of a “roadmap” for peace talks. After having been announced last week, the first meeting was delayed amidst general confusion over who should represent the insurgents while the government negotiators failed to turn up at an agreed time on 4 February.

Over the past week, international and local observers have voiced concerns regarding the potential for success of this initiative, initiated by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Over the past decade, short-lived ceasefires achieved through such initiatives have often been used by the TTP to buy time to regroup and find new resources in order to resume fighting. With military operations ongoing in North Waziristan, the lack of consultation with the powerful Pakistani military on the decision to begin talks is also seen as an important constraint and another sign of the growing rift between the military establishment and the civilian authorities. If the talks were to fail, as most observers expect, Prime Minister Sharif is likely to be increasingly under pressure from the military and the hawks of his administration to take more aggressive military action against the Taliban.

On 29 January, the administration of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reinvigorated the government's commitment to a dialogue-first approach to the Taliban insurgency, saying also that any talks could not go ahead before the cessation of violence. A special four-member committee of non-parliamentarians was reportedly formed to kick-start the dialogue. Responding to the offer, a TTP spokesman indicated that a Taliban leadership meeting would be convened in the coming days to discuss the issue, whilst continuing to
deny that there was any rift within the Islamist movement.

On 30 October, while at a summit in London, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif announced that his administration had started talks with the Pakistani Taliban in an attempt to end the insurgents’ attacks across the country. However, on 1 November, the leader of the TTP, Hakimullah Mehsud, was killed in a US drone strike and the TTP promoted Mullah Fazlullah, a brutal commander from the Swat Valley, as its new leader at a “shura” meeting. Earlier reports had suggested the relatively moderate Khan Said would assume command. On 7 November, the TTP officially rejected the idea of any further peace talks with the authorities, a clear indication of the hardline turn taken by the movement with the promotion of Mullah Radio, a nickname gained by Fazlullah for his Islamist radio broadcasts in Swat valley. On 8 November, the TTP further announced that it would orchestrate a wave of revenge attacks for the killing of Mehsud and chiefly target “security forces, government installations, political leaders and police”.

On 2 December, local militant and intelligence sources claimed that the elusive Mullah Fazlullah had relocated from Afghan Nuristan province, where he was based following a 2009 push by the Pakistani army into Swat valley and gone back to Pakistani tribal areas to assume command of the Taliban insurgency. According to several sources, his escort included three high-profile Taliban commanders, Azam Waziristan, Mufti Abdul Rashid and Muftah Udin, in a clear attempt to give more credibility to Fazlullah’s leading position within the TTP.

To a large extent, the TTP is a fragmented movement comprised of several factions that pursue different agendas. The promotion of Fazlullah is an important change within the movement whose centre of gravity may shift from the traditional North Waziristan area to the Swat valley, although it is yet unclear from where Fazlullah is intending to lead the insurgency. According to local sources, the promotion of Fazlullah is already triggering a rift in the TTP with the loyalty of several commanders to their new leader vacillating despite the reported endorsement of Fazlullah by Afghan Mullah Omar.

Since coming to power in May, Sharif has repeatedly suggested that his administration was ready to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban, although counter-insurgency operations were to continue until negotiations started. In early October, Hakimullah Mehsud had responded that he was open to peace talks with the Pakistani authorities, but complained that Islamabad had not yet taken serious steps to begin dialogue. The TTP leader also reiterated that the movement would continue to target the US and its allies and demanded that any ceasefire in Pakistan include an end to US drone strikes. The issue of peace talks with the TTP remains highly controversial in Pakistan.

Security Context

Tensions are running high in Pakistan with regular Taliban attacks being reported across the country. According to an independent count conducted by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 4,286 persons were killed and 4,066 injured between January and 31 August in targeted killings, militant attacks, incidents of terrorism, and security operations by the armed forces and intelligence agencies.

CRSS reported that the violence-related casualties in October came down by approximately 50% compared to September. The death toll was 291 with another 277 people being injured with targeted killing being one of the major causes of deaths followed by acts of terrorism, militants’ attacks and counter-terrorism operations by security agencies. In October, Sindh was the province most affected by violence, counting more deaths than Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Baluchistan combined. The last month thus marked a significant decline compared to September – the deadliest month so far this year with a 35% increase compared to August – when the death toll was 493 with another 555 people injured in attacks, the bulk of the victims being civilians. By contrast, the number of dead were highest in KPK, followed by Sindh, FATA, and Baluchistan in September.

On 4 February, a suicide bomber killed at least eight people and injured 42 near a mosque frequented by minority Shi’ite worshippers in a neighbourhood of the northwestern city of Peshawar. On 2 February, a Peshawar cinema was hit by two blasts that killed five people and injured at least 31.

On 29 January, three bomb blasts in Karachi, including a suicide attack on Pakistani security forces, killed four people and injured another four. On 23 January, six people were killed and seven injured in a bombing in Pakistan’s restive northwest city of Peshawar. The incidents were the latest in an upsurge of militant attacks which have left at least 104 people dead in January.

On 21 January 2014, a bomb exploded near a bus carrying Shi’ite pilgrims returning from neighbouring Iran to the western city of Quetta. The blast killed at least 22 people and wounded over 20 others, many of the victims being women and children. On 20 January, a suicide attack in Rawalpindi killed 13 people including eight soldiers and three children in a market next to Pakistan’s military headquarters. Another 30 people were injured in the blast. On the same day also in Rawalpindi, a bomb attack detonated at an army check point, killing at least 12 people. This came one day after the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) killed 26 soldiers and wounded at least 25 others in a suicide bombing in the northwestern city of Bannu, in the deadliest attack on Pakistan’s military in several years. The two high-profile attacks on 19-20 January are said to mark a sharp upturn in violence from the TTP after a period of relative calm following the death of the leader Hakimullah Mehsud in a drone strike in November.

On 16 January, at least five people were killed and over 50 were wounded in an explosion at a Sunni Islamic seminary in Peshawar. On 9 January, four policemen, including one senior officer, were killed in a car bomb blast set up by Islamist militants in the southern city of Karachi. On 7 January, six people were killed by alleged Islamist militants for having visited a Sufi shrine in Karachi, in another sign of growing sectarian strife in the country. Taliban militants advocate violent Wahhabi Islam, which discards many traditional forms of Sufi worship, including the worship at shrines.

On 6 January, at least 10 people were killed and a further nine wounded in a blast in the Tirah Valley, close to the Afghan border, which last year saw fierce fighting between the Pakistani military and Taliban militants. In a separate incident on the same day, one person was killed in a suicide bombing in the Shiite-dominated Ibrahimzai area of Hangu district in northwest Pakistan. On 4 January, coordinated back-to-back blasts killed one and injured 11 others, including a senior politician, in the southwestern Pakistani province of Baluchistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran. To date, no one has claimed responsibility for the attacks. On 1 January, a suicide car bomb attack targeting a
passenger bus carrying Shi'ite pilgrims killed two people and wounded at least 17 in southwestern Akhtarabad, on the outskirts of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province.

In late 2013, sectarian violence against Shi'ite Muslims, who comprise a fifth of the country’s 180 million population, intensified. According to observers, attacks against Shi’ite targets are largely due to Sunni militias such as the Taliban and the Punjabi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and the violence is worst in the western province of Baluchistan. Human Rights Watch reported that over 400 Shi’ites were killed in 2013.

**Military Operations**

On 21 January, the Pakistani armed forces conducted a major military operation against Taliban militants in the North Waziristan region, bordering Afghanistan. At least 40 people were killed in the offensive while local sources reported that dozens of civilians have been killed in the air strikes targeting militants. Fearing renewed warfare in the area, and although no new offensive has been officially announced, an estimated 23,000 people have fled the region in the aftermath to take in schools, private homes and veterinary clinics in the normally more peaceful areas of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan on the edge of the FATA. More displacement may occur in the area if military operations resume in North Waziristan. As of 31 January, local sources reported that up to 70,000 people may have left their homes following fighting in North Waziristan, although reports indicate that, as of early February, half of them may now have returned home.

In response to the two high-profile TTP attacks on 19-20 January, respectively targeting Pakistani troops in the northwestern city of Bannu and a market next to Pakistan’s military headquarters in Rawalpindi, Pakistani fighter jets launched an assault on tribal areas near the Afghan border on 21 January. The operation targeting suspected Taliban hideouts reportedly killed up to 40 people in North Waziristan, where many al-Qaeda-linked groups are based. Local sources also reported that the assault flattened several houses and sent villagers fleeing from their homes.

In mid-December, Pakistani troops pounded suspected militant hideouts for several days. Insurgents responded by attacking the military in the restive North Waziristan district on the Afghan border. According to local sources, over 50 people were killed and a number of civilian casualties were reported in the incident.

As of mid-January, police and militant sources said at least two Afghan Taliban commanders had been killed in recent weeks in the Pakistani city of Quetta. It is unclear whether the two commanders were targeted by the Afghan/Pakistan security forces or killed as a result of infighting within the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban movements. The Pakistani Taliban recently appointed a new leader that reversed his predecessor’s stance by refusing peace talks with Islamabad. Within the Afghani branch, disagreements on possible talks with the authorities also intensified. Taliban sources from both sides of the border have blamed the killings on Afghan and Pakistani security sources. Since the beginning of 2013 at least 18 other Afghan Taliban have been killed in similar attacks.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

As reported by OCHA in November, an estimated 4.2 million people were in need across Pakistan. These people include 1 million IDPs in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1.61 million registered Afghan refugees, 185,000 affected by the Baluchistan earthquake and 1.5 million people affected by recent floods.

**Access**

In early December, OCHA reported that 91 attacks against aid workers had been recorded since the beginning of the year, including 29 people killed, 41 injured and 21 kidnapped as of 30 November. Following a surge in attacks in September-October, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains the most affected province recording 37 attacks – including 20 people killed, followed by the FATA with 21 attacks and Sindh with 20 attacks. The total figure for last year was 42 attacks across Pakistan. Attacks on polio vaccination teams are also recurrent, and armed groups have killed more than 30 polio workers and troops protecting them in recent years. On 21 January, three polio vaccinations workers were killed in a targeted attack in Karachi. On 22 January, seven people were killed and 11 injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province’s Charsadda district, after a bomb exploded near a police van used to provide security for a polio vaccination drive. Throughout 2013, several deadly attacks on polio vaccination teams were reported in FATA.

As of mid-November, OCHA reported that INGOs continued to face delays in the renewal of their Memoranda of Understanding, four-month interim permissions to work in Pakistan, visas, and project implementation permits.

Aid response to the earthquakes that hit Baluchistan in September has been complicated by the remoteness of the region and the presence of separatist insurgents who fear that the army, which is overseeing aid operations, may take advantage of the crisis to move more forces into the area. Attacks on helicopters carrying aid workers were reported in September. On 10 October, new attacks by Baluch militants against security forces and government officials engaged in relief operations were reported.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

In late January, fearing renewed warfare in North Waziristan, and despite the fact that no new offensive has been officially announced, an estimated 23,000 people fled the region and took shelter in schools, private homes and veterinary clinics in the usually peaceful areas of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan on the edge of the FATA. More displacement may occur in the area if military operations resume.

As of mid-December, the UNHCR said that, as a result of the protracted conflict, an estimated 1 million people were now internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. In November, local sources suggested that up to 1.6 million IDPs from FATA and from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were located in the Peshawar area. Since mid-March, government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militant groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency have led to large-scale population movement to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the UNHCR, in 2013, an estimated total of 140,000 people were displaced across Pakistan, the majority in in the FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions. The UN reported on 6 December that almost 110,000 people had returned to the FATA in 2013.
As reported by OCHA, 90% of IDPs live with relatives or in rented houses. Most IDPs are subsistence farmers, but displacement has forced them to leave their farms and relocate to the Peshawar area where employment and livelihood opportunities are limited. At present, many IDPs have switched to irreversible coping strategies, taking on debt and selling assets to pay for food.

Refugees

Exact numbers of Afghan refugees in Pakistan remain difficult to ascertain. According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 31 December, there were an estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, in Pakistan. Most of the Afghan refugees, with the majority being located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, required humanitarian assistance.

This summer, the authorities agreed not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June, with Kabul and Islamabad also agreeing, at an UN-backed meeting, to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation. Pakistani media reports that the presence of Afghan refugees is triggering tensions in host provinces.

Disaster

According to the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, an estimated 185,000 people were severely affected by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake on 24 September and its main 7.2 magnitude aftershock on 28 September in the southwestern districts of Awaran (160,000 people affected) and Kech (25,000 affected), 350km south of Quetta in Baluchistan province. According to Baluch authorities, at least 200,000 people have been affected by the two quakes. As of mid-October, at least 376 people were killed and an estimated 824 injured by the tremors. The districts of Awaran, Kech, Gwandar, Pajgur, Chaghi and Khuzda were affected, and entire villages were reportedly flattened across these impoverished and sparsely populated areas of Baluchistan. According to local reports, the earthquake destroyed over 21,000 houses.

Food Security

Food insecurity is at emergency levels with an estimated 58% of Pakistan’s population considered food insecure as of November 2013, as reported by OCHA quoting a National Nutrition Survey. Seven districts face IPC phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). Inflation, rising fuel prices, and stagnating domestic productivity are pushing up food prices. Prices of wheat and wheat flour have steadily increased since June 2012, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

As of mid-December, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.06 million people, almost exclusively IDPs (living in and outside camps) and returnees, were in critical need of food assistance and were therefore key targets for food distribution.

Health and Nutrition

OCHA reported in mid-December that an estimated 1.21 million people were in need of health assistance. Needs include the provision of basic health services, quality maternal and child health services and health care to treat acute respiratory diseases now the winter season has started. Priority targets included over 508,000 IDPs and returnees in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dengue

The WHO said that between 1 and 4 January 2014, thousands of cases of dengue fever had been confirmed across various regions, notably: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 9,402; Sindh 5,765, Punjab 2,676, and Baluchistan 42. The disease is currently affecting areas that do not usually fall into the traditional endemic belt for dengue fever. This marks a significant difference from the usual patterns of cyclical dengue outbreaks in the country. In 2013, Dengue fever cases are reported from the less endemic areas also, according to WHO.

Polio

On 28 August, health officials warned of a polio outbreak after the disease was detected in North Waziristan, a tribal district where militant groups have banned vaccinations. In mid-January, health officials in a Pakistani tribal region hailed the success of a three day anti-polio drive. This success however comes against the background of the persistent threat of militant attacks on polio workers. A number of polio vaccination workers had previously refused to operate in the area because of security concerns before being persuaded otherwise. According to WHO, the current polio outbreak in Syria is related to a strain of the virus from Pakistan.

According to health officials, the number of polio infections is rising, with 91 cases reported in 2013 compared to 58 in 2012. To date, most of the cases have been recorded in the FATA, followed by northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eastern Punjab and southern Sindh provinces. Children are especially at risk of polio contamination, with most children affected being <5. Pakistan is one of the only countries in the world where polio is still endemic. According to authorities, over 240,000 children in North and South Waziristan are at risk with a Taliban ban on vaccination exacerbating the serious polio outbreak.

Measles

Since the start of 2013, 269 deaths from measles have been reported. According to local media, 141 children have died of measles since January in Punjab province alone. Sindh province, hardest hit by the measles outbreak, was also affected by flash flooding in September 2012. WHO described the situation in Pakistan as alarming due to a steady increase in fatal measles cases. According to OCHA, in Punjab and Sindh provinces, 54% of 8,844 children assessed between January last year and mid-May this year were not vaccinated against the disease.

Malnutrition

Malnutrition rates in some flood-affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the recurrent floods in 2012 and are predicted to worsen. According to WFP as of June, 15% of Pakistani children are severely malnourished, and 40% suffer from stunted growth.

In late January, local media quoted a December WFP survey as expressing concern about malnutrition in remote Neelum valley in the mountainous north of Pakistani-administered
Kashmir. An estimated 21% of children – which is high above the national average – were found to be malnourished in the region.

As of mid-December, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.59 million people were in need of nutrition assistance, including almost 55,000 moderately acutely malnourished children, an estimated 17,000 severely acutely malnourished children and over 46,000 pregnant and lactating women who are priority targets.

Shelter
As reported by the Shelter Cluster in mid-November, 1.2 million people required NFIs, such as blankets, quilts, shawls, kitchen sets, sleeping or plastic mats, jerry cans and solar lamps to cope with the harsh winter forecasted this year. To a large extent, the humanitarian caseload includes returnees, IDPs in the FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as well as people recovering from earthquakes and floods in Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh.

Updated: 06/02/2014

BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

4 February: The head of Bangladesh's largest opposition party accused the government of being involved in the killing or disappearance of more than 300 activists around the time of the country's election. According to observers, such accusations are relatively common and information remains difficult to verify. According to various reports by international human rights organizations, nearly 150 people were killed and thousands injured in election-related violence in recent months as the country experienced a major political crisis.

Late January: OCHA reported that the recent political unrest led to attacks on religious minorities, mostly Hindus, and a number of smaller indigenous groups the southwestern and northern districts of Bangladesh.

KEY CONCERNS

- Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world's most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones which cause extensive damage and floods.

- An estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims refugees from neighbouring Myanmar are living in official camps, and some 200,000 refugees residing in unofficial camps or villages, where they receive little or no humanitarian assistance.

- Due to frequent natural disasters and civil unrest, the level of food insecurity is rising. An estimated 40% of the population is considered food insecure, especially in the western parts of the country.

- In 2013, 507 people died as a result of political violence making it the deadliest year since the country's independence. Most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters during a time of major political crisis in late fall. It is unclear whether civil unrest will ease following the contested victory of the ruling Awami League at the last elections.

Political and Security Context

Political Context

In 2011, the ruling Awami League (AL) scrapped a caretaker government, a system in which neutral leaders take over the leadership three months before elections and oversee the ballot. In mid-October, the AL refused to step down by 24 October, as should have happened ahead of the 5 January elections. Several critics have argued that the AL is trying to stay in power up to the elections to influence their outcome. The move set the stage for an ongoing political crisis that ended with the opposition boycotting the elections. No agreement on how to bring an end to the protests was reached between the authorities and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The election standoff has sparked ongoing daily violence since late October.

On 4 February, the head of the BNP accused the government of being involved in the killing or disappearance of more than 300 activists around the time of the country's election. According to Begum Khaleda Zia, an estimated 22,000 had been arrested in late December and early January. According to observers, such accusations are relatively common in the intense rivalry, and often violent confrontations, of Bangladesh's politics while the presented numbers remain extremely difficult to verify.

According to various reports by international human rights organizations, nearly 150 people were killed and thousands injured in election-related violence in recent months as the country experienced a major political crisis marked by repeated strikes, or hartals, staged across the country by the BNP. Local monitoring organizations have indicated that the death toll might be as high as 180 people.

The elections were branded as flawed by international observers and mocked as a farce by the BNP. To date, the political crisis has not been fully resolved and the impasse between the two dominant parties is fuelling concerns about economic stagnation and further violence in Bangladesh.

On 12 January, the country's new government was sworn in following the contested elections of the previous weekend and Sheikh Hasina began a third term as Prime Minister. Meanwhile the leader of the BNP, Begum Khaleda Zia, reiterated that she considered the government illegitimate after being released after two weeks of virtual "house arrest".

On 6 January, the day after the AL victory in an election which was boycotted by the BNP and the rest of the opposition and accompanied by deadly clashes, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated that a new election would only be held if the opposition put an end to violent clashes. The ruling AL won more than two-thirds of the seats in a contest that was
shunned by international observers as flawed and derided by representatives of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). To date, the opposition continues to denounce the elections that were also marked by a very low turnout of voters. Hasina said that she had no doubts over the legitimacy of the AL victory.

Violence erupted on the night of the 25 November after the Election Commission announced that elections would be held on 5 January. The opposition was demanding the prime minister’s resignation, the establishment of a non-party government prior to the elections and the suspension of the announced election date.

In August, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) – the country’s main Islamic party allied to BNP – has called for a strike, with only minimal BNP support, to protest a Bangladeshi court ruling that declared JI illegal on 1 August, largely forbidding it to take part in the general elections. The JI eventually boycotted the elections on 5 January.

### Political Crisis and Civil Unrest

According to estimates by the local NGO Ain of Salish Kendra (ASK), a total of 507 people were killed in political violence in Bangladesh in 2013, making it the deadliest year since the country’s independence. ASK said most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters during a time of major political crisis in late fall and were largely fuelled over disputes over war crimes judgments. However, an alternative account from the news agency, AFP based on local police reports claimed that 278 people – about half the total cited by ASK – died in 2013, many in clashes with the police.

It remains unclear how the situation will evolve in Bangladesh following the AL contested victory at the last elections. On 15 January, the opposition alliance conducted another dawn-to-dusk strike in the sub district of Gabtali, part of the northern Bogra district. The opposition are protesting against the authorities whom they accuse of filing fake legal cases against 52 of their leaders and activists.

Several protest strikes that resulted in businesses closing and transport routes being blocked have been staged by the BNP in December and January, amidst widespread violence that resulted in casualties. On 5 January, the Election Day itself has been marred by violence with local media reporting that at least 18 people were killed and hundreds of polling stations attacked by opposition supporters. To date, observers remain concerned that the ongoing political crisis will further damage the country’s economy, especially the $22 billion garment industry that accounts for 80% of exports.

In 2006, prolonged clashes between the two main parties resulted in dozens killed and an intervention of the military establishment that cancelled elections and set up a military-backed caretaker government.

As reported by OCHA in late January, political disturbances in January led to attacks on religious minorities, mostly Hindus, and a number of smaller indigenous groups in Bangladesh. On Election Day, attacks on Hindus were reported in the Jessore district in southwestern Bangladesh. Similar incidents have been reported from other minority communities, mostly in the southwestern and northern districts, including Satkhira, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Chittagong, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Laimonirhat, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Dinajpur.
BNP and JI leaders are still officially on trial.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

According to humanitarian partners, the current political crisis is already significantly affecting operations in Bangladesh with both international missions and local field trips being cancelled, while stakeholders struggle to oversee and implement programmes.

Displacement

Bangladesh is currently hosting a large number of Rohingya Muslim refugees, an ethnic religious and linguistic minority subjected to exclusion and discrimination in Myanmar. The majority of Rohingya are denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities, and as of late November, observers expressed concerns over the government’s recent announcement of a “Rohingya strategy”, which allegedly plans for a survey to be conducted across the country in order to identify and register all Rohingya living illegally in Bangladesh. While humanitarian organisations hope that the national strategy will aim to provide the displaced with a legal status, or at least a temporary one, very limited information is available and officials have so far declined to comment on the content of the document.

As of September, according to humanitarian partners, an estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims living in official camps were being assisted by aid agencies. A further 200,000 refugees residing in unofficial camps or villages said they were receiving little or no humanitarian assistance and almost no protection from abuses.

In early August, OCHA reported that following inter-communal violence at the border town of Tripura, northeast Bangladesh, around 1,500 people sought refuge and protection in India.

Disaster

Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones which cause extensive damage and floods.

In late January, the authorities reported that an estimated 270,000 people had been affected by waterlogging in the southwest of the country, with the sub-districts of Keshobpur (Jessore), Tala, Satkhira Sadar, Kolaroa (Satkhira) being the worst affected. The disaster has also reportedly damaged local infrastructure as well as up to 10,000 houses. Priorities needs for those affected include shelter, livelihood assistance and WASH.

In early January, the Government carried out relief efforts in response to a cold wave across parts of the country, notably the northwest. Although cold temperatures are a regular occurrence in the country, the last relatively mild cold wave affected people in areas where households are generally very poor and have limited coping capacity.

Food Security

Around 40% of the population is food insecure, especially in the western parts of the country. The lingering effects of frequent natural disasters, including floods at end June, in mid-July, in late September in 2012, in mid-May in 2013, and violent demonstrations and disturbance, and other localised problems have raised the level of food insecurity of a high number of households.

Local authorities said the country’s annual inflation rate rose to 7.15% in November, up from 7.03% in October, ending a declining trend since July. As reported, higher prices have been registered for both food and non-food items in what may be seen as the first indication of the tangible impact of the ongoing civil unrest on the country’s economy. According to observers, economic growth is expected to slow in Bangladesh to less than 6% in the year until June 2014 from 6% in 2013 following the current unrest.

Updated: 06/02/2014

JORDAN DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

06 February: UNHCR said that 596,800 Syrian refugees have now crossed into Jordan, including those awaiting registration.

KEY CONCERNS

- Jordan remains affected by the ongoing crisis in neighbouring Syria, with recurring security incidents along the border, and the continuous influx of Syrian refugees which has swelled Jordan’s population size by almost 10% and placed enormous pressure on national resources.

- 596,800 Syrian refugees have now crossed into Jordan, including those awaiting registration (UNHCR).

- The winter season is exacerbating the situation for many Syrian refugees in Jordan which currently face a heightened risk of seasonally cold temperatures

- The majority of humanitarian operations are focused on Za’atari refugee camp, 10km east of Mafraq. Since opening in July 2012, the camp population, which has a maximum capacity of 60,000 has swelled to at least 130,000 refugees.

Politics and Security

After six days of relative calm along the Syria-Jordan border, coinciding with the Eid Al Adha holiday, a resurgence of heavy shelling was reported on 20 October in the southern Syrian villages of Daal, Nawa, Sheikh Al Maskin, Al Tufs, and Daraa. The Jordan Armed Forces said only around 400 Syrians crossed into Jordan on 26 October, marking a drop from the Eid Al Adha holiday, which saw 4,900 Syrians flee to Jordan over a five-day period, the largest refugee influx in nearly two months.
In October, the border region with Syria saw increased fighting, as the opposition has pushed to gain more ground. On 9 October, opposition fighters reportedly took control of the Hajanah border post, near the Syrian city of Dar’a, after besieging it for two months and fierce clashes erupting around it lasting a month. The border post is adjacent to an old customs post seized by opposition fighters on 28 September. With its capture, opposition forces now control a ribbon of territory along the border from outside Dar’a to the edge of the Golan Heights.

On 28 September, after four consecutive days of fighting, Syrian opposition forces, including members of an al-Qaeda linked group, captured the Ramtha military post on the outskirts of Dar’a city, at the border with Jordan. The military advance of opposition forces is also felt within Jordan where officials recently stated that al-Qaeda linked militants of the al-Nusra Front have been recruiting Jordanians for the fight against Syrian President Assad.

While Jordan’s economy and its social fabric have been significantly impacted by the large influx of Syrian refugees, the country has remained politically stable and secure. However, this balance is fragile.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Syrian refugees

Jordan is hosting the second largest number of Syrian refugees after Lebanon. According to the UNHCR on 6 February, over 596,800 Syrian refugees have now crossed into Jordan, including those awaiting registration. In September, an average of 251 arrivals per day was recorded, and the rate rose to an estimated 315 per day in October.

This continuous influx has swelled Jordan’s population size by almost 10%, placing enormous pressure on national resources, especially considering that most Syrian refugees have settled in some impoverished rural areas of Mafraq and Irbid governorates, where they exacerbate the already weak economic situation of the Jordanian population. Recent reports warn of rising tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees, especially in communities hosting large numbers of displaced Syrians.

Around 23% of Syrian refugees live in camps, the rest in local communities. Most refugees are in northern areas near the Syrian border, e.g. Irbid, Mafraq, Ramtha, and Zarqa. Recent statistics from the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization note that urban refugees comprise 75% of the total refugee population: 30% in Amman; 45% in the north; 15% in the middle; and 3% in the southern region.

The winter season is exacerbating the situation for many Syrian refugees in Jordan. Snowstorm Alexa, the worst winter storm in 20 years, struck Jordan on 11 December, bringing snowfall to higher areas and rain elsewhere. According to the NGO Islamic Relief, the rain and snow swamped the shelters of many Syrian families living in basements, garages and barns in Irbid, Amman and Mafraq. Many refugees face a heightened risk of seasonally cold temperatures. News agencies have reported the deaths of 20 refugees, of which 12 were children, due to the freezing conditions since the start of the winter season.

Za’atari Refugee Camp

Jordan’s biggest refugee camp Za’atari is the equivalent of an entirely new city, equivalent to the country’s fifth largest with over 130,000 residents, although there is no accurate information about the number of refugees currently residing in the camp. This is due mostly to the fact that thousands of them have allegedly left the camp to return to Syria or to move toward urban centers in Jordan.

The lack of security in certain parts of Za’atari camp impedes access to services. Lack of transportation also limits access to health services for the most disadvantaged, including persons with disabilities, older mobility-challenged refugees, and pregnant women. Security incidents in Za’atari camp are frequent.

Non-Syrian refugees

As of late December, UNHCR reported that the number of Iraqi refugees remains stable at around 25,000. Additionally, over 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, Somalia and other countries currently reside in the country.

Food Security

In 2013, the Jordanian Government gradually removed fuel subsidies, putting additional pressure on prices, with “fuel and lighting” increasing by almost 20% year-on-year. In 2013, the average total inflation rate reached 5.6%, however the Government agreed to introduce a set of structural reform, allowing for example to keep wheat bread fully subsidized. Additionally, the conflict in neighbouring Syria is disrupting trade between the two countries, adversely impacting on food prices.

As a result of the refugee influx from Syria, Jordan’s economy, water, energy, education, and housing resources remain strained. Commodity prices are higher in Jordan than in Syria, and the purchasing power of refugees to cover basic needs keeps decreasing. Jordan also has high unemployment (around 14%), inflation, and poverty.

All humanitarian programming is required to include interventions to support poor Jordanians as a way of sharing the burden of the government to meet ongoing needs of both refugees and its own vulnerable population. The socio-economic conditions in poor and food-insecure areas are not expected to improve in the short or medium term and could deteriorate with the continuation of the crisis.

In early August, the UN reported that some Syrian refugees are donating to poor Jordanians or selling them extra food received from aid agencies at a discounted price. Northern governorates have been hit particularly hard by the refugee influx and demands on basic service provision. In Mafraq governorate, where locals are heavily affected by prices and irregular water supply, food, blankets, tents, and other items with UNHCR and other agency logos are publicly for sale.

In Jordan, coping behaviour varies between camp and non-camp refugees. Those in host communities are resorting to more severe coping strategies due to a lack of readily accessible services, including provision of free food. According to WFP, the most recurring consumption-based coping strategy is reliance on less preferred and less
expensive food. Many adults also restrict their own consumption to feed small children. UNHCR reports that 23% of community-based refugees exhibit a ‘poor’ or ‘borderline’ Food Consumption Score compared to 18.5% of refugees in camps, highlighting the needs of both refugees and host communities.

To accommodate the spike in water demand, Jordan is drawing on additional water resources, including buying water from private wells. The extra demand on water and sanitation services will cost the government over $700 million dollars per year, even as Jordanians receive less water per capita.

Health and Nutrition

New cases of water-borne and water-related diseases are appearing in Za’atari camp on a weekly basis, including diarrhea, scabies, leptospirosis, rotavirus, and hepatitis A. Other communicable diseases related to hygiene conditions have been reported, including acute jaundice syndrome, chicken pox, lice, and measles.

Polio

In Jordan, the response to the recent polio outbreak in Syria began with polio vaccinations in Za’atari refugee camp, as part of a national campaign providing measles, rubella and polio vaccinations, as well as vitamin A supplement distribution.

Updated: 06/02/2014

LEBANON CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

04 February: UNHCR reported that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon now stands at over 909,000, including 47,000 awaiting registration.

KEY CONCERNS

- The ongoing conflict in neighbouring Syria is polarizing Lebanon, which is witnessing a rise in insecurity and sectarian tensions, with regular bomb attacks, sporadic clashes and almost daily shelling in the north and eastern border areas.

- The continuous influx of Syrian refugees is increasing pressure on the health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices and creating tensions between the host and the refugee population.

- The humanitarian plight of the Syrian refugees remains a major concern. With no formal refugee camps in the country, many refugees are living in makeshift accommodation or with host families. Food, water, sanitation, healthcare and education remain pressing concerns (UNHCR).

International Context

On 14 November, Hezbollah leader Nasrallah vowed to keep his forces in Syria, fighting alongside President al-Assad’s regime. Widespread involvement of the Shi’ite movement alongside Syrian Government troops in the offensive against the opposition-held stronghold Qusayr previously prompted the Free Syrian Army and Jabhat al Nusra to independently warn that their fighters could start fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon. On 10 July, the UN Security Council called on Hezbollah to end all involvement in the Syrian conflict. On 23 September, Nasrallah denied that his group had received chemical weapons from Syria after members of the Syrian National Coalition opposition group accused President Assad of transferring chemical weapons to the Lebanese Shi’ite group to avoid inspection after agreeing to put them under international control.

The first major clashes between Lebanese Hezbollah militiamen and Syrian opposition fighters inside Lebanese territory were reported in June. In the aftermath, shelling of Lebanese territory, including the eastern town of Hermel, a reported Hezbollah stronghold, from an area in Syria allegedly controlled by opposition forces, resulted in new deaths. Shelling from Syria in the border regions frequently results in casualties. On 14 October, at least 15 Syrian shells hit several towns in the northern district of Akkar.

Lebanon – Israel

On 29 December, the Israeli military fired a barrage of shells into southern Lebanon, in response to rockets which hit the Jewish state. While the exchange of fire did not cause any casualties or damage, the Israeli government accused the powerful Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah of launching the rockets, and threatened a tougher retaliation to any further attacks. Tension had spiked in mid-December, when a shooting took place between the Lebanese military and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the vicinity of the Blue Line border demarcation separating the two countries at Naqoura, along the southern border. The UN called for continued restraint and invited both parties to cooperate with the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in its investigation of the incident.

National Political Context

On 24 January, Lebanon’s prime minister-designate Tammam Salam said he would go ahead and form a new government without Hezbollah, unless the Shi’ite movement’s allies agreed to his proposed cabinet. Against the backdrop of increased sectarian divisions over the war in Syria, the country has been without a government for almost a year, and talks between the March 8 and March 14 coalitions are still faltering due to disagreements over the distribution of posts in a new government.

Security Context

Insecurity in Lebanon has grown with renewed fighting between different sectarian groups. The conflict in Syria has polarised Lebanon and increased sectarian tensions, with regular bomb attacks, sporadic clashes and almost daily shelling in the north and eastern border areas.

On 25 January, a statement by an unknown Lebanon-based Jihadist figure announced the creation of a Lebanese branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is
the most active Sunni militant group in Iraq, and has also seized large swathes of rebel-held territory in neighbouring Syria. Although the authenticity of this specific claim could not be verified, several developments indicate a rise of alleged Al Qaeda-affiliated currents of thought in different parts of Lebanon. The pledge appeared to come from the largely Sunni populated northern city of Tripoli, which has seen frequent battles pitting Sunni militants against Alawites, an offshoot of Shi’ite Islam. While Lebanon’s powerful Shiite Hezbollah movement has reportedly sent troops to Syria to back Damascus’ regime, Lebanese Sunni Islamists are said to mostly support the Syrian opposition. The announcement came a day after Lebanon’s former Prime Minister denounced violent sectarian attacks across the country, and said that the country’s Sunni Muslims refuse to be a part of any conflict between Hezbollah and Al Qaeda.

In a further development, Al Qaeda’s general command officially broke all links with ISIL on 3 February, in a move that can be seen as a clear attempt by Al Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria, by bolstering the Al Qaeda affiliated Al Nusra Front, following months of tensions with ISIL. It remains unclear how this shift will impact on the situation of ISIL in Iraq and Syria, and on its reported newly-founded branch in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, a fresh round of shelling was reported across the border with Syria, and in the areas of Hermel and Masharia Al Qaa in the Bekaa valley without causing any casualty.

On 21 January in Beirut, a bomb attack killed four people and injured 35 in the Shia-dominated Haret Hreik area. This is the sixth attack targeting areas considered Hezbollah strongholds since the group announced on April 30 that it was sending fighters to support President Bashar al-Assad in neighbouring Syria, and it is also the third in a month. The blast occurred in a library close to other government and residential buildings, and was shortly claimed by the group Jabhat al-Nusra in Lebanon, believed to be a branch of Syria’s al-Qaeda faction. On 16 January in the Bekaa Valley, a bomb attack targeted a predominantly Shi’ite Muslim area of the town of Hermel, killing three people and wounding 36.

On 17 January, shells fired from Syria killed seven people, including five children in the border town of Arsal, in the eastern Lebanon Bekaa Valley. The Sunni-dominated city hosts thousands of Syrian refugees who have fled the violence in their country, and has been bombed several times by Syria’s air force, most recently in December in a raid which prompted the Lebanese army to hit back in retaliation.

On 2 January, four people were killed in a bomb blast in a southern Beirut stronghold of the powerful Shiite Hezbollah movement, which has sent fighters to Syria to fight alongside Assad. This occurred less than a week after the assassination of former finance minister Mohammed Chahtah, a Sunni Muslim who was a vocal critic of Syria and Hezbollah. The attack took place on 27 December, and killed eight people and injured at least 70 in central Beirut, close to the government’s headquarters and parliament. Both Hezbollah and Damascus rejected accusations that they were behind the blast.

On 17 December, a car bomb exploded near a base of the Shiite movement Hezbollah in eastern Lebanon, killing one person and wounding 10 others. In recent months, several attacks have targeted Hezbollah-controlled areas and convoys in the capital Beirut and in the Bekaa valley in the east of the country. On 19 November, a twin suicide attack targeted the Iranian embassy in southern Beirut, killing 23 people, and was believed to be linked to the involvement of Tehran-backed Shiite militants in Syria’s war.

In a similar incident in mid-August, a car bomb in Beirut’s Ruwais district killed 27 and wounded over 330 people. A previously unknown group, the Battalion of Aisha, claimed responsibility for the attack, accusing the movement of sending fighters to help the Damascus regime.

In a separate development, repeated inter-sectarian strife were reported in the northern city of Tripoli over the last months, raising fears that the Syrian conflict may become a regional one between Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims.

Between 18-23 January, sectarian clashes killed 10 people and wounded 60 in Tripoli, in the latest wave of fighting between the Sunni neighbourhood of Bab Tabbaneh and the Alawite neighbourhood of Jabal Mohsen. Troops were reportedly deployed on the frontline separating the two areas, and a ceasefire, which was agreed at an emergency meeting on 23 January, appears to be holding. The violence has reportedly caused hundreds of families to flee the neighbourhoods. On 5 January, sniper fire killed one person and wounded eight in Tripoli. The victims came from both the Alawite neighbourhoods of Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tabbaneh, whose residents support the revolt in neighbouring Syria. This incident caused people from the two neighbourhoods to flee their homes for safer areas across the city. In early December, a Lebanese soldier was killed and six others wounded when pro- and anti-Syrian regime supporters clashed, breaking an army-imposed truce.

Already in late November, two days of fighting between the rival factions from Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tabbaneh left ten people dead and 49 wounded. In early November, a similar wave of sectarian violence between Alawite and Sunni militants cost 14 lives and over 50 injured. In August, 47 people were killed and more than 500 wounded in blasts that exploded outside two mosques in a Sunni neighbourhood of Tripoli.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

Both host and refugee populations are impacted by increasing pressure on the health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices. Tensions are rising between host communities and refugees over strained resources, particularly with regard to overwhelmed health facilities and employment. Many Lebanese families see their livelihoods eroding as wages decrease and rent prices soar, with hard-pressed Syrian refugees working for less money and sharing single-family homes with multiple families to save on rent. Real economic growth was 7% in 2010, fell to 1.8% in 2013 and is expected to be at 2.1% in 2014. In June 2013, general inflation reached almost 9% year-on-year (compared to 2% in June 2012). Food inflation eased from 5.7% in June 2012 to 3% in June 2013. Unemployment rates are expected to double to 29% in 2014.

**Access**

Security in Tripoli, Wadi-Khaled and the North of the Bekaa Valley remains volatile with rockets and shelling hitting a number of towns, impeding humanitarian access, and restricting activities, and the availability of services. Additionally, access to unregistered Syrians detained in Lebanon remains challenging.
## Displacement

As of 4 February, the UNHCR reported that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon now stands at over 909,000, including 47,000 awaiting registration. According to UNHCR, an additional 130,000 persons are reportedly unwilling to register.

In addition, an estimated 160,000 Lebanese returned from Syria since the beginning of the crisis. Along with host communities – which represent an estimated 200,000 people, they are said to receive limited support and assistance, which increases inter-community tensions.

Refugees now represent over 25% of the country’s population and continue to cross into Lebanon daily. With no formal camps, refugees are spread across 1,500 locations of which 400 are informal settlements. Vulnerable Syrian families are settling in communal areas - highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.; 69% of refugees stay in rented accommodation including unused shops, worksites and tents in makeshift settlements, half-finished buildings, and cramped apartment blocks, often in unhygienic conditions and with little access to food, water, and medical care.

An increasing number of evictions in some areas of Lebanon has been observed during in October, due to rising tension between Syrian refugees and host communities. This is particularly noted in informal settlements. It is extremely challenging and urgent for these refugees to find alternative accommodation considering the onset of winter, especially in elevated areas in north Lebanon and in the Bekaa, which shelter an estimated 64% of the refugees.

According to the Lebanese General Security Authority, there are currently one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Lebanon’s population has grown by 25% in under two years, while health, education, water and sanitation systems have all exceeded their capacities. According to media sources, the Lebanese government is implementing strict entry controls on Syrians attempting to enter the country at all border crossings. Only Syrians with valid identification cards or passports can enter. The measures reportedly aim at preventing extremist and anti-Lebanese groups from entering the county. While the majority of Syrian continues to be granted access to Lebanon according to UNHCR, there is a reported increase of arrests and detentions of Syrians for illegal entry and stay. Humanitarian partners also reported that refugees arriving through unofficial crossings are in informal settlements. This number is expected to increase with ongoing new arrivals. Many settlement locations lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease.

## Food Security

According to a World Bank assessment, the continuing refugee inflow will increase national vulnerability. Should the rate of refugee inflow continue at the same rate, more than 170,000 additional Lebanese could fall into poverty by 2014, due to competition with refugees for unskilled labour. Currently, one million Lebanese live in poverty. The study estimates that the unemployment rate in Lebanon could double, exceeding 20% and affecting 320,000 people. An estimated US$1.6 billion will be needed to restore quality and access to health, education, and social safety nets to pre-crisis levels. According to the Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees conducted in May 2013, 70% of Syrian refugee households cannot meet basic food and non-food needs. The number of people requiring food assistance continues to increase, straining existing resources.

## Health and Nutrition

UNHCR reported in July that access to healthcare is challenging for Syrian refugees in remote locations. Overstretched resources, short working hours, and non-availability of trained health personnel limit the adequate provision of care for the displaced who suffer from trauma, substandard living conditions, and depletion of savings and assets. Common needs include reproductive health care, family planning, child health care, treatment for acute illnesses, chronic disease, and mental health.

According to UNHCR, the current supply of medicines for acute and chronic diseases is insufficient to cover the rising demand. Additionally, prevention of disease control and outbreaks presents a challenge, in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation.

### Polio

Lebanon launched a massive public health initiative on 8 November to vaccinate all children <5 against polio, following a confirmed outbreak in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate in neighbouring Syria. Due to poor immunization rates in some parts of neighbouring Syria, the recent outbreak of polio represents a risk for Lebanon, especially considering the continuous influx of displaced.

## WASH

According to local authorities and humanitarian partners in December 2013, 27% of the Syrian refugees and Lebanese affected by the refugee influx – 909,000 and 200,000 people respectively, are in need of water support, and 29% in need of sanitation assistance. The refugee population currently reside in over 1,500 locations across Lebanon, 400 of which are in informal settlements. This number is expected to increase with ongoing new arrivals. Many settlement locations lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are located in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease.

Updated: 06/02/2014

## PHILIPPINES

### CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOON

#### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

**2 February**: Five people were injured after unidentified men threw a grenade into a Roman Catholic Church in Zamboanga, a southern city on the Island of Mindanao known for insurgent activity.

**31 January – 2 February**: Tropical storm Kajiki, locally known as Basyang, struck the Philippines on 31 January. According to latest estimates, the storm, which was of relatively low intensity, has affected at least 42,000 people, including over 5,000 displaced, across 9 provinces of regions Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and CARAGA. All of these areas were affected by Typhoon Haiyan in November.
31 January: In mid-January, tropical depression Lingling, locally known as Agaton, caused floods and landslides across the south of the archipelago. To date, at least 70 people are reported dead. National authorities report that 1.14 million people were affected by Lingling, including over 49,000 people who were displaced.

27 January – 2 February: In the aftermath of the recent conclusion of peace talks between the government and the Muslim insurgent Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – the biggest insurgent movement in Mindanao, the authorities launched a military offensive on 27 January against a hard line MILF splinter faction, which numbers a few hundred fighters. The clashes occurred in and around remote southern farming villages in Maguindanao Province in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao.

At least 53 people, almost exclusively militants, were killed and, according to OCHA, over 10,000 were displaced in five days of fighting. Observers say the clashes could end within the next few days due to an arrangement with the MNLF fighters.

KEY CONCERNS

- The Philippines authorities are currently finalizing a peace deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – the biggest Muslim insurgent movement in the southern Island of Mindanao to end decades of conflict in the area. The area is however still plagued by attacks from various spoiler armed groups who wish to derail the talks.

- In January, a tropical depression and a storm that hit the Philippines have also affected the areas previously hit by Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in November 2013, reportedly one of the strongest storms in recorded history, hampering access and reconstruction.

- To date, over 14.1 million people have been affected by Typhoon Haiyan, including 4.1 million people who remain displaced (OCHA). Philippines remain one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world, experiencing several large-scale natural hazards a year.


Political and Security Context

Mindanao Island has been plagued by a long-term insurgency waged by Muslim groups. The original Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), from which the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) later sprang, fought a 25-year guerrilla war for independence, until the signature of a peace treaty in 1996 granted it limited self-rule in the southern Muslim area.

Peace Talks in Mindanao

On 29 January, Philippines’ President Benigno Aquino officially swore to crush militants opposed to the recently achieved deals in Mindanao. After the government wrapped up peace talks with the MILF, Manila swiftly deployed its military against a hardline splinter faction, namely the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

On 25 January, in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, the Philippines authorities agreed the final chapter of peace talks with the representatives of the MILF, the country’s largest Muslim separatist group. The deal on the Annex on Normalization, the fourth and last part of a peace roadmap that was set out in October 2012, eventually opens the way to an historic agreement to end four decades of rebellion that had killed some 150,000 people. In December, the two parties had already signed an annex dealing with power sharing. Two other annexes on transitional arrangements and sharing of revenues were signed earlier in 2013.

The expected Comprehensive Peace Agreement will allow for the MILF to administer an expanded autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao by 2016, in return, among other things, for decommissioning its weapons.

Over the years, several armed groups – mostly splinter groups from the MNLF or the MILF – have tried to derail the peace talks by conducting attacks in Mindanao. Most of them believe that the 12,000-strong MILF has compromised too much in the peace process.

Military Operations in Mindanao

Despite the recent conclusion of peace talks between the government and the Muslim insurgent Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), on 27 January, a military offensive was launched against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) a hard line MILF splinter faction, which numbers a few hundred fighters. The clashes occurred in and around remote southern farming villages in Maguindanao Province in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. At least 53 people were killed and, according to OCHA, over 10,000 displaced in five days of fighting. The authorities reported that three child soldiers were among the people killed while several civilians had been also injured in the fighting.

Observers say the clashes could end within the next few days due to an arrangement with the MNLF fighters. Over the week, the MILF has cooperated with the authorities in the operations against the BIFF by holding back their own forces and not letting militants seek refuge in MILF territory.

In September – October, fighters belonging to another splinter faction of the original MNLF led by Nur Misuari, assaulted the southern city of Zamboanga in western Mindanao Island, igniting three weeks of fighting. Zamboanga is a city with a mixed Christian and Muslim population. The attacks were largely seen as an attempt to sabotage the peace talks between the authorities and the MILF.

According to official estimates, fighting in Zamboanga had left an estimated 202 were killed, including over 160 militants, and an additional 324 injured in the violence, and displaced over 140,000 people as reported by UNHCR. To date, a significant part still remains displaced while heavy fighting have left entire neighbourhoods razed to the ground. As reported by Human Rights Watch, Philippines security forces and Muslim rebels have committed serious abuses during fighting in Zamboanga.
Militants Attacks

On 2 February, five people were injured after unidentified men threw a grenade into a Roman Catholic Church in Zamboanga, a southern city in Mindanao known for Muslim rebel activity.

On 13 January, an improvised explosive device exploded and injured 24 people, some critically, in Arakan, in the southern island of Mindanao. Mindanao has been plagued by a long-running Muslim insurgency which the government is currently trying to resolve through negotiations with the MILF, amidst attacks from smaller splinter insurgent groups.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

As of mid-January, a tropical depression affecting the south of the Philippines is causing heavy rains which are reportedly hampering response operations to both this latest emergency and also to the ongoing response to Typhoon Haiyan.

Displacement

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that over 10,000 people had been displaced following a major offensive against MIFL rebels in Mindanao. Among the displaced, over 4,200 people are being hosted in evacuation centres and are in need of shelter material.

As of 14 January, local authorities reported that over 63,500 people remained displaced in Zamboanga city following the armed crisis that unfolded in September. Some 25,000 people are residing in 10 evacuation centres while over 38,000 are staying with host communities. OCHA reported in mid-January that the most pressing needs of those affected included food, nutrition, WASH, health and protection.

Disasters

(For Typhoon Haiyan, please refer to a separate section below)

Tropical storm Kajiki, locally known as Basyang, struck the Philippines archipelago on 31 January. As of 2 February, the storm, which was of relatively low intensity has affected an estimated over 42,000 people, including over 5,000 displaced, across 9 provinces of regions Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and CARAGA. All of these areas had previously been affected by Typhoon Haiyan in November. To date, information on needs remains limited, although concerns with WASH and Shelter were reported.

In mid-January, tropical depression Lingling, locally known as Agaton, caused floods and landslides across the south of the archipelago, affecting 16 provinces in regions Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN, Caraga and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. As of 31 January, at least 70 people had been killed, with an additional 9 being still missing, and 86 injured in the disaster. As of 31 January, the authorities reported that 1.14 million people were affected by Lingling, including over 49,000 people who were displaced. Over 9,400 houses had been damaged by the disaster. The depression has also affected parts of the areas affected by Typhoon Haiyan. To date, information on needs remains limited while assessments are ongoing.

On 15 October, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the southern Philippines, southeast of Manila near the town of Carmen in Bohol province. As of 10 January, authorities have reported 223 people dead, eight missing, 975 injured, and 1.25 million people affected across six provinces of Central and Western Visayas regions. An estimated 364,000 people remained displaced following the disaster, with only 2,681 people staying in some 17 evacuation camps (ECs), and the rest staying in makeshift tents outside ECs. OCHA also reported that 300,000 of the worst affected people are in need of food assistance. The earthquake destroyed or damaged over 76,000 houses, 41 bridges, and 18 roads, as well as caused power cuts across affected areas. On 31 October, IDMC reported that temporary shelters were likely to be needed for at least six months.

Health and Nutrition

As of early November, OCHA reported that congestion in the evacuation centres hosting IDPs in Zamboanga remains a significant problem. The WASH cluster reported that 53% of water samples collected from storage tanks and jerry cans in evacuation centres tested positive for bacteria (coliform).

An increasing number of children in evacuation centres following the crisis in Zamboanga are suffering from malnutrition in southern Philippines, according to the UN. According to the last assessment reported in December, SAM was detected in 9.4% of children, an increase of one percentage point from two weeks ago, while cases of MAM had risen to 11.5% from 11.1% among children under five across several surveyed camps. Although the SAM rate is still under the 10% threshold, humanitarian actors report it as a major concern.

Dengue

According to the Department of Health, 1,528 dengue cases were reported in the first quarter of 2013 in Soccsksargen region, of whom 669 (41% of cases) are children <10. In Korondal city, South Cotabato province, the municipal government declared a state of calamity on 27 June after a dengue outbreak was declared in the town. According to authorities, 239 dengue cases had been recorded as of 8 June, more than the 159 cases recorded in 2012. Dengue has also surged in central Philippines, particularly in the province of Iloilo, south of Manila, where the number of people affected is already 71% higher than the number recorded for the same period in 2012.

Protection

According to the UN and the Philippines authorities, there are credible reports that the BIFF armed group in Mindanao continues to actively recruit and train child soldiers.

Typhoon Haiyan

On 8 November, Category 5 Typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda, made landfall on the east coast of the Philippines. Haiyan, reportedly one of the strongest storms in recorded history, is the third major disaster to hit the country in the past two months.

Among the areas worst hit by Typhoon Haiyan were the east coast of Leyte and the south
coasts of Samar and Eastern Samar in the Eastern Visayas region, which were hit by the tidal surge. In the inland areas of Leyte and the Western coast of Samar, in the Eastern Visayas region, there was significant damage as a result of extreme winds. Damage was also reported in areas located in the direct vicinity of the typhoon’s path, such as in Central and Western Visayas. Strong winds also caused damage in the coastal areas of northern Cebu, Panay, and Coron.

As of 10 January, OCHA reported that many households affected by the typhoon have either limited or no purchasing power for shelter materials or agricultural tools and equipment. Children’s basic education and healthcare services also remain out of reach for many. To date, shelter remains a major concern across affected areas. Recent heavy rain and wind in the affected areas have exacerbated existing challenges with shelter, reconstruction and the acquisition of building and roofing materials. Nevertheless, as reported by OCHA on 10 January, across affected areas, local markets are reportedly returning to normal.

As of 7 January, OCHA reported that vast parts of the affected areas are still experiencing power cuts and unreliable electricity supplies which was hindering business activity and recovery in most urban and economic centres, such as Tacloban. Meanwhile, some isolated communities in highland areas, especially in Panay Island and northern Negros Occidental, have received only limited assistance so far. There is a possibility that food security will further deteriorate in these areas. In mid-December, the affected population identified their top three priorities as construction materials, cash and food assistance, according to the Multi-Cluster Need Assessment.

Before the start of rainy season in January, OCHA stressed the acute need for short and medium-term shelter solutions. Earlier reports indicated that the largest shelter gaps in Eastern Visayas were in Tacloban City and along the west coast of Leyte. In addition to shelter and livelihood support – seeds for farmers, displacement management, disease outbreak prevention and nutrition intervention were also immediate priorities.

Latest government figures on 13 January estimated that 6,190 people were killed as a result of Typhoon Haiyan and that over 28,600 were injured. The government also confirmed that 1,785 people are still missing. On 14 January, OCHA had estimated that about 14.1 million people had been affected by Typhoon Haiyan, including 4.1 million people who remain displaced, the majority of whom are sheltering outside the designated evacuation centres. The Philippines’ authorities continue to estimate that over 16 million people overall have been affected by the typhoon.

According to December assessments, the affected areas were Central Visayas region with 5.9 million people reported affected – 30% being considered poor, Eastern Visayas region, with 3.87 million people reported affected – 46.6% being considered poor, Eastern Visayas region with 3.8 million people reported affected – 28% being considered poor, MIMAROPA region with 466,000 people reported affected – 32% being considered poor, and Caraga with 70,000 people reported affected – 25% being considered poor.

According to OCHA, at least 5.9 million workers were affected by the typhoon, with their livelihoods and sources of income destroyed, lost or disrupted. This number was increased from earlier assessments which reported that 5.6 million people in 36 provinces had lost their livelihoods as a result of the typhoon. In mid-December, OCHA estimated that 2.2 million were engaged in risky forms of employment.

In addition, around 65% of fishing communities in the affected areas lost their productive assets, and 28,000, mainly small-scale, fishing vessels were destroyed. As reported by OCHA on 7 January, the Philippines Department of Agriculture estimated that an estimated 400,000 people (distributed approximately among ¾ farming and ¼ fishing households) had been directly affected by the typhoon.

As of 12 January, the authorities reported that over 1.14 million houses had been damaged by the typhoon. The number includes over 550,000 houses that were completely destroyed. Earlier assessments also reported extensive damage to infrastructure and public buildings, including the destruction of a large number of elementary schools, across the affected areas and especially in Tacloban. According to first governmental estimates, the cost of rebuilding houses, schools, roads and bridges in typhoon-devastated central Philippines could reach $5.8 billion, potentially forcing the Manila to seek cheap loans from international development agencies.

One area affected by Typhoon Haiyan is the island of Bohol, which was also struck by an earthquake on 15 October that caused massive displacement. The situation of over 350,000 IDPs living in makeshift shelters on Bohol was badly exacerbated by the typhoon.

Access

As reported by OCHA on 3 December, humanitarian access to people affected by the Typhoon Haiyan and logistics improved. However, humanitarian partners in regions VI and VIII indicated that food and other urgent support is not sufficiently reaching remote areas due to logistical challenges, and since 10 January, heavy rain in region VIII is said to be hampering response operations.

Debris clearance is ongoing, although some remote areas remain difficult to access. As reported by OCHA, the lack of power supply remains a severe obstacle in some affected areas, especially in Western and Eastern Visayas regions. Despite the recent improvements, though, access to areas affected by the typhoon remains challenging. Extensive damage to local infrastructure, notably roads, is hampering the delivery of aid.

The rise of insecurity in areas affected by the typhoon, with lootings and attacks on aid convoys reported near Tacloban on 12 November, is further challenging the humanitarian relief effort. According to UNHCR, looting, mobbing of relief trucks and jailbreaks are ongoing.

According to UNICEF, as of 4 December, an estimated 1.68 million children were among the displaced. In late November, it was reported that, while an increasing number of people were reportedly returning home, some people in worst affected areas are leaving in search of aid and shelter.

Displacement

As of 13 January, the Government of Philippines confirmed that almost 4.1 million people had been displaced with over 3.9 million being hosted outside evacuation centres. The majority of the IDPs (97%) and evacuation centres are located in Eastern and Western Visayas regions.
Food Security

As reported by FAO in late January, food security in the Philippines is considered satisfactory except in areas that have been affected by several storms last year, especially the areas affected by Haiyan. The disasters caused significant damages to housing and infrastructure, including irrigation and storage facilities. Losses to the stored crop at household level and in warehouses are likely to be high.

In addition, the FAO reported that heavy losses of staple food crop rice, other high value crops such as, sugarcane, coconut, fruits and vegetables, as well as of livestock, poultry and fisheries were expected across the affected areas. High winds, heavy rains and localized floods also resulted in the loss of stored paddy production and seeds. The overall damage has severely compromised livelihoods of the affected households.

As of 6 December, WFP reported that a multi-cluster initial rapid assessment was conducted and supported the initial estimate that 2.5 million people are in need of food assistance. As reported by OCHA on 3 December, an estimated 3 million people were in need of life-saving food assistance following the passage of Typhoon Haiyan. On 16 December, OCHA reported that overall 5.6 million people, including people not yet food insecure, were in need of support to prevent food insecurity and restore agricultural and fishing livelihoods.

As reported by the authorities in mid-November, the current shortage of certified rice seeds critical to rice-growing areas of Leyte and Samar regions may impair the coming wet planting season, leading to increased food insecurity. A deeply negative impact on the country’s coconut production and on the country’s fisheries was also recoded.

Health and Nutrition

At present, there is also a need for treatment for chronic conditions in areas affected by Haiyan. OCHA, WHO and UNICEF indicated that the risk of outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases and measles remained of concern in affected areas given the lack of safe water and sanitation, displacement and overcrowding, and sub-optimal vaccination coverage. To date, communities are also reportedly in need of nutrition and clean water in order to prevent a further spread of acute respiratory infections in the coming months.

Dengue

On 10 January, OCHA reported that dengue continues to rise in and around Ormoc City, where 78 cases (eight of them international aid workers) have been reported since November. In addition, there are also reports of Chikungunya fever, another viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes.

Malnutrition

On 7 January, the Nutrition Cluster reported that current priorities included the protection and promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding for 250,000 pregnant women and caregivers. Supplementary feeding for 145,000 children; micronutrient supplementation for 100,000 children; and treatment of acute malnutrition in 27,000 children were also identified as priorities. On 10 December, the Nutrition Cluster indicated that up to 12,000 boys and girls aged 6-59 months suffered from severe acute malnutrition in seven severely affected provinces alone.

WASH

As of 7 January, the WASH Cluster confirmed that household level sanitation was still a serious challenge for IDPs waiting for shelter. In addition, it was reported that vector control and solid waste management needed to be strengthened to curb public health risks.

As of 9 December, water supply continues to improve in parts of the affected areas – notably Leyte and Busuanga, but rationing is still ongoing and concerns remain regarding sanitation. According to the Health cluster, as of 30 November, sanitation, access to potable water and waste management are currently a major concern in affected areas. Local health authorities reported that population displacement and overcrowding in settlements represent a significant threat to public health condition, and OCHA reported that a number of water systems have tested positive for faecal coliform, raising fears of potential waterborne disease outbreaks.

Education

As reported by OCHA on 7 January, despite the reopening of many schools on 6 January, significant gaps remain in terms of the availability of learning spaces and school materials.

Updated: 06/02/2014

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new development this week. Last update was on: 03/12/2013.

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

KEY CONCERNS

- North Korea remains one the countries’ in which the humanitarian needs are the highest in the world, even though a slight improvement was registered between August 2012 and August 2013. As of August, approximately 16 million people (almost 65% of the population) were food insecure across the country, including an estimated 2.4 million people in need of immediate food assistance (UN).

- As of August, the malnutrition rates – notably in the northwest – remained extremely high with Global Chronic Malnutrition (stunting) standing at almost 28% and Global Acute Malnutrition (wasting) at 4% among children under five in the country (UN).
DPRK is also a disaster-prone country being notably plagued by seasonal flooding that, for instance, affected over 800,000 people in summer 2013.

Political and Security Context

Political Context

On 17 September, UN human rights investigators released a report that documented human rights abuses of inmates in North Korea's prison camps suffering from starvation, torture, and other unspeakable atrocities. The inquiry, based on testimonies from North Korean exiles, came after pressure from Japan, South Korea, and Western powers to investigate and begin building a case for possible criminal prosecution. The report was rejected by Pyongyang and may strain relations between the North Korean regime and the international community that have only lately begun to improve.

On 5 September, North Korea agreed to restore a cross-border military hotline with South Korea, in a sign of easing tensions between the rival states. The line had been shut down in early spring.

On 14 August, North and South Korea agreed to reopen the joint industrial park in Kaesong after a series of talks concerning this rare bilateral economic cooperation. The two countries announced on 10 September that the facilities would be reopened. In April, Pyongyang pulled its 53,000 workers out of the park at the height of tensions with Seoul and Washington over its nuclear military programme. On 7 August, Pyongyang announced that it was ready to reopen the joint industrial zone. The statement came only an hour after Seoul, exasperated by the North's lack of responsiveness, signalled its willingness to let the facility close definitively. Prior to closing, Kaesong was a rare source of hard currency for North Korea.

The reopening of Kaesong appears to be a step toward improving Pyongyang's relations with the West. After the soaring of the relations between Pyongyang and the West in early spring, relations with Seoul improved after an unexpected reversal on 6 June from Pyongyang, which proposed opening a dialogue. On 9 June, North and South Korean officials held their first talks in years in a positive end to months of military tension.

On 27 June during a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his South Korean counterpart Park Geun-hye in Beijing, Chinese authorities agreed to push for new talks between the two Koreas and appeared to favour a denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster

In mid-July, heavy seasonal rain resulted in flooding in many parts of DPRK. Particularly affected are the provinces of North and South Pyongan. According to the Red Cross, Anju City, in South Pyongan province, was 80% flooded after the Chongchon River caused embankments to break on the morning of 21 July.

Noted by OCHA on 23 August, floods in DPRK have affected 800,000 people and left almost 49,000 homeless. Farmland has been inundated with at least 10,000 hectares affected, and 1,000 hectares of crops destroyed. Damage to agricultural land is extensive with up to 40% of the land in Pakchon County, including 80% of paddy, affected. An assessment conducted by the Health Cluster on 6 August documented damage to roads, bridges, houses, and public buildings, limiting the access of affected persons to basic health care and services. An increase in the number of diarrhoeal diseases was reported due to extensive damage to the water system. An estimated 678,000 people need basic health care, essential drugs, and hospital supplies for life-saving interventions.

On 9 August, authorities reported that the floods affected 73 counties and caused severe damage in 22 counties. Over 11,000 buildings were reportedly damaged. The number of affected was given at 788,000 people, including 56,000 children <5 and 14,900 pregnant women. In early August, authorities estimated the death toll at 33 dead with 18 people still missing. An estimated 59,000 people were displaced. According to WFP, IDPs are suffering from a lack of access to safe drinking water. This comes after flooding and a subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012, which affected roughly 700,000 people, damaging health facilities and reducing access to primary and secondary health care.

Access

Humanitarian access to the country is limited. In early June, WFP approved a new two-year operation for DPRK starting on 1 July and targeting 2.4 million people, almost all children and pregnant and nursing women, with about 207,000 MT of food assistance.

Food Security

Information on the food security situation in DPRK remains limited. According to an August OCHA report, an estimated 16 million people, of a total population of 24.6 million, are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance. OCHA further reports that although the humanitarian situation has improved slightly over 2013, the structural causes of vulnerability persist and external assistance is needed, notably targeting the most affected northeastern provinces.

The results from a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) released in late November similarly indicate that, despite a slight increase in cereal production this year, the majority of households in DPRK have borderline or poor food consumption, with consumption being limited both in terms of quantity and quality. Specifically, WFP reports that 25% of households have acceptable food consumption while 45% and 30% have borderline and poor food consumption respectively.

The overall food production for 2013/2014 is estimated to increase by 5% compared to last year, according to WFP/FAO, allegedly resulting in the smallest cereal deficit since at least the early 2000s. Nonetheless, as reported by WFP/FAO, the food system in DPRK remains highly vulnerable to shocks and key gaps exist particularly in the production of protein-rich foods. According to OCHA, the lack of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser and plastic sheets) remains the main challenge for food production.

Health and Nutrition

Information on the health care situation in DPRK remains limited. The structural causes of vulnerability persist and external assistance is needed, notably targeting the most affected northeastern provinces. The reopening of Kaesong appears to be a step toward improving Pyongyang's relations with the West. After the soaring of the relations between Pyongyang and the West in early spring, relations with Seoul improved after an unexpected reversal on 6 June from Pyongyang, which proposed opening a dialogue. On 9 June, North and South Korean officials held their first talks in years in a positive end to months of military tension.

On 27 June during a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his South Korean counterpart Park Geun-hye in Beijing, Chinese authorities agreed to push for new talks between the two Koreas and appeared to favour a denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Humanitarian access to the country is limited. In early June, WFP approved a new two-year operation for DPRK starting on 1 July and targeting 2.4 million people, almost all children and pregnant and nursing women, with about 207,000 MT of food assistance.

Food Security

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Rates of child under-nutrition in DPRK, measured through stunting, wasting and underweight, has declined over the past decade. However, the rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children <5 remains, amounting to almost 28%, remains of alarming public health importance according to international standards, according to WFP/FAO as of late November. Stunting is also cited as a major underlying cause of maternal and child mortality. Meanwhile, the prevalence of wasting (4%) is now within the normal range according to international thresholds.

As of mid-November, the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) reported the resurgence of violence and killings in Cité Soleil (Port au Prince) as well as violent incidents around schools in Cap Haitien. According to a local NGO, more than 170 people were reportedly killed by gunfire in Port-au-Prince between July and September whereas in October only, 65 killings were recorded in the city, reflecting a potential increase in gun crime in urban areas.

On 29 November, thousands of young Haitians demonstrated in several cities demanding the resignation of President Michel Martelly. In Port-au-Prince, demonstrators from multiple neighbourhoods converged on the US embassy to denounce what they claimed was US interference in the country. Riot police and UN peacekeepers blocked access leading to the embassy. No incidents were reported but tear gas was fired to prevent the demonstrators from reaching the diplomatic building. Demonstrations took place in other cities as well, such as Cap-Haitien in the north.

Haiti was to have held legislative and local elections in 2011, but infighting among various government branches has delayed the vote until now.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

IDPs

On the four year anniversary of the 2010 devastating earthquake, the IOM estimated that 146,000 IDPs were still living in 271 camps scattered throughout the metropolitan Port-au-Prince and surrounding regions. The number of Haitians living in camps has decreased by nearly 90% from the July 2010 peak of 1.5 million. However, most people who have been relocated from camps have not moved into permanent housing and continue to live in dire conditions and at risk of diseases such as cholera. A lack of strong shelter makes them vulnerable to flooding and other adverse weather conditions especially during the hurricane season. According to OCHA in December 2013, an estimated 80,000 people in 67 camps are considered to be at particularly high risk of flooding.

According to Amnesty International, forced evictions are also one reason why camp numbers have fallen. Since July 2010, forced evictions accounted for more than 16,000 families leaving tent settlements, according to latest IOM figures. OCHA said that about half of the total number of IDPs still living in tent camps (78,000 people) is at high risk of being forcibly evicted.

Refugees/Migrants

Haitian children could be affected by a September 2013 ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican ordering authorities to strip citizenship from children of illegal immigrants dating back to 1929, even if they were born in the country and previously held Dominican documents. If this sentence is effectively applied, it means up to 300,000 people of Haitian origin could become stateless. Without documents, they would be unable to access health and education services, get married, or own property. The decision sparked outrage within Haiti, the diaspora, and human rights circles and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights denounced the decision, arguing that beyond discriminatory, it deprives
Dominican-born Haitians a nationality. However, despite international pressure, the Dominican government has maintained it is not willing to revisit the ruling, which cannot be appealed.

**Natural Disasters**

Haiti remains highly fragile and highly exposed to external shocks. The resilience of the population and its capacity to cope with new crises is extremely low.

On 21 January, local media reported that a drought is currently affecting southern Nord-Ouest region, resulting in damaged crops and food shortages and a weakening of the already fragile food situation.

In early May 2013, FEWSNET reported that seasonal rainfall was less than 50% below average in the Nippes, Sud, and Grand Anse departments, which experienced the largest seasonal deficits. Seasonal rainfall in the Ouest and Sud-Est departments has also been below-average. An increase in rain during the first week of August helped relieve the dryness over parts of Haiti. However, moderate seasonal precipitation deficits remain in many areas in the northwest and the south. Continued below average rainfall could further increase moisture deficits and negatively impact crops.

Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 led to severe flooding, affecting 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grand Anse, and Sud were the most severely affected areas. As of early April 2013, 72,000 people affected by Hurricane Sandy still needed humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA. Forecasts by the Directorate for Civil Protection anticipate that 600,000 people could be affected and 200,000 displaced by adverse weather conditions this year.

Reports indicate that 119 of Haiti’s 140 municipalities have been severely affected by drought, the tropical storm Isaac and/or hurricane Sandy in 2012, displacing at least 58,000 people.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Cholera**

Despite a significant decrease in the overall number of cholera-related deaths, Haiti continues to host half of the world’s suspected cholera cases. 56,174 suspected cases of cholera and 537 deaths were reported from January to November 2013 and a further 45,000 are expected for the year 2014, according to OCHA.

According to WHO/ Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), since the beginning of the epidemic in October 2010 until 26 November 2013 (week 48), the total number of cholera cases reached 693,875, of whom 387,820 were hospitalised (55.9%) and 8,482 people died. Despite progress made, average fatality rates remain at 1.2%, with variations ranging from 4.4%, in the department of Sud Est to 0.6%, in Port-au-Prince. Between January and November 2013, 55,736 cholera cases and 431 deaths were registered. A monthly average of 5,066 cases and 36 deaths and with a weekly average of 1,140 cases and 9 deaths were also reported. However, the monthly average of cases registered in 2013 is lower than recorded in 2011 (29,167 cholera cases and 243 deaths) and in 2012 (8,429 cases and 77 deaths). Four departments (Artibonite, Centre, Nord and Ouest) have registered a higher number of cases than average and two (Artibonite and Ouest) account for 52% of the total registered cases of 2013. However, an increase in cases has been observed over the past five weeks, corresponding with the rainy season and patterns similar to 2013. Contamination of rivers, unhygienic conditions, and inadequate sanitation are the principal causes for the spread of cholera. Some 42% of the population does not have access to clean water.

Human rights lawyers reported that they plan to seek compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on UN peacekeepers. The decision to file suit in New York comes after the UN said earlier this year that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti.

**Malnutrition**

In Haiti, nearly a quarter of children <5 are suffering from chronic malnutrition, according to UNICEF. According to OCHA as of 12 December, the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) among children <5 has increased from 5.1% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2013. 100,000 children <5 are affected by GAM, of whom 20,000 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Rural children are especially affected. The prevalence of poverty, the high degradation of the environment and limited government capacities to monitor, prevent and respond are factors contributing to the fragility of the situation.

**Food Security**

Haiti is structurally exposed to recurrent food crises. According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security as of 16 October, three million Haitians are food insecure. This figure is 44% lower than OCHA’s early October estimate. According to the report, the number of severely food insecure people has also declined in 2013, from 1.5 million to 600,000 people. In early October, OCHA reported that 1.5 million people across Haiti were still severely food insecure and risked a nutritional crisis; another 5.2 million people face moderate food insecurity. These 6.7 million people struggle to meet their own food needs on a regular basis according to WFP; 44 of 140 municipalities are affected, with over half the population facing high food insecurity. An estimated 800,000 people suffering from severe food insecurity had reportedly not received any emergency assistance and begun implementing negative coping mechanisms.

According to FEWSNET late October, food availability has improved significantly throughout the country since August 2013 due to the good performance of the spring agricultural production in the most productive areas.

As current agricultural production was greater this year than in 2012, the prices of foods showed a significant decrease, thereby improving access to food. The price of maize, for example, fell in October by almost half compared to September 2012 in most markets.

Despite poor and late rains during the two major agricultural seasons of 2013, rainfall was well distributed in most production areas. However, some regions such as the Southeast, the Northwest, Grand Anse and the North suffered from drought earlier in the season, which resulted in low production and poor yields.
Poor households in these areas are facing stressed food security conditions (IPC phase 2). Bombardopolis, Baie de Henne, Anse Rouge, Bainet and Jacmel, among others, continue to be areas of concern regarding the impact of food and nutrition insecurity. Stocks made from this production, especially in deficit areas, will likely be exhausted by end January. This will result in an increase in prices of food commodities and reduced access to food for poor households in these areas. Some of them will be in Crisis food security conditions (IPC Phase 3) between January and March.

Reviewed: 05/02/2014

SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA DROUGHT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

4 February: Bolivian authorities said that heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding has now affected an estimated 188,000 people (37,600 households) in 107 municipalities across all nine departments of the country and led to the death of 31 people. At least six others are still missing. Thousands of hectares of crops have also experienced extensive damage. Evacuation and delivery of food supplies by the government agencies are underway. Twenty-two air force planes are transporting goods to areas which have been cut off.

The areas most affected by the flooding are Cochabamba (66,000), Chuquisaca (39,500), Beni (19,500) and Potosí (16,500) and to a lesser extent La Paz, Santa Cruz and Oruro. In terms of flood-related deaths, the worst affected province is Beni where 10 people have died in Rurrenabaque, followed by north-western La Paz and central Cochabamba.

On 28 January, Bolivian President Evo Morales declared a national emergency situation in the departments of Cochabamba, Potosí, and Santa Cruz. La Paz and Beni were placed on red alert.

Rainfall is expected to continue over the coming days and the current rainy season will continue until March. According to reports from previous years, the most affected regions during the rainy season are typically in the north of La Paz and south Andean plateau of the Lake Titicaca.

In March 2013, several southern departments were severely affected by damaging levels of torrential rain and floods, especially in Chuquisaca, Potosí, Tarija and Cochabamba. Overall, the floods impacted 145,000 people in nearly 25% of Bolivia’s municipalities. In Cochabamba alone, 40,000 people were affected between 18-25 March.

Frost

On 3 December, local authorities reported that an estimated 21,725 persons (4,345 families) from four regions of Cochabamba in central Bolivia have been affected by frost and hailstorms that occurred in the last two months. The adverse weather has also damaged crops in eight municipalities of Cochabamba, with a total of 664 hectares affected. The city of Sacabamba in the high valley is among the worst hit with some 2,500 people (500 families) having lost their food stocks. Local authorities have declared a state of emergency. Several regions in Bolivia are being affected by snow and hail and some of these zones, such as Cochabamba, have suffered drought as well as floods this year.

On 28 August, the government reported that heavy snowfall and frost had affected the six departments of Cochabamba, Potosí, Oruro, La Paz, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca. Authorities reported that around 53,500 people were affected. Some 1,270 hectares of crops were damaged and 2,830 heads of cattle killed. Livestock is the only livelihood for most affected families in these areas.
Drought

Following the drought that occurred in Bolivia during the first quarter of 2013, the
government declared a national emergency in June. The most affected population is mainly
indigenous subsistence farmers. On 22 November, WFP reported that it would start to
provide humanitarian assistance to an estimated 50,000 people (about 10,000 families) in
12 municipalities in the four most affected departments of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca,
Tarija and Santa Cruz for a period of six months in response to the severe drought that
has affected the country. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people were affected by
drought, according to government sources.

Earthquake

On 15 October, a chain of several earthquakes in the eastern region of Bolivia affected up
to 2,200 people (440 families), but no casualties were reported. According to the
Observatory of San Calixto based in La Paz, the largest material damages occurred in
three Guarani communities (namely Cotoca, Las Cutas and Yateirenda) of the municipality
of Cabezas, in the province of Cordillera, belonging to the department of Santa Cruz. The
eastern regions of the country are particularly vulnerable since they are regularly affected
by drought, floods and earthquakes.

Food Security

In mid-December, the FAO reported that the aggregate maize production (main and
secondary seasons) was estimated to be 875,000 tonnes - 13% below last year’s figure.
This decline was attributed to lower harvest yields due to prolonged dry weather at the
beginning of the season and frosts in July and August. The impact was particularly felt in
the departments of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz, Tarija and Chuquisaca. The cold
wave during July and August also damaged potato crops and affected a large number of
rural households. In response, the government distributed food packages and animal feed
in September and October.

Additionally, wholesale prices of potatoes in La Paz and Cochabamba decreased by 23%
and 17% respectively in December but were still above their levels of a year earlier. In the
main producing areas of Chuquisaca and Tarija, potato prices were almost 10% higher than
in December 2012, reflecting the 2013 reduced productions. Similarly, rice and maize
prices in December remained one-third above their year-earlier levels, although were
relatively unchanged from the previous month.

The drought in the first quarter of 2013 continues to negatively impact crop production in
Bolivia. Crop failure has been especially severe in the regions of the Chaco and the South
Cone of Cochabamba. As of 15 October, an estimated 87,000 hectares of crops had
sustained damage. The department of Tarija is the worst hit with around 44,000 hectares of
crops estimated to have been lost. Santa Cruz recorded the highest number of affected
cattle with approximately 29,400 dead. In Cochabamba, 24,800 hectares in some 600
communities reported damage during the first half of 2013. The most serious damage was
caused by flooding (51%), drought (33%), and other lower-impact weather events. On 25
October, the Bolivian Civil Defence reported that it had begun the distribution of 300 tons of
food to 120,000 families in 15 municipalities affected by drought in the department of
Cochabamba. Water tanks, pipes and other material support were also delivered.

Results of a multi-sectoral national assessment from August 2013 confirmed a
deterioration of the food and nutrition security situation of the drought-affected households.
Many families have significantly reduced the frequency and quantity of food consumed.
Many workers have migrated from their communities in search of casual labour. The
affected households are not expected to recover until the next harvest in April/May 2014.

Health

Malaria/Dengue: On 15 January, the Bolivian Health Authorities issued an alert in the
department of the capital La Paz for dengue and malaria, along with more cases of
diarrhoea and skin and respiratory infections, following the current heavy rainfalls. Health
services already reported dengue outbreaks in 10 municipalities and 18 communities of the
department.

Updated: 05/02/2014
Introduction to the Global Emergency Overview Update

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

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

The Global Emergency Overview consists of three main sections:

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

The priority levels are assigned on the basis of:

- the number of people affected by recent disasters
- the level of access to the affected population
- the <5 mortality rate
- the level of development of the country
- the number of protracted IDPs and refugees.

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

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

Third, narratives for each country included in the Global Emergency Overview reflect major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country over the last months. Narratives are written based on secondary data. For each country, a specific highlights box is also added to put emphasis on the major developments that happened over the past 10 days.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones click here.


To download the mobile application for iOS phones click here.


Update

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

Disclaimer

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