Snapshot 04 – 11 March

Syria: Violence continues, with opposition infighting in the northwest and heavy clashes across large parts of the country, including Rural Damascus. While several military ceasefires have allowed some access to besieged areas, insecurity continues to interrupt aid distribution, and access to Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor and areas around the capital remains highly constrained. To date, over nine million people are estimated to have been displaced by the crisis, at least 2.5 million of whom have crossed into neighbouring countries.

South Sudan: New clashes and displacement continue to be reported in the northeastern states as well as the capital Juba. In three months, the crisis has forced 932,000 people to flee their homes, 226,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries. Overall, an estimated 4.9 million people – over 40% of the population – are in need of urgent assistance across the country. Negotiations between the warring parties are stalling due to lack of consensus over the framework for dialogue. Talks are expected to resume on 20 March.

Sudan: Renewed attacks by rebel groups and militias in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 40,000 people since early March, while local sources have reported that dozens of civilians have been killed. In rebel-controlled areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, food security is expected to deteriorate to emergency levels by April.
Pakistan: The Government warned it could launch a full-scale operation against militant strongholds in North Waziristan, amid renewed attacks claimed by reported rebel splinter groups. Despite the resumption and progress in peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban, violence continues on the ground. Since 20 February, an estimated 23,000 people have been displaced by government strikes and fear of further attacks. Access is heavily curtailed, but initial assessments indicated that most pressing needs include food, shelter, healthcare and WASH.

*Last Update: 11/03/2014 Next Update: 18/03/2014*
Politics and Security

The Central African Republic (CAR) has been in the midst of an escalating emergency since 5–6 December 2013, when fighting between rival armed groups in the capital, Bangui, left at least 1,000 people dead, and prompted the deployment of international peacekeeping troops. In mid-February, due to an increase in attacks against Muslim civilians, peacekeepers started concentrating their efforts against the main orchestrators of the violence: self-defense Christian militias or Anti-Balaka.

French Intervention and International Context

On 9 March, an anti-French demonstration took place in Ndele, in the northern prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran. This corroborated reports of renewed Seleka activism in the North of CAR in early March, and of increasing discontent among the remaining Muslim population of CAR against the French peacekeeping operation, Sangaris.

Demonstrations also took place in Khartoum, Sudan, against French involvement in CAR, illustrating evolving cross-border political and conflict dynamics. Local sources reported that fighters belonging to Darfur militia, including Janjaweed, Misseriya and Rizigat, had crossed into the northern prefecture of Vakaga.

On 28 January, French President François Hollande visited CAR and met with Central African President Catherine Samba-Panza to discuss the crisis. On 14 February, France announced that it would deploy 400 soldiers to add to its 1,600-strong force in CAR. On 18 and 21 February, CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza had asked France to extend its military presence until the CAR presidential election, which is due to take place in February 2015 at the latest. On 25 February, France announced the extension of its deployment beyond its initial timeframe. Earlier announcements about a potential extension had underlined that the UN Security Council would need to renew the mandate allowing the deployment of French and African troops in CAR, which expires in April 2014. According to French authorities, the rationale for the extension is that the situation on the ground is worse than initially expected. The new French deployment should be transferred to the European Union (EU) force, which is expected to start arriving in CAR as of late February.

On 20 February, the UN Secretary General outlined a six-point plan calling for the reinforcement of the French and African-Union-led peacekeeping operations in CAR. The plan’s announced objective is to ensure adequate peacekeeping prior to the potential deployment of a full-fledged UN peacekeeping operation. The Secretary General is expected to formulate recommendations to the Security Council in the next few days regarding the establishment of such a mission.

On 15 February, the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs announced that the deployment of the EUFOR-RCA, which was decided on 20 January and authorised by the Security Council on 28 January, would take place from early March. Its initially planned size (500 personnel) may be doubled. This would represent the biggest EU military operation in six years. While the specific date of deployment remains to be determined as negotiations within and among member states continue, a meeting is scheduled on 27 February to further determine the respective contributions of participating countries. The
EUFOR-RCA is due to be based in and around Bangui, where it will be active for six months and tasked with helping stabilization efforts.

Meanwhile, on 7 February 2014, the International Criminal Court announced the opening of a preliminary inquiry into potential war crimes and crimes against humanity in the CAR, the first step towards an official investigation and potential trials. The inquiry commission in charge of investigating the claims is due to arrive on 11 March. Its report will be due within six months.

On 28 January, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution inviting 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 Security Council also requested that presidential and parliamentary elections be organised as soon as possible, ideally in the second half of 2014, and no later than February 2015. In late January, targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes, were added to prior sanctions.

French troops were deployed on 5–6 December as part of a French peacekeeping operation, Sangaris, immediately after its authorisation by the UN Security Council on 5 December. The operation was prompted by the sharp deterioration of the humanitarian and security situation in the country since September 2013. The 450 French troops stationed in Bangui prior to the crisis had a restricted mandate of securing the international airport and protecting French interests and citizens.

French troops and AU peacekeepers stationed in CAR receive logistical support from the US and the UK. US assistance is similar to the support provided to the French troops in Mali. Starting 10–11 December, US military aircraft began airlifting Burundian troops to reinforce the AU mission in CAR. Washington is already providing logistical support and advisers to African troops operating against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) armed group in eastern and southeastern CAR. The UK started airlifting equipment for French troops in Bangui on 11 December.

On 4 December, Paris had officially received UNSC authorization to use lethal force to help AU peacekeepers in CAR. The UN 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 materiel to CAR.

On 10 October, the UN Security Council had 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; protection and promotion of human rights; and coordination of international actors. This underscored the increased awareness of the international community regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in CAR.

Fighting, led by a northeastern coalition of armed militia known as Seleka, initially broke out in CAR in December 2012. The Seleka fighters, the majority of whom are Muslim, seized power in a coup in Bangui on 24 March 2013 and the coalition leader was installed as CAR’s interim President. After disbanding the Seleka in response to international pressure in September, the short-lived President was removed from office in early 2014 as fighting intensified. In response to ongoing attacks by ex-Seleka fighters against the mostly non-Muslim civilian population, ‘self-defence’ militias known as Anti-Balaka have mobilised as the crisis took a turn for the worse.

African Union Presence

On 3 March, a UN Secretary General report regarding the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) into a fully-fledged UN peacekeeping mission was handed to the UN Security Council. The peacekeeping operation is expected to comprise 12,000 troops. Earlier reports also mentioned that it would include 1,820 police. France is expected to submit a draft resolution to the Security Council to authorise the deployment of this force by the end of March.

In mid-February, official sources estimated that over 5,300 AU troops from several countries, including Rwanda, Burundi, Chad and Cameroon, had been deployed so far, out of an expected total of 6,000, while the AU was reportedly still experiencing problems raising funds to finance the operation. On 20 February, the UN Secretary General proposed a plan to ensure a transitional peacekeeping prior to the potential deployment of a full-fledged UN peacekeeping operation, calling for the reinforcement of the MISCA with 3,000 additional troops.

In mid-February, after renewed calls from the new interim President Samba-Panza for the AU-force to be transformed into a UN one, senior UN officials said that the idea was still being considered, though any deployment would take time.

Various UN officials had indicated that the AU force might eventually be transformed into a full-scale UN peacekeeping operation, numbering between 6,000 and 9,000 troops, if local conditions in terms of governance are met. In late February, this seemed an increasingly probable scenario. However, UN Security Council officials had informally noted 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 stabilise 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 the transitional government’s distinction of forces who represent the state and those who do not.

MISCA had been mandated to restore security and ensure the protection of civilians, alongside French troops, through UN Security Council resolution 2127 on 5 December 2013. Its initially planned size was 6,000 troops.

Political Context

On 5 March, the CAR Prime Minister met with the leaders of the ex-Seleka and Anti-Balaka armed groups. The meeting was unprecedented, and reportedly aimed at discussing a possible exit from the armed conflict in CAR.

On 9 March, an anti-French demonstration took place in Ndele, in the northern prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran. This corroborated reports of increasing discontent amongst the remaining Muslim population of CAR against the French peacekeeping operation, Sangaris, due to the perceived failure of French peacekeepers to protect the Muslims.

On 28 February, a senior UNHCR official reiterated that “ethno-religious cleansing” was ongoing in CAR, a warning that had already been voiced by human rights NGOs in mid-
February. Killings and mass departures of Muslims by Anti-Balaka groups had intensified throughout February. CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza had denied such cleansing was ongoing but warned that criminal Anti-Balaka would be “hunted”. This marked a significant hardening of tone against the Anti-Balaka.

In late February, the involvement of militant Islamic groups such as Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) in the CAR crisis became possible after Nigeria-based Boko Haram threatened to avenge the killings of Muslims in CAR. However, according to observers, the likelihood of a spread of Islamic groups to CAR is considered as low, due to logistical and operational difficulties.

On 25 January, CAR President Samba-Panza appointed Andre Nzapayele, 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. Nzapayele formed a 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 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 after pressure from regional and international powers. 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 comprehensive negotiations complicated.

Former rebel leader Djotodia, head of the Seleka coalition that took control of CAR following a coup in late March, had been sworn in as the new president in August 2013. Violence had erupted in CAR in December 2012, when Seleka, 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 amnesties 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.

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. 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. 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.

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

As of 5 March, an estimated 8,000 international French and African Union peacekeeping troops are deployed in CAR, while an additional 500–1,000 EU troops and 3,000 additional MISCA troops are expected to be deployed over the coming weeks. As of 17 February, half of the French troops were deployed in Bangui.

In early March, Seleka fighters were said to be attempting to take back northern areas of CAR, including the locality of Ndélé in Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture. Local sources reported that foreign fighters belonging to Darfur militia, including Janjaweed, Misseriya and Rizigat, were arriving in the northern prefecture of Vakaga to support the Seleka.

In late February, disarmament operations by international peacekeeping forces had focused on the Anti-Balaka, and were ongoing in Bangui, especially in the PK-13 and Boy Rabe districts of Bangui, which have been home to pro-Bozizé and Anti-Balaka armed groups since the beginning of the CAR crisis.

By mid-February, humanitarian actors reported a decrease in armed clashes, allegedly due to the decreasing number of Muslim people, who have been fleeing the Anti-Balaka controlled regions. However, fighting was still occurring in the PK5, PK12 and Combatants neighbourhoods of Bangui. Near Sibut, a town 150km northeast of Bangui, 20 Muslim men were reportedly killed while trying to escape to Chad.

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 in Bangui since early December 2013.

Killings and mass departures of Muslims continued throughout February. Attacks were reported in the western town of Cantonnier near the Cameroon border on 16 February, where 8 people including two Anti-Balaka were killed in a clash with MISCA soldiers. On 8 February, the Anti-Balaka seized the western town of Berberati, which is CAR’s second city and had been a Seleka stronghold for months. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that 6,000 people are trapped in the western town of Bouar, and cannot flee for fear of being killed by Anti-Balaka. Anti-Balaka are reported to have gathered in cities along routes used to evacuate convoys of Muslims, namely Yaloke and Boali.

On 2 February, following negotiations with ex-Seleka fighters, international troops from Operation Sangaris and 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 had passed under the control of former Seleka fighters the previous
week amid reports of violence against civilians. The international troops are reportedly now currently deployed in the northwestern provinces of Paoua, Bozoum, Baoro, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bouca, and Kaga Bandoro as well as in Bangui, Yakobe, Boali, Bambari, Ndale and Bangassou.

In early March, an iNGO report on conflict trends indicated that the patterns of violence in CAR reflected a predominantly urban conflict. Attacks by Seleka, Anti-Balaka, and religious or communal groups (Christian, M巴拉拉, Mbororo and Fulani groups), constituted the bulk of violent incidents against civilians.

In mid-February, local sources reported that several ex-Seleka commanders have openly mooted the idea of dividing the country, a scenario that can no longer be completely discarded. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also indicated that there was a “distinct risk” that CAR could end up divided as a result of sectarian violence. Various sources have cited mass departures of Muslims to the north (as well as to neighbouring countries) as a potential motive for partition. The French Defence Minister has announced that France would not recognise any partition of CAR.

Reports also indicate 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. According to unspecified diplomatic sources, the ex-Seleka is now more fragmented than ever following the forced resignation of Djotodia.

Information remains difficult to ascertain, but 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.

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

**Security Context**

As of early March, violence affected especially the localities of Ndlele, Boda, Carnot, Bossangoa, Kouango, and Paoua.

On 7 March, Human Rights Watch reported that the country had been virtually emptied of its Muslim communities, while on 5 March OCHA estimated that 80 to 85% of Bangui’s minority population had fled. According to OCHA, localities where the entire Muslim population fled or was evacuated by early March included Yaloke (previously home to 10,000 Muslims), Baoro (4,000 evacuees), Mbaiki. Most Muslim inhabitants of Baoli and Bossemptele had also left (650 and 190 people evacuated in early March). On 5 March, four Muslim civilians were killed in the Combattants district of Bangui. As of 7 March, 1,800 people were reportedly trapped in the PK12 district of Bangui. On 26 February, 8 people were killed in an attack against Muslims in the village of Bowai, northwest of Bossangoa.

In early March, UNHCR reported that 15,000 Muslims were still at risk of attack, especially in the PK-12 district of Bangui, and in Boda, Bouar and Bossangoa. Anti-Balaka armed groups, retaliating against widespread abuses committed mostly against Christians by Seleka fighters, are still massively targeting Muslim populations and committing abuses. In mid-February, French military sources further reported that the Anti-Balaka armed groups have emerged as the main threat to peace in the country. These mostly Christian groups have gained traction over the past month as the main opponents of the ex-Seleka.

Fighting in CAR has adopted the characteristics of a sectarian confrontation between Muslim and Christian armed groups. On 12 February, a UN source warned of an ongoing “ethnic-religious cleansing” in the Central African Republic following the discovery by international peacekeepers of a mass grave at a military camp occupied by Seleka fighters in the capital Bangui. Similar warnings were issued by several international organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

According to NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), attacks against Muslims are ongoing in the northeast of the country while up to 100,000 Muslims have reportedly fled north, leaving Christian-dominated areas. The iNGO has in particular reported ongoing violence against Muslim groups in and around the township of Carnot. On 12 February, OCHA reported that violence by armed groups against both Muslim and Christian civilians remained widespread, notably in the northwest where entire villages have been looted and burned, triggering more population displacement.

As of mid-February, acts of violence had been mostly reported in the third, fifth, eighth, PK5, PK12 and Combattants 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, Yaloke, Berberati and Sibut. On 8-9 February, violence and looting in the capital left at least 11 people dead, including two Muslims who were reportedly lynched and a Bangui 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 toll 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 Ngouandaye, Berberati, Carnot, and Gamboula this week.

As of 11 December, according to French official sources, there were an estimated 3,000 to 8,000 armed fighters, mainly ex-SeLeke members, members of mostly Christian Anti-Balaka groups, former members of the armed forces of the previous regime and various militias in Bangui. French sources state that no reliable estimate regarding the number of combatants in the whole country was available, although local reports indicated that warlords control large swathes of CAR outside the capital.

In January, violence in Bangui left at least 50 dead and over 60 wounded despite patrols by
French and AU troops. 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 24 January, anti-Balaka fighters allegedly killed a former Minister, Joseph Kalité – a Muslim reportedly close to ex-President Djotodia.

In mid-January, significant violence had been 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. Over 14–16 January, more than 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 towards the Cameroon border.

Violence initially 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 the capital. At least 530 people were killed with hundreds more injured, and an estimated 189,000 people displaced in the Bangui area.

Since September 2013, fighting has increasingly adopted the characteristics of a sectarian confrontation between Muslim and Christian armed groups, with violence tearing apart the northern city of Bossangoa. As reported by a UN official in November 2013, in the aftermath of the March 2013 coup, sectarian violence was clearly on the rise with former Seleka fighters targeting churches and the Christian population and the latter responding by creating self-defence militias and attacking Muslim civilians. With violence escalating, the UN had suggested in November 2013 that a genocide might take place if the conflict dynamics remained unchanged, a risk that was reaffirmed in February 2014 by Human Rights Watch, which warned against the risk of an “ethnic cleansing” of Muslims.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Since the March coup, CAR has struggled to cope with a severe humanitarian crisis. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation is due both to the widespread violence and displacement, which has triggered the flight of employees and restricted user access to still-functioning services, and to extensive looting.

The widespread looting of health facilities and other public buildings means the population is largely deprived of access to basic services. As of late February, 2.5 million, of an estimated population of 4.6 million, needed immediate assistance according to OCHA, a slight decrease compared to the 2.6 million reported in the Multi-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA). 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 regions affected 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 fourth 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 not as a problem by any key informants in the urban sites around the city.

Basic services in CAR were already almost non-existent or covered only a limited part of the territory prior to the 2013 crisis.

Access

Access to populations in need of humanitarian assistance remains a challenge. Most of the country remains altogether out of reach of humanitarian actors. This is due to continuing insecurity in the cities and along the roads, and to the poor state of logistical infrastructures. This situation is likely to compound with the onset of the rainy season in May.

As of early March, NGOs reported increased targeting of international NGO staff by Anti-Balaka, who reportedly accused them of “helping” Muslims through assistance programmes. On 8 March, an aid worker was killed in Ndale. Staff abduction, vehicle theft, death threats and physical attacks have also been reported.

As of mid-February, WFP began airlifting cargo with food assistance to CAR from Cameroon for distribution to IDPs. Food stocks are to be prepositioned across CAR before the start of the rainy season in May, when many roads will be impassable. The airlifting of food assistance is necessary because insecurity makes the road between Cameroon and Bangui unreliable. Humanitarian actors have also reported that recurrent administrative problems at the Cameroon border affect relief convoys. As of mid-January, 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, MISCA sent troops to the border with Cameroon to escort convoys loaded with humanitarian aid toward the capital Bangui.

OCHA reported that the surge in violence since early December has had serious consequences for humanitarian assessments and response. In the country side, the security of humanitarian workers remains dependent on the willingness of local strongmen who are controlling given areas while security affects transport routes. Since August, several attacks against humanitarian workers have been reported, with two being killed in Ouham district in early September.

Displacement

IDPs

Levels of internal displacement in CAR remain hard to ascertain. As of 27 February, OCHA reported an estimated 657,000 IDPs in the country, including over 232,000 across 69 sites in Bangui. This represents a significant decrease compared to the 838,000 people, including 413,000 in Bangui, reported to be internally displaced in early February. At least
half of the displaced are reported to be children.

As of mid-February, new population displacement had been recorded in CAR. While numbers are difficult to ascertain, UN and humanitarian organisations report that Muslim populations are currently leaving areas where mostly Christian Anti-Balaka groups are active. As of mid-February, according to MSF, up to 100,000 Muslims have fled north, leaving Christian-dominated areas.

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 others 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 characterised by the presence of armed elements, according to the MIRA.

Internal displacement had been witnessed on a large scale since the outbreak of violence in the Ouham prefecture in September 2013, and more significantly in Bangui and most of western CAR as of December 2013. The displacement is mostly caused by fighting between armed groups that has also targeted civilians, and exacerbated sectarian strife between civilian groups.

**CAR Refugees in Neighbouring Countries**

The exact number of CAR refugees is difficult to ascertain, but recent reports suggest that it rose in February.

As of 26 February the UNHCR said 290,000 CAR refugees were in neighbouring countries, including 126,000 in Cameroon, 6,500 in Chad, 14,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and 5,000 in Congo. According to UNHCR, 54,000 of them have arrived since December 2013. This represents a 20,000 increase compared to early February.

In mid-February, NGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that escalating violence in CAR had triggered an upsurge in the number of people crossing into neighbouring countries in recent weeks. To date, MSF reports that between 80,000 and 100,000 refugees have fled from CAR to Cameroon, Chad, Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). MSF estimated that 35,000 people, often Central Africans of Chadian origin, had crossed into Chad in recent weeks, and 10,000 to 12,000 into the Republic of Congo.

On 6 February, the UNHCR had reported that since 1 December, 34,400 new CAR refugees had arrived in neighbouring countries, including 16,700 in Cameroon, 5,700 in Chad, and 12,000 in DRC. Counting these arrivals, UNHCR had 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.

**Refugees in CAR**

As of 28 February, UNHCR indicated that there are an estimated 16,500 long-term refugees in CAR, mostly from the DRC and Sudan. 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 Bambari 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 IOM-Chad on 13 February, an estimated 63,000 CAR ‘migrants’ have arrived in Chad, both by air and land. On 20 February, the Chad Government announced the end of its air evacuation programme, declaring that 99% of its citizens who had wished to had been repatriated. IOM reports had indicated that three people had died on an evacuation cargo flight in January, although the conditions of these deaths remained unclear.

On 10 February 2014 OCHA reported that over 65,000 people had been evacuated from CAR – more than twice the figure recorded on 31 January 2014. Meanwhile, a human rights NGO stated that about 50,000 mostly Central African Muslims have been evacuated from Bangui by air.

The large-scale evacuation of foreign nationals, which started in December, was facilitated by foreign embassies in Bangui and by the International Office for Migration (IOM). Humanitarian organisations have reported that the evacuees included citizens from neighbouring countries, but also Central Africans of foreign descent fleeing the conflict for fear of being targeted by sectarian violence. Many of them had reportedly never been to those neighbouring countries before, according to various UN and NGO reports.

**Food Security**

The exact number of food insecure people in CAR remains difficult to establish, although the ongoing crisis has disrupted the livelihoods of the majority of the population that relies on subsistence farming.

As of late February, FEWSNET reported that due to continuing violence in CAR, the country was still experiencing a food crisis (IPC Phase 3 – Crisis). Earlier this month, FEWSNET had projected that the country would be experiencing a Phase 3 Emergency situation by August 2014, meaning that “at least 1 in 5 households will face significant food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition, or will be marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with unsustainable coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood”.

As of 20 February, with the lean season having reportedly started in parts of the most severely conflict-affected parts of the country – Bangui and the north-west – humanitarian NGOs have warned that food insecurity is likely to increase further in the coming months.

As reported by FAO in mid-February, farmers in CAR are in urgent need of seeds and tools for the March planting season if they are to help avert a full-scale food and nutrition crisis in the country. According to FAO, 1.6 million people are in immediate need of food assistance. This figure constitutes a significant increase compared to earlier estimates by WFP and FAO, which indicated that around 1.3 million were in need of food assistance.

As of late January, FAO reported that of the 1.3 million people in need of food assistance,
approximately 60% are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 40% are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The areas most affected by food insecurity were 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. Assessments conducted by WFP in November also indicated significant food insecurity in the northern Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran provinces. Moreover, most IDPs groups are currently facing at least 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 at least 20% of the population in Bangui and in northwestern and southwestern regions.

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 numbers 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.

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.

In February, NGO reports warned that the flight of traders, most of whom are Muslim, has increased the risk of a food crisis, compounding an already critical situation. Moreover, the refusal of transporters, most of whom are Muslim, to take the road with their goods, for fear of targeted attacks, has also hampered food availability and led to price hikes.

In December, FAO had reported that, in particular, maize prices in Bangui rose by 31% between January and November 2013, while millet prices increased by 70% between March and October in Ouham 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.

The crisis has led to increased food insecurity for nearly all Central Africans. Population flight, the vandalising of fields, the looting of agricultural inputs, seeds and of other sources of livelihoods, have led to a significant reduction in agricultural production in a country where 70% of the population is dependent on the agricultural sector. The crisis has also reduced the access of the population to income-generating activities and to markets, thereby triggering an economic slowdown and food price hikes.

Food insecurity has increased as a result of frequent market closures and lack of access to them, both due to insecurity. These have led to decreased food availability. The interruption of economic activities has also reduced household incomes across all sectors, leading to plummeting purchasing power.

Health and Nutrition

The situation in CAR’s 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, a situation that still prevailed according to the MIRA in January 2014.

CAR’s health care system was already in an extremely poor state prior to the 2013 crisis; it has entirely collapsed in its aftermath. Since then, health structures have been almost exclusively supported by international NGOs and religious organisations, and have covered only 10 to 20% of the population. The incidence of malaria, the first cause of morbidity, is reportedly on the rise, a situation compounded by the systemic shortage of medicine. The epidemic risk (acute diarrhea, measles, meningitis) is high.

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 2013. The Health Cluster reported cholera outbreaks in 15 of 22 health districts.

Malaria

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

Malaria has been on the rise since December 2012, and is likely to increase further with the start of the rainy season in May 2014. In early January 2014, it was estimated that malaria constituted the first cause of morbidity in CAR, a situation compounded by the shortage of anti-malaria drugs in most of the still-functioning health structures 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. An
estimated 28,000 children <5 are expected to suffer from SAM in 2014, 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 2013, 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

The protection of civilians remains a key issue of concern as fighting between armed and so-called self defence groups rages on across several parts of the country. In February, Amnesty International released a report warning that ‘ethnic cleansing’ was ongoing against the Muslim population – a suggestion that remains disputed amongst some NGOs and the international community. In late October, Amnesty International published a report expressing deep concern about serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the 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.

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

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

Since late January, armed violence has increasingly targeted Muslim civilians, raising the alarm among humanitarian actors about the potential for large-scale killings in the country.

Education

An estimated 2.3 million children in CAR 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 MIRA, significant WASH concerns remain in the majority of displacement sites where the concentration of IDPs surpasses the number of WASH facilities available.

Updated: 11/03/2014
On 18 February, Chad's President Deby met with CAR interim President Samba-Panza and called for the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission to contain violence in CAR. Deby’s comments marked the first time the region’s military heavyweight has publicly called for UN intervention. UN chief Ban Ki-moon is due to report shortly on the possibility of a UN mission.

**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 unstable borders, heavy rains, and general insecurity.

**Displacement**

**Evacuees from CAR**

Ongoing looting, killings by anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka armed groups in Bangui and north-western CAR continue to drive out thousands of civilians to neighbouring countries, including Chad, and has led to warnings from a top UN official of ethnic-religious cleansing of Muslim minorities.

Chad is the largest recipient of CAR evacuees and refugees. As of 27 February, OCHA said that a total of 72,481 Chadian migrants, CAR refugees and Third Country Nationals have reached N'Djamena and five transit sites in the south of the country since 21 December, including at least 980 unaccompanied or separated minors.

An IOM profiling indicated that the evacuees are mostly women and children and that only half are strictly Chadian nationals: 30% are dual nationals; and 20% being are Central African. New arrivals are overwhelmingly Muslims (96%). Most people arriving after the latest wave of violence in CAR are women and girls (54%), and a third of the arrivals are children (31%).

**Chadian returnees**

Since the intensification of violence in CAR in December 2013, 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.

UNHCR reported that an estimated 56,000 Chadians, mostly children and women have been repatriated from CAR since December 2013, both on emergency flights and in land convoys. Returnees have mostly been located to N'Djamena and the southern sites of Doyaba, Mbitoye, Sido, Gore, and Doba. Many transit centres are of poor quality with limited sanitation access to clean water. Many more Chadians are expected to return from CAR as violence continues, over-stretching the humanitarian capacity in Chad, a country many have never lived in. Many returnees are entering Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship having been born in CAR, which may cause concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee). While second and third generation Chadians from CAR have been recognised as de facto nationals. UNHCR is working with Chadian authorities to formalise this recognition through an official announcement so as to avoid statelessness in the future. According to government figures, over 300,000 Chadian nationals lived in CAR prior to the ongoing crisis.

The Chadian government said on 20 February it had completed the evacuation of its citizens from CAR where violence is still ongoing. However, IOM estimated on 21 February that 15,000 Chadians remain at risk in CAR and another 10,000 are stranded in Cameroon. The government has underlined that all Chadian migrants must return to their zone of origin within ten days of arrival to preclude the establishment of permanent settlements. However, given that many migrants have little or no ties with Chad and transportation is limited, over 49,000 currently still reside in seven transit centres in the capital and the South with limited access to basic services, notably at Doyaba, N'Djamena, and Sido transit centres. With the continuing influx of new arrivals, and thousands more expected in the South and in transit sites, the living conditions of returnees are gradually deteriorating in terms of WASH, medical services, shelter, and access to drinking water.

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

Clashes between Nigerian Military and armed groups in northern Nigeria have caused an influx of about 3,500 returnees and 553 Nigerian refugees in the west around Lake Chad. Returnees from Nigeria hosted in Ngouboua are mostly unaccompanied children from fishing villages in Bagakawa. According to OCHA, returnees are dispersed across two other locations: Bol and Mao.

**Refugees in Chad**

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 refugees. These new arrivals have placed additional burdens on the host communities.

According to UNHCR, escalating violence in CAR has sent a wave 8,000 refugees since December 2013, bringing the total population of CAR refugees to over 86,000. Further influxes of refugees are foreseen for 2014, as the security and humanitarian situation in CAR continues to deteriorate.

According to Médecins Sans Frontières on 28 February, these refugees now lack clean water, decent shelter, and food. The 13,200 refugees who reached Sido in southern Chad have endured an exhausting trip on convoys, many of which came under attack in the CAR. They are now experiencing precarious sanitary and living conditions, with only 20 latrines and four water points in the camp. In the last five weeks, the refugees have received only one food distribution from WFP, which took place on 20 January. Their situation is worrying and may deteriorate with the approaching rainy season.

Following tribal clashes in the 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 southeast. This influx of refugees from Sudan has 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 Missiriya ethnic groups in Um Dukhun, Central Darfur. In December, the total number of Sudanese refugees in Chad exceeded 362,000 people.

Humanitarian needs of 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.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

According to OCHA on 19 November, an estimated 90,000 IDPs are still living in protracted displacement in the east of Chad. As reported by IDMC, they were forced to flee their homes six years ago as a result of armed conflict between government forces and armed opposition groups, inter-communal violence, and attacks by criminal groups known as coupeurs de route. The preferred option of most IDPs is local integration in their place of refuge or resettlement. However, 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. Limited information is available on their current situation.

**Food Security**

Chad has been struck by successive severe food crises in recent years that have had adverse, long-term impacts on household assets and savings. In January 2014, OCHA reported that 2.4 million people were food-insecure in Chad including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity. The Chadian Government, WFP and FAO conducted a food security assessment between October and November 2013 which showed that the Sahelian region (Central Chad) is twice as affected (with 1,321,000 people) than the Sudanian region in the south (697,900). The worst affected region is Wadi-Fira (eastern Chad) with 61% of the population reportedly food insecure.

As of mid-February, FEWSNET reported that the average cereal production of 2013-2014 crops is forecast at 19% lower than the 2012-2013 output, but 12% above the five-year average. Localized areas of Kanem, Wadi-Fira, Bahr-El Ghazel, and Hajer Lamis saw 2013/14 crop production deficits of nearly 50% compared to average. Production of sorghum and millet, the most important food crops, is estimated to have declined by 36% and 31%, respectively.

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. FEWSNET indicates that poor households are currently only minimally meeting their food consumption needs and are facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. Between April and the start of the next harvests in October, food security outcomes are expected to deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels with consumption gaps expected.

In the central regions of Hadjer Lamis, northern Guerra, and northern Batha, below average cumulative rainfall totals during the 2013 rainy season led to an earlier than normal drying of forage and early transhumance movements. Poor livestock conditions are detrimental to livestock-to-cereal terms of trade and below-average milk availability. Affected pastoral households will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity between January and October.

In the Sudanian zone of southern Chad, 2013/14 crop production was 12% above average and household incomes from other sources are currently normal. Poor households will continue to access food in the area without major difficulties through the end of the consumption year (October 2014) and will be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity.

**Regional Food Security Crisis in the Sahel Region**

Chad’s food insecurity problem is part a wider crisis in the Sahel region. OCHA estimates that 20 million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance. Across the region, an estimated 5 million children <5 are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles, Polio and Meningitis**

In late January, UNICEF reported that the border region with CAR is prone to recurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, and meningitis. The level of immunization among refugee and returnee children is unknown but believed to be low, heightening the risk. As of February 176 suspected cases of measles have been recorded in 15 districts in N’djamena and across southern Chad (border region with CAR and Cameroon).

**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 <5 years, according to UNICEF. IRIN noted that malaria deaths have nearly doubled in Chad in 2013, with over 2,000 fatalities registered and 780,000 cases diagnosed. In 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 on the dire conditions in refugee camps hosting Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad. On 12 September, it was reported that refugees in camp Djabal complained about the high incidence of malaria and diarrhea, especially affecting the youngest and older persons, and 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 nine of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The
Most affected areas are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22% GAM), Salamat (22% GAM), Beg (21% GAM), and Kanem (21% GAM). UNICEF forecasted that an estimated 147,000 children suffered from SAM in 2013.

Updated: 06/03/2014

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Conflict, Food Insecurity, Epidemic, Displacement

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 March: The iNGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that it treats more survivors of sexual violence in DRC than it does in any other country. In 2012, MSF teams provided medical care to 4,037 women, men, and children after incidents of sexual violence in DRC. The annual number of cases treated has not dropped below this number in the past five years.

KEY CONCERNS

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

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

- Katanga province is of particular concern with 402,000 people displaced across the province by the end of 2013. (OCHA, January 2014).

- DRC is host to over 260,800 refugees. The crisis in Central African Republic (CAR) has caused 62,100 CAR refugees to cross into DRC (UNHCR, February 2014).

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

Politics and Security

Decades of political violence and inter-communal strife have repeatedly disrupted the stability and security of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and triggered mass population displacement. Despite increased counter-insurgency efforts by the army, DRC remains highly unstable and is the theatre of sustained military operations and infighting between various armed groups and non-state actors, mainly in its volatile eastern region. Additionally, DRC is currently affected by the ongoing crises in Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan and is embroiled in long standing tensions with its eastern neighbours.

International and Regional Context

The UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region visited DRC on 14 February and called on Congolese authorities to fulfil their commitments to the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the region, signed by 11 nations in February 2013. Congo's neighbours promised not to interfere in its internal affairs nor tolerate or support armed groups.

In the 12 months since the PSC Framework was signed, the M23 rebel movement has been defeated and the Government has concluded a peace process with the rebel movement. A Regional Oversight Mechanism for the framework was also established, comprising principal representatives of Heads of States and Governments in the region.

The plan of action was adopted at the last Summit of the African Union in Addis Ababa in January 2014 when Kenya and the Republic of Sudan also agreed to join the Framework process. This was preceded by the adoption of complementary international benchmarks by donor partners to support the objectives of the Framework.

At the national level, DRC’s commitments include accelerating reforms within the security sector, which is an essential step for expanding State authority, particularly in the east. A thorough disarmament and demobilization process must be put in place and former M23 combatants in Uganda and Rwanda need to be repatriated for real trust to be built and progress achieved. The social and economic aspects of the PSC Framework need to be fast tracked as well. However, a national monitoring mechanism is still not operational due to funding issues.

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 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 repeatedly been accused of backing the armed groups active in DRC, but have always denied these accusations.

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

On 2 January 2014, a senior military officer, Colonel Ndala, and three other soldiers were killed in an ambush. Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF/NALU) rebels were first accused by the 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.

National Context

According to the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) as of mid-January, 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 17 January, the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) launched a UN-backed offensive.
against 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 4 February, FDLR's interim leader indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kagali, but UN peacekeepers say they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet. Claims by the FDLR rebel group came as UN forces prepared to target the insurgents. The FDLR was officially set up in 2000 by mainly Hutu Rwandan gunmen operating in eastern DRC, where the remnants of the extremist Hutu militia fled after they were defeated by the Tutsi-led army that ended Rwanda's genocide. Kagali has previously refused talks with the rebels, accusing them of still wanting to exterminate Tutsis. Tanzania called on Rwanda to hold talks with its rebels, an appeal that was angrily rejected by Kagali.

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

**Insurgent Groups**

Despite the end of fighting between FARDC and the M23 in November 2013 and the subsequent launch of DRR process, other conflicts drag in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Equateur provinces where fighting between armed groups and FARDC have triggered mass displacements, severely impacting the security situation. Several counter-insurgency campaigns are ongoing.

**Demobilisation and Disarmament: The End of the M23 Rebellion**

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. By end October, M23 rebels had suffered a series of severe military defeats that precipitated the effective end of the insurgency. With the support of the UN Force Intervention Brigade, established within the MONUSCO, this victory marked the army's first over a significant rebel group.

Despite the signing of a peace agreement between DRC and the M23 rebels 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 Government to speed up disarmament, demobilization, and reintegation of M23 ex-combatants and urged Uganda and Rwanda to prevent M23 elements from sheltering and training troops. In a public statement to Kobler, M23 rebels denied the UN's accusations.

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

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 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 terrorism, torture, sexual violence, child conscription and embezzlement and looting.

The amnesty law is seen as key to encouraging the return of former rebels who fled to Uganda in the wake of their defeat. Close to 1,300 former rebels, who once made up the strongest army in the mineral-rich but impoverished Kivu region, have been left in limbo in a camp in Uganda since the end of the fighting. Former rebels now have six months to approach the Government and vow in writing, not to commit any acts that come under the present amnesty.

**Counter-Insurgency Campaign in the East**

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 start 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. However, renewed acts of violence allegedly committed by surrendered rebels were ongoing in early 2014. In Shabunda Territory, South Kivu, a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration process was initiated, but in the absence of guidance and support, security has not improved and renewed attacks by Raiya Mutomboki rebels were reported by UNICEF late January.

Other armed groups including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the FDLR, the ADF-NALU, and various Mayi Mayi militias continue to terrorize the population across eastern DRC. On 11 December, MONUSC 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).

On 16 January, the FARDC, backed by the UN, launched an offensive, dubbed *Sokola*...
(clean out in Lingala) in the eastern Kivu region of Beni against ADF/NALU militia. The operation followed the successful November routing of the M23 militia in a joint UN-FARDC exercise. According to MONUSCO on 3 March, six UN peacekeepers were injured when rebels attacked their vehicle with a grenade near Mavivi airport in Beni, North Kivu. This attack immediately followed comments from a DRC army spokesman saying that FARDC had destroyed ADF-NALU bases.

On 1 February, OCHA reported that the offensive launched against ADF/NALU rebels was starting to have negative effects in Ituri district (Orientale) where elements of the armed group are said to have retreated into Mambasa forest and Irumu territory. Continuing combat may limit access for humanitarian agencies. So far, no major population movements have been reported, with the exception of preventive movements from Kokola towards Oicha.

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

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

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

**Security Context**

**North Kivu Province**

On 13 February, MONUSCO reported receiving reports about human rights violations including a summary execution of over 70 men and women in Nyamaboko villages I and II, Masisi territory, northeast of Goma. The executions were allegedly committed by armed groups to spread terror among the population. On 17-18 January, local sources reported that armed clashes between Government forces and elements of the APCLS erupted in Masisi territory. Violence reportedly caused population displacement in the town of Kitchanga.

On 14 January, Mayi Mayi Sheka rebels, an armed group operating from bases in Walikale territory, attacked the village of Pinga, leading to a gun fight with FARDC. MONUSCO said four Congolese soldiers were killed in the incident. In December 2013, MONUSCO discovered the bodies of 21 civilians killed in attack by suspected ADF/NALU in the area of Beni, North Kivu.

**South Kivu**

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

In late 2013, following the surrender of M23 rebellion, several armed groups, including Raiya Mutomboki rebels, announced the end of their rebellion on the condition that their fighters could join government forces or return to the civilian life. In Shabunda Territory, a DRR process was initiated, but in the absence of guidance and support the security situation did not improve and renewed exactions and clashes perpetrated by Raiya Mutomboki rebels were reported by UNICEF late January.

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

**Katanga Province**

On 29 January, the head of MONUSCO expressed concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Katanga due to renewed ethnic clashes and fights between armed groups and FARDC.

According to OCHA, Katanga province has experienced increasingly widespread insecurity since the end of December 2013, particularly in the Triangle of Death area between Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba territories, the three points of the notorious triangle, as well as in neighbouring Malemba Nkulu territory. Increasingly, the secessionist Kata Katanga (Swahili for cut off Katanga) and other Mayi Mayi rebels have fragmented into smaller groups, without a common leadership or agenda. This complicated situation has severely affected civilian communities, who have been victims of punishment raids by Mayi Mayi and are caught in fighting between FARDC and these groups. Over 60 villages were burnt down as part of a scorched earth campaign with schools and health centres also affected. Population movement is fluid and ongoing, with OCHA reporting a total of over 402,000 IDPs in the province of Katanga, of which almost 70% is in the Triangle of Death and Malemba Nkulu alone.

**Orientale Province**

OCHA said raids, looting, ambushes, and other incidents, allegedly committed by members of the LRA had been reported between 18-24 February in the Niangara - Ngilima - Bangadi triangle (Haut-Uélé District, Orientale province), a region where few national security forces are present.

The LRA, a Ugandan militant movement operating in DRC since 2005, was responsible for 164 incidents in the province in 2013. 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 2013.
On 18 February, OCHA said that intensified raids and looting, allegedly committed by FRPI have been reported in South Irumu, in the absence of the national army. According to some sources, the militia would be willing to surrender to benefit from the new amnesty law initiated by the Government.

According to OCHA on 12 February, the prevailing insecurity in CAR is starting to impact the northern part of Bas-Uele District with the arrival of heavily armed elements suspected to be ex-Seleka members. Local populations fear that continued incursions may trigger mass displacement and destabilisation.

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

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

According to OCHA as of January 2014, 6.3 million people, 8% of the population, need humanitarian assistance. In the east, 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. Due to different economic and conflict dynamics, needs vary depending on the area and the presence of humanitarian organisations. In conflict-affected areas, insecurity poses multiple protection risks and a lack of access to basic services.

Access is limited across 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 OCHA on 17 February, growing insecurity in Katanga is hindering the efforts of humanitarian agencies to deliver support. With seven UN agencies and about 50 NGOs present, Katanga has the smallest humanitarian community of DRC’s four eastern provinces.

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. In Katanga, poor quality roads, the threat of violence, and insufficient resources are hampering efforts to assist up to 400,000 people displaced by violence.

Displacement

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

IDPs

As of December 2013, the national Commission on Population Movements estimated that 2.9 million people are internally displaced, 60% located in the Kivus, and the rest in 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 25 January, OCHA reported that North Kivu is the most affected province with 1,074,500 IDPs, representing 37% of DRC’s total IDP population. This figure represents a decrease of some 49,000 people from November, due to returns recorded in areas of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru territories where security has improved. Despite this positive development, mass displacement remains a constant in the conflict affected province. As of February, 66% of IDPs were living with host families and 34% in public buildings and 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 OCHA, in late February, 80,000 people have been displaced following repeated attacks in the area since July 2013. Access to Kamango and Nobili remains limited because of insecurity and major administrative constraints. Most urgent needs include drinking water, health and food.

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

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

**South Kivu Province**

According to OCHA as of 31 December 2013, there are 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. As of 12 February, OCHA reported the return of some 26,000 IDPs in the territory. Their most urgent needs include food, NFIs, health and education.

Since mid-January, OCHA reported that over 5,900 people fled violence perpetrated by Raiya Mutomboki rebels in Kalo and Punia territories, Maniema Province to seek refuge in Shabunda territory, South Kivu. Despite 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% (2,858 against 1,894 in 2012), reflecting a deterioration in the protection of civilians.

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

**Oriente Province**

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

According to OCHA on 12 February, an estimated 5,000 people fled their homes in Niangara territory following armed attacks perpetrated by LRA members. Another 4,000 who also fled LRA attacks in December in Ango territory, Bas-Uele, are still in urgent need of assistance.

According to OCHA on 22 January, the military operation launched by FARDC against the ADF/NALU in North Kivu on 16 January is starting to affect Ituri District. Local authorities report that 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 have 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 displaced 30,000 people. OCHA expressed concerns that Ituri district may become a reservoir for both ADF/NALU and persistent M23 forces, further deteriorating the precarious security situation in southern Irumu.

Ituri is facing a crisis in South Irumu Territory, where FRPI continues to launch targeted actions against FARDC. On 29 December, FRPI rebels attacked Soke (50 km from Bunia), which displaced 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 displaced 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 rebels.

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**

As indicated by a statement by MONUSCO Chief Martin Kobler in early February, the humanitarian situation in Katanga Province is concerning. OCHA reported in January that between September and December 2013 alone, 43,000 people were displaced in Katanga province bringing the total number of IDPs to 402,000 in the province. This presents a 14% increase from September to December 2013.

Pweto is considered to be the territory most affected by violent events and hosts up to 160,000 IDPs (36% of IDPs in the province), followed by Kalemie (14.7%), Malemba Nkulu (11.8%), and Manono (11.3%). According to OCHA on 18 February, an estimated 20,000 people remain displaced across four informal camp sites in Manono, all living in dire conditions. As end December 2013, the total IDPs in Manono territory was 46,220. Most urgent needs include shelter, WASH, and health as the rainy season is currently under way in the region.

Over half (56%) of the displacement in the province is due to fighting between FARDC and Mayi Mayi militias who are seeking independence for the natural resource-rich province. Humanitarian partners face difficulties in accessing these communities due to widespread insecurity and heavy rains, which have left roads impassable. In areas where assistance can be delivered, agencies often find themselves targeted by Mayi Mayi militias seeking to pillage supplies.

According to OCHA on 5 March, the chefferie of Kasenga Nganye, one of the six chefferies of Moba territory, is most affected by activities of Mayi Mayi groups. This upsurge of violence has led to the creation of several self-defense groups to counter Mayi Mayi rebel attacks. Recurrent clashes between Mayi Mayi rebels and FARDC and between
rebels and self-defense groups continue to trigger mass displacement. Since January 2014, over 6,000 people have been displaced in Moba territory. In late 2013, Moba territory hosted 9,900 IDPs, of whom 40% have received no humanitarian aid. An assessment of the situation is under way to identify priority needs and guide interventions in the region.

According to OCHA on 22 January, over 4,100 people were forcibly displaced in Kalemie Territory following orders from authorities preparing to conduct operations against FDLR and other armed groups. As of 18 February, the number of IDPs had increased to 5,500. Most IDPs (75%) have gathered in a spontaneous site in Kampunda (40 km north of Kalemie); others are living with host families.

**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 among villages of Bondaki (Budjala territory) and Ndjeka (Gemena territory), leading to massive human rights violations and the displacement of a reported 17,000 people.

**Refugees in the DRC**

OCHA reported that North Kivu province is hosting the most IDPs in DRC, an estimated 1,074,500 IDPs, 37% of the total IDP population. This figure is a decrease of 49,000 people from November, due to returns in some areas of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru territories where security has improved.

The worsening security situation in CAR has resulted in significant refugee movements to DRC, mostly in Equateur and Orientale provinces, despite the closure of the border in December. According to UNICEF, refugees from conflict-ridden CAR continued to arrive in small waves of 30 to 40 people throughout January. In the first week of February, the city of Gbadolite (Equateur province) registered a peak of 1,100 arrivals. UNHCR reported on 26 February that 14,600 refugees from CAR have entered DRC since December 2013, bringing the total number of CAR refugees in DRC to 62,100. This marks an increase of refugees of 46% compared to 5 December 2013. Half the refugees are living in four refugee camps in Equateur and Orientale provinces, the other half with host families. In addition, 71,750 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 candidates registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 candidates who have opted for local integration.

**DRC Refugees in neighbouring countries**

Late December 2013, UNHCR reported that an estimated 430,400 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.

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

**Returnees**

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.

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 or 11% of the rural population face food insecurity and livelihood crisis. The figure shows 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 localised in five territories of three provinces: Katanga (Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories); Maniema (Punia territory); and Orientale Province (Sud Irumu territory), where the escalation of civil conflict during 2013 severely damaged local livelihood systems and caused massive displacement. In June 2013, five territories were classified 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. In the conflict-affected eastern areas, food security and livelihoods are negatively impacted by insecurity and displacement, which in turn disrupt agricultural and income generating activities. Host areas of CAR refugees are affected by food security. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, lack of 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 health system remains weak due to structural problems and violence. Epidemics are rife and the burden of infectious and non-infectious disease is one of the highest in the region. Due to extreme poverty, limited basic services, and lack of access to healthcare, maternal and child morbidity and mortality rates remain high.

**Cholera**

Cholera is endemic in DRC. So far in 2014, WHO recorded 2,413 cholera cases and 40
deaths, representing a case fatality rate of 2%. According to local health authorities, 27,000 cholera cases were recorded in 2013, including 491 deaths, reflecting a fatality rate of 1.8%, reflecting a decrease from 30,753 cholera cases and 709 deaths in 2012.

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

According to WHO, cholera outbreaks persist in four provinces: North and South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale. As of 7 February, 961 cases of cholera including two deaths have been registered in South Kivu, with Uvira, Ruzizi and Nundu health zones still reaching epidemic levels. WHO also reported 698 cases and 17 deaths in North Kivu province. The cholera epidemic continues to gain ground in Katanga Province. As of 16 February 2014, 1,173 cases of cholera including 34 deaths in 24 health zones out of 68 had been recorded in the province. In 2013, Katanga was the province most affected by cholera with 13,726 cases and 348 deaths registered against 6,930 cases and 223 deaths in 2012. The health district of Lubumbashi alone recorded almost half of cholera cases in the province.

In Orientale province, the district of Ituri registered an outbreak of 12 cases and 2 deaths, with a case fatality of 17%.

Malaria

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

Measles

As of early February, WHO reported 3,000 cases of measles and 37 deaths in nine health districts of five provinces so far in 2014. In 2013, DRC recorded 89,000 cases of measles, including 1,392 deaths.

Malnutrition

The national rate for GAM is 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 is 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 two main protection threats.

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

Updated: 11/03/2014

GAMBIA FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 17/02/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- Around 285,000 people are at risk of food insecurity across the Gambia (OCHA).
- At least 48,800 children are malnourished - an increase of 19,300 in comparison to the July 2013 figures (OCHA).

Humanitarian context and needs

Disasters

Heavy rainfall led to devastating floods in the Sahel region in August 2013. A lack of early warning systems led to over 3,300 people across the Gambia being affected. At least two people were killed and over 200 displaced and hundreds made homeless or left without income or livelihoods. As of 30 January 2014, OCHA said the flood-affected population were still vulnerable and in need of assistance.

Displacement

Refugees in Gambia

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

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

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

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

Diarrhoea

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

Malaria

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

Malnutrition

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

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

Reviewed: 04/03/2014

GUINEA FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

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

KEY CONCERNS

- Over 220,000 people (of 6.7 million) in Boké, Kindia, Conakry Bdespite (West), and N’Zérékoré (South) suffer from severe food insecurity. An additional 1.8 million people are estimated to be moderately food insecure (FAO, 28 November).
- Since the beginning of 2014, a measles outbreak has killed five children and led to at least 1,300 new suspected cases in the urban municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma in the capital Conakry (UNICEF, 12 February).
- Child health is a particular concern in Guinea. In December 2013, 139,200 children were suffering from acute malnutrition, 609,696 from chronic malnutrition, and another 1,592,892 from anaemia (WFP).
- Concerns about cyclical epidemics of cholera in Guinea remain with 291 cases and 29 deaths reported. The rainy season, dirty water, and population movement are amplifying the spread (OCHA 4 November).

Politics and Security

Legislative elections late last year led to the transition back to civilian rule after a 2008 military coup. The population lacks even the most basic social services and the country’s infrastructure is in urgent need of improvement. President Condé is under intense pressure to deliver concrete changes ahead of the next presidential vote in 2015.
Political context

Just four months after the presidential elections, the entire government resigned on January 15 as part of a transition process. On 20 January, President Condé issued a decree naming a new 35-member cabinet, but left out opposition figures from the new appointments. Under the new arrangement, Mohamed Said Fofana will continue as Prime Minister after being reinstated three days after resigning. François Louceny Fall will continue in the position of Foreign Minister. In total, 19 ministers were reinstated to the cabinet causing some to question the purpose of the reshuffle.

With the exception of the Hope for National Development, all opposition parties now have a seat at the newly elected National Assembly. Criticism of the presidential decree to reconvene the National Transition Council however remains. On 25 November, at least one person was killed and several were wounded during a protest over the results of the parliamentary elections on 28 September. Guinea’s opposition parties called their supporters to the streets to protest a Supreme Court decision released on 15 November that rejected all opposition challenges to the ruling party's victory in the elections.

On 12 December, the European Union announced full resumption of its development cooperation with Guinea. After the 2008 coup, the EU suspended its aid setting out a roadmap for gradual resumption of aid to accompany the return to constitutional order and democracy. With the holding of parliamentary elections in September 2013, Guinea fulfilled the conditions for full resumption.

Security context

National context

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

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

Inter-Communal Violence

In July 2013, the Government reported that a sudden outbreak of ethnic violence killed at least 100 people between 15-17 July, a significant increase compared to the previously announced death toll of 58. UNHCR reported on 19 July that 242 were wounded after Guerze tribesmen, who form the majority population in the forest region, allegedly attacked three ethnic Konianke in the town of Koule. Fighting spread to the provincial capital N’Zerekore, 570 km southeast of Conakry, and clashes reached the town of Beyla on 17 July. According to the UN, security and defense forces were deployed to restore order with the support of additional troops from Macenta and Gueckedou.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

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

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in mid-February, Guinea’s food security outlook until August 2014 will remain unchanged from 2013 and the five-year average. Guinea is expected to experience Minimal Food Security (IPC Phase 1) until June and during the lean season, expected in June-September 2014. In late January, above-average ongoing harvests of rain-fed crops and, in some cases, the first harvests of off-season crops are improving food security conditions by providing households with a diversified supply of food. In addition, markets are functioning normally. Prices for locally grown and imported rice were stable between November and December due to the arrival of newly harvested crops in the local markets, relatively stable rice prices on world markets, and average local demand. Stable prices and average incomes will improve poor households’ access to staple foods and will enable them to meet their food needs without any major difficulties during the entire 2013/2014 consumption year (October 2013 to September 2014). As a result, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food security outcomes will continue through at least June 2014.

Health and Nutrition

Measles

UNICEF reported a sharp increase in measles cases, echoing an earlier confirmation by the Ministry of Health of 1,300 new suspected cases and five child deaths in and around Conakry since the start of 2014. This figure represents a dramatic increase in the 2013 figures provided by the IFRC which, on February 1, said only 54 of 215 cases of measles had been confirmed. UNICEF, MSF and the GoG have started a massive emergency campaign in Conakry, rolling out to affected communities throughout the country, to vaccinate over 1.7 million children.

The cases documented in December 2013 and early January 2014 showed that the measles outbreak had crossed the epidemic threshold in several regions, with 143 suspected cases and 38 confirmed positive. Periodic measles outbreaks occur in Guinea, the last outbreak in 2009 saw a caseload of 4,755, with ten deaths, with the region of Conakry most affected.

On 25 January, the Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak in the urban
municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma in Conakry city. On January 27, the health authorities reported they were struggling to control the spread of the disease which by then had reached 15 districts (among them, Boké, Coyah, Dubreka, Kissidougou, and Mandiana). One child was reported dead from measles in mid-November and a further 37 are now infected out of 400 suspected cases. Almost all the cases have been reported among children <10 years. According to the Demographic Health Survey, only 37% of Guinea’s children have been fully vaccinated. Low immunization coverage has raised fears of a major epidemic, with the Ministry of Health conceding that the current stock of measles vaccine is insufficient.

**Cholera**

On 4 November 2013, OCHA highlighted ongoing concerns about a cyclical epidemic of cholera in Guinea. 291 cases and 29 deaths have so far been reported. The rainy season, dirty water and population movement are amplifying the spread. Plan is distributing hygiene kits and medicines in the most affected coastal areas of Coyah and Dubreak.

As reported by OCHA, Guinea experienced severe cholera outbreaks in 2012 and continued to report cases throughout 2013. Nevertheless, the country has witnessed a steady decline in the number of cases in 2013 with 294 cases of cholera reported nationwide since the beginning of the year compared to 5,523 cases (and 105 deaths) in September 2012.

**Malnutrition**

In December 2013, WFP highlighted in its nutrition fact sheet that child malnutrition remains a serious problem in Guinea. At least 139,200 children suffer from acute malnutrition, another 609,696 from chronic malnutrition, and at least 1,592,892 from anaemia.

*Updated: 05/03/2014*

**MALI CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

24 February: Malian authorities found five corpses in army uniforms in two graves near the headquarters of a former military junta during part of an investigation into officers who briefly seized power in a coup in 2012. The discovery brought to 30 the number of bodies dug from mass graves around the junta headquarters in Kati, about 20 km north of the capital Bamako. Mali’s new government is trying to ascertain the fate of the 21 paratroopers who disappeared two years ago after the coup and whose bodies were discovered last December in a mass grave in Diago in southwestern Mali, close to Bamako.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The security situation, particularly in the north, remains volatile. Civilian rule was re-established mid-2013, but a truce with Tuareg separatists in the north remains fragile. Banditry, car-jacking, and kidnapping incidents have been reported in the north, and access for 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.

- An estimated 200,000 people are currently internally displaced across the country, largely as a result of conflict and food insecurity (IDMC).

- At least 3.3 million are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, 30 January).

- An estimated 136,000 children suffer from SAM, another 360,000 from MAM. These figures represent a decrease compared to July 2013 UNICEF estimates of 660,000 GAM and 210,000 SAM.

**Politics and Security**

Mali continues to face political challenges in 2014, including restoration of security in the north and the further strengthening of key government institutions after the presidential and legislative elections. In late January, OCHA raised concerns about limited access to basic social services and the fragile capacity of public administration, citing them as key drivers of the ongoing crisis.

**Political Context**

**International Presence and Military operations**

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

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

On 18 February, following a request by the UN, Sweden sent a few hundred soldiers, in addition to the 70 troops sent in June, in support of the MINUSMA mission. On January 15, the second contingent of Chinese peacekeepers to the MINUSMA mission arrived. On 14 January, President Hollande confirmed France’s military presence will remain at 1,600 soldiers in February and be reduced to 1,000 by the end of spring.

**Regional context**

On 16 February, the presidents of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to monitor and align their development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritanian President Abdel Aziz; and follows a pledge of the international community of $8 billion to these countries to fight terrorism and support development within the region. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad in the next six months.
On 19 January during a meeting in Algiers, President Keïta welcomed the Algerian government’s 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 organise and support the (voluntary) return of Malian refugees from Mauritania.

The Tuareg Rebellion and the National Reconciliation Process

On 18 February, in UN led preliminary talks in the capital Bamako, Malian rebels agreed with the government to a roadmap and a timetable for restricting members of their armed groups to barracks in northern Mali, including in Lere, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu. The long-delayed meeting in Bamako is part of a series of negotiations designed to bring an end to recurrent Tuareg revolts in the northern regions.

On 3-4 February, a UN Security Council delegation visited Mali, travelling first to Mopti to meet with the Governor, local authorities and civil society, and then to a MINUSMA camp for Peacekeepers from Togo. The next day, the delegation met government officials and representatives from the three main armed groups. Following the meetings, the delegation called upon both sides to push forward with peace talks and expressed concern that a failure to do so might risk a further radicalization of fighters, who must lay down their weapons in accordance with the provisions of the peace accord while awaiting disarmament regulations that need to be developed in cooperation with MINUSMA, and undo fragile security gains made in recent months.

Background to the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion

In January 2012, several insurgent groups, united in the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) began fighting against the government for independence and greater autonomy for the Azawad region in the north. The rebellion initially pitted Tuareg tribesmen, who have been waging a rebellion for decades over territorial dispute, against the Malian government. Also starting an insurgency in opposition of the government, however not in unison with the Tuareg, were Islamist rebel groups Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA) who wanted to impose the sharia in Azawad and push Tuareg rebels out of major cities. These developments led the MNLA to seek negotiations with the government. However, the conflict was then further complicated by a military coup in March 2013 and, later, fighting between the above-mentioned Tuareg and Islamist rebels. At the request of the Malian government, the French military launched Operation Serval in January 2013 in response to territorial gains and a push south by Islamist fighters. Malian and French forces have now recaptured most of the north, but the security situation remains volatile.

In late November 2013, the MNLA ended the ceasefire and took up arms, rupturing 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. To facilitate dialogue, President Keïta lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion in November and created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region to seek solutions to the Tuareg issue.

Security Context

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

On 26 February, a vehicle belonging to Médecins du Monde (MdM) ran over an improvised explosive device near the airstrip of Kidal airport seriously injuring two passengers. There is no evidence that the NGO was specifically targeted, but the number of incident involving humanitarian workers is increasing.

On 24 February, Malian authorities found five corpses in army uniforms in two graves near the headquarters of a former military junta during part of an investigation into officers who briefly seized power in a coup in 2012. The discovery brought to 30 the number of bodies dug from mass graves around the junta headquarters in Kati, about 20 km north of the capital Bamako. Mali's new government is trying to ascertain the fate of the 21 paratroopers who disappeared two years ago after the coup and whose bodies were discovered last December in a mass grave in Diago in southwestern Mali, close to Bamako.

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

On 6 February, 30 people were killed in clashes between Fulani and Tuareg communities in Tamkoutat, near Gao, northern Mali. Members of the Tuareg and Fulani communities accuse each other of cattle rustling and organizing robberies. Already strained relations between minority Tuaregs and other communities in the northern region, such as the Fulani and Songhai have deteriorated since the launch in early 2012 of a Tuareg rebellion in alliance with jihadi groups also linked to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

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 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, renamed in July as MINUSMA.

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.

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 fighters 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 northern regions due to the volatile insecurity. According to OCHA, humanitarian access continues to improve and aid is increasingly accessible in the central and southern regions. The destruction of infrastructure, and a lack of materials to support basic services remain major challenges.

Displacement

Due to the conflict and socio-political factors, massive population displacement has taken place.

IDPs

In late February, IOM and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center reported that around 200,000 people are currently internally displaced. This figure is a decrease from 350,000 in June 2013 and can largely be attributed to an improvement in security. Bamako hosts the largest number of IDPs (46,200), followed by the northern regions of Tombuktu (44,000), Kidal (34,100), and Gao (29,300). However, the situation remains volatile, notably in the South, which currently hosts 45,000 IDPs in Koulikoro, Segou, Mopti, Sikasso, and Kayes.

On 21 January, USAID and IOM reported 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).

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

Malian Refugees

On 22 January, UNHCR reported that around 170,000 Malian have taken refuge in neighbouring countries: 68,500 in Mauritania, 50,000 in Niger and 49,900 in Burkina Faso.

Refugees in Mali

Mali hosts over 14,000 refugees from countries including Ivory Coast and Mauritania.

Returnees

As of 30 January, OCHA reports that spontaneous returns of Malian refugees from Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Niger continue, with 5,706 Malian refugees returning between June and December 2013. Also between June and December, 2,030 Malian refugees, hosted in Mbera camp in Mauritania, and 912 refugees hosted in camps and settlements in Burkina Faso have spontaneously returned to Mali.

The majority of Malian refugees in neighbouring countries are, however, very cautious and say they are willing to return only when security improves considerably. An increase in the number of incidents, such as the attacks by armed groups, especially in Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu, since September are not encouraging. Consequently, some Malians continue to leave the country in search of a safe haven in neighbouring countries. Some 2,600 Malian went to Niger in November and December, following fighting between the Malian Army and a rebel group in Aghazaraghan, Gao region. They found refuge in Ininti, the Tahoua, region, where they received UNHCR assistance. The volatile security situation in Mali is also aggravated by recurrent inter-communal tensions. In November 700 nomadic Peulhs from Niger, who were grazing their livestock in Mali, hastily returned to their country after fighting erupted with Tuareg communities. Several men were killed on both sides.

As of 9 January, UNHCR states the security situation in northern Mali remains volatile. There is a risk of reprisal attacks for refugee returnees and returning IDPs, and socio-economic conditions have not 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 3,000) from CAR, 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 6th of January. 750 others are in urgent need of evacuation. Malian authorities will assist destitute and traumatized migrants upon arrival.

Food Security

As late February, OCHA reported that 2.3 million people are moderately food insecure, while 970,000 are reported to be severely food insecure. Many households are expected to continue to face food insecurity due to poor 2013 crops in some areas and to the consequences of the 2012/2013 conflict. The estimated results of the agro-pastoral season, according to the GoM and its partners, indicate a total drop of 9% in agricultural outputs compared to the five-year average (2008-2013), and a drop of 6% compared to the difficult 2011-2012 crop year.

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

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

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

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

Health and Nutrition

Child Malnutrition

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

The Global Nutrition Cluster on 3 February shared findings on chronic malnutrition among children <5. In northern Segou and in the Kayes region, 25,000-40,000 children are affected, and in Bamako, Southern Segou, and Sikasso (Koutiala region) over 40,000 children are suffering from chronic malnutrition.

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

Protection

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

Updated: 05/03/2014

MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

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

KEY CONCERNS

- 470,000 people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity (OCHA January 2014).

- At least 140,000 were affected by the floods of August/September 2013 and remain vulnerable (OCHA).

- Mauritania’s Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) level has already surpassed the estimated 2014 caseload (SMART survey) representing a 25% increase from 2013 (125,263 GAM and 30,741 SAM) with a reported 31,000 SAM and 95,000 MAM children as of 30 January (OCHA).

- Locust infestations in the north and northeast regions continue to put crop production at risk despite ongoing containment efforts (FAO).

- Security challenges continue to be a problem in Mbéra refugee camp on the border with Mali. The camp currently hosts 66,200 Malian refugees. Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali (UNHCR).

Politics and Security

Political Context

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

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

**National Context**

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

Following the first parliamentary polls since 2006, President Abdel Aziz’s Union for the Republic party won the majority of seats on 22 December 2013. The National Electoral Commission announced a record turnout of 75% of the 1.2 million registered voters. However, the vote was boycotted by most parties in the 11-member Coordination of Democratic Opposition. The credibility of the government continues to be questioned by much of the northern populations who claim they are being marginalised with regard to the provision of basic services.

**Security Context**

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

A high-level international delegation, co-led by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the League of Arab States, and OCHA, visited Mauritania in early February. Participants included representatives from Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the African Union, ECHO, and several NGOs from the Gulf region. During the five-day mission, the delegation met with Government, UN agencies, humanitarian partners, and national NGOs to discuss the potential for strategic cooperation. The delegates travelled to the southern regions of Brakna and Gorgol, meeting with actors on the ground and with communities affected by food insecurity, malnutrition, and floods to explore concrete assistance support.

Local authorities and communities highlighted that this mission was their first interaction with such a diverse group of partners keen to assist. The participants committed to strengthen support for Mauritania, build concrete and innovative partnerships, and further advocate with their respective constituencies to keep Mauritania on the humanitarian agenda.

The visit also served to connect participating NGOs with national and local actors and develop concrete cooperation projects, both bilaterally and within the framework of the Mauritania Strategic Response Plan 2014–2016.

**Displacement**

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. The remote area of Mauritania where Mbéra camp is located is poor, has high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition and 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.

**Food Security**

On 30 January, OCHA reported that 470,000 people are now at risk of food insecurity in the country, marking a decrease from 90,000 over a year ago. Another 140,000 are still affected by the 2013 floods. The overall vulnerability of those at risk from food insecurity and drought is exacerbated by increasing food prices and a scarcity of resources. Limited access to water and sanitation is aggravating the spread of epidemics, such as Rift Valley fever, cholera and meningitis, especially during the rainy season.

As of 20 February, FEWSNET reported that the 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was recorded as average. However, erratic rainfall in localized areas of the southern Sahel resulted in crop losses of up to 50% and below-average pasture growth, including in southern Mauritania. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households. Pasture and water availability for livestock is also poorer than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than normal.

National food insecurity is further influenced by twenty million people currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. Across the region, an estimated five million children <5 are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis, and pressure on resources.
Northern Guidimaka in Mauritania is anticipated to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity between April and June. In these worst-affected areas, the ability of households to expand their coping in the coming months beyond current levels will be limited and as a result, the poor are expected to either face consumption deficits or only be able to marginally meet their basic consumption needs through irreversible coping strategies.

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

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 2013’s erratic rains and the presence of 66,392 Malian refugees in the east of the country.

Harvesting of the 2013 cereal crops was completed in December and an above-average harvest was recorded for the second year in a row with 33% above the previous five years average, according to FAO. By contrast, pastures have been affected by insufficient rains in several regions, notably in Brakna, Gorgol, and Guidimaka.

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 are anticipated in both Senegal and Mali due to reduced cereal harvests in these countries.

**Health and Nutrition**

On 11 January, 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**

On 30 January, OCHA reported that 31,000 children suffer from SAM and a further 95,000 children suffer from MAM in Mauritania. According to ECHO, 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: 05/03/2014

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**NIGER FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new developments this week. Last update: 21/02/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- At least 418,000 people are classed as severely food insecure across Niger. Another 4.2 million are food insecure (OCHA 30 January).
- Around 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM January 2014).
- In mid-February, fourteen new cases of cholera in the Maradi and Zinder region have given rise to concerns that Niger may be affected by the cholera epidemic in neighbouring Nigeria.
- A cereal deficit in the agricultural regions of Tillabery and Zindi 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).
- 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 16 February, the presidents of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to institutionalize alignment as well as monitor and coordinate their development and security policies. The G5-Sahel is headed by the President of the African Union, Mauritanian President Abdel Aziz; and follows a pledge of the international community of 8 billion dollars to these countries to fight terrorism and support development within the region. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad in the next six months.

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

On 8 February, 36 parties supportive of Niger’s President Issoufou mobilised 18,000 people to rally against the opposition in the capital Niamey, in response to large-scale opposition-held protests which took place in December 2013. Additionally, the government accused a leading opposition figure of calling for a coup and inciting ethnic strife. Over the past two weeks, at least six journalists and three civil society leaders have been arrested.
over similar accusations.

On 28 December, thousands of protestors from the opposition party Alliance for the Republic, Democracy and Reconciliation (ARDR) took to the streets to express their discontent over the reported 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 before.

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.

Security context

Since May 2013, insecurity has been rising in Niger and the region, subsequently to a series of crises in neighbouring countries, namely in Libya, Mali, and Nigeria. The fragile socio-economic and political environment is further affected by terrorist spill-over, including the Nigerian Boko Haram Islamist rebel group, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Additionally, the country is facing increasing communal tensions.

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

Displacement

Refugees in Niger

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that an estimated 87,000 refugees reside in Niger. Crises in neighbouring countries have led to the arrival of refugees from Mali and Nigeria. When fighting broke out in Mali in 2012, thousands of people fled the country and crossed into neighbouring countries. So far, UNHCR reported that some 50,000 Malian refugees crossed into Niger, 80% of them being women and children. Malian refugees reportedly reside in camps, nomadic pasture areas or urban settings.

Since May 2013, Southeastern Niger (Diffa region) has witnessed an influx of almost 40,000 displaced persons from Northern Nigeria following the declaration of the state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in Nigeria on 14 May 2013. The majority of the refugees are women and children who live with host families in Bosso, Abadam, Main Soroo, Diffa, Kablewa, Tchoukoudjani, Garin Amadou and Baroua. These refugees fled into Niger due to clashes between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian military in northeastern Nigeria.

Thus far, the government has reportedly been slow in giving the refugee status to the newly arrived Nigerians, despite a decree issued in early December granting the status to refugees fleeing the states affected by the State of Emergency in Nigeria. On 10 February, however, the Government – with UNHCR and UNICEF – launched a civil documentation campaign.

Returnees

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that some 44,300 Nigeriens returned from the northern regions of Nigeria.

Food Security

On 14 February, ECHO reported that, according to the latest data, 4.3 million Nigeriens – 24% of the population – are food insecure, with some 420,000 individuals at severe risk. The 2014 estimation of the overall number of Nigeriens at risk of food insecurity stands at 7.5 million.

As of late February, FEWSNET reported there are localized production deficits in agropastoral areas of the Tillabéri, Tahoua, and Zinder regions, with poor households resorting to market purchase earlier than usual for their food needs. Market prices are above-normal, making these purchases much more difficult for this group of poor households, who will be facing Stressed levels of acute food security (IPC Phase 2) between January and June.

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

Certain households in the above-mentioned areas will have trouble meeting their basic food needs between January and June of this year in spite of their efforts to augment their incomes and limit their non-food spending. These households will experience Crisis levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). However, since these crisis conditions will affect less than 20% of households in different regions, the zone classification remains as Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

In spite of localized pockets of acute food insecurity in Tillabéri, Tahoua, Zinder and Diffa regions, most households across the country will however be able to meet their basic food and non-food needs without resorting to irreversible coping strategies. Thus, the
nationwide food security situation will be marked by Minimal levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and June 2014.

As of 7 February, ECHO reports that the ongoing violence in Nigeria and the displacement of 40,000 into Niger, consequently, caused for farmland to be affected in large areas. The ICRC adds that 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.

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

As of 20 February, FEWSNET states that regionally, 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was average. However, erratic rainfall in localized areas of the southern Sahel resulted in crop losses of up to 50 percent and below-average pasture growth, including in southern Niger. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households. Pasture and water availability for livestock is also poorer than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than normal. Though market prices in the western and central Sahel will remain at near average levels, atypically tight supply, as well as growing demand, will cause unusually high staple prices in the eastern marketing basin, particularly in Niger and the Sahelian belt of Chad.

Health and Nutrition

Child mortality

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

Cholera

As of 30 January, OCHA reports there are new cases of cholera in Maradi and Zinder. Resurfacing after a month, in Aguié Madarounfa and Maradi Commune-Maradi region, 10 cases were confirmed with no deaths. In 2013, seven cases were confirmed and one person died. In Zinder, 4 cases, including 3 cases in 2014, were reported, with no deaths. The last epidemic was in Maradi city in April-May 2012.

Health authorities stated that the epidemic is linked to the one raging in the neighbouring regions of Nigeria, where 6,600 cases and 229 deaths were recorded in 2013 only. Contamination is mainly due to polluted water, limited access to safe drinking water, unsanitary conditions and daily contacts in trade and population movement.

Diphtheria

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

Malnutrition

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that some 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), amounting to a caseload of 1 million children under 5 suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM).

This represents an increase compared to 2012 and 2013, when respectively 567,700 and 625,500 children were suffering from GAM. UNICEF reported in mid-October that more than 2,500 children under 5 died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

Reviewed: 05/03/2014

SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

27 February: The armed rebel group Al Shabaab carried out a bomb attack near the Somali intelligence headquarters in Mogadishu, killing seven people.

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity remain widespread across Somalia, particularly in the south central areas where armed non-state actors such as Al Shabaab militants 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 violence.

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

- An estimated 857,000 people are at Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4), 74% of whom are believed to be IDPs.
Additionally, two 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

Somalia has suffered from a chronic fragility of state institutions as a result of two decades of civil war. In mid-February, a leaked UN report accused the Federal Somali government of providing weapons to militant group Al Shabaab. These claims had been made in earlier reports, prior to the nomination of Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed as a new prime minister on 12 December.

In early February, 700 soldiers demonstrated against their dismissal from the Somali army. This development raised fears amongst local observers who reported that the government had neither disarmed the fired soldiers nor provided them with appropriate reintegration plans.

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 Mahmud appointed Ahmed as a new Prime Minister 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 Prime Minister 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

Somalia has been in a state of deep instability for over two decades, with conflict intensifying significantly from 2006 onward. In a context of multiple competing powers across the country, violence is widespread 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.

In late February, Al Shabaab vowed to recapture all Somali territory that it lost in 2013, after the government said a military offensive, led by an expanded African peacekeeping force, would drive them out of their remaining strongholds by the end 2014. The group claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in the capital Mogadishu in February, with a death toll reaching 28 people. On 27 February, a bomb attack near the Somali intelligence headquarters in Mogadishu killed seven people. On 21 February, Al Shabaab rebels launched a major suicide attack against the heavily-fortified presidential palace, triggering a firefight with security forces in the capital. While the President was unharmed, nine people died in the attack, including four insurgents and five Somali soldiers or officials. The incidents took place two days after the government announced the military offensive to drive the militants out of their remaining strongholds by end 2014.

On 13 February, a car bomb killed seven people and wounded another 15 near the airport in Mogadishu. The attack reportedly targeted a UN convoy and was later claimed by Al Shabaab. According to the UN mission in Somalia, the victims were both civilians and Somali security guards.

On 10 February, two car bombs wounded at least five people in Mogadishu. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but authorities blamed the incident on Al Shabaab who were responsible for a twin bombing in the capital on 2 January, which killed 11 people. In early January, the militant group said the first 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 over the past year.

Observers have pointed out that the resurgence of terrorism in the past weeks is due both to insufficient military commitment by the Somali government and African Union (AU), and to the state’s inability to provide basic services in large sways of the country, fuelling discontent and armed groups’ leverage for recruitment campaigns.

Although security in 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.

Until late 2010, Al Shabaab controlled much of Mogadishu and surrounds, but 2011-2012 marked considerable strategic gains by the joint Somali and AU-led campaign, especially after the deployment of Ethiopian and Kenyan troops in 2011. 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 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.

Expansion of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peace keeping force was authorized in November, and was expected to launch a broad offensive along with Somali military troops.

The 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 contested 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 in 1998, at a time when fighting raged throughout 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 refused to share power and foreign aid with the region.

Puntland is 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 ten 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 Gaigala Mountains, reportedly inflicting casualties.

Military Operations and International Presence

In late February, the Federal Government of Somalia and the AMISOM announced an upcoming military offensive in southern and central regions, where Al Shabaab and other smaller armed groups still hold swaths of rural territory, towns and villages. In November, the AU's Peace and Security Council endorsed the recommendation to boost AMISOM with an additional 4,400 soldiers, taking its total strength to more than 22,000. The UN Secretary General urged member 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.

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.

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, including Al Shabaab, in late December and early January in the areas of Bakool, Bay, Gedo, and Lower and Middle Juba. In southern Somalia where floods have affected the population since November, humanitarian access is reportedly hampered by bureaucratic impediments restraining the recruitment of staff and the implementation of assistance operations.

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, market activities, and 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 worked in Somalia since 1991 announced an immediate stop to all Somali operations after attacks against its staff increased. 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. Most of the displaced are in the south-central region (893,000), and the rest in Puntland (130,000) and Somaliland (85,000). In the south central region, Mogadishu records a high concentration, with 369,000 IDPs living in makeshift camps.

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, trends show that eviction of IDPs by private landowners has increased. The proposed solution is to move the IDPs to the Deynille 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

On 17 January, the UNHCR reported that more than one million Somalis were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, the majority in Kenya (around 477,000), Ethiopia (246,000), and Yemen (240,000).

On 28 February, OCHA announced that 30,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya over the course of 2013. Although their status is not specified, it is implied that these people were mostly Somali refugees. As of 17 February, there were 353,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab. 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. 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 onto the plain. Water has contaminated wells, disrupted markets, destroyed crops, and delayed planting crucial to the next crop season. Additionally, a major frontline between AU troops and 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 reported that heavy rains affected IDP settlements on the northern coast of the Bari region and inland in the regions of Karkaar, Nugaal, and Mudug. The cyclone caused substantial damage to houses and infrastructure, and preliminary findings of the Multi-cluster Initial Rapid Assessment indicated that the storm damaged and contaminated large clean water sources, leading to half the affected population no longer being able to access sanitation and sustainable clean water sources. The assessment also indicated that access to basic health care services was very limited in the affected areas. In early December, OCHA reported that the storm also hit parts of Somaliland, where it caused the deaths of at least ten people and over 500 livestock, mostly in the Awdal, Sanaag, and Woqooyi Galbeed regions. As of 28 February, an IOM report indicated that a screening for malaria carried out in nine cyclone-affected IDP settlements in the coastal city of Bogasso, which covered over 27,000 people, found that 7.9% of the people were tested as positive.

**Food Security**

While the situation has improved since the 2011 Horn of African drought and famine, when the number of people requiring urgent assistance peaked at four million. As of February, according to Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) reporting on an assessment conducted in November-December 2013, the food security situation has only slightly improved, limited by insecurity, disasters, and a below average harvest.

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 IDPs. Most are located in the northern regions of Sanaag, Sool, Bari, and Nugaal, the central regions of Mudug, Galgadud and Hiran, and the southern regions of Middle Shabelle, Middle and Lower Juba. In late February, according to FSNAU, food prices were reported as stable over the months of December-January. However, cereal prices were reported as significantly higher than at the same period in 2013. In addition, maize price is increasing in the Southern regions of Juba and Shabelle.

In the northeastern regions of Bari and Nugaal in Puntland, the areas hit by a devastating cyclone in November, the widespread loss of assets, livelihoods, and livestock still present a challenge to the local population. In the south, 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. Rainfalls are expected to be below-average to average throughout the Gu rainy season (March-May).

**Health and Nutrition**

**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 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 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 immunisation 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**

Nurtition 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 GAM. An estimated 203,000 children <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 SAM, which represents an increase from 45,000 at the same time in 2013. Most of the malnourished are 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: 05/03/2014**

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

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**9 March:** The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) indicated that five East African countries expressed willingness to send peacekeeping troops to stabilise conflict-affected areas and protect South Sudan’s oil fields and other vital installations, as part of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM).

As of **6 March**, OCHA reported that an estimated 932,000 people have now been displaced by the crisis – 226,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia. As of early March, humanitarian partners indicated that an estimated 4.9 million people – over 40% of the total population – are in need of urgent assistance across the country. The situation remained highly volatile in the states of Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile and in the capital Juba, with reports of clashes and new displacements.

As of **early March**, negotiations between the warring parties have reportedly been slow, with South Sudanese rivals failing to reach consensus on the Declaration of Principles and framework for Dialogue, which would be the basis of negotiations. According to latest reports, talks have been adjourned to allow consultations on the two sides, and are expected to resume on 20 March.

**Late February:** Renewed tensions have been reported in the contested Abyei area, which lies at the centre of the Sudan–South Sudan border. In early March, South Sudan accused its northern neighbour of killing 77 people in the region, alleging that the Sudanese army (SAF) carried out repeated and coordinated attacks on civilian settlements in a bid to occupy the area claimed by both countries. These claims followed accusations by the Sudanese government that the South Sudan army (SPLA) attacked Sudanese citizens north of the 1956 border line, and called on Juba to withdraw its forces, while Juba denied the presence of SPLA troops in the area.

**25 February:** The UN released a report indicating the presence of 660 SPLA forces and police elements in different parts of Abyei, along with heavy artillery and military-type settlements. This represents an additional violation of the 2011 Agreement on Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for Abyei, which includes the redeployment of all Sudanese and South Sudanese forces out of it.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The security situation in South Sudan remains volatile with ongoing conflict and clashes, particularly in Jonglei and Upper Nile states.
- Over 932,000 displaced, including 226,000 in neighbouring countries and 77,000 people sheltering in ten UN peacekeeping bases (OCHA).
- Up to 300,000 IDPs are currently living in 33 sites that 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 located in the eastern states worst affected by the crisis. Overall, an estimated 4.9 million people are considered in urgent need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA).

**ACAPS released a Disaster Needs Analysis on South Sudan in February 2014.**

**Politics and Security**

Since fighting broke out in mid-December 2013, violence has rapidly spread across the eastern part of the country, mostly in Jonglei and Upper Nile states. Despite the signing of a ceasefire in late January, violence continues and tensions are running high, especially in the northern states bordering Sudan.

**Sudan–South Sudan**

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

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.

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

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

National Context
Violence erupted in the capital Juba in mid-December and quickly spread to the
northeastern states. Clashes have led to a decrease in oil production, and concerns
remain that the country is on the brink of civil war. The unrest quickly deteriorated into all-
out conflict following an alleged coup by former Vice-President Machar, who was sacked in
July for leading a dissident group within the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement
(SPLM). Violence has 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 and Machar's Nuer group.

Peace negotiations
As of early March, observers expressed concerns that negotiations between the warring
parties have been slow, with South Sudanese rivals failing to reach consensus on the
Declaration of Principles and Framework for Dialogue, which would be the basis for
negotiations. Government representatives reportedly attributed the failure to the mediators
seeking inclusion of the seven former government officials who were arrested in mid-
December for their involvement in the alleged coup that ignited the crisis. Another sticking
point was reportedly the signing of a permanent ceasefire agreement, and Government
accusations that members of the opposition forces are protesting against the mediator’s
inclusion of some areas within the joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

According to latest reports, talks have been adjourned to allow consultations on the two
sides, and are expected to resume on 20 March.

Despite the securing of a fragile ceasefire in late January, a second round of negotiations
between South Sudan's warring parties had stalled on 11 February, due to Juba's refusal to
meet the opposition’s demands, namely the withdrawal of Ugandan forces and the release
of the four political detainees still in Juba's custody. South Sudan's government released
seven of 11 political detainees in late January, but vowed to put on trial the remaining four
key leaders accused of attempting to topple President Kiir. The fate of the four detainees
was set to be part of the second round of negotiations, but the opposition reportedly
insisted that they be released before the resumption of dialogue.

On 26 February, IGAD presented a proposal for an interim government in South Sudan,
pending presidential elections. Both warring parties accepted the proposal in principle,
while dismissing rumours that this interim government would exclude the participation of
the two key actors, namely South Sudan's President Salva Kiir, and former Vice-President
Riek Machar.

In early February, IGAD dispatched a 14-person strong joint technical committee,
comprising 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 to initiate the establishment of the
Monitoring and Verification Mechanism for the ceasefire implementation and was expected
to meet with state and non-state stakeholders. On 7 February, the delegation reported
back to IGAD Special Envoys in Addis Ababa to provide recommendations before the
beginning of the second round of peace talks between Juba and the rebels.

In a separate political development in late February, an exiled South Sudanese opposition
organisation requested to participate in the peace talks. The South Sudan United
Democratic Alliance (SSUDA), which is based in neighbouring Ethiopia, announced that it
was backing the formation of an interim government as proposed by IGAD mediators, and
insisted that the negotiations must be inclusive.

Security Context
Although the cessation of hostilities agreement, signed by both parties in late January, led
to a considerable reduction in violence in February, both sides continue to trade
accusations that each is violating the terms of the truce. Reports continue to indicate
fighting on the ground.

According to OCHA in early March, the situation remained highly volatile in Jonglei, Unity,
Upper Nile and the capital Juba. In Upper Nile state, several clashes were reported near
the oil fields in Adar. In areas around Melut and Malakal, the conflict was reportedly
moving north, and aid agencies indicated that both parties continued to mobilise, possibly
ahead of further clashes. In Jonglei, tension in Duk and Twic East counties continued to
trigger displacement towards Awerial county, Lakes state. Fighting was reported in Juba
on 5 March between rival factions, but was contained by 6 March.

As of late February, the security situation in the key oil-hub town of Malakal, Upper Nile,
remained tense following heavy fighting between Government and opposition forces from
18 to 20 February. According to latest reports, the town was deserted, with a strong
presence of opposition forces near the airport and hospital. The fighting represented the
biggest clash since the ceasefire was signed in late January, and was reportedly triggered
by an assault by the insurgents.

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

In Jonglei on 23 February, clashes were reported in Gadiang, north of the state capital Bor, between the South Sudanese army (SPLA) and the rebel SPLA-in-Opposition. According to military sources, over 170 insurgents were killed in three rounds of attacks, while the SPLA lost 19 soldiers.

In a separate event on 24 February, local authorities reported that over 68,000 people were displaced from their villages in Duk county. Jonglei, following an attack by reported rebel fighters which allegedly killed three civilians. Most displaced were said to be moving toward Twic East county. In the states of Central and Eastern Equatoria, the security situation remained relatively calm. In Unity, the town of Bentiu was reportedly tense but stable, with new arrivals in the UN base fearing a possible attack by armed forces. In Leer town, no new incidents were reported, but humanitarian partners observed significant military presence in the area.

In early 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 between Rumbek and Yirol. In Unity state, OCHA indicated that clashes continued in Guit and Leer counties. 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.

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 two months 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; although the number of gunshot patients has significantly reduced since early February, possibly due to decreased clashes between the two warring parties compared to January.

**Military presence**

On 9 March, IGAD indicated that five East African countries had expressed willingness to send peacekeeping troops to stabilise conflict-affected areas and protect South Sudan’s oil fields and other vital installations, as part of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM).

In late February, Uganda announced it would withdraw its troops from South Sudan, where it is supporting the SPLA, as soon as the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) is ready to take over. The African Union’s Peace and Security Council has been notified and is reportedly expected to meet in the coming weeks to decide on the modalities for the deployment of the African emergency force.

On 4 February, a contingent of 266 additional peacekeepers arrived in South Sudan, and more 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**

The current unrest is occurring against a 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 18 February in Warrap state, local sources reported two cattle raids in Akop Payam, Tonk North county, and Paliang Payam, Tonj East county. While the attackers could not be identified, the incidents were reportedly different from typical cattle raids, notably due to the use of heavy weapons. Local authorities indicated that nine civilians and over 150 attackers were killed in the fighting, while approximately 2,000 people were displaced. Already in early February, local sources reported that at least 42 people were killed in attacks on two separate areas in Tonj North county. While it is unclear who carried out the attacks, an unknown number of cattle were reportedly taken by the assailants.

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 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 and 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 conflict 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 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, as well as in other security organs and civil services. Following
several months of behind-the-scenes negotiations, presidential orders pardoning militant
groups have resulted in a significant reduction in insurgency, mostly in the Greater Upper
Nile region. As of November, 13 armed groups had 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 Jonglei.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

According to aid agencies, the crisis which erupted in South Sudan in mid-December has
caused significant population displacement across the east of the country and towards
neighbouring countries. Insecurity and armed clashes are reportedly hampering the
delivery of assistance, while the UN reported widespread violation of human rights and
targeted violence against civilians. As of early March, humanitarian partners indicated that
an estimated 4.9 million people – over 40% of the total population – are in need of urgent
assistance across the country.

Access

OCHA indicated that access for humanitarian workers is improving, with agencies
reportedly now able to work in most parts of the country. However, as of mid-February,
insecurity in Unity state reportedly continued to hamper the movement of aid convoys,
limiting the ability of aid agencies to preposition supplies. In rural areas, security and
physical impediments reportedly continue to constrain assistance.

As the rainy season approaches, humanitarian partners are working to preposition stocks
across the country. The rainy season, which begins in April, can lead to over half of the
country becoming inaccessible by road.

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

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.

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

Displacement

As of 6 March, OCHA reported that an estimated 932,000 people have been displaced by
the crisis, 226,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries. In mid-February,
UNHCR released a non-return advisory for South Sudanese fleeing conflict, recommending
that states refrain from returning South Sudan nationals to the country, unless cases
involve people who may have committed serious human right violations.

IDPs

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 seek shelter, a lack of space and
common facilities is causing sanitation concerns and tensions due to overcrowding.

According to OCHA as of 6 March, the number of IDPs in South Sudan now stands at
706,000, with most located in the northern state of Unity (186,000), and the northeastern
states of Jonglei (142,600) and Upper Nile (116,300). An estimated 76,600 people are
sheltering in ten UN bases, mostly in Juba and Malakal. According to UNICEF on 3 March,
377,400 children 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 towards 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 mainly reside in Upper Nile and Unity states
(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

As of 6 March, the number of South Sudanese who have fled to neighbouring countries
since mid-December stands at 226,000, including 97,000 people into Uganda, 62,000 into
Ethiopia, and 22,600 into Kenya. Aid agencies also reported that an estimated 42,000
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 that will be at risk of flooding during the rainy season (April to October). 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 depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, this disruption is concerning. As of mid-January, FAO warned that violence is threatening to hamper the upcoming March planting season for maize, groundnuts, and sorghum.

While the food security situation had 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.

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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 threatening of cholera outbreaks. Gun battles have increased the need for surgical capacity in conflict flashpoints.

**Measles**

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

As of 23 January, health authorities raised the alarm about a possible outbreak of 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 previous 10 days.

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

**Wild 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 polio outbreaks in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

**Hepatitis E**

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

**Malnutrition**

According to OCHA, as of mid-June, the under-five global acute malnutrition 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: 11/03/2014**

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

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

9 March: Violence intensified over the weekend in the area of Saraf Omra, North Darfur, causing the displacement of thousands of people, according to the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Renewed attacks by rebel groups and militias in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 40,000 people since early March, while local sources reported that dozens of civilians had been killed.
5 March: IOM estimate that since the beginning of the South Sudanese crisis in mid-December, the number of newly arrived South Sudanese refugees into Sudan exceeds 42,000.

2 March: The African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), the international body facilitating political dialogue in the region, announced a new suspension of negotiations between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) and Khartoum on the conflict in the “Two Areas” of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, following a deadlock between the two parties.

2 March: Clashes occurred in the Abyei region between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka tribes, causing Sudanese officials to denounce the involvement of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the South Sudanese army, in the region. South Sudan denied such involvement. According to OCHA, an estimated 2,500 South Sudanese have settled in the disputed area of Abyei since the South Sudanese conflict erupted in December.

Late February: dozens of deaths were reported in 35 South Darfur villages following attacks by the pro-government militia Rapid Support Force (RSF), according to local sources. OCHA noted that renewed clashes occurred between the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army – Minni Minawi (SLM-MM) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in the region of Nyala, South Darfur state following the recent redeployment of RSF from North Kordofan state.

KEY CONCERNS

A Humanitarian access remains a significant problem due to insecurity, the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war, logistical constraints and restrictions placed by the authorities.

Politics and Security

Tensions continue to run high between Sudan and South Sudan, where ongoing conflict since mid-December is affecting oil transit and causing population displacement. Nationally, 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 Sudan’s relative instability.

Sudan–South Sudan

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.

As of 2 March, clashes occurred in the Abyei region between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka tribes, causing Sudanese officials to denounce the involvement of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the South Sudanese army, in the region. South Sudan denied such involvement. Abyei lies on the Sudan–South Sudan border and has been disputed since South Sudan’s secession in 2011. Abyei has seen the arrival of 2,500 South Sudanese refugees since December, according to IOM.

After three months 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 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 have also said they are concerned about an influx of refugees and arms.

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

On 26 November, Khartoum hosted the fifth meeting of the Joint Security Committee, where Sudanese and South Sudanese members discussed their respective complaints and claims relating to the presence of, and support to, rebel groups in both countries. Despite reports of decreased support to rebels, Khartoum and Juba have been trading accusations that each side has been harbouring insurgent groups since 2011. Both sides 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 had 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 over 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 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.

**Insurgent Groups**

Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups in the southern states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur.

On 2 March, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), the international body facilitating political dialogue in the region, announced the adjournment of the negotiations between the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N) and Khartoum on the conflict in the “Two Areas” of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, following a deadlock between the two parties. The talks, initiated on 13 February, broke down five days later.

In late 2011, an alliance of opposition groups formed the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), with the stated aim of organising new elections to end the current regime. The SRF is made up of the SPLM-N, mainly active in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, as well as Darfur’s three largest rebel groups: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation 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 South Sudan won independence in 2011, insurgents in Darfur have been active since 2003, when they took up arms accusing the Government of neglecting the region. This led to a counter-insurgency campaign, which continues today.

On 20 February, three leaders of the SRF met with the US Special Envoy to Sudan to discuss their position on the comprehensive peace process, unification of the negotiations platforms, and their view about Sudanese President Al Bashir’s call for dialogue. In turn, leaders of the JEM, SLM-MM, and SLM-AW, led by Abdel Wahid Al Nur and speaking under the SRF banner, reiterated that they were against any partial solution for Sudan’s crises and expressed their wish to unify both the Darfur and the South Kordofan-Blue Nile platforms to reach a comprehensive solution. They insisted that security must be established on the ground before any meaningful dialogue could take place.

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

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

**Instability in the East**

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

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

In January 2014, in the latest restrictions on foreign aid workers, the GoS announced that
it would suspend the activities of ICRC as of February on the grounds that ICRC did not respect the guidelines for working in Sudan.

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 GoS 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 which it has repeatedly accused of exaggerating the magnitude of internal conflicts, disseminating false information, and spying.

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

**Displacement**

**Internally Displaced**

According to OCHA, as of 31 January an estimated 2.3 million Sudanese are currently internally displaced due to conflict, food insecurity, and environmental conditions. IDP figures are currently being updated by IOM and are likely to increase following renewed violence in the Darfur region.

**Sudanese refugees in other countries**

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

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

**Refugees residing in Sudan**

According to the UNHCR, by mid-February 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 and is reportedly most intense in the northeastern states of Upper Nile and Unity, which has raised fears about a significant influx of refugees and the potential return of 200,000 Sudanese refugees originally from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, who are currently in refugee camps in Unity and Upper Nile states.

As of 5 March, IOM estimated that since the beginning of the South Sudanese crisis in mid-December, the number of newly arrived South Sudanese refugees exceeds 42,000 people. An estimated 2,500 South Sudanese have settled in the disputed area of Abyei, 29,000 in the Blue Nile region, and 5,700 in South Kordofan.

As of late January, the GoS Humanitarian Aid Commission had reported that the number of South Sudanese refugees in Sudan is estimated at 8,100, most of whom were located in White Nile state. On 24 February, IOM reported that South Sudanese refugees, reportedly from Upper Nile state, continue to move into East Darfur and South Kordofan, with secondary movements recorded from White Nile state to Khartoum. However, the daily rates of arrivals at the border have dropped from over 1,300 people each week to less than 300.

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

**Food Security**

As of 11 February, FEWSNET reported that an estimated 3.3 million people face 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, increasing 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 Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Production deficits are also linked to insecurity and conflict during the harvest, which is expected to lower harvest prospects, as well as cause continued destruction of assets and displacement.

As of 28 February, FEWSNET reported that staple food prices were increasing, due to a
As of 28 February, FEWSNET reported that staple food prices were increasing, due to a below-average sorghum harvest. Although food prices decreased during the December harvest, staple food prices had risen 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. Prices are likely to continue to increase until June 2014.

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust egg-laying, hatching, and band formation were ongoing, mostly along the coast and in the Nile valley. The outbreak is expected to intensify in March due to continued hatching, compounding an already deteriorating food security situation.

Households in drought-prone areas of North Darfur, North Kordofan, and Red Sea states are expected to evolve from Minimal (IPC Phase 1) to Stressed food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) with the early start of the lean season in March/April. In SPLM-N controlled areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions, food security is expected to deteriorate to IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) respectively as of March/April. This likely deterioration is based on below-average harvests, of the likely continuation of conflict, of refugee influx, of rising prices, and of limited food aid access. The deterioration is expected to affect primarily the IDP populations in these regions.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles**

On 2 March, OCHA reported 4 suspected cases of measles in Kassala states. On 24 November, the Federal Ministry of Health launched a national measles catch-up campaign targeting some 15 million children aged nine months to 15 years of age, OCHA reports. Sudan has experienced a resurgence of measles outbreaks since 2010, mainly due to population growth, which caused a major outbreak in Kassala state in 2012.

**Malnutrition**

According to WHO, child mortality due to malnutrition reached 40% in Sudan in late September 2013. Nationally, global acute malnutrition levels for children under five stand at 16.4%, above the emergency threshold of 15%. In mid-June, the Ministry of Health issued a report noting that 33% of children are chronically malnourished and 5.3% suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). An estimated 500,000 children under five suffer from SAM and up to two million children are stunted, according to a recent Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and partners report. Malnutrition rates in east Sudan (Red Sea, Kassala and Gedaref states) are 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 Darfur states have been affected by various conflict dynamics, including fighting between GoS forces and rebel groups, and inter-tribal fighting. The region also faces rampant criminality.

**Insurgent Groups – The Darfur Peace Process**

The Darfur peace process is currently stalled because it does not include all the parties aligned in the SRF, and because insurgent groups have requested a comprehensive settlement for the whole of Sudan, and not a partial dialogue for Darfur only. Though some progress has been made, the Darfur peace process is challenged because 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 Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). These Darfur movements have continuously rejected the Doha process and have been responsible for ongoing clashes with GoS forces across the state since April.

On 7 March, UNAMID officials met with the leaders of the JEM and of the SLM-MM in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of ongoing UN–AU mediation in the Darfur conflict. On 10 February, Joint AU–UN senior officials met with leaders of the Darfuri non-signatory movement in Uganda. Representatives from the SLA-AW, the SLA-MM, and the JEM met with the official to follow-up on outcomes of the technical workshop on peace and security in Darfur held in Ethiopia last December.

This three-day All Inclusive Peace and Security in Darfur Technical Workshop 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. Reports stated that parties discussed the humanitarian situation in Darfur and the lack of access to affected populations, and JEM and SLM-MM restated their demand for a comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable negotiated peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflicts.

On 26 January, Sudanese President Al Bashir reportedly met with the leader of the former rebel JEM, in a bid to resolve a conflict over the implementation of a peace deal signed in April 2013. On 24 January, JEM suspended participation in the meetings on the implementation of power sharing and security arrangements agreements, accusing the head of Darfur peace implementation of voluntarily slowing the process. JEM also underlined the delay in the formation of the ceasefire commission, and added that African Union-UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) had not yet started the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process.

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 ongoing peace efforts. The visit was part of a larger tour including 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, the DDPD has only a minority of the rebel movements as signatories – the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), and JEM-Mohamed Bashir, a splinter group of JEM.

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

**Military Operations**
Since 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. On 3 March, UNAMID reported its peacekeepers were denied access by authorities to regions affected by renewed violence in Darfur. Violence has increased militia attacks have increased, including by the pro-government militia Rapid Support Force (RSF), which deployed from North Kordofan.

According to local sources, on 10 February, SAF aircraft bombed Kara and Khor in East Jebel Marra, causing no casualties. 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 bombed areas east and west of Jebel Marra, destroying water wells, killing an unknown number of livestock and setting fire to farmland and pasture areas. On 20 January, aerial bombardments targeted Kadareik and Um Laouta in East Jebel Marra, no casualties were reported. On 16 January, the 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 GoS troops denied carrying out the attack. On 5-6 November, SAF reportedly launched intensive air raids causing widespread destruction in the valley of Jebel Dengo, 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, destroyed 30 houses and a school in East Jebel Marra in the villages of Tangarara, Hillat el Dum, and Arashu. The Society for Threatened People 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.

**Insecurity and Violence against Internally Displaced People (IDPs)**

IDPs across Darfur continue to face attacks from various armed non-state actors. As of 10 March, clashes have caused the displacement of 40,000 people, mostly in South Darfur, and of thousands of people in North Darfur since 7 March. As of 5 March, according to local sources, dozens of civilians were killed by the pro-government RSF in South Darfur, 11 people were killed in militia attacks in North Darfur, and six were killed in Central Darfur.

As of 27 February, according to OCHA, renewed clashes occurred between the SLM-MM and the SAF in the region of Nyala, South Darfur state following the deployment of the pro-government RSF from North Kordofan state. According to local sources, the RSF attacked civilians and IDP camps, causing IDP representatives to request protection measures from UNAMID and the Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) officials.

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

**Tribal Violence**

The five Darfuri states, plagued by a decade of conflict, remain affected by insecurity due to intensified violence between local tribes over scarce resources. On 2 February, representatives from the AU, the GoS, the UN, and UNAMID met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the 17th Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNAMID. Concern was expressed about the deterioration of security in Darfur throughout 2013. Regional tribal conflicts 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 recent tribal conflicts and seek solutions for peaceful coexistence among tribes. Participants recommended disarmament, the establishment of laws regulating relations between farmers and pastoralists, and the settlement of disputes over land resources. 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, the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in South Darfur signed a peace agreement on 15 December, which aimed to pave the way for the deployment of GoS 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 longstanding conflict over access to resources. Between 17 and 20 February, in the latest expression of inter-tribal conflict, clashes between Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen in Um Bukhun, Central Darfur province, led to dozens of deaths and the displacement of 10,000 people, according to local sources and OCHA. Violence reportedly erupted following the assassination of a Misseriya tribal chief, but local authorities blamed the fighting on the withdrawal of the NISS and the Central Reserve Forces from the region.

In mid-November, unverified reports suggested that over 50 people were killed and many others wounded following violence in the Abuwar IDP camp, in the area of Um Dukhun town, and significant damage was caused to shelter and activity centres. The violence in the IDP camp followed only a week after 100 people were left dead and many injured over three days of tribal clashes over 6-8 November. Heavy fighting between the Salamat and the Misseriya and their Taaysha allies closed markets and roads; there were also reports of civilian abuse by combatants. The 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 Chadian army soldiers were killed during clashes with Salamat tribesmen trying to flee Sudan after violent battles in Central Darfur. The Chadian troops were part of a joint force with Sudan and were allegedly killed around Um Dukhun, on the border with Chad.

Following the escalating conflict between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in November, the Central Darfur State Government Security Committee and the Governor visited Um
Dukhun in an attempt to facilitate dialogue between the belligerents and reinvigorate the July peace agreement. This previous reconciliation agreement was another unsuccessful attempt to curb the inter-ethnic violence and implement lasting peace.

**East Darfur**

On 3 December, the AU-UN Joint Special Representative concluded his visit in East Darfur, where he met with state authorities and 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 Kualyakili Abu Salama in Adila. 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 displacement of 144,000 people, and prepare for a reconciliation conference in Al-Tawisha, North Darfur.

**North Darfur**

As of 9 March, fighting intensified in the area of Saraf Omra, North Darfur, causing the displacement of thousands of people, according to the African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Violence between militias and Tama tribes had led to the closure of school and government institutions in the locality during the previous week. Since early March, 11 people were reportedly killed during militia attacks in the region. A heavy presence of the SLM-MM had been reported in the Taweisha and El Lait areas of North Darfur over the last week.

Since the start of 2013, rival Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes have clashed violently over control of the Jebel Amer gold mine in Al Sareif Beni Hussein, leaving 839 people dead, according to authorities as of late August. The UN reported that an estimated 150,000 were displaced. UN reports further note that the gold mine death toll is twice the number of all people killed by fighting between the army, rebels, and rival tribes in Darfur in 2012.

On 26 July, the tribes signed a comprehensive peace agreement in El Fasher, and on 18 August, the treaty came into effect with the reopening of roads linking Saraf Omra with Al Sareif Beni Hussein. The two tribes agreed to cease hostilities, hold accountable outlaws from any side, and return all stolen agricultural lands. However, as of late November, negotiations between the two tribes were ongoing.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

Access to Darfur remains restricted due to on-going hostilities and insecurity, including the direct targeting of aid workers and peacekeepers. On 3 March, UNAMID reported its peacekeeping soldiers were denied access by authorities to regions affected by renewed violence and displacement in Darfur.

According to the UN, 16 peacekeepers were killed in hostile acts in Darfur in 2013, representing a 50% increase from 2012, and bringing the number of personnel killed to 57 since UNAMID was deployed in 2008. 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 were 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, Kebkabya and Saraf Omra. In South and East Darfur, particularly in Jebel Marra, access remains 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 January, there are now nearly two million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 displaced in 2013 as a result of inter-tribal fighting and clashes between the SAF and armed movements. This figure is over twice the number of people internally displaced in Darfur in 2011 and 2012 combined.

In South Darfur, HAC reported that between March and November 2013, an estimated 55,000 people were displaced due to inter-tribal fighting in the state. A December assessment indicated that most pressing needs for IDPs are water, non-food items and health services. In early March, according to OCHA, tribal and militia violence in several locations of Darfur over the last few weeks was estimated to have displaced 40,000 people due to clashes between the SAF and SLM-MM. The bulk of displacements occurred especially in the El Salam and Nyalia areas of South Darfur.

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

In Central Darfur, over 25,000 people have been internally displaced since April 2013, when fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes began. There is little information available about civilian displacement caused by the fighting in early November, although local media reported population movements from Central to South Darfur. Between April and June 2013, fighting between the two tribes created 22,000 IDPs and displaced 30,000 to Chad and 3,300 people to CAR, according to UNHCR.

Refugees

According to UNHCR as of 22 November, around 36,200 Sudanese refugees from Darfur have arrived in Chad since January 2013, bringing the estimated number of Sudanese refugees in Chad to 346,000. In addition, 3,400 new Sudanese refugees have arrived in CAR 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. IDPs are most affected, with at least 30% of recent IDPs (who missed the harvesting season in 2013) not yet receiving any humanitarian assistance. Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) are expected in the region from January-June. This situation is likely to be compounded by the increasing staple food prices, mostly due to below-average harvests. According to FEWSNET, as of late February, retail sorghum harvests were 50% below average in Darfur.

An estimated 20% of existing IDPs in Darfur will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) throughout March 2014. In late February, FEWSNET indicated that households in drought-prone areas of North Darfur, North Kordofan, and Red Sea states are expected to evolve from Minimal (IPC Phase 1) to Stressed food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) with the early start of the lean season in March/April.

According to an October Integrated Food Security Phase Classification jointly undertaken by several humanitarian actors, 2.7 million people in Darfur face Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels food insecurity, of whom 520,000 are in South Darfur, a million in North Darfur, 460,000 in West Darfur, 490,000 in Central Darfur, and 230,000 in East Darfur due to displacement, loss of assets and livelihood strategies.

Health and Nutrition

Measles

As of 7 March, OCHA reported a suspected measles outbreak in the Buram locality of South Darfur.

Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL)

At least 25 people, among them eight children, diagnosed with visceral leishmaniasis (VL) 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.

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 activism of armed groups, and violence grew significantly after 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), an offshoot of the politico-military group which initially led the southern rebellion during the 1983–2005 civil war and is now in power in South Sudan.

On 2 March, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), the international body in charge of facilitating political dialogue in the region, announced a new suspension of the negotiations between the SPLM-N and Khartoum on the conflict in the "Two Areas" of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, following a deadlock between the two parties.

Despite international pressure to reach a ceasefire, negotiations between the warring parties were adjourned on February 18 after the two sides traded accusations and failed to meet face-to-face to discuss a cessation of hostilities and the issue of humanitarian access. On 23 February, the AU presented a proposed agreement which included humanitarian access to more than one million people, the adoption of an immediate ceasefire, and the designation of the third-party to monitor its implementation on the ground.

Peace talks had resumed on 13 February under the auspices of AUHIP in Ethiopia. It was the first time the sides had met since short-lived negotiations collapsed in April 2013. However, the two delegations failed to agree on the agenda, with SPLM-N reportedly demanding to allow humanitarian access to the civilians in conflict-affected rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, a request rejected by Khartoum on the grounds that rebels would take advantage of such humanitarian assistance.

The GoS chief negotiator had said issues relating to the humanitarian situation would be addressed but insisted the two sides focus on a political partnership as outlined in the framework agreement reached on 28 June 2011. SPLM-N reportedly expected to negotiate a comprehensive cessation of hostilities and the opening of humanitarian corridors as well as a comprehensive political solution with the participation of all political forces and civil society groups.

In mid-January, South Kordofan’s governor called on traditional leaders to convince rebels to lay down their weapons, join the ongoing efforts to develop the region, and hold a conference for peaceful coexistence.

Security Context
Armed clashes between SAF and rebel forces of various groups under the SRF in South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to cause 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, as of mid-November.

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

Local sources reported on 19 February that suspected SPLM-N rebels launched a rocket attack against Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan, a day after peace talks with the GoS broke down. According to the January INGO report, GoS forces suffered heavy losses of life and equipment in early January in South Kordofan, near the border with South Sudan. Since mid-January, the military has refocused operations on Blue Nile, increasing its air strikes.

South Kordofan is the most heavily-mined area of Sudan according to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, and local sources noted on 12 February that five people were killed and another 13 wounded in a landmine explosion. On 11 February, an SAF air raid in the Nuba Mountains killed one person and injured two others. On 26 January, SAF warplanes launched air strikes against the rebel-held town of Kauda, with no casualties. On 31 December, the SAF reported that it had recaptured several rebel-held areas bordering South Sudan. However, SPLM-N rebels denied this. Accurate information has been difficult to verify as GoS authorities severely restrict access to the fighting zone.

Early December, SAF airstrikes and renewed fighting between the army and SRF, killing seven including six children, caused new population displacements in South Kordofan. Between 21 and 25 November, aerial bombing and ground fighting was reported by local sources in several parts of SPLM-N controlled areas, including Kaling, Habil, Al Buram, Talodi and Karka and Kondikar areas in Dilling. The attacks caused the displacement of a large number of people, while death totals and material damage remain unverified. On 19 November, local media reported that an air raid killed at least six people in Kujurya village, Dilling locality. 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. Two days before, rebels reportedly attacked a town at the South Kordofan border. On 22 October, unconfirmed reports assert that 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 that at least 23 civilians had been killed and another 81 injured due to aerial bombardments since January 2013.

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

Armed clashes in West Kordofan between 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. The fighting reportedly stopped following the deployment of the SAF.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

Due to insecurity and restrictions by the authorities, international humanitarian access to insurgent-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states is virtually non-existent. 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 Sudan against entering Blue Nile and South Kordofan states without GoS permission. The NCP secretary stated that some organisations previously working in Sudan who had been expelled due to violating GoS 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 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 noted that 231,000 people in South Kordofan and 120,000 people in Blue Nile were displaced or severely affected by conflict in GoS-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. With no presence in SPLM-N controlled areas, the UN is unable to verify these figures.

As reported by OCHA, 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. As reported by local media in early December, renewed tribal fighting in the Um Deibut area in West Kordofan triggered the displacement of over 6,000 people to El Taboum and Babanusa in West Kordofan, and Adila in East Darfur.
**Sudanese refugees in other countries**

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

The SKBN-CU reported that in late November, over 3,800 people from South Kordofan and Blue Nile 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 fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile areas is likely to trigger further displacement, disrupt market access, and have a further adverse effect on food security in the peripheral southeastern states. Conflict-affected areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile reportedly show the highest levels of food insecurity in the country. The 2013–2014 harvest is expected to be below-average in 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.

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

As of October, according to a joint Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 104,240 people in South Kordofan, and 100,107 people in Blue Nile faced Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels of food insecurity. 30% of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan were estimated to remain at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity; 20% of poor residents in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and IDPs in GoS-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states will remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels.

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust egg-laying, hatching, and band formation were ongoing in the Nile valley. The outbreak is expected to intensify in March due to continued hatching, compounding an already deteriorating food security situation.

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Wild Polio Virus**

The HAC announced that the polio vaccination campaign planned for SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile was still delayed as of January 2014, with negotiations between the GoS and SPLM-N unable to agree on logistics. In late October, the GoS had announced a 12-day cessation of hostilities in non-government-controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states from 5 November 2013 to facilitate a polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation campaign for children under five. The UNICEF and WHO-led campaign was due to target 147,000 children under five in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and 7,000 children in Blue Nile who have not been vaccinated since the 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 alerted WHO to a yellow fever outbreak in West and South Kordofan. WHO also reported that, between 3 October and 24 November 2013, 44 suspected cases of viral haemorrhagic fever were reported, including 14 deaths, presenting a case fatality rate of 31.8%; 12 localities in West and South Kordofan were affected as of late November.

**Regional Context**

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

National Context

Burkina Faso has been generally politically stable for over two decades, but of late 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, potentially revising Article 37 of the Constitution, allowing him to run again in 2015, led to a wave of resignations in early January and could lead to further political instability.

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 so 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. Tiendrebeogo insisted that even if his former party came 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 CDP were organizing against the Senate. Among them was 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 at risk from social unrest stemming from simmering disputes 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

Refugees in Burkina Faso

As of 27 February, UNHCR reported that Burkina Faso is currently hosting 49,900 Malian refugees (unchanged since 22 April 2013). Back in December, the UNHCR indicated that approximately half of the refugees are children. The growing numbers of the displaced and their livestock are reportedly putting pressure on host communities and the already scarce resources available.

According to latest reports, the bulk of the refugees are located in seven officially recognized camps – Mentao, Damba, Fereiro, Goudebo, Gandafabou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Ouagadougou – and informal settlement sites. Most camps are located in the northern region of Sahel, in the provinces of Soum, Oudalan and Seno, where almost 90% of Malian refugees are settled.

Food Security

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 1.3 million people are at risk of food insecurity due to chronic structural vulnerabilities compounded by recurrent shocks such as droughts, floods, epidemics, and locusts, which have eroded household and community resilience, and caused families to rely on negative coping strategies.

FEWSNET reported on 24 February that poor households in and around the Sahel region, including those in Burkina Faso, increasingly lack access to food and are therefore more reliant on market purchases and more likely to sell their livestock as a means of survival. The lean season is expected to take place from July to September 2014. By August, the Burkinabe population is likely to experience a decrease in food assistance needs compared to the five-year average and therefore face Stressed food security (IPC Phase 2) situation.

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

The national situation regarding food insecurity is further influenced by the fact that some twenty million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. In addition, across the region an estimated 5 million children under five years of age are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis and pressure on...
Continued food assistance is needed in the Sahel, North and East regions as a result of localized rainfall deficits in 2013. Oudalan and Soum provinces in the northern Sahel region, already facing food insecurity and high malnutrition rates, are heavily affected by the influx of 50,000 refugees from Mali. OCHA reported in early July that the arrival of Malian refugees and their cattle had further increased pressure on scarce resources leading to tensions with local communities. A May WFP and UNHCR 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**

As of 30 January, OCHA reports that 5.4 million people are at risk of epidemics.

**Meningitis**

As of 15 October 2013, UNICEF reported that 2,479 cases of meningitis and 294 deaths were recorded in all 63 districts of Burkina Faso since the beginning of 2013. The total number of cases is low compared to recent years as there has been no epidemic yet 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 were reported -equals to a mortality rate of 0.42%. These cases included measles-related complications such as pneumonia, croup or encephalitis. Of these, 976 or 34% of cases and no deaths were reported in the Sahel region.

**Malnutrition**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 144,000 children were suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and another 370,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). The latest SAM caseload represents a dramatic increase compared to October 2013, where UNICEF reported that the SAM caseload stood at 96,000.

UNICEF estimates that 1 million children in Burkina Faso <5 are affected by stunting due to chronic malnutrition.

According to UNICEG in late October, the 2013 annual caseload of children <5 with SAM was 96,000. 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%).

Reviewed: 05/03/2014

**Cameroon**

**FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**2 March:** Seven people (six Boko Haram members and one Cameroonian soldier) were killed when Boko Haram militants launched an assault in northern Cameroon. Two other Boko Haram fighters were captured near the Nigerian border.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The impact of the 2011-2012 drought is still being felt across the country and chronic food insecurity remains in the north. Around 615,000 people are still at risk from food insecurity and malnutrition (CFSVA).
- Only 30% of Cameroon’s 20 million inhabitants have access to piped drinking water. In Yaounde, the needs surpass the current capacity three times over (Government).
- More than 30,000 refugees from CAR have arrived in Cameroon in the recent weeks, and the numbers could rise to 43,000 (WFP). The latest arrivals bring the overall total of CAR refugees in Cameroon to over 126,000 (UNHCR).
- The Cameroonian-Central African Republic border continues to be an area of humanitarian concern, especially the road from Bangui to the border with Cameroon (OCHA and ECHO February 2014).
- 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 spill over from fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants continues to impact Cameroon and threaten regional security. The influx of refugees from neighbouring CAR and Mali is also putting pressure on already limited resources.

**Nigeria crisis**

Recent arms seizures and arrests of traffickers in Cameroon’s Far North Region, has highlighted the escalating insecurity caused by the Boko Haram insurgency in neighbouring Nigeria. 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. In December, troops from Cameroon’s military were deployed to the border with Nigeria to prevent Boko Haram militants leaving Nigeria and entering Cameroon.

On 23 February, it was confirmed that Nigeria has closed its northern border, from
northern Borno State, by Lake Chad, to the southern end of Adamawa state, with Cameroon in an attempt to block Boko Haram movement. Nigerian military claimed that fighters have set up bases in sparsely populated areas of the Far North Region. Security threats in the Far North Region further include kidnappings, undocumented movement of foreigners, and the influx of refugees from CAR, Chad, Nigeria, and Sudan. Officials have expressed concern that refugee camps may become targets for attack or may conceal militants.

On 2 March, as reported by a Cameroonian security source, seven people (six Boko Haram members and one Cameroonian soldier) were killed when Boko Haram militants launched an assault in northern Cameroon. Two other Boko Haram fighters were captured near the Nigerian border. In December, troops from Cameroon’s military were deployed to the border with Nigeria to prevent Boko Haram militants leaving Nigeria and entering Cameroon.

On 17 January, Cameroonian villages along the northern border with Borno State in Nigeria were reportedly deserted as people fled heavy fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram insurgents. Five people were believed to have been killed in the clashes and 30 others from both Cameroon and Nigeria wounded. Houses were said to have been damaged and destroyed. Amchide village on the border with Cameroon and Nigeria was the most badly affected in the incident.

CAR crisis

UNHCR reported that from 13-19 February the situation along the eastern border regions with Central African Republic (CAR) was relatively calm. However, fighting was reported between CAR militias and MISCA (the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic) in Cantonner, located two kms from the Cameroonian border town of Garoua Bouali.

On 31 December, gunmen suspected to be from the 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.

Nigeria-Cameroon demarcation process

On 16 February, the UN said progress had been made in the Nigeria-Cameroon demarcation process in the oil-rich, yet underdeveloped, Bakassi region, a peninsula on the African Atlantic Gulf of Guinea. The UN and the concerned governments are moving forward in marking out borders and working towards developing the region. The process has been impeded by security challenges, including piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and Boko Haram militant violence in Nigeria.

However, border patrols, comprised of military factions from both countries and UN observers, are in place to monitor protection and the basic rights of people. Authorities are addressing the absence of basic necessities such as water, electricity, and communication facilities, and UN country teams in the area are supporting several projects, including a recently launched measles vaccination campaign.

At the beginning of 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 Nigeria 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. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN for West Africa and Chairman of the CNMC, Said Djinnit, stated that the 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.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Refugees from the Central African Republic

As of 26 February, UNHCR reported that over 32,800 refugees from CAR had arrived in Cameroon since December 2013. On 21 February, UNHCR reported a sharp rise in the number of CAR refugees fleeing to Cameroon. In total, some 130,200 CAR refugees now reside in Cameroon.

On 28 February, Médecins Sans Frontières warned that these refugees lack clean water, decent shelter, and food. UNHCR reported that many are in poor physical shape and suffering from malaria, diarrhoea, and respiratory infections contracted while they had been in hiding in the bushes in CAR.

The growing number of new arrivals and their need for food and other basic necessities has resulted in higher prices and shortages of goods. Host communities have taken in many people, but are unable to meet the needs. Rent increases are also affecting local residents.

On 17 February, it was reported that Rwandan peacekeepers had helped to move 2,000 Muslims fleeing CAR to safety in Cameroon. However, ten people were killed when the Rwandan troops were forced to fight Christian militias from attacking the convoy during the evacuation. On 15 February, UNHCR also began moving CAR refugees away from areas within and along the border with Cameroon.

ECHO carried out a needs assessment at the Cameroon-CAR border following the escalation of violence which caused many from CAR to cross into Cameroon along the nearly 800 km long porous border. Acute needs of the population concern shelter, food, health, water and protection. As of 26 February, OCHA emphasized that the border of CAR and Cameroon continues to be an area of concern, especially the road from Bangui to the Cameroon border.
Refugees from Nigeria

As of 25 February, OCHA reports that following the crisis in north-eastern Nigeria, exacerbated by the declaration of the state of emergency in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa States on 14 May 2013 (extended for six months on 12 November 2013), more than 520,000 people, mainly women, children and older people have been forced to flee inside Nigeria or seek refuge in neighbouring Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. At this moment, shelters for these refugees are under construction at Minawao Camp.

On 24 January, UNHCR reported that recent clashes between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram militants in north-eastern Nigeria had caused over 4,000 people to flee to Cameroon since early 2014. Most 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 relocated to the Minawao camp, in Mayo-Tsanaga department in the Far North Province of Cameroon. A further 6,000 Nigerian refugees have opted to stay with host communities near the border. The needs among the refugees are largely WASH, health, and nutrition related.

Since June 2013, the regions of Mayo Sava, Logone Chari, and Mayo Sanaga have accommodated most of the Nigerian refugees fleeing Boko Haram attacks and the ongoing military offensive against the insurgent group. The attacks have led to a significant deterioration of the security situation in the region.

Food Security

The impact of the 2011-2012 drought is still being felt with chronic food insecurity remaining in the two Sahelian North and Far North regions due to recurrent climatic shocks which have negatively impacted agricultural activities. Since May 2013, the North and Far North regions have received over 8,000 Nigerian refugees, increasing pressure on resources. National food insecurity is further influenced by 20 million people currently at risk of food insecurity across the Sahel region and 2.5 million in need of urgent lifesaving food assistance, reported by OCHA on 3 February. Across the region an estimated 5 million children <5 are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014 with 1.5 million of them facing acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced over 12 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis, and pressure on resources.

On 14 February, local media reported that food prices in Cameroon have soared by over 20% since December. The growing food shortages are being compounded by prolonged water scarcity following limited rainfall.

GIEWS and FAO reported on 16 January 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 were underway in several bi-modal rainfall areas of the Centre and South. Abundant precipitation during March to July, the main season planting and growing period, benefitted crops. However, below average rainfall in August and September may have negatively impacted planting activities of second season crops for harvest in December/January.

The September 2013 IMF report stated that 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, economic recovery improved in 2012. Inflation rates rose to 3% in 2011 and remained stable at 3% in 2012 and 2013. Risks for medium-term macroeconomic stability could be, among others: 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

As of mid-February, OCHA stated that medical facilities in the Far North Region of Nigeria were becoming increasingly overwhelmed and weakened as a result of the ongoing conflict between Boko Haram and the government. As a result, increasing numbers of refugees are crossing into Cameroon to seek refuge and assistance.

An ECHO needs assessment, carried out on the Cameroonian-CAR border, found that malnutrition, malaria, respiratory infections are the most common health problems among refugees coming from conflict-ridden CAR. A number of measles cases were also reported amongst recently arrived child refugees.

On 18 February, the US media NPR provided an assessment on the health challenges Cameroon is facing. Quoting WHO, NPR said the public health care system was unable to address the country’s increasing infant mortality rates, which are amongst the highest in the world, along with high rates of HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. Due to the high cost or simple unavailability of care, families often turn to unauthorized clinics for care. Recently, the Ministry of Public Health started a campaign to ensure the creation of legally registered clinics which meet national standards with regard to staff, equipment, and hygiene. If not, it said the Ministry said it would proceed to close them down.

Malaria

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 compared to the same period in 2012. Authorities blamed the recent upsurge on low bed net use, heavy rains, weak medical services, and widespread poverty.

Wild polio virus

On 21 November, WHO reported that the wild poliovirus type 1 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 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 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.
Malnutrition

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

WASH

In mid-February, OCHA reported concerns about the high risk of a large cross-border cholera outbreak in the states bordering Lake Chad: Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger. Previous outbreaks in this area, the existence of cases in inter-epidemic periods, and the precarious security situation in northeast Nigeria could exacerbate the risk of the disease spreading.

Government statistics reveal that only about 30% of Cameroon’s inhabitants have access to piped drinking water. According to the state water company, current needs surpass Yaoundé’s available capacity by three times.

Updated: 05/03/2014

ETHIOPIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

1 March: UNHCR has reported that over 61,000 South Sudanese refugees have registered in the Gambella region of Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan in December.

KEY CONCERNS

- Ongoing armed insurgencies continue to affect the southeast Ogaden region. Outbreaks of violence are frequent due to clan and inter-communal tensions.

- Ethiopia is hosting over 451,000 refugees including persons from Kenya and South Sudan (UNHCR; OCHA).

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

- The number of reported measles cases has surged since mid-January 2014, with over 3,700 suspected cases reported to date.

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 repeatedly threatened Ethiopia since 2011. Addis Ababa recently pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is maintained. As of early March, no attacks have materialised. The government has successfully suppressed protests and contained 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. The government has thwarted plots of attacks blamed on rebel groups based in the south and southeast and on the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab which Ethiopia has been fighting alongside African Union forces since 2011.

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Refugees

As of 3 March February, OCHA reported that over 61,000 South Sudanese refugees, mostly from Jonglei state, have registered in Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan. This represents a 20,000 increase over a week. Most of the refugees have crossed into Ethiopia via the Pagak and Akobo Tergo border points, and have settled in the area, where camp facilities are reportedly overwhelmed. Government and humanitarian partners indicated that they expect as many as 150,000 refugees to arrive in the coming weeks.

In late February, UNHCR reported that Ethiopia was hosting around 431,000 refugees, including 245,000 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.

As of 17 February, according to the local press, there were renewed tensions in the northern Moyale district of Kenya. Fighting had erupted in September 2013 in Moyale, leading to a significant escalation of violence on the north-central border with Ethiopia. By 20 January, tribal clashes between the Borena, Burji and Gabra communities in the districts of Marsabit and Moyale had displaced an estimated 72,000 Kenyans, mostly across the border with Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, latest reports indicate that some displaced remain with host families. An assessment determined that priority needs included food, WASH, shelter, and health care. In early...
September, ECHO 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**

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

**Food Security**

As of late February, poor and very poor households in parts Amhara, Tigray, and the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNP), respectively in the north, north-west and south-west of the country, are experiencing IPC phase 2 (stressed) levels of food insecurity. In pastoral areas of the Afar and Somali regions in the north-east and the east respectively, pasture and water availability were reported as below average, and poor households are currently experiencing Stressed level. Food insecurity in these areas is due to below-average rainfalls which had a negative impact on the meher harvest (October to January).

According to the government and humanitarian partners, an estimated 2.7 million people need food assistance due to consecutively below average 2013 belg and sugum rains (February to May and May to respectively), 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).

The food security situation is expected to remain stable in the rest of the country through March. From October to January, according to Fewsnet, the national meher crop output was 10% higher than the previous year due to average- to above-average rains. Prices are expected to remain stable for most staple foods due to sufficient harvests and availability on markets, except in the Somali region where price increases have been observed since November.

Poor households in the Amhara, Tigray, and SNNP regions are expected to experience IPC phase 3 (crisis) from April to June, while poor agro-pastoral households in Afar and Somali regions are expected to remain at Phase 2 from February to June.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Polio**

A new case of polio was confirmed in January in Somali region, bringing the caseload in Ethiopia to nine. All cases were reported in woredas (districts) which share borders with Somalia where the regional polio outbreak started in May. An immunisation campaign targeting over three million children is ongoing.

**Measles**

According to WHO, a measles epidemics that initially affected the SNNP region, as well as Oromia and Amhara, in early 2014, is currently spreading to the Tigray, Somali, and Gambella regions. As of March, 3,700 suspected cases of measles have been reported, including a 600 increase over the last week of February of which over 400 were recorded in the Amhara region. In mid-February, over 90% of cases were recorded in SNNP region. A vaccination campaign targeting 6.8 million children <15 was due to start on 11 January, but continues to be delayed due to lack of resources. OCHA reported on 16 December that 2,860 cases of measles were confirmed between January and October 2013 nationally, with children <5 constituting 37% of the affected.

**Malaria/Dengue**

As of 3 March, 40 new cases of dengue were reported in Gode, Somali region, since mid-January. According to ECHO on 6 December, 9,258 cases of dengue fever were reported in Dire Dawa city since the beginning of the outbreak in mid-October.

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

**Meningitis**

As of late February, a seasonal meningitis outbreak was ongoing in Oromia, SNPP, and Gambella regions, requiring an estimated two million vaccine doses.

**Child Malnutrition**

As of February 2014, according to OCHA's nutrition hotspot mapping, priority woredas in terms of nutrition were primarily located along the Eritrea border in the Afar region, in Oromia, and in the Tigray region. Hotspots were also recorded along the South Sudan border in Gambella region.

OCHA reported on 28 August that in East Hararge zone (Oromia region), the 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 was still 7% higher than the SAM caseload in September 2012.

As of early March, according to UNHCR, over 10% of registered children amongst the newly arrived South Sudanese refugees since December have been estimated to suffer from SAM.

**WASH**

As of 17 February, water shortages were reported in the drought-affected woredas in Oromia and Afar. An estimated 130,000 people were in need of truck water in Oromia. Over 20,000 people were in need of truck water in the Northeastern Afar region until March, when the rainy season is due to start.
According to OCHA in January 2014, renewed water shortages were reported in drought-prone areas in the central and northeastern regions of Oromia, Afar, and Tigray.

**Protection**

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

Due to a government-run land development plan that is due to allow sugar-cane plantations, dam construction and commercial agriculture, it is expected that 150,000 indigenous people will be relocated into permanent sedentary villages, as part of a "villagization" programme.

**Updated: 04/03/2014**

**LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**7 March:** FAO presented its crop prospects and food situation report, stating that food security conditions remain stable. An estimated 223,000 persons were assessed to be food insecure in 2013/14 and require assistance until the start of the main harvest in April 2014.

**7 March:** International media reported that contribution shortfalls from donor countries, cutbacks of around 30% in 2014 and another 20% in 2015, threaten adequate treatment of HIV/AIDS patients, in what is an already underfinanced health-care system. Lesotho already struggles with a lack of qualified staff and facilities. According to Doctors Without Borders, only six of 171 health centres adhere to minimum staffing requirements.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Food security conditions improved significantly throughout 2013/2014. However, 223,000 persons remain food insecure, with the largest proportion (27%) located in the western Maseru district. The number of food insecure marks a decrease of 70% compared to 2012, mainly due to strong production gains made in 2013 (Lesotho Vulnerability Committee, October 2013).

- Lesotho has the world's third highest rate of HIV prevalence, currently over 480,000 people or 23.5% of the population (WFP, June 2013).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

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

FEWSNET reported in February that stable income opportunities from agriculture activities, ongoing poverty reduction and humanitarian programs, and the start of the green harvest are all expected to contribute to improved access to food resulting in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes in most parts of the country until June 2014.

FAO reported in February that food security conditions had improved significantly during the 2013/14 period. This was attributed to a rebound in domestic cereal production, and generally stable prices in 2013. An above average harvest is expected this year, particularly in the large producing areas of the north-west lowlands as a result of generally favourable weather conditions during the 2013/14 cropping season (October-June).

However, in the more marginal producing zones of the centre and south-east, production levels may be negatively affected by delayed planting following a late start of seasonal rains. During the last quarter of 2013, the Government distributed agricultural inputs, subsidizing 50% of the cost, to all ten districts, assisting in improving access for farmers.

**Health and Nutrition**

WFP reported in June 2013 that the country records a HIV prevalence of 23.5%, the world's third highest rate. 39% of children <5 are stunted.

On 7 March, international media report that contribution shortfalls from donor countries, cutbacks of around 30% in 2014 and another 20% in 2015, threaten adequate treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in what is an already underfinanced health-care system. Lesotho already struggles with a lack of qualified staff and facilities. According to Doctors Without Borders, only six of 171 health centres adhere to minimum staffing requirements.

On 3 March, the US Army Africa (USARAF) reported it deployed a team of medical personnel for medical readiness training between Lesotho Defence Forces (LDF) and USARAF. The team shared tactics, techniques and procedures, and built upon the capacity of LDF medical personnel to prevent and respond to infections disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies.

**Updated: 10/03/2014**

**MADAGASCAR FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**
28 February: FEWSNET reported that southwestern Madagascar will face Crisis Phase 3 food security levels until the end of the March lean season, due to multiple shocks, including drought, locust infestation and political instability, during the 2012-13 season. The food security situation will improve to Phase 1 (None or Minimal) for April-June 2014 with the harvests of rice, maize and pulses.

28 February: FEWSNET reported that locust outbreaks, though above average, are less severe than anticipated due to ongoing efforts to control the infestation. The impact on production is therefore expected to be less severe than last year. The FAO says that Madagascar is dealing with its worst locust outbreak since a 17-year-long outbreak which began during the 1950s.

KEY CONCERNS
- An estimated 4 million people, or 27.5% of the households in rural areas, are food insecure following reduced harvest in 2013. A further 9.6 million people are at risk of food insecurity (FAO).
- Since April 2012, Madagascar has experienced Malagasy Migratory Locust infestation, which threatens the livelihood of 13 million people (FAO).
- A plague outbreak affected 4 out of 112 districts in the country in December 2013. 86 cases have recorded since September, including 42 confirmed deaths (WHO). With the upcoming peak of the rainy season between February and March, heavy rains and poor waste management are raising concerns that the disease could spread to other areas.
- Madagascar is dealing with its worst locust outbreak since a 17-year-long outbreak which began during the 1950s. In March 2013, approximately 50% of the country was infested by swarms of locusts (FAO).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Following the army-backed coup by Andry Rajoelina, who ousted President Marc Ravalomanana in 2009, Madagascar has been mired in political turmoil. In late October, the first presidential election since the 2009 coup took place. The elections were hailed by international observers as free, transparent and peaceful, despite isolated incidents of violence as well as some organisational flaws that prevented some from casting their ballots. On 17 January, the Madagascar's Special Electoral Court (CES) announced the final results of the second round of elections. Former Finance Minister Hery Rajaonarimampianina was announced as the new President-elect, with 53.5% of the votes. The defeated rival candidate, Jean-Louis Robinson, who had demanded a recount following more than 300 complaints to the CES, swiftly rejected this outcome.

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

On 3 March, OCHA reported that, following the second round of elections, two candidates for the position of Prime Minister were submitted to the new president of Madagascar. The first candidate is Haja Resampa, Permanent Secretary in the Presidency during the transition period and an active participant of the 2009 coup, and Jules Etienne Raharivony, former presidential candidate who was kept from running by the Special Electoral Court for not fulfilling all criteria. The Prime Minister is yet to be appointed by the new President, Hery Rajaonarimampianina.

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

Security Context

On 25 January 2014, Hery Rajaonarimampianina was sworn in as the new President of Madagascar. Just hours after the inauguration, a grenade explosion killed 3 people and injured 51 people in the capital Antananarivo. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack and an investigation is ongoing.

On 10 January, student protests in Mahajanga city, calling for the reinstatement of students previously expelled for protest activities, deteriorated into a confrontation between the gendarmerie and the students, OCHA reported. The gendarmerie allegedly used live ammunition during the clashes, leaving one person dead and 13 injured according to the Red Cross and local media reports. Around 50 students were arrested.

According to OCHA, as of 16 December, no major incidents linked to the elections have been registered, but tension reportedly remains high between supporters of the presidential candidates. Violence and pre-election tensions have escalated in recent months, with a series of explosions and attacks in September and October. Moreover, large rural areas remain insecure due to proliferating armed bandit groups who have become increasingly organized in the wake of the diminishing legitimacy and capacity of the state.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Natural Disasters

The National Bureau for Risk and Disaster Management (BNGRC) issued a weather alert for the northern regions, warning of possible rise in river levels and landslides due to bad weather conditions.

According to the latest Madagascar rainfall forecast, issued by the Department of Meteorology, rainfall during February is expected to be below normal, followed by heavy
rains in March which could cause flooding, with normal rainfall expected in April. The cyclone season runs until April 2014.

According to ECHO as of 20 January, heavy rainfalls and subsequent flooding have been affecting western Madagascar in the past seven days, caused by Tropical Cyclone Dineo in the south and the Intertropical Convergence Zone in the north of the island. These regions had already been affected by successive severe weather conditions since late December 2013. In total, 7 people died and one is still missing, 2 schools were damaged, 1,640 people were either displaced or evacuated and 729 hectares of rice fields were flooded.

Food Insecurity

On 28 February, FEWSNET reported that parts of southern Madagascar will remain in Phase 3 (Crisis) until the end of lean season. In southwestern areas the food security will remain at Phase 3 during February and March due to the fact that the region faced multiple shocks during the 2012-13 season. The food security situation will improve to Phase 1 (None or Minimal) for April-June 2014 with the harvests of rice, maize and pulses.

On 27 February, the World Bank approved emergency financing to Madagascar, to help the country deal with its challenges due to a convergence of factors as the political crisis, drought, locust infestation and extreme poverty. The funding aims at providing food security for 13 million people who are coping with continuing locust infestation and drought.

According to the crop and food security assessment undertaken by FAO and WFP, as many as 4 million people, or 27.5% of the households in rural areas, of Madagascar are food insecure following reduced harvest in 2013. A further 9.6 million people are at risk of food insecurity. The south of the island - already a chronically food-insecure area - has been particularly affected, with severe food insecurity being significant in the regions of Androy, Atsimo Atsinanana and Atsimo Andrefana. Additionally, the regions of the southern plateau, including Hirombe, and the food basket region of Alaotra Mangoro reportedly experience high rates of food insecurity.

In February, OCHA indicated that a combination of damage to agricultural lands due to floods and tropical storms in early 2013, insufficient rains throughout the remainder of the year, a devastating locust infestation, reduced domestic rice harvest and rising food prices are some of the primary reasons for persistent food insecurity in the country.

On 11 February, FAO reported that rains during the 2013/14 cropping season (October-June) have been generally satisfactory, with some deficits recorded in the south-west in December. However, abundant rains in January revived cumulative rainfall levels, limiting the potential negative impact on crop productivity. Given the current conditions, an average rice crop in 2014 is foreseen.

Accordingly, the FEWSNET report of January 2014 noted that food insecurity is at Crisis level (IPC Phase 3) until March due to multiple shocks, but this is forecast to improve from the month of April through to June during the rice, corn and vegetable harvest period.

Locust Outbreak

On 28 February, FEWSNET reported that locust outbreaks, though above average, are less severe than anticipated due to ongoing control efforts. Impact on production is therefore expected to be less severe than last year.

Nonetheless, locust invasion in Madagascar continues to pose a significant threat to food security and livelihoods, with an ongoing three-year eradication campaign. Since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a plague of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, which threatens the livelihood of 13 million people in the country, 9 million of whom earn a living from agriculture, according to FAO. The locusts have expanded beyond their endemic areas in the southwestern quadrant of Madagascar to affect over two-thirds of the country. Recent estimates indicate that resulting rice crop losses range from 10-40% in 17 of Madagascar's 22 regions. This has both damaged crops and discouraged farmers from planting. The impact of the locust plague has been most severe in the southwest, which contributes on average about 7% to the national rice output. The impact of the locust plague has been comparatively limited on the national rice production, but has a significant impact on the livelihoods of the households in affected areas.

In total, according to the FAO/WFP Report, Madagascar's 2013 rice output is estimated at 3.6 million tonnes, which is about 21% below the above-average level of 2012. Maize and cassava production are also estimated to have declined compared to the previous season, by 15 and 14% respectively. The country is estimated to have a rice deficit of about 240,000 tonnes for the 2013/14 marketing year (April/March), while approximately 48,000 tonnes of imported maize would be required to satisfy the national deficit.

The joint government-FAO campaign against the locust infestation began in November 2013, with the first phase expected to run until August this year. Approximately 20 million hectares have been surveyed and more than 68,000 hectares treated with pesticides and insect growth regulators. The implementation of anti-locust campaign is expected to significantly limit the impact of locusts on rice production.

Health

Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague

In Madagascar, between 300 and 1,200 cases of bubonic and pneumatic plague are reported annually between October and March. OCHA reported that the plague season arrived early in 2013, with 285 suspected cases and 71 deaths between October and December 2013 in 27 districts of ten regions in the north, northwest, southwest regions and the central highlands. The situation went back to normal in January. However, with the upcoming peak of the rainy season between February and March, heavy rains and poor waste management are raising concerns that the disease could spread to other areas.

Updated: 04/03/2014

MALAWI  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

8 March: UNAIDS reported that the Government of Malawi is revitalising its national HIV prevention strategy. Despite the progress made, there were 40% fewer new HIV
infections in 2012 compared to more than a decade ago, around 180 new HIV infections are still occurring every day.

7 March: UNICEF reported that the number of food insecure people remains at 1,894,782. Following a January 2014 rapid food security monitoring exercise by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee (MVAC), earlier concerns that the food insecurity situation was deteriorating can be dispelled. The food security situation was generally stable in areas visited with no further adjustment to the number of food insecure people expected until the end of the consumption season in March 2014.

7 March: FAO reported that rainfall during the first week of March was characterised by an increase and continuation of torrential rains over the western and northern part of southern Africa, including Malawi, where high (> 50 mm) rainfall amounts were recorded.

7 March: UNICEF indicates, following a Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) analysis that in 18 of 24 food insecure districts targeted with the current nutrition emergency response there are more new admissions in January 2014 than in the same period in 2013.

4 March: The UN reported that since mid-January, an estimated 2,000 people have fled Mozambique following clashes between the Government and former rebels, spilling into Malawi. Those who fled are yet to receive assistance as the Malawian Government and UNHCR remain in disagreement about their status as asylum seekers.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Around 1.9 million people are food insecure, which represents an increase of around 30% from the figure released in July 2013 (Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, January 2014).

- Around 180 new HIV infections are still occurring every day (UNAIDS, March 2014).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

On 4 March, the UN reported that since mid-January, an estimated 2,000 people have fled Mozambique following clashes between the Government and former rebels, spilling into Malawi. Those who fled are yet to receive assistance as the Malawian Government and UNHCR remain in disagreement about their status as asylum seekers.

**Disasters: Heavy Rainfall and Floods**

FAO reported on 7 March that rainfall during the first week of March was characterised by an increase and continuation of torrential rains over the western and northern part of southern Africa. High (> 50 mm) rainfall amounts were recorded in Malawi.

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that since the onset of the 2013/14 rain season in November, 54,280 people have been affected in 19 districts. Of these, 16,040 people in Mangochi, Nsanje, and Salima districts were affected by floods. The rest were affected by wind and rain storms with varying levels of damage on their houses and properties.

**Food Security**

On 7 March, UNICEF reported that the number of food insecure people remains at 1,894,782, or 12% of the population. Following a January 2014 rapid food security monitoring exercise by the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, earlier concerns that the food insecurity situation was deteriorating can be dispelled. The monitoring exercise found that the food security situation was generally stable in the areas visited with no further adjustment to the number of food insecure people expected until the end of the consumption season in March 2014.

As of 27 February, FEWSNET reports that due to ongoing humanitarian interventions and normal levels of *ganyu* opportunities, short-term rural labour relationships, acute food insecurity among poor households in targeted areas has been revised downward from Stressed food insecurity (Phase 2) to Minimal (IPC Phase 1). FEWSNET projects that between the months of April and June 2014 the majority of poor rural households will likely access adequate food through a combination of purchases from markets and own household stocks.

**Outlook**

On 7 March, FAO reported that, although precipitation has been near normal in the main producing zones, water deficits were recorded which have delayed planting activities and impeded early crop growth, limiting potential crop yields.

Maize prices have recorded strong gains since the last quarter of 2013, supported by reduced national supplies, changes in subsidy policies, and increased transportation costs. Malawi recorded the largest year-on-year increases in January 2014, nearly doubling its price levels, mainly a result of the devaluation and subsequent depreciation of the country’s currency and localised production shortfalls.

On 2 March, FEWSNET reported that staple food prices increased throughout most of South Africa in January as the November-to-March lean season began to peak. Maize prices increased most rapidly in Northern Malawi (by 50% in Mzuzu), where particularly low trader stock levels and limited subsidised sales were available in January.

The cumulative volume of informal imports into Malawi over the 2013/14 marketing year (April 2013 through January 2014) is over double the volumes recorded the previous year and over 50% higher than the five-year average. The sudden month on month shift is due to increased policing along the Zambian borders and worsening seasonal road conditions. Cumulative maize exports remain low (81% below 2012/13 volumes), but exports to neighbouring parts of Mozambique, though still limited, have been steadily increasing since November in response to favourable price differentials.

UNICEF adds on 28 February that although effective planting rains started late across the country, the 2013/14 agricultural seasonal outlook appears to be promising with prospects
for better harvest in 2014 than in 2013, if the existing conducive weather conditions persist.

Harvesting of the 2014 cereal crops is expected to begin in April. Despite a delayed start of seasonal rains in parts of the Southern Region, generally beneficial rains have been received and crop conditions are reported to be satisfactory. An outbreak of red locusts was sighted in the southern area around Lake Chilwa and caused damage to 2,500 hectares of crops.

The June 2014 outlook is for prices to rise atypically until the next harvest in April. The Agricultural Development and Market Corporation sales in the southern region are expected to end in March, when households will rely on markets to meet their staple food needs. The consumption of green maize and main harvests is expected to begin in mid-March and mid-April, respectively, due to the delayed start of the rainfall season. The Malawian Kwacha is expected to further depreciate which could have the joint effects of increasing local transportation costs while simultaneously making exports more competitive within the region. Together, these could put additional pressure on market supplies, resulting in even higher prices.

**Armyworm outbreak**

On 2 March, OCHA said that an outbreak of African armyworm affected 16 districts and a total of 10,903 hectares of land throughout February. The armyworm is known to attack more than 40 plant species including key crops such as corn, wheat, and maize as well as forage grasses and small grains such as oat, barley, and rye. Despite the outbreak, the crop stand looks promising with a high likelihood of higher food crop production than in 2012/2013.

**Health and Nutrition**

**HIV**

On 8 March, UNAIDS reported that the GoM is revitalizing its national HIV prevention strategy. In 2012, new HIV infections among children had declined to 11,000 compared to 28,000 in 2001. Estimated AIDS-related deaths also decreased from 86,000 in 2001 to 46,000 in 2012. Despite the progress made, there were 40% fewer new HIV infections in 2012 compared to more than a decade ago, around 180 new HIV infections are still occurring every day.

**Malnutrition**

UNICEF reported on 7 March that an analysis of Community Management of Acute malnutrition (CMAM) data for January 2014 indicated that 18 of 24 food insecure districts targeted with the current nutrition emergency response showed there were more new admissions in 2014 than in January 2013. Districts that showed increased admissions were Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Dedza, Karonga, Kasungu, Machinga, Mchinji, Mzimba, Ntcheu, Salima, Thyolo, Nsanje, Neno, Mangochi, Balaka, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, and Dowa.

Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit (NRU) admissions were lower in most districts in 2014 for January as compared to same month in 2013 except for nine districts namely; Thyolo, Nsanje, Machinga, Rumphi, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, Kasungu, Karonga, and Dowa where higher admissions were recorded. High NRU admissions are mainly a result of late presentation to the CMAM program leading to severe acute malnutrition with complications.

**Protection**

According to government statistics, half of the girls in Malawi will be married by their 18th birthday, with some as young as age 9 or 10 being forced to marry. Human Rights Watch recently released a report stating that the GoM should increase efforts to end widespread child and forced marriage or risk worsening rates of poverty, illiteracy, and preventable maternal deaths.

*Updated: 10/03/2014*

**SENIGAL FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**25 February:** The community of Sant’Egidio, which is mediating in the conflict between Senegalese authorities and separatist rebels of the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamance (MFDC) along the southern border with Guinea-Bissau, announced that progress has been made in the peace talks with the signature of confidence-building measures. Senegalese authorities agreed to withdraw an international arrest warrant issued in 2001 against the leader of the separatist movement, Salif Sadio.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- **As of 30 January, 2.2 million people were at risk from 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) has already topped by the January 2014 figures of 79,000 SAM children (OCHA, 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 coastal Casamance area. Separatist movements continue to oppose the authorities along Senegal’s southern border with Guinea-Bissau in a 30-year old conflict. In March 2013, attempts to restart talks between the warring parties were undertaken but did not succeed.

On 25 February 2014, the Community of Sant’Egidio, which is mediating the conflict, announced that progress has been made in discussions between the Senegalese authorities and rebels of the Movement of Democratic Forces in Casamance (MFDC) with the signature of confidence-building measures. Senegalese authorities agreed to withdraw an international arrest warrant issued in 2001 against the leader of the separatist movement, Salif Sadio. However, MFDC rebels have not agreed on demining as part of the peace negotiations yet.
Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Displacement
As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 14,200 refugees now reside in Senegal. Most are from Mauritania and Rwanda.

Food Security

National Outlook
On 18 February, FEWSNET reported that national level crop production was about 17% lower than average in 2014. Poor households in areas of the north and southeast will be most affected and are likely to be Stressed (Phase 2) from April onward.

Previously, FEWSNET had reported that Senegal would be in need of external food security assistance until at least August 2014. This outlook is similar to that of the August 2013, as well as to the five-year average. The lean season will take place in June-September.

As of 30 January, OCHA reports that 2.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity. 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 communities continue 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 high levels of food insecurity (Ziguinchor 68%, Sedhou 67%, and Kolda 50%), and the regions of Matam and Kedougou following with high prevalence of food insecurity at 48% and 45.6% respectively.

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

Regional Outlook

On 20 February, FEWSNET reported that erratic rainfall in the northeastern region of Senegal, and other countries across southern Sahel, resulted in regional crop losses of up to 50% and below-average pasture growth.

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.

On 3 February, OCHA presented the Sahel Humanitarian Response Plan 2014. It is a three-year response plan (2014-2016) that will provide aid to millions of people in nine countries in the Sahel region: Burkina Faso, Northern Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Northern Nigeria, and Senegal. Twenty million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel, and 2.5 million urgently need lifesaving food assistance. An estimated 5 million children <5 will suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition. Violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement and a refugee crisis. The plan emphasizes strong partnerships with governments and development partners, a regional perspective, and a multi-year time frame to better address the chronic causes of the crises.

Health and Nutrition

Senegal’s National Union of Doctors (Syndicat autonome des médecins du Sénégal) staged a partial strike, providing minimum services, as ongoing disputes with the government over working conditions and wages continued.

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 aims to eradicate the tsetse fly population completely by mid-2014.

Malnutrition
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%, and Ranerou 16%) and in the bordering department of Podor (17%) in St. Louis Region. Bakel (2.7%), Goudiry (2%), Medina Yoro Foola (2.2%), Bounkiling (4.6%), and Mbour (2.3%) all had a critical prevalence of more than 2% SAM. Twelve more departments are seriously affected with a prevalence of between 10-15% GAM.
Eleven of 14 regions, Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sedhiou, Tamacoune, and Thies were in need of humanitarian assistance in 2013 due to a high prevalence of GAM and aggravating factors such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections.

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

**WASH**

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

*Updated: 06/03/2014*

**SWAZILAND FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new significant developments this week. Last update: 03/03/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Swaziland is vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly drought in the eastern regions and occasionally severe flooding in the north.

- Food insecurity is chronic. In 2014, 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity (SADC and World Bank, 2013).

**Humanitarian context and needs**

**Food Security**

Swaziland is vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly drought in the eastern regions and occasionally severe flooding in the north. While 70% of Swazis rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, consecutive years of drought have undermined crop production, particularly maize.

**Food insecurity**

The UN states that as of 3 March, 167,000 people (or one in ten Swazis) receive direct food assistance. According to OCHA quoting the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the World Bank on 17 February, an estimated 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity in 2014, of whom 56,300 people (5% of the population) require immediate food assistance. This figure represents a 150% increase on the 2012/2013 figure of 116,000 given by WFP’s Vulnerability Assessment in November 2013.

Food insecurity levels have increased in Swaziland primarily due to poor crop performance in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 and food price and agricultural inputs increases. A fiscal crisis, caused by a reduction in Government revenues, aggravated food insecurity and led to an increase in unemployment and cuts in social services.

**Food security outlook**

On 3 March, the UN reports that a prolonged dry spell with scorching temperatures has undone an optimistic outlook for Swaziland’s main harvest, maize. Experts are now predicting another round of scarcity and hand-outs in the perennially food-insecure country.

Rainfall had been above normal in spring and early summer, with half the country experiencing rain every day in December 2013. However, the lowveld – areas that lie at an elevation of between 500 and 2,000 feet above sea level – had erratic rainfall which heavily impacts food production as most of the agriculture in Swaziland is rainfall dependent. In December 2013, storms caused damage to crops and infrastructure. Hard-hit regions are Shiselweni and Lubombo, where the crops have been decimated by lack of rainfall and high temperatures.

The January 2014 dry spell is part of an emerging pattern of the past decade where certain parts of the country have gone dry at midsummer since 2006. Since 2000, the maize harvest has dropped by a third, to about 70,000 tons per year on average. To meet annual cereal consumption, cereal is now imported.

According to SADC as of 3 February, Swaziland experienced a near-normal start of season in October 2013. Slightly higher than average rainfall were experienced in most areas throughout the growing season until the end of December, despite storms which caused damage to crops and infrastructure in December and low rainfall received in the first 20 days of January. FAO indicated on 11 February that harvesting of the 2014 cereal crops, mainly maize, is expected to start in May.

While the forecasts for 2013/2014 may indicate improved production, the Food and Nutrition Security Working Group recalled in January that many underlying factors contribute to the trend of low production: erratic weather, high input costs, the devastating impact of HIV and AIDS, and low implementation of improved agricultural practices.

*Updated: 10/03/2014*

**TANZANIA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

9 March: International media reported on tensions between President Kikwete and the Rwandan Government, after comments by the President that Rwanda should negotiate with the Congo-based Rwandan rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The Rwandan Government has suggested that President Kikwete sympathised with FDLR, which the President strongly denies.

7 March: International media reported that the Government is planning to open up...
special grazing areas for nomadic herders to give them better access to water and pastures as part of a policy to prevent recurring conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. Deadly clashes have broken out as persistent drought and dwindling water resources have pushed pastoralists to the edge of survival, with farmers accusing them of destroying their crops by allowing their animals to feed and trample on them. The latest clash in January led to 10 farmers to be killed by pastoralists in the central Ketoto district.

**7 March:** According to UNHCR as of January 2014, 2,103 Somali refugees reside in Tanzania.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- An estimated 1,615,445 people are currently food insecure (OCHA, February 2014).

- According to IOM, 63,300 people (43,100 from Burundi, 15,500 from Rwanda, and 4,700 from Uganda) have been forcibly repatriated from Tanzania. The country is currently hosting about 102,000 refugees, mainly from DRC and Burundi (IOM February 2014 and UNHCR mid-2013).

**Politics and Security**

Tanzania has enjoyed political stability in a multi-party political system introduced in 1992. The political union between Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania has weathered more than four decades of change, with Zanzibar having its own parliament and president. The country hosts thousands of refugees from conflict in the neighbouring Great Lakes region.

On 9 March, international media report that Tanzania is embroiled in a potentially ugly feud with Rwanda and its president, after Tanzania’s President urged Rwanda’s Government to negotiate with the Congo-based Rwandan rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The Rwandan Government suggested President Kikwete sympathised with FDLR, which the President strongly denies.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

According to the FAO, on 21-22 January, heavy rains caused flooding in the districts of Kilosa, Mvomero, and Gairo in the Morogoro region. An estimated 13,557 people have been affected, and damage to infrastructure, farms, and food stocks has been reported.

**Food Security**

Tanzania remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with many of its people living below the poverty line (World Bank). OCHA reported that, as of mid-February, a total of 1,615,445 people are food insecure.

On 7 March, international media reported that the Government is planning to open up special grazing areas for nomadic herders to give them better access to water and pastures as part of a policy to prevent recurring conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. Pastoralists received the new policy with mixed feelings, hoping it would ease tensions, however stating that it serves as an attempt to drive them away from their traditional grazing lands to enable commercial exploitation instead.

Deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers have broken out as persistent drought and dwindling water resources have pushed pastoralists to the edge of survival, with farmers accusing them of destroying their crops by allowing their animals to feed and trample on them. The latest clash in January led to ten farmers being killed by pastoralists in Ketoto district, central Tanzania.

On 28 February, FEWSNET reported that although regional conflicts, the devaluation of local currencies, and high levels of inflation have pushed food prices up in some areas, maize and rice prices remained atypically stable due to surplus supply from the June-to-August 2013 harvest. FEWSNET also said that prices could increase marginally due to ample availability of maize and rice countrywide. Bean prices are likely to increase earlier than usual due to below-average January-to-February harvests in the northern bimodal areas.

In February, the WFP reported that in the last quarter of 2013, severe rainfall deficits affected several areas. A delayed start and poor distribution of **Vuli** rains from mid-September to January has had a particularly negative affect on central areas. In the east, pronounced rainfall deficits were seen during December 2013.

FAO indicated on 11 February that below-average harvests were expected in localized areas of the north-eastern regions and central marginal areas of Dodoma and Iringa. According to FEWSNET, households with below-average (<50% of normal) **Vuli** food production will likely run out of food stocks in April instead of July. An early dependence on markets combined with limited income generating activities has resulted in Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) in areas affected by below-average **Vuli** production. Households in the rest of the country are expected to remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity between now and June 2014.

In Kagera region, production of food has been significantly reduced following the infestation of bacterial disease in banana and cassava plants. As a result, market dependence has increased, resulting in high demand of food from outside the livelihood zone. Currently, Kagera is facing Stressed (IPC phase 2) food security conditions that are expected to end in February, when alternative food crops (yams and potatoes from the **Vuli** season) will become available at household and market levels. To date, there have been no updates on the impact of the availability of crops on the food security situation.

Above-average maize harvests in the southern highlands have stabilized national production levels, despite the northern and central area’s poor harvest. Localised price increases may occur for maize in reduced production areas, but nationally prices remain stable. Due to a poor bean harvest, prices are higher than normal.

**Displacement**

Tanzania has a decades-long history as a major country of asylum, having hosted millions of refugees from conflicts across Africa's Great Lakes region.

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**Displacement**

Tanzania has a decades-long history as a major country of asylum, having hosted millions of refugees from conflicts across Africa's Great Lakes region.
Refugees

As of mid-2013, UNHCR indicated that Tanzania hosts about 102,000 refugees mainly from DRC and Burundi. According to UNHCR as of January 2014, 2,103 Somali refugees reside in Tanzania. However, Tanzania has expelled refugees from Burundi (43,100), Rwanda (15,500), and Uganda (4,700), following a 29 July 2013 Presidential decree stipulating that all migrants without valid residential documents had to leave the country by 11 August 2013 or be forcibly removed by security forces. The returnee population is largely deprived of access to basic services. For the Ugandan returnees in Sango Bay, IOM warned of a looming shortage of food rations. The Government of Rwanda reported that the provision of reintegration assistance, especially shelter, is the most pressing need. For Burundians, there is concern over family reunifications, as most returnees wish to return to their families in Tanzania. Many of the expelled had lived in Tanzania for several decades.

Updated: 11/03/2014

ZIMBABWE FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 March: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) raised concerns about the impact of the HIV epidemic in Zimbabwe, especially in the town of Gwanda in the southwest of the country. An estimated 21 per cent of Gwanda is HIV positive and many cease continuation with treatment due to poverty.

3 March: According to local media, a typhoid outbreak has been confirmed in the densely populated suburb of Mabvuku, east of the capital city Harare. Four months of water shortages has resulted in many residents drinking water from unprotected wells in the surrounding Chizhanze area. Nine cases of typhoid have been confirmed in the area so far.

28 February: OCHA reported that, as a result of the recent flooding, approximately 2,194 households – around 9,000 people – have moved to the Chingwizi resettlement camp. An average 100 households, or 450 people, continue to arrive in the camp on a daily basis. At the transit points and relocation sites, significant humanitarian needs remain at the transit points and relocation sites, especially in the sectors of WASH, education and food.

28 February: According to FEWSNET, the food security situation has deteriorated throughout the current peak of lean season, despite distribution of half-rations throughout the country. Most of the southwestern areas continue to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, while most northern areas are currently facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes in the presence of assistance.

28 February: FEWSNET reported that the recent floods damaged an estimated 1,056 ha of food crops, leading to a loss of 718 tons of potential harvest. Food and nutrition security therefore risks to be severely compromised until the next harvest in 2015. In addition, a loss of livestock assets, due to the distress sale of animals, as well as the loss of productivity of the remaining livestock due to stress and disease were reported.

KEY CONCERNS

- The food security crisis in Zimbabwe is worsening with an estimated 2.2 million people – 25% of the rural population – who are food insecure, at least until April. This represents a significant increase when compared to the same period in 2013 when 1.67 million people were food insecure (National Vulnerability Assessment Committee). The exact figures remain to be confirmed and agreed upon by the government and humanitarian actors.

- Staple food prices are likely to continue to increase countrywide in the coming months (FEWSNET).

- The southeastern Masvingo province has been declared a State of Disaster with an estimated 60,000 people are at risk of localized flooding in the dam basin and downstream. Significant humanitarian needs remain at the transit points and relocation sites, especially in the sectors of WASH, education and food.

- The overall rate of HIV in Zimbabwe stands at 14.7%. In Gwanda, in the southwest of the country, an estimated 21% is HIV positive and many of those affected cease continuation with treatment due to poverty.

Disasters

Heavy rains, which started in late January, led to flooding in several parts of the country. At least three people died and many were displaced when their homes and property were destroyed. The most affected areas were the districts of Chivi, Masvingo, and Tsholotsho, Matabeleland North Province. According to local authorities, the usually drought-prone Masvingo province received nearly double the annual average of rainfall, causing water levels to rise rapidly at the partially constructed Tokwe-Makorsi dam. As a consequence, there were fears that the dam would not withstand the volume of water. On 3 March, OCHA however reports the authorities stated the Tokwe-Makorsi Dam remains stable.

The State of Disaster (SoD), declared in Masvingo Province on 9 February, remains in place. In addition, the authorities called upon the international community to help evacuate an estimated 60,000 people at risk in the dam basin and downstream since households in Muzarabani, Gokwe, Middle Sabi, Tsholotsho, Chiredzi, Chivi and Mwenezi districts remain under a serious threat of localized flooding. Both shelter and crops have been affected in these areas and continued heavy rains could have a negative impact on crop yields.

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that, as a result of the recent flooding, approximately 2,194 households – around 9,000 people – have moved to the Chingwizi resettlement camp. An average 100 households, or 450 people, continue to arrive in the camp on a daily basis. At the transit points and relocation sites, significant humanitarian needs – especially
in the WASH, health, shelter, education and food sector – remain.

**Food Security**

FEWSNET reported that the recent floods damaged an estimated 1,056 ha of food crops, leading to a loss of 718 tons of potential harvest. Food and nutrition security therefore risks to be severely compromised until the next harvest in 2015. In addition, a loss of livestock assets, due to the distress sale of animals, as well as the loss of productivity of the remaining livestock due to stress and disease were reported.

**Food Insecurity**

Zimbabwe is currently at the peak of the lean season and the food security situation has deteriorated, even in the presence of some half rations being distributed across many parts of the country. Most of the southwestern areas continue to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes, while most northern areas are currently facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity outcomes in the presence of assistance. However, continued funding shortfalls resulted in half rations for a reduced number of households, FEWSNET reports on 28 February.

Following a government-led survey in 2013, the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC) estimated in early February that 2.2 million people – 25% of the rural population – will remain food insecure until the end of the lean season and the start of the main harvest in April. This is the highest level of food insecurity in Zimbabwe since early 2009, and represents a significant increase compared to the 1.67 million people considered food insecure at the same time last year. The escalation is largely due to lower domestic production and poor cereal harvests in 2013, in the south and west of the country.

However, figures relating to food insecurity in the country have been called into question by the government. In early March, the Deputy Agricultural Minister said that the numbers had been exaggerated and denied the existence of a food crisis. An unnamed senior aid worker however challenged this statement, saying years of poor rains and general economic deterioration have left people’s resources depleted.

According to WFP, the food insecurity is due to various factors including adverse weather conditions, the unavailability and high cost of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilisers, and projected high cereal prices due to the poor maize harvest.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 2 March, FEWSNET reported that maize grain was available in most monitored markets across the country with the exception of the southern market of Gwanda, where consistent importation of relatively expensive South African maize meal continues to guarantee food availability. However, maize grain prices increased significantly in Harare (11 percent) and in Gweru and Mutare (15 percent), remaining significantly higher (76 and 43 percent respectively) when compared to January 2013, and marking the highest year-on-year increase. These two areas of the country are increasingly dependent on maize grain imports from neighbouring Zambia, where source market prices are also high.

Staple food prices are likely to continue increasing countrywide in the coming months although successful government procurement of relatively less-expensive South African grain, commercial cereal imports, and low international fuel prices and the ethanol blending policy could temper these effects.

Earlier, FAO stated that the provinces in the south and west of the country have the highest rates of general food insecurity due to unfavourable weather conditions and poor cereal harvests in 2013.

Zimbabwe has five regions with varying suitability for growing crops. The drought-prone provinces of the south and west, such as Masvingo and the South and North Matabeleland provinces, are typically ranked as the most unsuitable areas for crop production. The highest proportions of food insecure households are currently estimated to be in Zvishavane (52 percent), followed by Binga (50 percent).

Overall, the aggregate cereal harvest in 2013 was estimated at about 1 million tonnes, close to 150,000 tonnes below the 2012 output and about 27% below the five-year average. Maize production was particularly low in 2013, estimated at about 799,000 tonnes, 17% lower than the below-average output in 2012. Poor rainfall during the main cropping season (November-June) in southern and western provinces, as well as an overall contraction in planting, contributed to this year’s production decline, FAO reported.

**Health and Nutrition**

**HIV**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) raised concerns about the impact of the HIV epidemic in Zimbabwe, especially in the town of Gwanda in the southwest of the country. An estimated 21 per cent of Gwanda is HIV positive and many cease continuation with treatment due to poverty.

**Typhoid**

According to local media, a typhoid outbreak has been confirmed in the densely populated suburb of Mabvuku, east of the capital city Harare. Four months of water shortages has resulted in many residents drinking water from unprotected wells in the surrounding Chizhanje area. Nine cases of typhoid have been confirmed in the area so far.

**Reviewed: 04/03/2014**

**BOTSWANA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

5 March: Following widespread and heavy rains with high rainfall amounts (>50 mm) in the past weeks, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that abundant rains are again forecast over south-eastern Southern Africa during the next week. Heavy rainfall could further deteriorate ground conditions and lead to new flooding across eastern Botswana.

4 March: The Government declared that it has embarked on infrastructure development
The Government declared that it has embarked on infrastructure development projects aimed to ensure an adequate supply of water and electricity, since dams in Gaborone area have proven to be unable to meet the demand with supply more than halved from 88 to 48 million litres per day. These developments are part of the 30-year national water master plan established in 1990 and reviewed in 2006.

**KEY CONCERNS:**

- Botswana’s upcoming cereal harvest is predicted to be below-average, due to dry conditions in late 2013. Low water levels in dams in the south area contributing factor to food insecurity (FAO, 2014).

**Burundi**

**FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, POLITICAL UNREST**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

28 February: The UNHCR welcomed the decision of the Burundian government to finalize the situation of 37 Rwandan refugees who fled their country between 1959 and 1998. On 26 February, the government declared the cessation clause of the refugee status for these refugees and said it would implement durable solutions for them.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Recent torrential rains have left over 12,000 people homeless in and around the capital Bujumbura. There remains an urgent need for assistance with shelter and basic humanitarian supplies.

- Below-average harvests in the central region of Plateaux Humides means households in this area are likely to experience IPC phase 2 levels until June 2014 (FEWSNET).

- Burundi is one of the worst-affected countries in the world when it comes to food security with “extremely alarming” levels of hunger resulting from prolonged conflict and political instability (Global Hunger Index, October).

**Politics and Security**

A civil war that led to inter-ethnic killings between Hutus and Tutsis marred Burundi between 1993 and 2006, and the country is struggling to emerge from this civil war. The government, with the help of the international community, has embarked on the lengthy process of disarming thousands of soldiers and former rebels, as well as forming a new national army. However, the authoritarian behaviour of the government following disputed elections in 2010 has cast a shadow over the reconciliation process.

Post-war political life rests on a compromise under which 60 percent of members of parliament must belong to the Hutu ethnic group and 40 percent to the Tutsis. Despite years of relative stability, currently the political landscape is becoming increasingly tense due to deteriorated relations between the ruling parties.

In addition, due to land scarcity and high population density, tensions over land ownership are pervasive. This is partly due to a high number of former IDPs and refugees returning to their place of origin after the end of the war and claiming ownership over land where other...
families, often of a different ethnic background, had since settled. Discontent is further fuelled by the economic slowdown currently affecting the country.

Political Context

In December, the ruling party made controversial announcements regarding possible revisions of the Constitution in relation to the term of the President Elect, which would allow the current President to run for a third term in office in the 2015 presidential elections. The move reportedly triggered a political crisis, due to a perceived threat to the inter-ethnic power-sharing balance. As per the Arusha peace agreement of 2000, seats in government are distributed between representatives of Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups.

Following turmoil due to a dispute between the Hutu-led National Council for the Defense of Democracy—Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) and its minority coalition and predominantly Tutsi party UPRONA. In recent weeks, five senior UPRONA figures either resigned or were forced to leave the government, including the first Vice-President.

In January 2014, the chairman of UPRONA, Charles Nditije, was sacked from the position of vice-president when he refused to support the planned constitutional amendments. Hence, a year before the elections, relations within this fragile coalition have sharply deteriorated.

Elections for which it remains uncertain whether any opposition candidate will run against Nkurunziza, since it the opposition has been mostly inactive since 2010. Observers state one candidate could be Agathon Rwasa, head of the former rebel and Hutu-dominated National Forces of Liberation (FNL). Rwasa recently spoke out when on 16 February, three UPRONA activists were arrested in a police raid during a party meeting. He warned for a political crisis that might risk to spark new unrest ahead of the upcoming presidential elections, and stated that only good governance on the basis of law and order can move the country forward.

On 10 February, severe floods and landslides, following torrential rains, largely affected the region of Bujumbura, killing 77 people, displacing close to 20,000 people and leaving around 12,500 people homeless when about 2,000 houses were destroyed, the Red Cross reported. The flooding was amongst the deadliest ever recorded in the capital. Most pressing needs include shelter and provision of basic supplies. Local sources have warned that similar events might occur in the near future, due to the upcoming main rainy season.

Displacement

Returnees

As of January, the IOM reported that 43,000 Burundians living in Tanzania have been forcibly repatriated and were mostly registered in the South of the country, namely in Giharo, Rutana and Bukemba in Makamba province as well as in Madamba and Kayogoro. However, it is difficult to quantify the exact number of people expelled since the end of July. Due to the lack of reception facilities at the various entry points, many of them choose to return to their province of origin without being registered. 65% of returnees were women and children.

From 6 to 8 November, the Tripartite Commission on the voluntary repatriation of 13,000 Burundian refugees living in Uganda held its second meeting in Bujumbura. Representatives of the Governments of Burundi, Uganda and UNHCR adopted a text on practical modalities for the voluntary repatriation and several recommendations have been made including continuing information campaign to promote voluntary return and negotiating with the Government of Rwanda on the terms and modalities for the transit of goods and people across Rwanda. First convoys are due to take place early 2014. Sensitization campaigns regarding voluntary return took place among Burundian refugees in DRC in early February.

The recent repatriation wave follows the presidential directive by the Government of Tanzania on 25 July, requiring all undocumented migrants to leave the country. The civil war, which followed the coup in 1993, displaced up to a million Burundians who fled to more stable Tanzania. Most of these refugees returned after the conflict ended in 2006. Tanzanian authorities seem to be increasing their expulsions of refugees from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda.

IDPs

As of late October, UNHCR reported that a list of 20 sites hosting IDPs in Burundi was handed over to UNHCR by the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender to initiate the voluntary return process and sustainable solutions. IDMRC reported that although there has been no new displacement recorded since 2008, there are still up to 79,000 IDPs in the country, mostly ethnic Tutsis displaced by internal armed conflict between Government armed forces and non-state armed groups and inter-communal violence following the coup in 1993. They are mainly located in and around 120 sites across northern and central Burundi. There are concerns that the number of IDPs may increase in light of the increased number of returnees from neighbouring countries.

Refugees

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

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Refugees

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The UNHCR welcomed the decision of the Burundian Government to finalize the situation of 37 Rwandan refugees who fled their country between 1959 and December 31, 1998. On 26 February, the Government declared the cessation clause of the refugee status for the 37 refugees in question and said it would implement durable solutions for them.

These refugees fled Rwanda between 1959 and 1998. This decision stems from the strategy for durable solutions for Rwandan Refugees as adopted in Geneva in 2011 and confirmed by the ministerial conference of African States held in April 2013 in Pretoria.

As of late October, Burundi was hosting over 47,200 refugees and 8,300 asylum seekers. Refugees are mainly located in the border regions of Ngozi (north, along Rwanda), Ruyigi, Muyinga and Cankuzo (east, along Tanzania) and Bubanza (west, along DRC). Most (more than 46,000) are fleeing violence and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In October, UNHCR reported a significant increase in the number of arrivals from DRC, with nearly 910 asylum seekers mostly from the province of South Kivu. Over 6,000 new refugees arrived between January and August 2013, compared to 3,500 over the same period in 2012. Most of the newly displaced are hosted in two transits centres in the west (Cishemere in Cibitoke and Kajaga in Bujumbura) before their transfer to other refugee camps in the east of the country. As of 20 August, an average of 150 new arrivals per day was recorded at the western border; the number of refugees hosted by the local population was still under assessment.

According to UNHCR as of late November, Burundi’s three refugee camps (Bwagiriza, Musasa and Gashora) have reached their maximum capacity with a total population of 26,000 refugees. In May 2013, UNHCR inaugurated a new refugee camp in Kavumu, Cankuzo Province to cater for refugees fleeing fighting in eastern DRC. The new camp is expected to accommodate 5,000 refugees by the end of 2013.

Meanwhile, a resettlement operation targeting current refugees in Burundi, which is significantly growing, is also underway. The number of cases referred to the Regional Support Hub in Nairobi, Kenya for onward submission to resettlement countries has increased sharply in September and October 2013. In total, 564 persons have been referred since 1 January 2013, including 325 for the last two months. Moreover, the number of departures totalled 188 between January and October 2013.

**Food Security**

According to the Burundi Red Cross, the floods in early February are likely to lead to an increased risk of famine. The floods affected the region of Bujumbura.

In February, the FAO announced that harvests of the ‘A’ season crop, which run from September to February, were slightly below average due to plant diseases and heavy rains. This situation mostly affects the Plateaux Humides region in central Burundi and, according to FAO estimations, poor households in the Plateaux Humides may face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels as a result. Most households will experience IPC phase 1 (Minimal level) of acute malnutrition until June 2014, when the main “B season” is due.

In October, according to FEWSNET, although most households experienced Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1), poor households in the Plateaux Humides and Congo Nile Crest zones had been expected to face Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) until “season A” harvests were due to start in December. These households had reduced food quantity and quality due to below-average production last season, reduced purchasing power, and decreased opportunities for labour migration to Tanzania, given the recent expulsion of Burundians from Tanzania.

Overall, the 2013 cereal production had been provisionally forecast at about 260,000 tonnes, about 7% lower than the five year average due to unfavourable weather conditions that affected the previous cropping seasons earlier in the year. For 2014, the whole country was forecast to receive average to above average rainfall amounts along the season, with favourable effects on crop yields and pasture conditions.

According to the 2013 Global Hunger Index (GHI) report released in October, Burundi is the worst-affected country in the world among 19 nations with “extremely alarming” levels of hunger that can be attributed to prolonged conflict and political instability.

According to WFP as of late November, the results of the latest Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) corroborated the projections of the October Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and clearly confirmed this situation of acute food insecurity. Burundi’s population at risk from poor food consumption had doubled since April (from 5 to 10%). In terms of regional disparity, FSMS results showed a decrease in the proportion of households with adequate consumption compared to April 2013 in Central Provinces (Muramvya and Gitega) and Eastern Plateaux (Ruyigi). Four of the eight livelihoods zones across the country had a significant proportion (>45%) of households with limited to poor food consumption. Eastern Burundi had been particularly affected by the closure of Tanzania’s Mtibila refugee camp in December 2012 and the forced repatriation of Burundian refugees initiated by Tanzanian authorities in August 2013. Moreover, slowness in the process of reintegration in rural villages coupled with the hostility of Tanzanian border authorities regarding traditional spontaneous movements across the border had worsened food security conditions in the region.

**Health**

According to the Burundi Red Cross, the floods in early February are likely to lead to an increased risk of epidemics.

**Cholera**

Burundi has been experiencing an outbreak of cholera, along the border with DR Congo and Tanzania. According to WHO, as of 4 November 2013, a total of 1,576 cases including 16 deaths have been reported from 12 districts.

**Updated: 04/03/2014**

**KENYA FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**28 February:** UNHCR reported that over 20,000 South Soudanese asylum seekers have crossed into Kenya since violence erupted in South Sudan in December. The majority are currently residing in the northwestern camp of Kakuma.
28 February: FEWNET reported that poor households in the conflict-affected pastoral areas of Turkana and Marsabit are currently experiencing IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) levels of food insecurity.

KEY CONCERNS

- Conflict is ongoing in northeast Kenya, where two thirds of violent attacks have been attributed to the Somali Islamist Al Shabaab movement.
- Inter-communal tensions remain high in various parts of the country. In 2013, 491 people were killed and 47,000 displaced because of tribal conflicts. Most affected counties are Tana River (coastal area), Mandera (northeast), Marsabit (north), Moyale (north).
- Kenya is currently hosting more than 587,000 refugees, including at least 477,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the northeastern Dadaab refugee camp (UNHCR, January 2014, OCHA, February 2014). An estimated 20,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into the country in recent weeks. (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).

Politics and Security

National Context

Kenya is considered relatively stable in the Horn of Africa and held peaceful presidential elections in March 2013. However, the country remains deeply divided, ethnically polarised, and 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 since 2011, 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 the Westgate 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 7 February, three people were stabbed in riots which broke out after Friday prayers in the coastal city of Mombasa - Kenya’s second largest. Around 300 men, some of them armed, blocked the roads in protest at the arrest of some 130 Muslim men whom the police accused of attending a radicalisation session in a mosque. A few days before, local sources reported that clashes ignited between the authorities and Muslim youths in Mombasa, following a police raid on a mosque in which three people died and over 100 were arrested. The operation was 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

As of mid-February, the local press reported that tensions remained high in the northern region of Moyale, which is located in the North, along the Ethiopian border. On 21-22 February, the ‘Marsabit Peace Initiative’ brought together in Nairobi leaders from the communities which have experienced conflict over the last years, namely the Borana, Gabra, Borji, Sakura Garre and "Corner communities". These communities reside in Moyale and surroundings in the northern Marsabit county, which has been hit by recurrent waves of violence over the past year. The event, organised at the initiative of the Central Government, aimed to negotiate peace in the county, and marked the unveiling of the
Boma Peace Agreement. All leaders pledged to form a multi-ethnic committee to steer joint peace rallies and dialogue, to facilitate reconstruction of houses for the displaced, to facilitate the return of the displaced and ensure their security, to strengthen cross-border dialogue with Ethiopia on the issue of violence in Marsabit, and to ensure that all public resources, under the charge of the national and county Governments, would be allocated fairly to all communities in the county.

Violence in Moyale had erupted in December 2013 and had sharply escalated as of mid-January, causing significant population displacement. As of February, tribal clashes between the Borena 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.

On 10 February, local sources reported that two Ethiopian were killed in a clash between raiders from the Ethiopian Daasanach community –also known as Merille, and local Turkana in Kokoru division, Turkana county. Violence reportedly erupted when Daasanach raiders launch a revenge attack, and raiders were shot dead during a firefight with the Kenyan Police Reservists and local herdsmen. According to local sources, confrontations traditionally ignite over pasture and water, and Ethiopian raiders allegedly killed more than 20 people in the past two months, notably in the neighbouring West Pokot county.

Inter-clan violence also erupted early December on the West Pokot-Turkana border (northeastern Kenya), where pastoral communities clashed over resources, causing more than 20 deaths and displacing hundreds of families. Armed clashes between the rival communities had previously flared up in July-August 2013, 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 Garfi 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.

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. Interclan 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 Turkanas. 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 Bargi 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.

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.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

**Internal Displacement**

According to OCHA on 20 January, fighting which erupted in December 2013 in the northern region of 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**

As of 28 February, according to UNHCR, an estimated 20,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed over to Kenya since violence erupted in the neighbouring country in mid-December, and are currently residing in the northwestern camp of Kakuma. The camp, which has a capacity of 150,000, has almost reached its full capacity. Government officials have authorised the construction of a new camp in the vicinity. The daily rate of arrival is as high as 500 and latest reports indicated that the most pressing needs include protection for separated children, registration and health services.
On 31 December, the UNHCR had reported that Kenya is currently hosting more than 587,000 refugees, including at least 477,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the north eastern Dadaab/Anjoujir refugee camp complex (391,000), the northwest camp of Kakuma (54,000) and the capital Nairobi (32,400).

On 28 February, OCHA announced that 30,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya over the course of 2013. Although their status is not specified, it is implied that these people are mostly Somali refugees. As of 17 February, there were 353,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab.

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

As of February, according to FEWSNET, most of the country remains at Stressed (IPC phase 2) level of food insecurity. 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.

In the pastoral areas of Turkana, which borders Uganda and South Sudan in the north, and Marsabit, northern Kenya, poor households have entered IPC phase 3 – Crisis, due to below average rains, and to reduced access to livestock sales and markets as a result of inter-clan conflict.

As of February, FEWSNET indicated that food insecurity is expected to increase due to declining food availability and rising prices, but will likely remain at IPC level 2 throughout the 2014 lean season (August – November). The availability of the legume harvests through February-May is expected to mitigate the effects of declining food security. The situation of household in IPC phase 3 in pastoral areas will also be expected to improve to IPC phase 2, due to expected precipitations during the long rains season (March – May).

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 Turkana 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) had 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 Lamu, where malnutrition has increased and is now above the five-year average due to increased prices and limited milk availability. Malnutrition levels are also expected to deteriorate in areas affected by conflict and floods, such as Tana River county and Mandera county where UNICEF says the nutrition status as critical.

Updated: 05/03/2014

NAMIBIA DROUGHT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 March: OCHA reports that 39 cholera cases and 3 deaths have been reported in Katutura, 8 kilometres north of the capital Windhoek. Poor WASH conditions and open defecation in the area are of concern, as this could exacerbate the outbreak.

27 February: Grave concerns remain regarding water shortages of affected communities. There is an insignificant inflow despite recent rain – underground water levels therefore could not improve – and water levels in the three major dams, supplying Windhoek and the central areas, are ever-deteriorating. The total water storage in the three dams plummeted to 36.6 percent, compared to 91 percent in February 2012 and 63.3 percent in February 2013. Fears are that – in case there is no inflow – Windhoek, especially, could run dry by August next year.

KEY CONCERNS

- Namibia is in the grip of serious food security crisis due to recurrent drought. Approximately 780,000 people remain food insecure as a result of the 2013 drought out of which 463,600 need assistance (FAO and GoN, January 2014).

- Since November 2013, Namibia has been experiencing a cholera outbreak which
has so far been confined to the northern regions and in the vicinity of Windhoek. As of 21 February, 546 cases have been recorded nationally with 19 fatalities since the start of the outbreak. National Health authorities are coordinating a response in conjunction with the UN and the Namibian Red Cross to prepare for a serious outbreak (OCHA, February 2014).

An estimated 109,000 rural children <5 are at risk of malnutrition because of lack of food and poor sanitation (Namibian Red Cross, July 2013).

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Drought

While the December rains have started to relieve the drought conditions of northern Namibia, grave concerns remain regarding water shortages of affected communities. There is an insignificant inflow despite recent rain — underground water levels therefore could not improve — and water levels in the three major dams, supplying Windhoek and the central areas, are ever-deteriorating. The total water storage in the three dams plummeted to 36.6 percent, compared to 91 percent in February 2012 and 63.3 percent in February 2013. The Windhoek municipality urged its residents to be conservative in their water use, in addition to water restrictions that were already imposed last year. Fears are that — in case there is no inflow — Windhoek, especially, could run dry by August next year.

Food Security

Namibia is in the grip of a serious food security crisis due to recurrent drought. According to FAO, approximately 780,000 people were estimated to be food insecure following the impact of the 2013 drought, of whom 463,600 need assistance. The northern regions have been worst affected, with the largest number of food insecure assessed to be in Kavango and Ohangwena. Households have employed negative coping strategies to mitigate the impact of the drought, including reducing numbers of meals and increasing consumption of wild foods.

On 17 May 2013, the President of Namibia declared a national drought emergency and called for assistance from the international community. The Namibian Directorate of Disaster Risk Management drafted a National Drought Emergency Response Plan (July 2013-March 2014) with the support of humanitarian partners. Measures included cash grants to food insecure households, distribution of food, provision of clean Water, and WASH measures. However, by the end of 2013, according to UNICEF assessments, food security conditions were still critical. Results of an Inter-Agency Emergency Food Security Assessment also indicated that agricultural production will be very poor due to the lowest seasonal rainfall for decades. OCHA indicated that early 2014 forecasts have a strongly pessimistic outlook in terms of food security and drought conditions in the country.

In addition, water levels are decreasing, and 40-50% of water points no longer function. Many farmers are forced to sell cattle, due to lack of pasture, while cow-herds from drought affected Angola are reportedly crossing the border in search of food, fuelling tribal tensions as competition for scarce pastures intensifies. The biggest challenges remain the issue of water competition for livestock and human consumption.

Health and nutrition

Cholera

As of 3 March, OCHA reports that 39 cholera cases and 3 deaths have been reported in Katutura, 8 kilometres north of the capital Windhoek. Katutura is a densely populated area of 200,000 individuals with low socio-economic indicators and a popular destination for urban migrants. Poor WASH conditions and open defecation in the area are of concern, as this could exacerbate the outbreak. This is the first recorded outbreak of cholera in Windhoek. National Health authorities are coordinating a response in conjunction with the UN and the Namibian Red Cross to prepare for a serious outbreak.

Humanitarian needs related to the epidemic include provision/distribution of water purification sachets to communities, improved active surveillance of new cases and strengthening of the prevention campaign in different languages and media.

Since November 2013, Namibia has been experiencing a cholera outbreak, which has mainly been confined to the northern regions, particularly Opuwo in Kunene as well as sporadic suspected cases in Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena. As of 13 February, Kunene Region reported 486 suspected cholera cases and 15 deaths (case fatality rate of 3.1%), although there is no link to the Katutura cholera as it is a different strain. According to UNICEF, nearly 40% of the reported cases were among children below 15 years of age (22% were among children <5). The fact that the region has not received rain in a while and that wells have dried up has forced many people to consume unclean water.

Although the Government of Namibia has said that the outbreak in Kunene Region has stabilized in January, the WHO warned that a major outbreak remains a possibility. Cases continue to be reported and drought conditions are leading to unsafe water collection and poor sanitation practices. Concerns are rising ahead of the upcoming flood season. As of 21 February, 546 cases had been recorded nationally with 19 fatalities since the start of the outbreak.

Urgent needs include Oral Rehydration Solution, tents and beds for Cholera Treatment Centres (in the event of a large outbreak) as well as hygiene and public health campaigns.

Malnutrition

As of mid-December, the WHO reported that acute malnutrition rates remain high in the Omusati region mainly due to food shortages and inadequate child care. In July, the Namibia Red Cross Society reported that about 109,000 rural children <5 at risk of malnutrition because of lack of food and poor sanitation.

WASH

An assessment in the four regions of Kunene, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, and Kavango found that, due to high food insecurity and malnutrition levels, and few people implementing household water treatment, the risk of water and sanitation related diseases from possible water contamination at household level is high. Of particular concern are regions with the lowest access to water and sanitation and which are prone to diseases like cholera.
Kunene, Ohangwena and Kavango are the regions most at risk from WASH related challenges.

Updated: 04/03/2014

NIGERIA  INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

7 March: FAO reported an estimated increase in cereal production of 20% compared with the 2012 flood-affected output. Maize prices in the main northern Kano market stabilised in December after falling by over 40% between July and October.

6 March: The African Union’s Mission to Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), as part of the Nouakchott Agreement, has launched a cooperation initiative with countries in the Sahel, enabling security agencies in neighbouring countries to combat terrorism and investigate transnational crimes, including joint cross-border security patrols.

6 March: The military stated it killed 20 Boko Haram (BH) insurgents when repelling an ambush in Mafa village, Borno state. There has been no independent confirmation of the death toll. On 2 March, suspected BH gunmen killed 29 people in Mafa.

4 March: FEWSNET indicated that below average harvests, limited earning opportunities, and high market prices are exacerbating the food access problem as poor households in Borno and Yobe states experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity and in Adamawa state Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity, which will last until June 2014. Poor households in Niger state will – due to erratic and below average rainfall – again face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity between April and June as they see an early start to their lean season.

2 March: BH gunmen clashed with Cameroonian soldiers when crossing the border into the Far North region in Cameroon, killing seven soldiers.

KEY CONCERNS

- Nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water (UNICEF).
- 1,287 cholera cases reported so far in 2014 – compared to zero last year – is worrying cholera experts, given the lack of WASH infrastructure in the country and growing humanitarian concerns tied to the conflict in the northeast (OCHA, February 2014).

Politics and Security

Years of conflict have resulted in widespread public distrust in the current administration due to the failure of the state to maintain public order or implement peacebuilding measures. The economy is also on the decline and inequalities are rising.

Alongside fears of a possible military defeat in the fight against the Islamist-led insurgency of Boko Haram, political is a problem as President Goodluck Jonathan intends to run for election again in February 2015, to the XXXX of opposition factions.

Regional Context

On 6 March, the African Union’s Mission to Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) launched a cooperation initiative with countries in the Sahel to combat terrorism as part of efforts to stabilise the region. This initiative, which is part of the implementation of the Nouakchott Agreement, will enable security agencies in neighbouring countries to combat terrorism and investigate transnational crimes, including joint cross-border security patrols.

On 4 March, the head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), Said Djinnit, strongly condemned the latest wave of “unspeakable” violence in the region and demanded an end to attacks targeting innocent civilians.

On 3 March, the ECOWAS Commission strongly condemned the unprovoked attack by a terrorist armed group on a Federal Government College in Yobe state, and confirmed that the Community stands solidly behind the GoN in collective efforts to rid the country and region of terrorism.

2015 Elections: Tensions within the Ruling People’s Democratic Party

On 28 February, at the end of her first official visit to the country, Rita Izsák, the UN Independent Expert on minority issues, said she recognised the challenges of the complex ethnic, religious and linguistic make-up of Nigeria, but stated that “good and inclusive governance was essential to ensuring minority rights, equality and peaceful coexistence for all of Nigeria’s citizens”.

In a press conference on 24 February, President Jonathan defended the army’s role against Boko Haram, stating the fight against the insurgents is improving.

On 20 February, Nigeria’s central bank governor Lamido Sanusi was suspended by President Jonathan for “financial recklessness and misconduct”, a move Sanusi has already declared he will be challenging in court.

At the press conference on 24 February, the President said the suspension followed
allegations of mishandling of the bank’s budget and irregularities in the 2012 and 2013 audit. However, observers say that Sanusi, whose suspension caused a panic selloff in financial markets (forex, bond and money markets have all stopped trading), had become an increasingly vocal critic of the government’s record on tackling corruption. After taking his position in 2010, Sanusi was asked to resign in December 2013. He refused. Earlier in February, in a hearing with the Senate committee, Sanusi alleged that 20 billion dollars in oil revenue had gone missing. On 22 February, a Nigerian court barred the security services from arresting Sanusi, after he was briefly detained and his passport seized at the airport.

On 17 February, the United States and Nigeria – more specifically the Governance, Transparency, and Integrity Working Group of the United States-Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC) – met to discuss integration of civil society organisations into the electoral process ahead of the 2015 general elections. The aim of the meeting was to support the establishment of benchmarks for transparent and inclusive elections, with corruption potentially impeding effective governance and economic development in Nigeria.

The question of whether President Jonathan should seek another term in office continues to stoke tensions and create divisions within the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Critics say Jonathan’s re-election would violate the unwritten rule that governance should rotate between the Muslim north and Christian south every two terms.

On 12 February, in a fresh attempt to resolve the political crisis within his ruling party, President Goodluck Jonathan fired four cabinet members, including the Ministers of Police and Information. The most prominent person to be fired was Stella Oduah, Aviation Minister and close ally of the President, who has been accused of corruption.

On 3 February, Nigeria’s former Vice President Abubakar left the PDP to join the All Progressives Congress (APC) opposition party, stating he believed in a two-party political system for Nigeria.

In mid-January, Bamanga Tukur, the chairman of the ruling PDP, resigned following significant pressure from the opposition. As a close ally of the President, Tukur’s resignation aims to settle party divisions, which continue to rock the current administration.

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

In the beginning of February, agreement on the 2014 budget was still delayed due to a personal clash between Finance Minister Onokpo-Iweala and the Parliament. The National Assembly Budget and Research Office called for a public hearing with the Finance Minister to question her performance prior to a budget vote. The government has stated that it could continue using last year’s budget for another six months before being forced into shutdown. Nigeria’s main opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), called upon its parliamentarians in late January, to block all legislation, including the 2014 budget, until rule of law was restored in Nigeria.

Security Context

Over the past decade, Nigeria has been facing a number of security challenges, including militant insurgency, ethno-religious conflict and piracy. Due to the significant increase in violent attacks, the International Criminal Court (ICC) qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013.

Since 2009, the Nigerian authorities have been fighting Boko Haram (BH), an Islamist group founded in Maiduguri, Borno State. BH has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in the predominantly Muslim regions of northern Nigeria. Another group prompting security concerns is the less operational Ansaru, a splinter faction of Boko Haram, which targets the Nigerian military and Western targets and is thought to be linked to al Qaeda. The violence continues to trigger internal and international displacement, particularly in Borno and Yobe states.

In the Niger Delta region, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta is causing unrest by threatening to sabotage and end Nigerian oil production by 2015. It is the largest militant organisation within the region, made up of several armed groups. Its aim is ‘to expose the exploitation of people in the Niger Delta as well as the destruction of the natural environment by public–private partnerships’.

In addition, inter-communal and ethno-religious violence remains a persistent threat. The Middle Belt area is divided between the Islamic North and the more secular Christian/animist south and is home to a number of minority groups. Plateau and Kano states have experienced the most violence of late. Armed raids on four villages took place in central Plateau state in November 2013, and inter-communal conflict triggered population displacement in September 2013.

Boko Haram Insurgency

According to observers, BH may be taking advantage of the porous borders with Chad and Niger, which allows criminal groups, including weapon dealers, to move freely between the countries. In April 2012, the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force, formed in 1998 by Nigeria, Chad and Niger, was expanded to include counterterrorism.

On 25 February, President Goodluck Jonathan officially declared Nigeria was ‘at war’ with the militant Boko Haram, adding that the war had taken on an international dimension. The Defence Ministry continued to insist that the military would eventually crush the insurgency.

Following recent arms seizures and arrests of traffickers in Cameroon’s Far North Region, on 23 February it was confirmed that Nigeria has closed its northern border with Cameroon – from northern Borno state, by Lake Chad, to the southern end of Adamawa state – to block the movement of BH members. The Nigerian military claimed fighters have set up bases in sparsely populated areas of the Far North Region.

On 23 February, US Secretary of State John Kerry condemned the Boko Haram attacks and underscored a commitment to help Nigerian authorities to crack down on the militants the United States deems a terrorist organisation.
In January 2014 attacks by suspected members of BH claimed over 200 lives. Fighting between government troops and the BH has intensified in the last months, particularly in remote north-eastern areas. According to OCHA, the insurgency has cost over 4,000 lives since 2009 – 1,200 since May 2013.

Reportedly with the tacit backing of the Nigerian government, civilians have formed vigilante groups/ self-defence militias, which in turn have led to retaliation attacks by BH. BH has expanded its initial military and security targets to include Christians, Muslims, students, politicians and others opposing BH’s ambition to impose Islamic Law.

Since April 2013, attempts by military forces to engage with BH militants have resulted in excessive use of force and large-scale destruction in civilian areas. In May 2013, BH took control of part of Borno state, prompting authorities to deploy large numbers of troops. In order to contain the BH insurgency in mid-May 2013 a state of emergency (SOE) was declared in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa state. The SOE was extended for six months in November 2013. The state of emergency is feared to have strengthened the recruitment base of Boko Haram since May 2013. Between mid-August and December 2013, BH coordinated several reprisal and retaliation attacks on military barracks and villages in Borno, Kano, Yobe and Adamawa state.

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.

**Boko Haram Attacks**

On 6 March, the military stated it had killed 20 BH Islamist insurgents when repelling an ambush in Mafa village, Borno state. There has been no independent confirmation of the death toll. On 2 March, suspected BH gunmen killed 29 people in Mafa.

On 2 March, BH gunmen clashed with Cameroonian soldiers when crossing the border in to the Cameroon Far North Region, killing seven soldiers.

On 2 March, international media reported that at least 20 people were killed when government jets bombed the village of Daglun in Borno state. A senator representing the region stated they probably mistook the village for a Boko Haram camp. The Nigerian military dismissed the allegation that civilians were killed.

Separately, on 1 March, 35 people were killed by suspected BH gunmen in the crowded Gomari district of Maiduguri, as they prepared for evening prayers.

On 27 February, suspected BH gunmen killed at least 37 people in three separate attacks in Shuwa and Kirchinga, in northern Adamawa state, including one on a theological college.

On 25 February, unidentified gunmen – suspected to be from BH – attacked the Federal Government College at Buni Yadi, Yobe state. The attack left some 45 children between 13 and 17 dead. Terrified students fled the surrounding boarding schools, refusing to stay overnight.

UNICEF expressed its outrage at the brutal killing as well as concern about the repeated attacks on schools in northeastern Nigeria. Since June 2013, four attacks have resulted in school closures. Observers state that schools are targeted because for BH they represent the main conduits through which Western values are being transmitted to the local society.

On 19 February, suspected Boko Haram members attacked Bama town, southeast of Maiduguri – the capital of Borno state. A series of alleged suicide blasts and a battle with soldiers eventually killed a large number of insurgents.

On 16 February, Boko Haram killed more than 100 people in an attack on the mostly Christian Izghe village in Borno state. There were no security forces present at the time of the attack. On 13 February Boko Haram gunmen killed nine Nigerian soldiers in Madagali area of Adamawa state. The soldiers were reportedly on a mission to avert the planned attack on Izghe village. On 18 February, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) strongly condemned an attack on seven villages in Adamawa state, killing 65 people as well as the attack on Izghe village. OHCHR urged the Nigerian Government to do more to provide security and protection to civilians, especially in areas prone to attacks and where a state of emergency has been proclaimed. On 19 February, the extremists returned to Izghe village, killing three and torching remaining homes.

On 15 February, gunmen attacked a fishing village on Lake Chad, killing an unspecified number of residents. On 12 February, about 39 people are believed to have been killed in an attack by Boko Haram militants in konduga, Borno state. In addition, a mosque and government jets bombed the village of Daglun in Borno state. A senator representing the state of emergency is feared to have strengthened the recruitment base of Boko Haram since May 2013. Between mid-August and December 2013, BH coordinated several reprisal and retaliation attacks on military barracks and villages in Borno, Kano, Yobe and Adamawa state.

On 1 February Shaikh Adam Albani, a Muslim leader critical of the BH and supportive of a Niger Delta oil refineries and target several national leaders.

**Niger Delta**

On 25 January, an attack on a security patrol boat on the Nembe-Bassanbiri waterways in southern Bayelsa state was carried out by the rebels of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. It claimed responsibility, stating that it served as a reminder of the rebel group’s presence in the oil rich delta. There were no casualties.

**Inter-communal Violence**

On 20 February, gunmen killed 13 people, including nine children, in a raid on Rapyem village in the Barkin Ladi local government area in Plateau state. So far, it is unclear who carried out this attack in what is a hotspot of the protracted conflict.

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

According to local sources, on 9 January a raid on Shonong village in Riyom local government area in central Plateau state carried out by ethnic Fulani herdsmen killed 34...
people, injured 24 and displaced 600. Around 56 houses were burnt down.

On 7 January, three were killed and 12 others injured in a mosque attack in Kwankwaso village, Kano state. Investigation has commenced, as the identity of the attackers and their motives are unknown.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

The conflict in northeastern Nigeria has displaced a large number of people, restricted movement, disrupted food supply, seriously hindered access to basic services, and limited agricultural activities. An interagency assessment was conducted in September 2013 in seven northeastern states, including Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, where a state of emergency was declared in May 2013.

As of February 2014, OCHA said that the violence and insecurity could lead to food crisis in northern areas. The current planting season is being missed as government irrigation and food production activities are on hold due to insecurity; and the predominantly agrarian population is reportedly abandoning farms in fear of Boko Haram attacks. Access to health services is also seriously hampered; many medical staff are reportedly fleeing northeast Borno state. Reports from northern Cameroon indicate that a number of Nigerians are seeking medical attention on the Cameroonian side of the border, overextending limited medical facilities in the neighbouring state. As of 30 January, OCHA reported that around 9.5 million people are affected by both natural disasters and conflict. According to UNHCR, women and children represent half of the population of concern; most urgent needs are food, WASH, and protection.

**Access**

On 25 February, OCHA reported that most international actors have withdrawn from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, where a state of emergency (SOE) has been declared for security reasons.

**Displacement**

The security situation in the SOE states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno continues to deteriorate. As of 25 February, OCHA reported that following the crisis in northeastern Nigeria, exacerbated by the declaration of the state of emergency on 14 May 2013 (extended for six months on 12 November 2013), more than 520,000 people, mainly women, children and the elderly, have moved within Nigeria or sought refuge in neighbouring, Niger, Cameroon or Chad.

Maintaining the civilian nature of places of asylum or displacement is a concern. The Government lacks capacity to ensure the protection of basic human rights for refugees, and recurrent crises have eroded the ability of households to withstand repeated and frequent disturbances.

According to UNHCR, the influx of refugees and the spillover of violence is creating cross-border tensions. In November 2013, Niger and Nigeria established a Joint Border Patrol Command to address the security challenges related to displacement and rebel activity in the area.

**Refugees**

OCHA reported that approximately 2,000 people had fled violence in Nigeria during the last week of January, with many seeking refuge in Niger. This brings the amount of displaced in the bordering region of Diffa, Niger, to 40,000 (around 8,000 Nigerians and 30,000 Niéras) since May 2013. Temporary refugee status has been granted to those Nigerians fleeing the three states under the SOE. UNHCR has advised against forced returns to the northern areas. Cameroon is now hosting 12,428 Nigerian refugees.

On 28 January, UNHCR reported that nearly 6,000 people had fled the Logone-et-Chari area and other parts of northern Nigeria after ten days of violent attacks by BH militants. Thirty people were killed, villages were bombed, and two villages were burned to the ground.

**IDPs**

As of February 2014, OCHA – in accordance with new Government figures – reports that 470,565 IDPs reside in Nigeria. Of these, 290,002 are from the SOE states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, and half are children.

**Food Security**

The food security situation in Nigeria, especially in the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, is exacerbated by the ongoing food crisis across West Africa. Due to a combination of conflict and production deficits in agro-pastoral areas of the Sahel, some 20 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity throughout the region, of which 2.5 million need urgent lifesaving food assistance.

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity in Nigeria. At the end of February, FEWSNET reported that below average crop harvests, limited earning opportunities, and high market prices are exacerbating the food access problem as poor households in Borno and Yobe states will experience Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity and in Adamawa state Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity through June 2014. The late harvest of long-cycle crops in January has helped improve food security outcomes for poor households in Niger state, worst affected by erratic and below-average rainfall during the 2013 rainy season. Poor households in Niger state will again face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity between April and June as they see an early start to their lean season.


**Agricultural Outlook**

On 7 March, FAO reported that estimates indicate a good cereal, and root and tuber crop production in Nigeria, the largest producer of the subregion, with an estimated 20% increase in cereal production compared to the 2012 flood-affected output. The decline in cereal prices – along seasonal trends –came after several months of steep increases due
to reduced 2012 production and conflict-induced trade disruptions. Similarly, yam and cassava production increased by 14% compared to last year. Overall, national cereal and tuber production for the current season is 10% and 7% higher, respectively, relative to the five-year average. Maize prices in the main northern Kano market stabilised in December after falling by over 40% between July and October. Market stocks and trade flows are adequate even in areas affected by localised flooding and dry spells, and trade flows from surplus to deficit production areas are maintaining food prices below pre-harvest levels.

On 2 March, FEWSNET reported that trade flows between Nigeria and Benin are proceeding normally, while trade flows towards Cameroon and Chad are disrupted by Boko Haram-related conflict.

FEWSNET reported at the end of February that conflict in northern Nigeria, especially Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, continues to contribute to disrupting livelihoods and trade flows. The area suffered significantly below-average production in the 2013/14 cropping season and off-season income-generating activities will be similarly limited through the next cropping season. Market prices for key staples in Borno state are already upwards of 30% above the five-year average.

Land preparation and dry season activities continue in most areas, increasing earning opportunities and contributing to the ability to access food normally, with most households likely to experience Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity through June.

Exceptions are households affected by erratic and below-average rainfall during the rainy season. Beginning in April, poor households in Niger state, worst affected by the prolonged dry spells, will deplete their food stocks two to three months earlier than usual and will need to resort to market purchase to access food. People in the Middle Belt, north-central and southwestern parts of the country also continue to be affected by flooding and dry spells, which result in a below-average harvests. By April 2014, poor households will face rising food costs and most likely have to resort to the sale of additional livestock animals and increased casual labour.

The critical exception, however, is Boko Haram conflict areas in northeastern Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. As of 17 February, FAO reports that households in this area depend mostly on market purchase to meet food needs during the height of the lean season, which takes place from March to September. However, seasonal incomes will be significantly below average due to the disruption of livelihoods by conflict. The current situation is similar to the food assistance outlook of August 2013, yet it represents an improvement when compared to the five-year average.

Health and Nutrition

On 5 February, the UN said that persistent attacks by BH 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 medical attention across the border. Mortality rates are increasing and vaccination programmes are severely hit. ICRC adds that tens of thousands are missing out on vital services, and the availability of shelter, food, water, clothes and health services has worsened in the northeast. These developments could have a detrimental impact on the reliability of epidemiological surveillance systems and the quality of the care still being delivered. For instance, routine vaccinations: the polio campaigns are now limited to the Maiduguri metropolis. A break in procurement chains for antimalarial drugs and bed nets is another concern.

Cholera

After UNICEF reported a cholera outbreak in and around Kano and Nassarawa states on 29 January, ECHO also reported that 524 cases of cholera, including ten deaths, had been confirmed in the Middle Belt and in northern Nigeria during the first three weeks of January. The northwestern Zamfara state is considered the most affected. These figures represent a massive increase compared to the same period in 2013. According to OCHA, as of mid-December, 2,880 cholera cases had been reported across 16 states in 2013. Over 70 people died, and almost 90 cholera high-risk wards have been identified. The 2013 figures represent an eightfold increase compared to the same period in 2012.

The cholera risk in Nigeria is exacerbated by a general increase in cholera in neighbouring countries and across West and Central Africa regions.

In February 2014, OCHA reported that cholera was continuing to pose a serious threat across West and Central Africa. In the first five weeks of 2014, 3,822 cases had been reported, resulting in 72 deaths. Whilst this represents a 30% decline in cases as compared to the same period last year, the reporting of 1,287 cases this year in Nigeria compared to zero last year – is a worrying trend for cholerISTS given the lack of WASH infrastructure in the country and growing humanitarian concerns tied to the conflict in the northeast.

WASH experts underline that there is a high risk of a large cross-border cholera outbreak in the states bordering Lake Chad (Chad, northern Cameroon, northeast Nigeria, and southeast Niger) given the occurrence of previous outbreaks in this area, the current caseload during an inter-epidemic period, and the precarious security situation in northeast Nigeria with its accompanying spillover into neighbouring Cameroon and Niger.

Lassa Fever

On 5 February, ECHO reported that 16 cases of Lassa fever, including six deaths, had been reported in Taraba, Nassarawa, and Bauchi states, in the Middle Belt. Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic fever caused by the Lassa virus, first described in 1969 in Lassa, Borno state. The infection is endemic in West African countries, with 300,000-500,000 cases and 5,000 deaths reported annually. Lassa fever can be transmitted directly from one human to another. It can be contracted by an airborne route or with direct contact with infected human blood, urine, or semen. Transmission through breast milk has also been observed. After an incubation period of six to twenty-one days, an acute illness with multiorgan involvement develops. Non-specific symptoms include fever, facial swelling, and muscle fatigue, as well as conjunctivitis (pink eye) and mucosal bleeding.

Polio

UNICEF reported 49 cases of polio in 2013. This represents a decrease compared to the 102 cases reported in 2012. 72% of cases have been recorded in Borno, Yobe, and Kano states, where insecurity is slowing the polio immunisation campaign.
Malnutrition

As of 30 January, OCHA said that Nigeria’s global acute malnutrition stands at 1.74 million. 540,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. A further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition. An estimated five million children under five years of age will suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition.

WASH

According to reports from UNICEF, nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water, and a third does not have access to sanitation services. The 2010 and 2011 rainy season caused for water-borne epidemics to spread easily, killing nearly 2,000 people.

ZAMBIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

10 March: FEWSNet reports that week high (> 50 mm) rainfall amounts were recorded over northern Zambia in the past week. Local residents in Kitwe, north-central Zambia, were displaced, several houses were destroyed, and the livelihoods of several thousands of people disrupted. Moderate to heavy rains are expected to continue during March, which could trigger new flooding and worsen ground conditions.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 200,000 households are at risk of being food insecure, mostly in the south (FAO, February 2014).

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

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Food Security

The main cereal crops in Zambia are maize, millet and sorghum, which are harvested from May to June. As of 15 February, FAO reported that according to 2013 vulnerability assessments, one million people (200,000 households) were at risk of being food insecure. They are mostly located in the southern. On 27 February, FEWSNET reported that acute food insecurity remains Minimal (IPC Phase 1) at the height of the lean season, despite atypically high staple food prices. Most households depend on the market to meet basic food needs.

Outlook

On 28 February, FEWSNET reported that consistently heavy rainfall in recent weeks caused flooding, overflowing of rivers, infrastructure damage, and displacement of people in Luano Valley, Kitwe, and Chipata regions, in central and eastern Zambia. Heavy downpours are forecast to continue during March, which could exacerbate ground conditions.

The price of staple food remains above the five year average and 2013 prices due to the combined effects of reduced national production, increased marketing cost due to higher fuel prices, and strong export demand from neighbouring countries.

Widespread rainfall is expected to continue, potentially boosting harvest prospects for the late planted crop, especially for the east. Despite late planting and the delayed start of the season, possibly leading to a reduced legume harvest, the distribution of relief good through March will increase food access for food insecure populations (<20%), mostly in the south.

Maize

FEWSNET adds that maize prices were stable or increased seasonally in January. Maize and maize meal prices are expected to peak in February/ March after which demand will decline as farming households start to access food from their own production. Remaining maize stocks are now predominantly in the hands of the Food Reserve Agency and traders and should be adequate for the remaining marketing year. While the maize export ban will remain in force, the private sector will continue to supply markets and the government will continue community sales and relief distribution in 18 districts. Maize prices are expected to fall in April as the green harvest increases and the main harvest begins.

Updated: 10/03/2014

ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

3 March: FAO reported that outbreaks of desert locust continued along Red Sea coasts, especially affecting the central Eritrean coast.

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

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression,
association, and religion are still major concerns in Eritrea (UN, HRW).

- Ongoing human rights abuses prompt thousands of Eritreans to flee the country every year. In December, Ethiopia was hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean refugees (UNHCR).

- Over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished between 2011 and 2013 (WFP).

Politics and Security

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

On 5 February, the human rights situation in Eritrea was discussed at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council where it was again pointed out by several participants that human rights abuses remained widespread in Eritrea. 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 organisations assessing needs. As reported in ECHO’s Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) released in October, due to limited access and humanitarian space in Eritrea, providing direct humanitarian assistance remains a challenge.

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 Tigrai region and two others in the Afar region in north-eastern Ethiopia. As indicated in ECHO’s HIP, the high proportion of unaccompanied minors who cross from Eritrea to Ethiopia is a priority problem in need of solid action.

According to UNHCR, eastern Sudan received an average 500 Eritrean refugees per month in 2013, down from 2,000 a month in 2012. Sudan reportedly shelters at least 114,500 Eritrean refugees. Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

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

Refugees in Eritrea

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

Food Security

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust egg-laying, hatching, band formation and fledging were ongoing south of Massawa, along the central portion of the Eritrean coast. The Northern coast was also affected. The outbreak is expected to intensify in March due to continued hatching.

As reported by FAO on 11 February, erratic rainfall has affected the 2013 cropping season. Although available information remains limited, erratic rainfall is likely to have resulted in fewer fields being cultivated in 2013 as well as having negatively impacted crop development during the crucial grain filling phase. FAO also indicated that livestock that had poor pasture conditions had also probably been affected.

According to FAO’s 2013 State of Food Insecurity in the World, over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished during 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 markets do not seem to be functioning properly. These two factors suggest that a significant part of the population may be in need of food assistance. In addition, local food and fuel prices are likely to remain high, putting severe pressure on household coping mechanisms. The government 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 are estimated to consume less than the daily calorie requirement.

Updated: 06/03/2014
AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

As of February, FEWSNET reported that western central highlands will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food security from January to March, due to the strain on usual food sources by the replacement by external assistance. Resumption of seasonal livelihood activities is expected to improve food security outcomes to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) from April to June.

KEY CONCERNS

- Throughout 2013, the Taliban intensified attacks against foreign and local military and humanitarian targets as the country prepares for the withdrawal of NATO-led troops. 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. Over 612,000 people are also internally displaced in Afghanistan, with 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 2.2 million are classified as severely food insecure. The conflict has caused widespread disruption to health services (OCHA).

Politics and Security

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 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 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 who 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, 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 added that Washington should leave if it is unable to do so.

Some observers believe that Karzai prefers to leave the decision about whether to sign the BSA to his successor and that the US might be ready to wait until then before making any decision. On 13 February, Germany’s foreign minister indicated that he had received assurances from the Afghan President that Kabul will sign the BSA without amending it. However, Karzai continues to give no indication of the timing.

On 24 November, the assembly of local elders, the Loya Jirga, issued a much-awaited endorsement for the BSA. Following this, Karzai still refused to unreservedly support the deal before the April 2014 presidential elections, unambiguously outlaying 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 handover 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 requested a commitment from Washington to refrain from backing any candidate in the upcoming presidential elections, a stark reminder of the earlier blame placed on the US for meddling in the 2009 elections.

While Karzai’s reluctance to sign the BSA is seen as a high-risk gamble by the international community, 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 US financial support, 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 is likely to give Afghanistan a year-end deadline. Against the background of the rising insurgency in Afghanistan, which is predicted to worsen, the presence of American military personnel is seen as vital for the stability of post-2014 Afghanistan.

In early December, following protests in Pakistan over drone strikes, Washington was reportedly forced to temporarily 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. 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.

Most of the over 84,000 international troops, including an estimated 60,000 Americans, stationed in Afghanistan as of 1 December are scheduled to withdraw by end 2014. Over 75% of the country was expected to be under national security control by end-July 2013, following the formal handover of national security from the US-led NATO coalition to Afghan forces in June. Within the US-led NATO coalition, there is widespread concern regarding the capacity of the 352,000-strong Afghan security forces to cope with the insurgency. As reported by an Afghan official in early September, police deaths have nearly doubled since the NATO forces have started withdrawing and handing over security to local troops. An estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen have died, and over 2,700 have been wounded in the last six months.

**National Political Context**

**April Presidential Elections**

As of early February, election campaigning for the April presidential elections got underway amid concerns over the country’s ability to hold the polls because of rising insecurity. With the near-absence of a party political system, the elections are thus likely to be determined by votes based on identity politics. According to international observers, there are currently no favourite candidates to succeed President Karzai, who has been Afghanistan’s only leader since the US intervention in 2001. In early December, after refusing to sign the BSA with the US until after the coming polls, President Karzai went on to suggest the April presidential elections could be delayed. The upcoming polls are seen as a key test of Afghanistan’s stability, amidst the ongoing withdrawal if international troops.

According to observers, the front runners and main candidates for the upcoming elections are: Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, a Pashtun and US trained anthropologist who has picked the Uzbek ex-warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum as a running mate; Zalmay Rassoul, a Pashtun educated in France and former foreign minister who is reportedly close to Karzai; Abdullah Abdullah, Tajik, a former ophthalmologist turned Mujahidin in the 1980s who ran against Karzai in 2009, but in whose administration he held the foreign minister position up to 2006; Qayum Karzai, a Pashtun and older brother of the president who promised to offer his brother a position; Abdul Rahim Wardak, a Pashtun and former guerrilla commander who served as defence minister for eight years; and Abdul Rassoul Sayyaf, a Pashtun ex-warlord who is believed to be one of the few hardline Islamist commanders to oppose the Taliban.

On 16 February, Hezb-e-Islami, a major Afghan militant group, active since the 1980s and led by former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, announced its intention to formally participate in the upcoming presidential elections by calling supporters to vote for one of the candidates, Qutbuddin Hilal who is not one of the main contenders and used to be part of the militant group. Some observers see this development as a major crack in the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan as it is likely to add legitimacy to future polls. No comment from the Taliban has been yet made available, while informal militant sources have reported rifts within the Taliban ranks in recent weeks.

In the autumn, the Taliban officially announced it would 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 April presidential elections. The elections, when an increase in attacks is expected, should prove a key test of Afghanistan’s stability against the background of international troop withdrawal.

**Release of Detainees**

On 13 February, the Afghan government released 65 detainees despite repeated warnings from the US that the released were dangerous and linked to the killing of Afghan and foreign troops in Afghanistan. The prisoners are part of a much larger group of detainees transferred to Afghan authority in 2013 as one milestone in the US and NATO transition out of Afghanistan. The 65 freed last week were part of a group of 88 whose proposed release from the US that the released were dangerous and linked to the killing of Afghan and foreign troops in Afghanistan. The prisoners are part of a much larger group of detainees transferred to Afghan authority in 2013 as one milestone in the US and NATO transition out of Afghanistan. The 65 freed last week were part of a group of 88 whose proposed release following the formal handover of national security from the US-led NATO coalition to Afghan forces in June. Within the US-led NATO coalition, there is widespread concern regarding the capacity of the 352,000-strong Afghan security forces to cope with the insurgency. As reported by an Afghan official in early September, police deaths have nearly doubled since the NATO forces have started withdrawing and handing over security to local troops. An estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen have died, and over 2,700 have been wounded in the last six months.

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**Peace Talks with the Taliban**

Several attempts have been made by Kabul and/or the US to re-launch peace talks with the Afghan Taliban over 2013. Since 2001, the Karzai government has cultivated informal contacts with current and former Taliban figures, but seems to have renewed its effort to establish a dialogue with militant representatives in recent months according to observers. To date, both Washington and Kabul remain thus interested in peace negotiations with the insurgents. Although various official and informal sources have evoked renewed
preliminary contacts, no substantial talks have been launched so far.

Afghan-led Initiatives

On 19 February, a spokesman for the Taliban restated that insurgents are still opposed to negotiations, and reported that they were not involved in a recent meeting in Dubai between former and current Taliban figures who appeared open to talks with the Afghan government. On 16 February, Kabul officials reported that a delegation from the High Peace Council, a government body launched to promote a political end to the war, had travelled to Dubai to meet a group of former and current Taliban figures that had allegedly floated the possibility of talks. The aim was to build on an informal meeting held in the same city earlier in February. No additional comments are available from Afghan authorities.

On 5 February, a spokesman for President Karzai confirmed 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 government representatives and the Taliban who flew in from Doha. To date, it remains unclear to which extent progress has been made. Western and Afghan officials both say the talks have borne little fruit and no peace negotiations have been opened. The US said it welcomed any talks that would bring peace to Afghanistan.

Throughout the fall of 2013, Kabul made several attempts to reach out to the Taliban through Pakistan. On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume peace talks, stalled since the summer, between Afghan authorities and the Taliban in April after Karzai steps down following presidential elections. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. However, the comment suggests reluctance on the Taliban’s side to engage with the Karzai administration. 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. Sharif, visiting Afghanistan for the first time since he took office in May, promised he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, who was captured in Pakistan in 2010, and who 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 went to Karachi to kick-start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and meet with Baradar, who had been released by Islamabad in September but has 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 conclusions. Islamabad had previously 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 Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

US-led Initiatives

On 23 February, the Taliban indicated that it had effectively suspended talks over a possible exchange of Taliban and US prisoners due to what the insurgents called the "complexity" of the situation in Afghanistan. The statement came as Washington officials had hinted at renewed contacts with the Afghan insurgents the previous week.

On 18 February, US government sources indicated that the Obama administration may revive talks with the Afghan Taliban, building on a separate initiative that stalled in summer 2013. According to the sources, Washington may be ready to agree to a proposed exchange of Taliban detainees held at Guantanamo Bay in return for a US prisoner of war. The aim is for this first measure to open the door to more substantive talks, possibly in Qatar whose government has played a key role in the previous contacts. Contact with Qatari authorities on the issues have reportedly restarted. However, a spokesman for Washington denied the US were “involved in active negotiations with the Taliban”.

Renewed contacts, which may lead to negotiations between the US and the Taliban, has been cited by Karzai as a necessary step before Kabul agrees to sign the bilateral security deal with the US.

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

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 the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). 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 southeast regions are most affected by violence with an increasing numbers of attacks hitting the northwest and the capital Kabul. With the onset of winter, the number of militants’ attacks has decreased.

On 23 February, in a high-profile attack, Taliban fighters staged an assault on an Afghan army outpost in the eastern Kunar province, killing 21 soldiers and kidnapping another seven. The attack came as attempts by the US and Kabul to launch peace talks with the Taliban had apparently again stalled. On 20 February, one guard was killed after a failed attempt by a suicide bomber to target a guest house used by foreigners in Kabul. The attack has not yet been claimed; similar attacks have been staged by Taliban-affiliated Islamist in the past.
On 12 February, men in Afghan army uniforms killed two and wounded another four US soldiers in eastern Kapisa province. The assault was the first so-called “insider attack” reported in 2014. At least ten such incidents in 2013 led to the deaths of 15 ISAF members, forcing NATO to briefly suspend all joint activities with Afghan forces. On 10 February, a car bomb blast targeting a convoy of foreign military vehicles in eastern Kabul reportedly killed two US contractors to ISAF. The attack was later claimed by the Hezb-e Islami group, allied to the Taliban.

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, a presidential candidate, were shot dead in the western Herat city in an early indication of how the country’s volatility is likely to impact upcoming 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 wounded in a militant 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 latest estimates, 21 people, including 13 foreigners including UN and IMF workers, were killed in the assault that proved to be one of the deadliest to date for the expatriate community. On 4 January, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack on a military convoy belonging to the NATO-led 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.

In December, militant attacks were recorded across various parts of Afghanistan, hitting targets in Kabul and in the eastern province of Wardak, in addition to southern areas. December was marked by high profile attacks striking western military targets in the capital area, although overall the number of attacks have reportedly decreased in the country. As indicated in a UNAMA report released on 8 February, the number of civilians killed or injured in Afghanistan’s armed conflict increased in 2013. The last report documented a total 2,959 civilian deaths and 5,656 injured in 2013, reversing the decline registered in 2012. The figures mark a 7% increase in deaths and a 17% increase in injuries as compared to 2012 and are similar to record high numbers of civilian casualties documented in 2011. The new figures suggest a slight increase in the number of killed and injured during the second part 2013 since only 1,319 civilians were killed and a further 2,533 injured from January to June.

While improvised explosive devices used by anti-Government elements remained the biggest killer of civilians in 2013, increased ground engagements between pro-Government forces and anti-Government armed groups emerged as the number two cause of civilian casualties with rising numbers of Afghan civilians killed and injured in cross-fire. The UNAMA report attributed 74% of casualties to insurgent groups, 8% to Afghan National Security Forces, 3% to international forces, and 10% to ground fighting between the two the insurgents and pro-Government forces. The last 5% of casualties were unattributed, resulting mostly from explosive remnants of war.

Military Operations

Military operations are ongoing; according to a US report, Afghan troop casualties climbed by 79% during key fighting months in 2013, as the Taliban intensified attacks amid NATO’s ongoing withdrawal from Afghanistan. In parallel, NATO casualties fell by 59% from April to September. While US officials acknowledged that Afghan troop combat capabilities have improved, the report suggests that the National Security Forces would be at risk without international support after 2014. In August, Afghan military sources reported that insurgent numbers were up 15% on 2013 summer fighting months.

On 15 January, new tensions arose between Kabul and Washington after the Afghan president blamed the US for an air raid in Parwan province that killed Afghan civilians. Although the NATO-led ISAF reported that a joint force of Afghan troops and foreign soldiers called in the strike after being ambushed by Taliban insurgents, the incident might further jeopardize the signature of the BSA. In the aftermath, the Afghan President openly linked the attack to one of the demands he formulated to the US side by again blaming Washington for allegedly refusing to stop air raids on Afghan homes. Accidental civilian deaths during ISAF airstrikes have been a major source of friction between Washington and Kabul.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Climatic Conditions

The severe winter has created additional logistical constraints for humanitarian access. On 10 February, ECHO reported that some access roads were blocked between the provincial capitals and districts. The most affected provinces are Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar, and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan. As reported by OCHA in February, many of 13 passes in Ghor province are closed during winter with snow severely affecting movement along main transport axes.

Insecurity and Attacks against Aid Workers

Active hostilities and threats of violence continue to impede humanitarian access, with contested areas remaining the most problematic. Movement restrictions are increasingly applied to aid workers, and relief organisations are reviewing security protocols. The humanitarian space in Afghanistan continues to shrink, as security is increasingly precarious.

In February, insecurity severely constrained movements and operations across several Afghan provinces. OCHA reported that the presence of humanitarian organizations is concentrated in and around the provincial capital in Badghis province. In Farah province, humanitarian organizations are severely constrained in their movement outside of Farah city with almost no assessments taking place in the east and northern parts of the province. In Ghor province, NGO movement outside of the provincial capital are also several constrained. In Herat province, districts in the north and south remain largely off-limits with five NGO staff being reportedly killed after being abducted in the district of Gulran. The main transport axis is also reportedly unsafe with increasing militant presence in rural areas.

On 26 June, a coordinated attack targeted a road south of Kabul, killing four people and wounding another 22, according to local police sources. On 25 January, two people were wounded in a militant 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 latest estimates, 21 people, including 13 foreigners including UN and IMF workers, were killed in the assault that proved to be one of the deadliest to date for the expatriate community. On 4 January, the Taliban claimed responsibility for an attack on a military convoy belonging to the NATO-led 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.

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

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 is 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 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 rank high in numbers of security incidents, civilian casualties, and conflict displacement, and low in health and nutrition indicators.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

In 2013, conflict-induced displacement 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, mostly in Herat, Helmand, Ghor, Farah, and Badghis provinces.

In mid-December, OCHA reported that the number of people internally displaced each year has risen 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 were 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 Herat province.

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

**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 one million undocumented Afghans. An estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, are in Pakistan. An estimated 200,000 Afghan refugees are registered in other countries. The protracted Afghan refugee crisis is placing an increased humanitarian burden on neighbouring countries and triggering tensions as Iran and Pakistan push for their repatriation.

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

**Disasters**

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

Information remains limited, but ECHO reported that severe weather and heavy snow was affecting vulnerable families, including IDPs, in seven provinces of the country. Local sources indicate that 63 people had died and 12 had been injured. 100,000 livestock are also at risk. Provinces in central and northern Afghanistan are the most severely affected.

In late January, ECHO reported that heavy snowfall and low temperatures continue to affect northern Darz Aab and Qush Tepa districts of Jawzjan province. As of February, reports indicated that Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakshan, Takhar, and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan were areas most heavily affected by harsh winter conditions. In late February, USAID indicated that Balkh Province was also affected.

**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 FEWSNET in February, western central highlands will experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of food security from January to March, due to the strain on usual food sources and the replacement by external assistance. Resumption of seasonal livelihood activities is expected to improve food security outcomes to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) from April to June.

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 centers 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, 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 the WFP in February, the average wheat grain retail price in main Afghan cities increased between August 2012 and March 2013. Wheat prices then decreased during the April–June 2013 period only to slightly increase again from July 2013 to January 2014. In particular, the January average price of wheat in main cities of Afghanistan was slightly higher by 5.9% in comparison to the same time last year, and significantly higher by 15.9% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

The January price for wheat flour was slightly lower by 4.5% compared to the same month in 2013, and significantly increased by 12.6% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. The January average price for low quality rice, the second main staple food in Afghanistan, was slightly lower by 4.8% compared to the same month last year, and significantly higher by 23.3% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. By comparison, the January average price of high quality Rice is significantly higher by 11.5% compared to the same month last year, and by 33.4% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

Health and Nutrition

According to OCHA, the number of people in need of access to health services has increased from 3.3 to 5.4 million. Conflict-related hospital admissions increased by 42% from January to April 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. In Helmand province, there was an almost 80% increase in hospitalised injuries caused by conflict in 2013. The Health Cluster reported a 40% increase in security incidents from January to April 2013 compared to 2012. 2013 saw a 60% increase in the 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.

Polio

Afghan authorities confirmed the first polio case in Kabul since 2001 and launched an emergency polio vaccination campaign in the capital. However, according to medical sources, the girl diagnosed with the disease may have contracted it in neighbouring Pakistan. The highly contagious polio virus remains endemic in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, but Kabul has been free of the disease since 2001.

Malnutrition

According to figures from OCHA in mid-June, 125,692 children <5 suffer from GAM, including 28,650 suffering from SAM. Updated: 05/03/2014

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

10 March: Amnesty International published a report in which it accuses Government of Syria forces of perpetrating war crimes as of sieges in Yarmouk, southern Damascus.

8 March: Syria’s main opposition coalition confirmed in a statement that it had chosen Brigadier General Abdel Ilah al-Bashir to assume leadership of the coalition’s military council. The previous general, General Salim Idriss, has refused to step down after he was asked to leave his post at the end of February.

5 March: A report by the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry stated that the chemical weapons used in two incidents in Syria in 2013 appear to have come from the stockpiles of the Syrian Armed Forces. The report further states that the Security Council bears responsibility for not addressing accountability and allowing the warring parties to violate the rules of war with total impunity and calls on the UN Security Council to refer grave violations of the rules of war to the International Criminal Court for prosecution.

4 March: Syria submitted to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons a revised proposal that aims to complete the removal of all chemicals from Syria before the end of April 2014. As of March, over 70% of identified chemicals have not yet been removed from Syria.

28 February: Fighters from the extremist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started withdrawing from parts of northern Syria ahead of a deadline set by the Al-Nusra front, a powerful rival al-Qaeda faction. On 24 February, the leader of the Al-Nusra front gave ISIL a five-day ultimatum to accept mediation to end infighting or be expelled from the region.

26 February: A US government official said that the Government of Syria (GoS) had arrested family members of the opposition delegation to the peace talks in Geneva. In addition, it was reported that the GoS has designated delegates as terrorists and seized their assets. A second round of peace talks in Geneva ended without results on February 15. No date has been set for the talks to resume.

25 February: Israeli jets bombarded an area in Lebanon, near the border with Syria. Over the past year, Israel has carried out several airstrikes inside Syria to halt suspected shipments of advanced missiles from reaching Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel has never confirmed the airstrikes.

KEY CONCERNS

- UN estimates indicate that 6.5 million Syrians are currently internally displaced. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

- Over three million people in Syria live 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). At least 325,000 children <5 live in areas not currently accessible to humanitarian aid (UNICEF).

- The north-eastern governorates continue to experience a deteriorating humanitarian situation, with severe access challenges and disruptions in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. The number of IDPs in the main cities is increasing, as families flee to urban centres to escape the conflict in many rural areas. Many health centres have closed or are operating below capacity, schools are overcrowded or closed, and water and electricity services are severely rationed.

- A Joint Rapid Food Needs Assessment in December 2013 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.

- 25 laboratory-confirmed cases of polio were reported in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor and Idleb at the start of March. According to the GoS, 41 of 91 public hospitals, 674 medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged and are out of service.

Politics and Security

Political Developments and International Law

On February 14, 2014 The UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2139 (2014) demanding that all parties in Syria allow the provision of humanitarian assistance, cease depriving civilians of food and medicine, and enable the rapid, safe, and unhindered evacuation of all civilians who wish to leave.

Russia, with support from China, had previously blocked three resolutions aimed at pressuring the GoS. In February, neither Moscow nor Beijing blocked the resolution, although Russia did not allow an earlier draft which threatened sanctions should Syria fail to comply. On 2 October 2013, the Council adopted a non-binding statement urging more humanitarian access, but the statement produced little administrative progress. The Security Council has now adopted five resolutions linked to the Syrian conflict.

Chemical Weapons

The International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, reported on 5 March that the quality and quantity of the chemical weapons used on 21 August 2013 in Al-Ghouta and on 19 March 2013 in Khan Al-Assal indicated that the perpetrators likely had access to the chemical weapons stockpile of the Syrian military and to expertise and equipment necessary to safely manipulate large amount of chemical agents. The UN mission to investigate the use of chemical weapons on Syria reported in December that chemical weapons were likely used in five out of seven attacks examined, but did not assign blame.

In January, the head of the UN mission stated that it was “difficult to see” how the opposition could have weaponised the toxins used. Both the GoS and the opposition deny having used chemical weapons and have accused each other. The attack in al-Ghouta in August 2013 claimed between 350 and 1,400 lives.

Since the attack in al-Ghouta, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has lead a process of verifying, securing, and transporting Syria’s chemical weapons stocks. The transfer is running several months behind schedule. On 4 March, Syrian submitted to the OPCW a revised proposal that aims to complete the removal of all chemicals from Syria before the end of April 2014. As of March, over 70% of identified chemicals have not yet been removed.

Armed conflict

The SAF has taken control of another strategic town in its offensive launched late 2013 to secure the Damascus-Homs highway and to sever the supply route to the town of Arsal in Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley. The town is one of two last strongholds for opposition groups along the Lebanese border leading to the city of Homs. Aerial and tank bombardments on several areas continue in and around Yabroud town in the Qalamoun area, around 70 km northeast of Damascus. Since the end of 2013, Syrian forces have been trying to re-take control of the town, and its strategic access to the Lebanese border across which supplies of commodities and weapons flow. The use of barrel bombs continues to be reported in Yabroud and nearby Rima.

Infighting between opposition groups continues, albeit at a smaller scale than at the start of 2014. On 28 February, fighters from the extremist group ISIL withdrew from Azaz, a town near the border with Turkey to strongholds east of Aleppo city. The withdrawal by ISIL follows a warning by the leader of the Al-Nusra front, which included a ‘five-day ultimatum to accept mediation to end infighting or be expelled’ from the region. On 7 March, heavy fighting between ISIL and the al-Nusra Front in the northeastern town of Markada was reported.

Regional

On 19 February, twin suicide attacks hit Beirut’s heavily populated southern suburbs, near the Iranian Cultural Centre, killing five and wounding 80. The attacks were claimed by the Al-Qaeda linked Abdullah Azzam Brigades, who called it an attack against Iranian interests in Lebanon due to Iran’s involvement in the Syrian conflict. This is the second such attack after the Iranian embassy was targeted in November. Attacks on Beirut’s southern suburbs are occurring on an almost weekly basis. In the northern town of Hermel, a car bomb was detonated at an army checkpoint, killing three people on 22 February.

In Iraq, extremist militants have been regaining ground over the past year, particularly in the western province of Anbar, which borders Syria, where Falluja was taken over by extremist groups in January. The latest unrest in Anbar has sparked Iraq’s worst displacement since 2006-2008, with an estimated 380,000 people displaced as of 6 March.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

OCHA’s latest figures from the SHARP appeal published mid-December put over three million people in areas hard to reach area, due to access limitations, in dire need of
humanitarian assistance; 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the GoS or opposition forces. WFP reports that widespread insecurity and access constraints continue to hinder deliveries to several areas of Syria, preventing the provision of food assistance to over 500,000 people. Some of these areas have not been accessed for over one year. Access for humanitarian organisations operating from Damascus is particularly difficult to the eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo city and the northern governorates of Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqaa.

Renewed fighting in the Palestinian area Yarmouk in Damascus has blocked humanitarian access. Yarmouk, which houses about 16,000 Palestinians and an unknown number of Syrians, has seen some of the worst fighting in the capital. A tight siege has led to severe food shortages and widespread hunger. According to the UN, over 100 people have reportedly died from starvation and hunger-related illnesses.

Several military truces and ceasefires have been implemented in some hard to access and besieged areas, with varying degrees of adherence, allowing partial and sporadic humanitarian access. Relief distributions took place in several areas in the southern outskirts of Damascus after ceasefires were reached between the GoS and opposition groups mid-February.

Needs

Revised estimates indicate that the total number of people in need in Syria has increased to 9.3 million, up from April 2013 estimates of 6.8 million. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 7.5 million people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

A Syrian Centre for Policy Research study on the socio-economic impact of the crisis estimates that over half the population now lives in poverty; 4.5 million live in extreme poverty and are unable to meet their basic needs. The Economist Intelligence Unit country report forecasts continued economic hardship for Syrians as the conflict continues. Nearly all the country’s oil sector, which previously supplied 25% of GoS revenue, will remain off-stream. This means the GoS will likely continue scaling back subsidies to ease pressure on public finances. Many Syrians completely rely on the subsidies provided on bread, fuel, and other basic items. On 16 December, the UN launched a US$ 6.5 billion appeal to cover the needs in Syria and refugee hosting countries in 2014.

IDPs

An estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced, with the highest concentration of IDPs in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Tartous, Hama, and Deir-ez-Zor. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

Thousands of IDPs have also fled the area of Qalamoun over the last three months to more secure locations in rural Homs and Homs city or into Lebanon. The continued escalation of fighting around Yabroud has resulted in the displacement of more than 13,000 people, largely to Lebanon.

Airstrikes in Aleppo have pushed an estimated 500,000 people from several opposition-held areas in the east of Aleppo city. 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.

Refugees

As of 9 March, the total number of Syrians registered and waiting to register as refugees outside of Syria stands at 2,546,803. Over 957,000 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 584,000 Syrians in Jordan (government estimates 600,000 Syrians in total), nearly 624,000 in Turkey, over 225,500 in Iraq, and almost 135,000 in Egypt (government estimates up to 300,000).

The total number of refugees registered by UNHCR is expected to surpass four million by the end of 2014. UNHCR stated that across the region, 400,000 refugees live in formal camps and nearly two million reside outside formal settlements.

Health

The lack of available medicine, particularly for chronic diseases continues to be a critical problem. According to the GoS, 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, and anesthetics 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 taken into account, the price of medicine has increased by 25 to 50%. Medicine is imported, primarily from Lebanon and sold at high prices. Lengthy administrative procedures surrounding supplying the clinics have caused delays in distributing medical equipment and medicines to some areas.

Polio

Health actors recently stated that polio remains the most significant health threat. According to the GoS, 25 laboratory-confirmed cases of polio were confirmed in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor and Idleb as of 24 February. Over 2.7 million children reportedly received a vaccination dose, which is above the target of 2.6 million. However, due to access issues, coverage remains sub-optimal in several areas including Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, and Rural-Damascus.

Food Security

Syria media report that around 70% of Syria’s flourmills are no longer operational and the conflict is seriously impacting food security. According to WFP, market prices for bread continue to increase in areas affected by conflict, including al-Hassaka city and Al-Raqqaa, where the price of bread increased by over 50% during the first week of February.

The first results of the December 2013 Joint Rapid Food Security Needs Assessment 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.

Protection

In a report published by Amnesty International on 10 March, the human rights organisation accused Government forces of perpetrating war crimes as part of a siege in Yarmouk. According to the organisation, the Government of Syria has committed numerous war crimes as part of the siege of Yarmouk. Hundreds of civilian residents of Yarmouk have been killed, wounded or have perished as a result of deliberate starvation and destruction of their means of support, direct attacks on civilians and indiscriminate attacks. Other residents have been subjected to enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture as part of a systematic, as well as widespread attack on the civilian population in what amount to crimes against humanity.

On 5 March, the Commission of Inquiry published its 7th report on violations of international human rights law in Syria. According to the report, both GoS forces and opposition groups have violated the rules of war embodied in the Geneva Conventions, including torture, massacres, and rape. The report states that the Security Council bears responsibility for not addressing accountability and allowing the warring parties to violate the rules of war with total impunity and calls on the UN Security Council to refer grave violations of the rules of war to the International Criminal Court for prosecution. The Commission has drawn up four confidential lists of suspects.

Following the evacuation of civilians from the Old City of Homs between 7-12 February, UN staff have been monitoring the situation of male evacuees between the ages of 15 and 55 undergoing a security clearance procedure by the Syrian authorities. There are concerns over mistreatment of these and other individuals evacuated from opposition controlled areas during GoS interrogations following evictions.

A US government official stated that the GoS has arrested family members of the opposition delegation to the peace talks in Geneva. It was reported that the GoS has designated delegates as terrorists and seized delegates’ assets.

A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report released mid-February stated that GoS forces have started targeting opposition-held areas with a new type of cluster munitions rockets which is larger, more powerful, and deadlier than types previously used in the conflict.

An organisation called the Islamic Law Council of Deir-ez-Zor issued a statement requiring all women in the area to wear the face veil. In February, HRW reported that Jabhat al Nusra and ISIL were enforcing their strict interpretation of Islamic law by requiring women to wear head scarves and full-length robes. HRW also cited refugees as having reported that the Islamists were imposing discriminatory rules banning women and girls from moving freely in public, working, and going to school.

Shelter

Temperatures during winter can fall to as low as 3-5 degrees Celsius at night, creating dire conditions for IDPs. In both Syria and in 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 families.

WASH

Ongoing problems at water plants in Damascus, Idlib, and Deir-ez-Zor have been reported due to depletion of the water table and a lack of fuel due to increased water pumping. Homs, Idlib, and Hama are high-need areas in terms of water availability. In Hama city, damage to the water and sewage network has led to a sharp decrease in water pumping. Water has been rendering unsafe for drinking due to infiltration of the sewage line to the drinking line, leaving three million people without access to safe drinking water.

Education

According to UNICEF, nearly 2.3 million children in Syria have stopped attending school. Essential education infrastructure has been destroyed and militarised by parties to the conflict, including more than 4,000, or 18% of Syria’s 22,000 schools. Across the region, more than 60% of the 735,000 school-aged refugee children are not enrolled in school.

Updated: 10/03/2014

YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

7 March: OCHA reported that conflict between government forces and separatist militants in Al Dhale’e Governorate, southern Yemen, has displaced at least 8,000 people. Health, education and water facilities have been damaged and services interrupted. Thousands of people are unable to access basic services, food and protection.

6 March: Local media report that fighting took place between security forces and armed Huthis and tribesmen over the weekend, leaving eight dead and 11 others injured in both Al-Jawf and Sana’a.

4 March: The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict reports that three parties, Al-Huthi, Ansar al-Sharia and state-armed forces, are engaged in recruitment of children. The UNSC, in Resolution 2140, expressed concern over the continuing recruitment of children by armed groups and government forces, calling for committed national efforts to end and prevent further recruitment and use of children.

3 March: FAO reported that the desert locust situation remained serious along both sides of the Red Sea during February, with outbreaks continuing in Yemen. In its forecast to mid-April 2014, FAO notes that adults will continue to form groups and small swarms on the northern Red Sea coast and small groups may form on the southern coastal plains near Aden.

1 March: Clashes between the armed tribes Al-Dola and Al-Askr in Shabwa governorate, southern Yemen, killed three and injured four.
28 February: The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2140 unanimously, showing its support for Yemen’s transitional process, consisting of economic reform, the drafting of a new constitution, and the organisation of the upcoming referendum and general elections.

28 February: FEWSNET reported that the conflict in the northern region continues to contribute to food insecurity. Particularly in Amran Governorate, there are concerns about food insecurity among locals and displaced populations due to reduced cereal market supply and labour market demand. OCHA added that in Amran governorate 28,610 recently displaced people have received food support.

27 February: OCHA stated that an estimated 70,000 people are displaced by conflict in Amran, including 20,000 - 30,000 since clashes erupted in October 2013. Reportedly, parties to the conflict are currently re-arming in Amran city and Raydayn town. Reports indicated that the President deployed a new mediation team to Amran to ease tensions. However, the outcome of the mediation process has not been confirmed.

27 February: OCHA reported that humanitarian access remains limited in Al Dhale’e. The Government and the UN reached an agreement to field an inter-agency assessment mission to Al Dhale’e city on a short notice, following statements by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, who condemned Yemen’s armed forces’ indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks affecting civilians.

27 February: OCHA highlighted that the civilian population in Al Dhale’e and Amran needs protection, especially survivors of gender-based violence. In February alone, six cases of GBV were reported, of which two were in Al Dhale’e and four in Amran. In northwest Yemen, up to 35% of Ethiopian migrants registered in Haradh district in Hajjah province are subject to physical abuse and/or GBV.

24 February: IOM has observed a massive reduction in the number of African migrants and refugees entering Yemen, following measures and labour regulations by neighbouring countries, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia. In 2013, 65,000 migrants and refugees entered Yemen, compared to 107,532 in 2012.

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity continue to exist with regular attacks by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Huthi militants in the north and secessionists and government forces operating in the south.

- Ongoing conflict has triggered large-scale internal displacement of over 307,000 people across Yemen as of February 2014 (UN).

- 14.7 million people, 58% of the population, will need some form of humanitarian assistance in 2014 (OCHA).

- An estimated 10.5 million people, 43% of the population, are food insecure (WFP, OCHA).

- Around 8.6 million people have no access to healthcare (OCHA).

- Around 1 million children are acutely malnourished (GAM) (OCHA).

- As of late 2013, 243,000 refugees – of which 230,855 Somalian refugees – are in the country, 22% of whom are women and girls who have been victims of gender-based violence (UNHCR, IOM).

Politics and Security

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab region and the 7th most food-insecure country in the world, with 14.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. Yemen is currently undergoing a political transition process which is aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in 2014. Meanwhile, Yemen continues to face three concurrent security challenges: the presence of Huthi insurgents in the north; southern secessionists; and the increasing presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) militants throughout the country. Urban centres in the west and central governorates have also seen civil unrest.

Political Context

Under a US-supported power transfer deal, President Hadi is overseeing reforms during an interim period after the long-serving former President Saleh was forced to step down in 2012. By end January 2014, the political factions extended Hadi’s interim period by a year to allow him to oversee the draft of a new constitution and the change to a federal system. These arrangements include a reshuffle of the cabinet and restructuring of the Shura Council to guarantee sufficient representation of both northern and southern insurgents. These changes were decided upon by delegates following the ten month National Dialogue Conference (NDC). The lack of inclusion of southern delegates in these reconciliation talks was heavily debated, yet, the current outcome is designed to accommodate southern separatist demands for more autonomy.

Under the new system, the country will consist of six regions. The more populous North Yemen will consist of the Sabaa, Al-Jund, Azaal, and Tihamah regions. Huthi insurgents from the far north rejected this division, claiming it is unequal in terms of wealth distribution. Huthis are largely settled in Sa’ada province in northern Yemen and will be included in the Azaal region, which has no significant natural resources or access to sea. South Yemen, formerly independent, will be split into two regions: Aden and Hadramout. According to local sources, a large portion of Southern leaders, who previously declined to take part in the NDC, aimed for full independence of a unified South and therefore rejected the accord.

On 28 February, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2140 unanimously, reaffirming the need for full and timely implementation of the political transition following the National Dialogue Conference (NDC), in line with the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism. With this resolution, the UNSC wants to support the Government and population in the transitional process, consisting of economic reform and development assistance, as well as drafting a new constitution, holding a referendum and general elections. Included in UNSC Resolution 2140 is an imposition of travel bans and asset freezes on people in Yemen who obstruct or undermine the country’s political
transition and those who commit human rights violations. This issue had been highlighted earlier this month when the UNSC expressed concerns regarding reports documenting the continuing interference of former authorities, notably former President Saleh, in the reconciliation talks.

The Council condemned the growing number of attacks carried out by AQAP and called upon all constituencies, especially the Hiraak Southern movement and the Huthi movement, to partake constructively and reject further use of political violence.

In support of civil society development, both the World Bank and the US Government increased their support to the country. On 28 February, the World Bank approved an $8 million grant to Yemen’s Civil Society Organizations Support Project. On 25-27 February, the US launched the Civil Strengthening Network whose purpose is to create a platform for the civil society sector to work collectively with government entities to increase participation during Yemen’s government transition, including the drafting of the national constitution.

Security context

Strategic importance and international interference

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. 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 allegedly regrouped and continue fighting to set up an Islamist state in the east. 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. Despite international and local criticism with regard to the many civilian casualties, but with consent of the Yemeni authorities, the US has intensified drone strikes against militants which to date killed over 70 people since July 2013.

On 24 January, three suspected al-Qaeda militants were killed in Ma’rib province, east of the Yemeni capital Sana’a, 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.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) is extremely active. Despite counter-intersurgency operations conducted by local military and backed by US drone strikes, its strongholds in the south and east remain.

Since the start of AQAP’s campaign in 2012, senior army and security service officers have been a target. According to local sources, an estimated 80 officers have been killed so far. The group has also regularly targeted oil pipelines. AQAP militants have abducted several foreigners, particularly in large cities, including Sana’a. There have been over ten abductions/attempted abductions of expatriates in Sana’a since February 2013. In February 2014, at least three such incidents involving foreigners were reported, the latest being the kidnapping of a Czech doctor who was released shortly after 22 February. The two other foreigners abducted in February, a British and a German, have not been released yet; little additional information is available. The risk of abduction for foreigners remains high in Yemen.

On 22 February, an intelligence officer was killed by suspected AQAP militants in Atek in the southern province of Shabwa in another indication of rising insecurity levels.

On 13 February, eleven people were killed after attackers carried out a bomb, grenade, and gun assault on the main prison in Sana’a. According to the authorities, the attack which allowed 29 inmates, including 19 jailed for terrorism-related charges to escape was led by an unspecified terrorist group. Local media sources indicated that AQAP was most likely to be behind the incident.

On 9 February, a bomb exploded in Sana’a, killing a senior officer in the country’s domestic secret service and wounding two other people. The attack was the latest targeting senior security officials in the capital; local authorities blame AQAP for the attacks.

On 4 February, at least two people were killed and two others injured after a bomb hit a bus carrying Yemeni soldiers in 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. On 31 January, at least 15 soldiers were killed and four wounded by suspected AQAP militants in an attack on an army checkpoint in southeastern city of Shibam, in the province of Hadramout.

Southern Secessionists

The formal decision to turn Yemen into a federal, effectively splitting the south into two distinct regions, was met with outrage as many southern leaders feared it is a way to limit their authority and role in a federal Yemen by depriving them control over important areas such as Hadramout, where some of Yemen’s oil reserves are found. Many leaders and a large portion of its population continue to ask for a mechanism that would allow the South to transition back to full-fledged independence, rejecting the federalist framework.

Following the agreement, many observers expect an escalation of violence in the south.

According to OCHA, as of 27 February, fighting which broke out mid-December 2013 in Al Dhale’e district between Hiraq Taqer Al-Masir and government forces has caused civilian deaths, including women and children, but the exact number of people killed remains unknown. Meanwhile, the situation remains tense.

On 1 March, in clashes between two armed tribes, the Al-Dola and the Al-Askr tribe, in Shabwa governorate, southern Yemen, three people were killed and four injured.

On 23 February, local sources reported important protests in the southern port city of Aden after local authorities reportedly prevented a local newspaper linked to southern separatists from being printed at a government-owned press. The incident followed two day of clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

On 21 February, at least one person was killed and 20 injured in overnight clashes.
between police and pro-independence demonstrators in Aden. Violence erupted as thousands of protesters tried to march through the streets, renewing demands for full independence and rejecting the federation deal. The previous day, similar protests had triggered violence that led to one person being killed and a dozen injured, as security forces reportedly fired live rounds and tear gas at protestors.

On 18 February, local sources reported further clashes between government forces and armed separatists in the southern city of Dalea, resulting in nine people being killed, including five soldiers, and 14 soldiers being kidnapped. The incident occurred after gunmen attacked a truck carrying food supplies. Dalea is a stronghold of southern Yemeni separatists and the area has witnessed repeated armed clashes between armed and government troops since late December.

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. 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 Dalea.

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 reported that government forces shelled a funeral tent, killing 19 people, including four children.

**Conflict in Northern Yemen**

Since October 2013, intermittent fighting has been recorded between Zaidi Shi’ite Huthi insurgents and local tribesmen from the Hashid confederation and their Sunni Islamists allies. The Huthis, also referred to as Ansarullah, have been advancing from their mountain stronghold in Sa’ada province, near the border with Saudi Arabia, toward other majority Shi’ite areas near Sana’a with most of the fighting centring on Amran governorate.

The conflict allegedly started after Huthi 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 fighting between the tribes has attracted Salafi-affiliated tribesmen and spread to Al Jawf, Amran, and Hajjah governorates. In January, local sources reported that the fighting spread to Hashid groups after the tribes reportedly supported Sunni Islamist groups fighting the Huthis. The recent escalation comes despite a year-long ceasefire agreement reached between tribesmen loyal to the Huthis and tribesmen loyal to the Salafi Al-Ahmar family on 14 September.

As of late January, consolidated casualty figures following several months of fighting remained 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, have been killed on the Salafi-Hashid side since 30 October. Casualty figures for the Huthi group have not been released. Fighting around Dammaj was curtailed in January after a Government brokered ceasefire on 8 January, although violence has continued in other areas. Throughout January, heavy fighting was reported the Hashid strongholds of Wadi Khaywan and Usaimat.

On 6 March, local media report that fighting took place between security forces and armed Huthis and tribesmen over the weekend, leaving eight dead and 11 others injured in both Al-Jawf and Sana’a.

On 5 March, local media reported that, under the supervision of the mayor of Sana’a, negotiations are taking place between Sheikh Saleh Al-Wajman, head of the pro-Huthi tribes, and General Ali Mohsen. A presidential committee reached a truce between the two parties in early February, but residents in the area said it still lacks guarantees.

On 27 February, OCHA reports that in Amran Governorate tension are again high, with parties to the conflict reportedly re-arming in Amran city and Rayday town. Reports indicate that the President deployed a new mediation team to Amran to ease the tensions. However, the outcome of the mediation process has not been confirmed.

On 24 February, local media report that warring parties in the Amran governorate reached a tentative peace deal after a presidential committee from Sana’a negotiated with armed tribesmen fighting the Huthis. Nonetheless, the ceasefire agreement was broken three days later when at least 13 people died when Huthi fighters clashed with security forces at a security checkpoint in al Jawf province, in the north. Local authorities confirmed that two soldiers were killed in the attack, four others wounded, and several Huthi attackers were arrested. Security sources stated violence erupted after members of the Huthi group staged a protest in al Hazm, the provincial capital. However, accounts of what happened continue to differ.

On 9 February, Huthis and armed tribesmen confirmed that both sides have agreed to another ceasefire following deadly clashes between the two sides in the Arhab district near Sana’a on 4 February, according to local authorities. The last truce is part of an agreement signed committing them to an immediate ceasefire and to reopening roads in the area. The deal should also see Government forces deployed to positions evacuated by rebels and tribesmen. All fighters who do not come from the Arhab area will have to withdraw. It remains unclear if the new ceasefire will hold, since a similar agreement earlier this year has not been sufficient to put an end to fighting in the north. Tensions in Arhab district, located just north of the capital, continue reportedly to run high.

On 7 February, fresh clashes were recorded between Huthi insurgents and local tribesmen and their Sunni Islamists allies. In early February, local sources have reported that the insurgents seized areas in the northern province of Amran, leaving more than 150 people dead and overrunning the home base of the Al-Ahmar clan which heads the Hashid confederation. Fighting was reported in Huth, Khamir, Al Ashah, Wadi Danan, and Al Khaiwan, while Huthis were making progress toward Amran city.

**Tribal Attacks on Oil Pipelines**

Across the oil-producing country, local sources continue to report frequent attacks by tribesmen on pipelines, according to observers staged to pressure the government to provide jobs, settle land disputes, and free relatives from prison. Most of these assaults have happened in Hadramout Province, the centre of Yemen’s oil production. Since December, Hadramout has seen intermittent fighting between government forces and a big tribal confederation after a senior tribesman was killed in a shootout at an army
On 7 February, at least eight people, six soldiers and two armed tribesmen, were killed after armed tribesmen launched an attack to stop maintenance crews repairing an oil pipeline blown up last month. The assault succeeded in halting work on the line linking Yemen's Masila oilfields to the al-Dabba export facility on the Arabian Sea.

On 1 February, armed tribesmen bombed Yemen's main oil pipeline in the Serwah district in Ma'rib province, east of Sana'a, halting crude flow to the main export terminal less than a month after it was repaired. In early January, three similar tribal attacks were recorded.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

An estimated 14.7 million people (58 percent of the population) will need some form of assistance in 2014, including nearly all two million people in Sa'ada and Al-Jawf governorates, northern Yemen, according to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview and the 2014 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan.

The central governorates, Amanat, Al Asimah, Al Bayda, Dhamar, Ibb, Marib, Sana'a, and Taizz, where 11.3 million people reside, have the highest national levels of food insecurity. An estimated 6 million people need assistance, including food aid, improved water, adequate sanitation, and primary healthcare.

In the northern governorates, years of conflict have destroyed local infrastructure and the existence of landmines and explosive remnants of war remain a major concern. In the western governorates, Al Hudaydah, Raymah and Mahwit, where 5.8 million people live, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition continue to be registered. To date, more than half of this region's population, 3.8 million people, including 82,000 IDPs, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In the south and east, the governorates of Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al Dhale’e, Shabwah, Hadramaut, and Al Maharah, where 4.89 million people reside, are characterized by a large number of returnees, who fled the mid-August flash floods, and by pockets of instability and limited livelihood and income opportunities causing the population to need assistance as well.

Access

Humanitarian access remains impeded across Yemen, especially in Amran and Al Dhale’e governorates where tribal conflict, civil unrest, natural hazards, and impediments put in place by non-state actors have prevented humanitarian workers from reaching those in urgent need. MSF, ICRC, and OCHA reported that parties to the conflict continue to cut off humanitarian assistance to vulnerable IDPs already living in camps and host communities as well as to people newly displaced by ongoing conflict in the northern governorate of Al Jawf, Al Dhale’e in the south, Al Mahwit and Raymah in the west, and Al Maharah in the east. These obstructions, partly following civil disobedience campaigns created during the onset of the NDC, have led civilians in Sa’ada to run out of fuel and those in Dammaj and Kitaf to run out of food, water, and medical supplies.

As of 27 February, OCHA reports that humanitarian access is limited in Al Dhale’e. The Government and the UN reached an agreement to field an inter-agency assessment mission to Al Dhale’e city on a short notice, following statements by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, who condemned Yemeni’s armed forces’ indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks affecting civilians.

As of early February, OCHA noted that thousands of IDPs who have registered for assistance in the northern parts of Amran governorate were currently out of reach.

Displacement

Yemen is a transit country for migrants, who seek wealthier nations with better job opportunities for their destination. Recently, measures by both Ethiopia and Saudia Arabia led to a massive reduction in the number of African migrants and refugees entering Yemen as well as causing many Yemenis to return from Saudia Arabia. Tribal conflict, the current fluidity of displacement, tribal traditions which prevent some people from registering, and a lack of access to affected populations is hindering identification of new IDPs.

IDPs

Amran and the northern region

In late 2013, the UN reported that almost 307,000 IDPs remain in Yemen’s north, including Sana’a. As of February 2014, OCHA reports that around 95% of IDPs are hosted in the five provinces of Hajjah (81,942 people), Amran (54,274 people), Al-Jawf (24,700), Sa’ada (103,014 people), and Sana’a (42,757 people). As indicated by OCHA, an estimated 7,000 people are still unable to leave the area of conflict. Since recent violence occurred in areas already hosting IDPs, it is likely that some people have been displaced for a second or third time.

Recently, the parties to the conflict have brought more armed men and weaponry into Amran city and Raymah district, and tensions are rising. As of 27 February, OCHA stated that an estimated 70,000 people have been displaced by conflict in Amran, including 20,000 - 30,000 since clashes erupted in October 2013. By 18 February, 14,767 newly displaced people had been verified and provided with assistance. Another 13,843 displaced people have registered with the Executive Unit for support. Verification of displaced people continues, including outside Amran city and in Huth, Bani Suraim, Khamir, Raydah, Kharif, Jabal Iyal Yazid and Iyal Surayh Districts.

OCHA states that the highest number of displaced people have arrived in Amran city, but the highest number of verified IDPs is in Bani Suraim. The relatively low number of registrations in Amran city can be a reflection of the displacement pattern, with IDPs in large cities living with relatives. The Executive Unit reports that 5,824 people from Amran Governorate have arrived in the capital, Sana’a. Protection cluster partners are currently verifying this information.

In the beginning of January, about 10,000 Salafis were made homeless in Sana’a as a result of an agreement reached between the Salafis and the Huthis, which stipulated that 15,000 non-local Salafis residing in 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 Yemen.

Al Dhale’e and the southern region

On 7 March, OCHA reported that conflict between government forces and separatist militants in Al Dhale’e Governorate, southern Yemen, has displaced at least 8,000 people. Health, education and water facilities have been damaged and services interrupted. Thousands of people are unable to access basic services, food and protection.

Since January, more than 20 villages, 45,000 people, in Al Dhale’e District have been frequently shelled or violently attacked. The fighting caused markets, shops, health facilities, schools, government offices and other businesses to close, and properties and farms are being looted by armed elements while checkpoints have hindered free movement of goods and people, affecting access to basic services, food and protection. Residents have fled to neighbouring communities within the district. The flight of around 1,000 people has left Al Wabh village depopulated; 3,400 people have sought shelter with relatives or host communities in the districts of Jahaf, Al Azariq, Al Hussein, and Qa’atabah, and in Al Dhale’e city. Local sources note that more people are arriving in the neighbouring governorates of Aden, Lahj, Taizz and Ibb. People who have left to other governorates, such as Aden and Lahj, are renting accommodation or staying with relatives.

Refugees

UNHCR states that Yemen hosts almost 245,000 refugees as of early January. According to IOM, 22 percent are women and girls who have been victims of gender-based violence. On 7 March, OCHA adds that as of January 2014, there were 811 new arrivals in Yemen.

For the past six years, the number of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants has risen to around 52,000 Ethiopian and 11,000 Somali refugees. On 7 March, UNHCR reported that as of January 2014, 230,855 Somali refugees reside in Yemen.

However, on 24 February, the IOM reported that in 2013 there has been a massive reduction in the number of African migrants and refugees entering Yemen nonetheless. In 2013, 65,000 migrants and refugees entered the country, compared to 107,532 people in 2012.

Ethiopia has tightened enforcement on illegal border crossings in 2013 and has more aggressively gone after traffickers, according to its Migration and Passport Authority. In December 2013, 244 migrants and refugees arrived on Yemen’s shores, an 82% decrease from November 2013 and a 96% decrease from December 2012, according to the Regional Mixed Migration Task Force Secretariat. According to IOM, these measures by bordering countries contributed to the lower number of African migrants and refugees making their way to Yemen.

Returnees

Last February, OCHA reports that between June 2013 and 31 January 2014, 274,695 refugees returned from Saudi Arabia. In March 2013, the Saudi government adopted a new amendment to Article 39 of the Saudi labour law that stipulates that foreigners cannot work for anyone other than their original sponsors to the country. As reported by UNHCR, these Yemeni returnees, who returned via Al Tuwal in Haradh District, have acute humanitarian needs. The majority of those arriving are undocumented migrant workers. 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.

Food Security

Although there has been an improvement in food security compared to the crisis of 2011, conflict continues to disrupt food access contributing to high levels of chronic food insecurity. According to OCHA and WFP in January, the total number of food insecure people in Yemen was estimated to stand at 10.5 million, or 43 percent of the population.

Populations of greatest concern include IDPs and the recently returned. WFP said there is 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 early 2014. In addition, FAO states that primary underlying causes of food insecurity are extreme poverty, and high unemployment. Also, 75 percent of the rural population depends on agriculture for its livelihood, which is hampered by conflict and insecurity, consequently leading to volatile food and commodity prices.

As of end February, OCHA reported that in the southern region of Abyan over 75 percent of the population is food insecure. In Shabwah, Taizz, Raymay and Dhamar in central and southern Yemen, between 50 and 75 percent of the people is food insecure. There is a data gap on the food security situation in Sa’ada and Al Jawf governorates.

In Amran and Hajjah governorates between 5- and 75 percent of the population is food insecure. On 28 February, FEWSNET reported that particularly in Amran Governorate, there are concerns about food insecurity among locals and IDPs due to reduced cereal market supply and labour market demand. The food security situation is also impacted by the displacement of around 70,000 people in the Amran Governorate where people are forced to travel long distances due to hindered food distributions outside Amran City. Distance to distribution points is of concern particularly for vulnerable households, such as those headed by women, older people, and young adults. Another factor impacting food security is the desert locust invasion on the northwestern coast, causing substantial localized damage to sorghum, millet, and sesame.

On 27 February, OCHA stated that in Amran governorate 28,610 recently displaced people have received food support. Following fighting in Al Dhale’e district from mid-December onwards, many people fled to family or host communities in the district or in neighbouring governorates. The fighting caused markets, shops, health facilities, schools, government offices and other businesses to close, and properties and farms are being looted by armed elements while checkpoints have hindered free movement of goods and people, affecting access to basic services, food and protection. OCHA highlights that displaced people and host communities need food assistance, access to health facilities and clean water. Overcrowding and a lack of income have placed extra pressure on already vulnerable households.
Agricultural Outlook

Despite below-average first-season rains in the southwest and the locust outbreak in northwestern cropping areas, the 2013 national cereal production is estimated to be slightly above the five-year average. Areas experiencing both shocks and/or conflict are likely to face the worst food security outcomes.

FEWSNET states that the March to June 2014 rainfall forecasts suggest near-average rainfall performance for most of Yemen with an increased likelihood for above-average rains over northwestern cropping areas. If rains perform as predicted, it could result in average agricultural wage labour income for poor households during the production season, as well as average first-season crop production beginning in June 2014.

Locust outbreak

As of 3 March, FAO reports that the desert locust situation remains serious along both sides of the Red Sea during February as outbreaks continued in Eritrea, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, Sudan and northern Somalia, where hopper bands, groups and swarms formed.

Locust infestations are mainly concentrated on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea, in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah governorates, between Al Zuhrah and Suq Abs. Infestations have also been reported on the southern coast near Aden where field operations are limited due to insecurity. In January, OCHA indicated that the locust outbreak had spread to Hajjah, Hadramaut, Shabwah, and Lahj Governorates. Local authorities estimate that the locusts have destroyed about 90% of the sesame and millet crops in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah. A spread of local infestation also pose a risk of destruction to the season’s mango crop in Al Jar District. On 6 March, OCHA reported that thus far 46 million dollar has been lost in crop value since locusts invaded Yemen in June 2013.

As of mid-February, FAO reported that the locust situation is critical as a result of favourable ecological conditions that have allowed several generations of breeding since last autumn. Although Yemen imports up to 90% of its staple food, local harvests are an important contributor to the diets of many vulnerable Yemenis. After mid-February, FAO reports, the bands have decreased due to control operations. Hoppers that were not treated fledged and formed groups of immature adults that matured during the remainder of the month. In its forecast until mid-April 2014, FAO states that adults will continue to form groups and small swarms on the northern Red Sea coast.

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. In January, OCHA reported that there were an estimated 8.6 million people without access to basic healthcare and in need of assistance. On 26 February, WHO and the Yemeni government report that between 15 and 22 February, acute respiratory tract infections (ARI), acute diarrhea (OAD) and suspected malaria (S.Mal) were the leading cause of morbidity.

Malnutrition

As of late January, UNICEF reported that an estimated 1.8 million people are in need of nutrition. Regarding child malnutrition, UNICEF states that 1,060,000 children <5 are estimated to be suffering from GAM, of whom 279,146 suffer from SAM. The latest figures represent a slight increase compared to the end of 2013, when six governorates exceeded the emergency threshold. According OCHA in 2014, Al Hudaydah and Raymah governorates have the worst levels of acute malnutrition among children <5.

WASH

As of late January, OCHA reported that an estimated 13.1 million people do not have access to safe water and sanitation. In addition, 8.6 million people do not have access to health care. In Amran, 1,300 displaced families, 5,000 children included, lack access to safe water. On 6 March, OCHA reported that thousands of people in Al Jawf Governorate are in urgent need of water, sanitation and health services.

On 27 February, OCHA reported that the hospital in Al Dhale'e lacks secure, stable and safe access to water. The violence in Al Dhale'e has interrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance. On 16 February, an international non-governmental organization (INGO) temporarily suspended basic health care assistance to Al Nasser hospital and nearby villages. On 19 February, ambulances were prevented from transferring patients to Aden for medical treatment.

Protection

In January, OCHA reported that an estimated 5 million people, including the IDP population, are in need of protection assistance in Yemen. The lack of adequate protection institutions and weak rule of law exposes vulnerable groups to grave violations of their rights, abuse, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

On 28 February, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2140 unanimously, expressing concern over human rights abuses and violence against civilians. It called upon all parties to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law obligations.

Child recruitment

On 4 March, the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict reports that three parties, Al-Huthi, Ansar al-Sharia and state-armed forces, are recruiting children. On 28 February, the UNSC in Resolution 2140 expressed concern over continued recruitment of children by armed groups and government forces, calling for committed national efforts to end and prevent further recruitment and use of children.

Gender-based violence

OCHA, on 27 February, reports that the civilian population in Al Dhale’e and Amran needs protection, especially survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). In February, six cases of GBV were reported, of which two were in Al Dhale’e, and four in Amran. In northwest Yemen, up to 35% of Ethiopian migrants, registered in Haradh district in Hajjah province, are subject to physical abuse and/or GBV.

Education

OCHA reported that, in early 2014 education facilities in Sanah, Al Dhale’e governorate,
were destroyed by shelling, hampering access to education for the almost 1,500 students the facilities served.

Shelter

Registration of IDPs in large town settings and with host communities is progressing slowly and vulnerable displaced such as women, children and older people in Amran are in need of emergency shelter, OCHA reports.

Updated: 07/03/2014

IRAQ CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 March: A bomb exploded in a market in the capital Baghdad, killing one person and wounding five others. Meanwhile, west of the capital, gunmen shot dead a policeman in Abu Ghariba. In the northern Nineveh province, militant attacks killed four people.

27 February: A bomb in northern Baghdad and militant attacks in the mainly Shi‘ite areas in the country, killed 31 people and wounded another 51, in the provinces of Salahuddin, Anbar, Tuz Khurmatu and Diyala. Over 703 people have been killed in February alone and over 1,740 had died since the beginning of the year in Iraq.

27 February: The Iraqi authorities quoted by the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) estimated that over 430,000 people (more than 67,500 households) have been displaced by the fighting, most of them within Anbar province.

25 February: A 72-hour ceasefire, declared by Iraqi authorities to halt military operations against the insurgent-held city of Fallujah, was cut short by renewed mortar attacks. 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.

February: According to the Anbar Health Committee, the total civilian death and casualty toll in Anbar for February was 298 killed and 1,198 injured, with 189 and 109 killed respectively in Ramadi and Fallujah. However, these figures could not be independently verified, nor the status of those killed and injured as civilians.

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. In 2014, an independent death count based on security and medical sources indicated that over 580 people have been killed in February and over 1,550 have died since the beginning of the year (UNAMI, AFP).

- 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 430,000 people. In February, the conflict in Anbar province has been spilling over to neighbouring provinces (UNAMI, GOI).

- 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 of refugees to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkhabour crossing in Duhok province. As of 4 March, over 225,500 people had now crossed into Iraq from Syria since the conflict began (UNHCR).

Politics and Security

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 because of 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
Safety 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
general to increased 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,
0 was was the deadliest month to date with over 1,050 killed and 2,320 wounded, the highest
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 neighboring Syria, has withdrawn its forces from Syria’s oil-rich eastern province
of Deir al-Zor, 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 stronghold
in Anbar, Nineveh, Kirkuk, most of Salah-Al-Din, 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 cafés 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 Shia 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 from 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 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 25 February, a 72-hour ceasefire, declared by Iraqi authorities to halt military
operations against the insurgent-held city of Fallujah, was cut short by renewed mortar
attacks. The truce initially followed demonstrations in Fallujah with civilians calling for an
end to the bombardments and for the government to allow supplies in the city. While
observers commented that this truce may raise the possibility of negotiations to end the
conflict, expectations remain limited and no quick solution seems to be in sight. In the
aftermath, clashes and violence continued to flare up in the area with the insurgents
managing to shot down a military helicopter and launching a suicide bombing attack on a
military base east of Ramadi. To date, the fighting in Anbar province has gradually shifted
to become a war of attrition between government forces and entrenched militants.

On 24 February, UNAMI indicated that the insecurity in Anbar increasingly spreading to
central-southern and northern region, destabilizing Nineveh, Salah-Al-Din and Diyala
provinces. On 21 February, dozens of armed Islamist militants thus managed to stage an
attack from Anbar on the small town of Al-Sainiyah, near Baiji city, in Salah-Al-Din
province. According to local sources, armed Islamic gunmen engaged government troops
in Al-Sainiyah for several hours, bombed the local police headquarters and raised the black
flag of ISIL. Meanwhile, while the authorities have indicated that the crisis in Sulayman Bek
– also a city in Salah-Al-Din province seized by Islamist militants in mid-February – has ended,
local sources reported that three villages in the area still remained under the
control of ISIL as of 22 February.

On 18 February, the Council of Ministers adopted Prime Minister Maliki’s Anbar Peace
Plan, which aims to restore stability in the province, reconstruct damaged property,
reset displaced families, and integrate tribal fighters who fought alongside the military
into the police. According to observers, the measures were the last in an attempt to pacify
Anbar province, and Iraq’s broader Sunni minority, who have repeatedly complained of
being marginalized by the Shi’ite dominated government of Maliki and of being unfairly
targeted by heavy-handed security measures.

Ten days before, 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 on
The statement came after over a month of protracted conflict over Fallujah and Ramadi between militants and security forces. Daily shelling and combat operations have been reported from the area. In recent weeks, government forces have been reportedly able to make progress in retaking some militant-held areas of Ramadi and Sulayman Bek – 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 while Baghdad remains concern that any delay give the insurgents time to further strengthen their positions.

To date, the humanitarian impact of the fighting in Anbar province is difficult to determine, as reports are scarce and humanitarian access to the area curtailed. As of mid-February, no consolidated death toll was therefore available.

According to the Anbar Health Committee in early March, the total civilian casualties in Anbar in February was 298 killed and 1,198 injured, with 189 and 109 killed respectively in Ramadi and Fallujah. However, these figures could not be independently verified, nor the status of those killed and injured as civilians. Meanwhile, the authorities reported that Iraqi troops and allied tribesmen killed 52 militants in two days of fighting in Ramadi on 2-3 March. In the last week of February, 57 Islamist militants were killed after several days of intense fighting near Ramadi. On 21 January, local reports indicated that violence had killed at least 250 people, among them civilians, security forces, tribal fighters and insurgents. Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused fighters from both sides of causing civilian casualties and damaging property. HRW alleged that Iraqi government forces were using indiscriminate mortar fire, while al-Qaeda and its local allies were launching attacks from populated areas.

As of 24 February, the authorities quoted by UNAMI reported that internal displacement in Anbar province continues to increase. As of late February, fighting in the area has displaced over 430,000 people (67,500 households).

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 ISIL, 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.

**Militant Attacks and Executions**

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. As of 3 March, an independent death count by Agence France Presse (AFP) based on Iraqi security and medical sources indicated that over 703 people have been killed in February alone and over 1,740 had died since the beginning of the year in Iraq.

On 3 March in the capital Baghdad, a bomb exploded in a market, killing one person and wounding five others. West of the capital, gunmen shot dead a policeman in Abu Ghraib. In the northern Nineveh province, militants’ attacks caused the death of four people.

On 27 February, a bomb in northern Baghdad and militants attacks in mostly Shi’ite areas in the country killed 31 people and wounded another 51, in the provinces of Salahuddin, Anbar, Tuz Khurmatu and Diyala.

On 23 February, at least 17 people were killed and dozens others wounded in bombings and shootings across northern Iraq. The deadliest attacks included an assault on a police convoy in the area of the city of Baiji that killed three policemen and four detainees and a bombing in the Shi’ite neighbourhood of Sadr City in Baghdad that killed five and wounded another 22; several other attacks were recorded in the Baghdad area. On 22 February, a further three policemen were killed in three coal bomb explosions in Tikrit, north of Baghdad, according to police sources. In the aftermath, the authorities reportedly declared a curfew in the city and its suburbs, anticipating more attacks and fearing a further spread of instability from Anbar province.

On 20 February, a mortar attack struck the mainly Shia town of Mussayab, south of Baghdad, killing at least 22 people and wounding over 50. While it was not clear who fired them, the rounds appeared to come the nearby Sunni-dominated town of Jurf Al Sakr. Three days earlier, again in Mussayab, a car bomb killed five civilians and wounded 13. The town is located in a mixed area holding Sunni and Shiites, and has been a flashpoint of sectarian violence in recent years. On 19 February, attacks targeting mainly security forces killed 11 people across the country, mainly in areas north of Baghdad, namely in Baquba, Tuz Khurmatu and Mosul. On 18 February, a dozen of car bomb attacks killed at least 49 people and injured over 100 in central Iraq, hitting predominantly Shi’ite districts of Baghdad and the areas around the southern cities of Hilla and Bayaa. A day before, a series of explosions in the capital left at least 24 dead and 94 injured, with attacks targeting mainly crowded areas near Shia mosques.

On 11 February, militants reportedly ambushed and killed 16 Iraqi army soldiers protecting an oil export pipeline near the northern city of Mosul in Nineveh province, through which pipeline stretches from Kirkuk oilfield to neighbouring Turkey.

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 Baiji, 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 Shiite 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 Mahmudiya, 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 Shia districts of Jadidah, Shuala, and Talbiyah 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 Khurmatu. 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 Tamruya. 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 Sunnis 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 Kurdistan 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 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.

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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 deal 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 militants
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 Kurdish 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. As of 24 February, UNAMI reported that hundreds of people demonstrated in Fallujah for an end to government's artillery bombardment in the area and for the authorities to allow supplies to enter the city.

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 provinces, 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 27 February, the Iraqi authorities quoted by UNAMI estimated that over 430,000 people (more than 67,500 households) had been displaced by the fighting, most of them within Anbar province. To date, numbers remain difficult to ascertain while ongoing military operations are likely to trigger additional population movements in Anbar and Salah-El-Din. According to latest reports from OCHA and IOM, many IDPs have scattered around Anbar, which shares a long border with Syria. Some others have moved into the neighbouring Salah-El-Din, Kerbala, Baghdad, and Najaf provinces. Up to 15,000 have reportedly sought refuge in the northern semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. According to local sources, the influx of refugees imposes a significant burden on host communities. Additionally, thousands of people are reportedly trapped in what are being described as siege-like conditions in Fallujah and Ramadi. According to the UN, the most pressing needs of the IDPs include food, NFIs, health care and cash assistance.

The government blockade of both cities has resulted in limited access to food, water, and fuel for the population. As reported by UNAMI on 30 January, shelter is becoming a pressing need as the humanitarian consequences continue to mount.

According to the IOM, prior to the outbreak of violence in Anbar 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 province, following the re-opening of the border on 15 August after a closure in mid-May. As of 4 March, UNHCR reported that over 225,500 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 province, 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: 04/03/2014

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

4 March: Local sources citing Shan ethnic rebels reported that Myanmar military forces captured two strategically outposts of the Shan State Army-North (SSA-North). Insurgents were reportedly forced to withdraw from two of their camps due to two consecutive days of bombardments and attacks in late February. A senior ethnic leader from the United Nationalities Federal Council, an alliance of 12 ethnic armed groups involved peace talks with the government, warned that the recent increase in violence
between the military and ethnic armed groups in the north could derail the ongoing negotiation process.

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).

- Myanmar authorities are currently engaged in peace negotiations with all the country’s ethnic and regional insurgency groups, aiming to reach a nationwide ceasefire in the coming weeks.

Politics and Security

Political Context

The military-led authoritarian regime in Myanmar has made moves to improve its track-record on human rights over the last years with the release of the opposition activist Aung San Suu Kyi being a turning point in November 2010. In 2013, several amnesties were granted to political prisoners in Myanmar.

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. The pardon, the first one in 2014, and the sixth since the beginning of 2013, reportedly extends to over 200 political prisoners and other categories of detainees.

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, the President Thein Sein promised to free all prisoners of conscience by end 2013, a promise that may only now be completed in 2014. While recent efforts by the Myanmar authorities to improve the country’s human rights record have been welcomed, local activists report that the prosecution of dissidents is continuing.

Peace Negotiations

Since independence in 1948, Myanmar (Burma) has been plagued by endemic internal conflicts. The latter developed mainly in remote ethnically non-Burmese and economically marginalized areas of the country where ethnic and/or political groups conducted protracted insurgencies such as in Kachin, Kayin (Karen), Kayah (Karen), Rakhine, and Shan states. In 2013, authorities signed several separate peace deals with the various insurgent movements opening the way toward a nationwide peace accord. However, local sources reported that the Myanmar military were weakly involved in the current peace process that is mainly handled by the civilian authorities through the Myanmar Peace Center.

According to local sources in early March, a senior ethnic leader from the United Nationalities Federal Council, an alliance of 12 ethnic armed groups involved peace talks with the governments, warned that the recent increase in violence between the military and ethnic armed groups in the north could derail the ongoing negotiation process.

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. 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 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`aung army. The government says it hopes to consolidate these agreements into a nationwide ceasefire deal. Some 16 of the insurgent ethnic armed groups are represented by the umbrella group Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team that should be instrumental in reaching a nationwide ceasefire.

Security Context

Despite ongoing peace negotiations between the authorities and various ethnic insurgent groups, the security situation remains tense in parts of Myanmar. Massive human rights infringements against the Muslim minority, the Rohingya, in Rakhine, and 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).

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Security Context

Despite ongoing peace negotiations between the authorities and various ethnic insurgent groups, the security situation remains tense in parts of Myanmar. Massive human rights infringements against the Muslim minority, the Rohingya, in Rakhine, and ethnic internal conflict. An estimated 2,000 Muslims.
According to local sources and several human rights organizations reports, at least 40 people, including women and children, were reportedly killed in retaliatory government attacks on Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state on 13-14 January. Médecins Sans Frontières reported that it treated 22 people in western Rakhine state who had apparently been wounded around the same time as the reported massacre of Muslims, an incident the government denies while acknowledging the clashes took place. The UN are calling for an investigation into the incident while tensions remain high in the area.

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.

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.

**Military Operations**

On 4 March, local sources citing Shan ethnic rebels reported that Myanmar military forces captured two strategically outposts of the Shan State Army-North (SSA-North), at the junction connecting northern and southern Shan state. Insurgents were reportedly forced to withdraw from two of their camps due to two consecutive days of bombardments and attacks in late February. Despite the signature of a ceasefire in January 2012, fighting between the regular army and the SSA-North has continued, with the rebels claiming it has lost five camps to government troops and engaged in over 100 clashes since the deal was signed.

Although negotiations are ongoing, various local reports indicated that small-scale military operations continue in Kachin state. Reports indicated that though the army is still deployed in Karen State, almost no fighting had occurred in the area since a ceasefire was signed in January 2012. Little information is available on the ground situation in other ethnic areas as of early 2014.

On 12 February, a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) outpost was reportedly sized by government troops in Kachin state; limited information is available to date. On 26 December, government troops launched a renewed offensive against the KIA in the north. 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 impact the ongoing peace negotiations.

On 18 November, Kachin campaign groups called for an immediate end to clashes between government troops and the KIA. Violence 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 since October.

From 22-28 October, violent clashes were reported from Kachin state’s Mansi Township between government troops and the 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 were 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**

As of late January, OCHA indicated that inter-communal tensions and restrictions on movement continued to isolate many communities in Rakhine state, leaving them with minimal access to livelihoods and basic services. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in Myeboon Township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe. In early February, ECHO reported that some demonstrators were asking for the departure of UN and INGOs in Buthedaung, northern Rakhine state.

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 is affecting the ability of international actors to provide assistance to Rakhine and Muslim IDPs and vulnerable communities. In some cases, humanitarian assistance has been temporarily interrupted. According to recent monitoring reports, there has been a rise in incidents affecting humanitarian operations across Rakhine State, with local community resistance proving the biggest barrier to effective programme implementation.

Access has reportedly improved 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. As reported by OCHA, six cross-line missions in January successfully accessed locations beyond Government’s control in Kachin state where approximately 30,000 IDPs are currently living.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

As reported by OCHA in November, over 649,000 people are internally displaced 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; most are considered crisis-affected and needing humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, the Muslim minority in Myanmar is subject to many forms of persecution, discrimination and exploitation. As reported by UNHCR, over 800,000 persons, mostly Muslims, are
estimated to be without citizenship in the northern part of Rakhine State.

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.

An estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern Shan states, including over 53,000 in areas beyond government control. Many have been displaced for up to two years, triggering renewed and additional needs for provision of basic services, livelihoods, and protection. In February, OCHA reported that, in addition to shelter renovation and WASH assistance, the most urgent needs in displaced communities are education, health care, and non-food items. In late 2013, an additional 2,000 people were 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.

**Refugees from Myanmar**

Rohingya Muslims, many of whom have been in Myanmar for generations, are rejected by neighbouring Bangladesh and are therefore stateless. To date, most Rohingyas 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 human rights abuses.

According to reports by international human rights organisations in early December, Rohingyas are also subject to human trafficking in neighbouring Thailand. To date, following the clashes and persecutions over the last years, notably in Rakhine state, several thousands of Rohingyas are hosted in Thailand which is pushing for the repatriation of this group to Myanmar. As of December 2013, according to UNHCR, an estimated 28,000 refugees, including Rohingyas, and an estimated 90,000 people from various ethnic minorities, lived in temporary sites along the Thai-Myanmar border.

In early November, UNHCR reported that an increasing number of mainly Muslims from Rakhine state, at least 1,500, are setting out to sea on smuggling boats from the Bay of Bengal. Although numbers remain difficult to ascertain, such forced departures often result in disasters as boats capsize.

In June, UNHCR reported that 28,000 Rakhine Muslims were registered as refugees in Malaysia. However, according to groups representing them, the real number of Myanmar Muslim immigrants is much higher and has surged this year because of the violence.

**Disasters**

According to the UN, heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have displaced almost 50,000 people in 2013, 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 north 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 in 2013.

**Food Security**

In late January, FAO reported that the food situation is 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. 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 Rohingyas in 113 isolated villages in Rakhine state have no or limited access to basic services, including markets, education, and healthcare. Access to services is impeded by ongoing tension and restrictions on freedom of movement.

**Dengue**

Even though the numbers of dengue cases and related deaths were lower than expected for the 2013 rainy season, health authorities still recorded 16,000 cases and 75 deaths in September 2013. 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.

**Protection**

As reported by OCHA in February, adolescent girls in camps in Kachin and Rakhine states are facing increasing violence and abuse, including SGBV.

*Updated: 06/03/2014*

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

In early March, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the annual policy conference of the pro-Israeli lobbyist group AIPAC in Washington, and repeated his call on Palestinian leaders to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, an issue he presented as central to any potential peace deal. This demand was reportedly rejected by Palestinian authorities, and a top Palestinian official qualified Netanyahu’s address as an announcement of a unilateral end to negotiations.

3 March: An Israeli air strike reportedly killed two Palestinians and wounded two others in the north of Gaza, with the Israeli military alleging that the target was a Palestinian rocket-launching squad. Over the past weeks, an increase in Israeli raids, Palestinian rocket attacks, and border incidents is raising fears of renewed major confrontations between Israel and Hamas.
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 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).

Politics and Security

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks

In early March, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the annual policy conference of the pro-Israeli lobbyist group AIPAC in Washington, and repeated his call on Palestinian leaders to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, an issue he presented as central to any potential peace deal. Netanyahu reportedly reiterated Israel’s demand to retain a military presence along the Jordan Valley, which runs down the eastern flank of the West Bank. These demands were reportedly rejected by Palestinian authorities, and a top Palestinian official qualified Netanyahu’s address as an announcement of unilateral end to negotiations.

In early January, US Secretary of State Kerry wrapped up four days of intense shuttle diplomacy between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Palestinian President 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 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 US is trying to broker a framework of guidelines addressing core issues such as borders, security, the future of Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem, but Israeli officials comment that wide gaps remain in peace talks. Palestinians want to create a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and are seeking a written framework agreement, while 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 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 later in 2014. However, in a move that could jeopardize the peace talks, Israel 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. 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 US Ambassador to Israel stated that Kerry would return soon to continue his talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Local Context

While the negotiation process is expected to be lengthy, ease of access and movement for both people and goods in the OPT is pressing as recent action to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai has included imposing severe restrictions on movement of people through the Rafah Crossing into the Gaza Strip and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian-Gaza border.

Gaza’s economic situation continues to deteriorate 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.

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 and 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.

Security Context
Settler-related violence in the West Bank and Israeli military operations continue to undermine the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians. 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.

OCHA estimates that 110 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of over 315,000 people, are vulnerable to violence from the conflict. Of these, almost 60 communities, over 130,000 people, are at high risk.

Over the past weeks, an increase in Israeli raids, Palestinian rocket attacks and border incidents is raising fears of renewed major confrontations between Israel and Hamas.

**Military Operations in the West Bank**

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.

On 27 February, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian they were seeking to arrest in the West Bank. The man was allegedly affiliated to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a small leftist faction.

On 29 January, Israeli soldiers shot a Palestinian, 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 on a town and refugee camp in the 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, reportedly a member of the Islamic Jihad, was shot dead and several people were wounded.

**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 ten Palestinians and 29 settlers were killed in these attacks.

OCHA reported that between 28 January and 3 February, seven settler-related incidents were reported in the West Bank. Four Palestinians were reportedly injured in the attacks, which also damaged Palestinian agricultural properties. Between 21-27 January, eight similar attacks were recorded across the West Bank, resulting in injuries on both sides, and causing property damage.

**Impact of the Violence on Civilians in the West Bank**

In the West Bank, OCHA reported that Israeli forces injured 42 Palestinian civilians, including eight children, in clashes which took place between 4-10 February at Al Jalazoun refugee camp in Ramallah, Al Far’a refugee camp in Tubas, and in Ya’bad village in Jenin.

On 29 January in the area of Ramallah, OCHA reported that Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian civilian under unclear circumstances. The incident triggered multiple clashes between Israeli military and Palestinians in the Al Jalazoun refugee camp. Between 28 January and 3 February, 55 Palestinians, including 11 children, were injured in clashes with Israeli forces across the West Bank, notably in the area of Hebron, East Jerusalem and Ramallah.

OCHA reported that between 21-27 January, 53 Palestinians, including ten children, were injured in clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in the West Bank, notably in Abu Dis in Jerusalem governorate, Kafr Qaddum in Qalqiliya governorate, and Wadi Qana in Safliyeh governorate. These incidents brought to 129 the number of Palestinian injured in similar incidents since the beginning of 2014.

**Military Operations in the Gaza Strip**

On 3 March, an Israeli air strike reportedly killed two Palestinians and wounded two others in the north of Gaza, with the Israeli military alleging that the target was a Palestinian rocket-launching squad.

On 9 February, an Israeli airstrike reportedly targeted and wounded a key militant figure considered responsible for cross-border rocket fire. This strike is the latest in a growing number of violent incidents in and around Gaza since the start of 2014. Tensions have been rising after a year of relative calm, with an estimated 33 rockets fired from Gaza towards southern Israel since early January. In early February, Hamas reportedly deployed a 600-strong special security force tasked with preventing cross-border fire by Palestinian factions.

OCHA reported that Israeli airstrikes on January 31 the Gaza Strip injured ten civilians and caused significant property damage. The strikes were reportedly launched in response to rockets shot by Palestinian factions toward southern Israel earlier in the day. The Israeli air force responded with a series of airstrikes which caused civilian injuries and property damage.

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 of the Violence on Civilians in the Gaza Strip**

In Gaza on 13-14 February, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian they were seeking to arrest. The man was allegedly affiliated to the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).
On 31 January, OCHA reported that Israeli airstrikes caused 10 civilian injuries and significant damage to civilian homes, public services and agricultural property. The strikes were reportedly launched in response to rockets shot by Palestinian factions toward southern Israel earlier in the day. On the same day, seven civilians were injured, including four by live ammunition, when Israeli forces opened fire at demonstrators approaching the fence separating Gaza and Israel.

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-Qassam 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 reportedly in northern Gaza on militant positions, where they caused no casualties.

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.

The Rafah Crossing opened for five days between 4-10 February after 14 consecutive days of closure, allowing the departure of over 2,500 Gazans to Egypt, and the return of 1,500 people. This marked the highest number of travelers leaving Gaza since restrictions were increased in July 2013.

The crossing previously opened for five days in late January, following a two-day opening early January and a three-day opening in late December. While the crossing normally remains closed for the import of construction materials and other goods, these items were briefly authorised entry on 19-25 January. As of early January, OCHA reported that the waiting list for people registered to travel outside the Gaza Strip exceeded 5,000 people, including those seeking urgent medical treatment. In December, the number of people exiting Gaza via the Rafah Crossing was 15% of the monthly average recorded during the first half of 2013, dramatically decreasing from 20,340, to 3,000 people exiting in December. 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 have been severely restricted since September 2000.

Displacement

In January 2014, aid agencies in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem reported an increase in Israeli demolitions of Palestinian property, using information made available by OCHA’s Protection of Civilian Database. Between July 2013, when the US-brokered Israeli-Palestinian peace talks began, and December, the number of demolitions increased by 43%, while the number of displaced Palestinians increased by nearly 75% compared to the same period in 2012. Between 28 July and 31 December 2013, demolitions caused the displacement of 452 people, compared to 250 displaced by similar events over the same period in 2012. Humanitarian partners indicated that of the 663 Palestinian structures torn down in 2013, 122 were built with international donor aid.

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. 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 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

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% in 2011 to 57% in 2012. Economic pressure on Gaza could impact the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The unemployment rate, 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 livelihoods, particularly those employed in construction, agriculture, and fishing. 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 are expected to be reflected in an increased number of food insecure households. About 1.1 million people (65% of the population) are already receiving food aid.

Over 770,000 people are estimated to be food insecure in the West Bank alone, according to the UN.
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 Gaza and Ramallah authorities are main underlying reasons for this. The restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the Rafah Crossing, which has served as the main entry point for most medical donations, has further exacerbated the situation. As of late November, 30% of 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.

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: 06/03/2014

PAKISTAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT, EARTHQUAKE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Early March: Local sources reported that the desert area of Tharparkar, in the southern Sindh province, is facing famine-like conditions due to prolonged water stress and drought. At least 121 people have reportedly died due to drought-related causes in the last three months, most of them in the town of Mithi. Water scarcity has been ongoing for the past three years in the desert area, which is home to an estimated 950,000 people.

Early March: The Pakistani Government hailed the resumption and progress in peace talks with representatives of Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) and announced it was setting up a new committee to accelerate the negotiation process, despite renewed attacks claimed by reportedly unknown TTP splinter groups across the country. The Government also warned that it could launch a full-scale operation against Taliban insurgents in tribal areas if they did not abide by the ceasefire declared at the beginning of March.

As of 5 March: An estimated 23,000 people have been displaced from North Waziristan into neighbouring districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and into Afghanistan since the beginning of the military offensive on 20 February, according to authorities and as reported by OCHA. Access is a challenge, but initial assessments indicate that most pressing needs include food, shelter, access to healthcare, and WASH facilities. A full military operation in the area could displace up to 300,000 people.

KEY CONCERNS

- Military operations against the Taliban in the northwestern tribal areas and militant attacks in urban centres are ongoing despite the resumption of peace talks between TTP (the Pakistani Taliban) and the authorities.

- An estimated one million people are internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas as of mid-December. Though numbers are difficult to ascertain, there are an estimated 2.5 million documented and undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan (UNHCR).

- As of February, priority humanitarian needs in Pakistan were related to health, nutrition and food security. OCHA reported that 1.21 million people are in need of health assistance and food assistance, while 1.59 million in need of nutrition assistance.

- Pakistan is an extremely hazard-prone country. In September, an estimated 185,000 people were severely affected by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Baluchistan province (OCHA).

Politics and Security

The security situation remains volatile as militant attacks in urban centres and military operations against the Taliban in the tribal areas continue. To date, Pakistani authorities have been unable to start comprehensive peace talks with the insurgents, although a preliminary meeting with representatives of the insurgents was held in early February. As of February, 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 that US drone strikes had reduced sharply as peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban got underway. However, the Obama administration indicated that it would carry out strikes on senior al Qaeda officials if immediate threats to the US were identified.
Over the past six months, official and public outrage over drone strikes has intensified, with local leaders saying they constitute a breach of the country’s sovereignty. In early December, Washington was forced to temporarily halt ground shipments from Afghanistan via its main Pakistan supply route following protests in Pakistan over US drone strikes. The route, which connects Torkham Gate, at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, to the port city of Karachi, is crucial to the withdrawal of the US combat mission from Afghanistan. The alternative Northern Distribution Network, a grid of supply lines running through Central Asia and Russia, is far more costly and politically challenging. Long-term suspension of the supply lines running through Pakistan could potentially derail the whole US regional strategy. In November, the death of Pakistani Taliban’s leader Hakimullah Mehsud and continuation of drone strikes also had significant repercussions for short-term US-Pakistan relations.

On 21 November, the day after Pakistan’s Foreign Minister indicated that the US had committed to cease drone strikes while the government tried to re-engage the insurgents in peace talks, a 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) and four others. Ten days before, HN’s financial chief was shot by unidentified men in Islamabad. Washington has long called for Pakistani authorities to crack down on HN 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 to be conducted in Pakistan since 1 November, when Hakimullah Mehsud, the leader of Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban, was killed in a US drone strike in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), probably north Waziristan, along with three other militants. The strike took place as Pakistani authorities started negotiations with the TTP. Islamabad openly denounced the attack as a US bid to sabotage the peace talks. Mullah Fazlullah, who 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. Nevertheless, an increase in drone attacks have been reported in FATA, with at least nine occurring since Sharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by Pakistani authorities in late August 2013, 339 drone attacks have been recorded since 2004, resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2,200 people in FATA, including 400 civilians and 200 victims deemed probable non-combatants. The numbers released by Islamabad have been questioned by independent organisations. No official US data on the number of people killed in drone strikes is available. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released separate reports in October 2013 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 talks aimed at calming bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi, India’s military continued to accuse Pakistan of helping insurgents push into Indian Kashmir as foreign forces withdraw from neighbouring Afghanistan. Pakistan denies it is helping militants to cross into the Indian part of the contested region.

Prime Minister Sharif met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on 29 September, amid 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, the de facto border in the disputed region, after heavily armed militants reportedly crossed from Pakistan into India. Tensions have been running high in Kashmir since August, when Western observers fearing for the November 2003 ceasefire and stalled peace talks between the two countries. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for incidents that, as of early September 2013, 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 from the Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba said that the group is preparing to reignite the fight over Kashmir in 2014, when Western troops have left Afghanistan. The bombing of the Indian consulate in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on 3 August, for which the Taliban has denied responsibility, might be an early indication of this 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 presidential elections when Afghan President Karzai is due to step down. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. The comments from Pakistan could indicate reluctance on the part of the Taliban to engage with the Karzai administration.

On 30 November, Prime Minister Sharif met with Afghan President Karzai in Kabul as part of renewed efforts to revive Afghanistan’s peace process before the NATO troop withdrawal. Sharif, who visited Afghanistan for the first time since being sworn in in June, promised that he would help arrange further meetings between Afghan officials and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command and reported friend of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. Baradar, who was captured in Pakistan in 2010, is seen by Kabul as key to reaching moderate Taliban commanders and involving them into peace talks.

In late October, a breakthrough in negotiations between President Karzai and Prime Minister Sharif was reportedly achieved at a meeting in London. On 20 November, a delegation of senior officials from Afghanistan’s High Peace Council travelled to Karachi to start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and meet with Baradar, who was released by Islamabad in September, but reportedly has remained under close Pakistani supervision. During its visit, the Afghan delegation reportedly met with the former Afghan Taliban commander. 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. Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not handed over directly to Afghan authorities.
National Political Context

On 18 February, Pakistan’s former ruler Pervez Musharraf eventually arrived in court to face treason charges that may result in the death penalty. Officially, Musharraf’s trial had opened in Islamabad on 1 January. 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. The development is reported as a victory for the country’s increasingly assertive judiciary, although several observers voiced concerns that the trial may anger the Pakistani military. Pakistan authorities decided to put Musharraf on trial in November 2013 for treason, for suspending the constitution and declaring a state of emergency in 2007 while he was in power.

On 27 November, Lieutenant-General Raheel Sharif was nominated as the country’s new army chief. Considered a moderate, Sharif is known for his role in reshaping Pakistan’s strategic policy in 2007, when he turned the focus away from the rivalry with India and pushed for a more nuanced policy that considered the internal threat from militants as equally pressing. To a large extent, the nomination may be seen as another attempt by civilian authorities to put pressure on the influential military establishment.

Pakistan’s Taliban Insurgency and Peace Talks with the Taliban

Peace Talks with the Taliban

As of early March, the Pakistani Government hailed the resumption and progress in peace talks with representatives of the TTP, a few days after the country’s main Taliban faction declared a one-month ceasefire. On 6 March, the Government announced it was setting up a new committee to accelerate the negotiation process, despite renewed attacks claimed by reportedly unknown TTP splinter groups across the country. TTP central command denied being involved in the string of attacks that followed the truce announcement. The latest incidents were claimed by two dissident factions opposed to peace talks, Ansar-ul-Mujahideen and Ahrar-ul-Hind. These developments raise fears that the movement is splintering and is unable to control its various groups, but observers have also suggested that the TTP could be using talks as cover to regroup and rearm.

On 26 February, Pakistan unveiled its first counterterrorism policy in parliament, ending years of failed attempts by previous governments, due to lack of consensus around a unified set of rules to combat armed groups. In what is seen as a significant shift, the policy announces the establishment of a rapid response force to carry out counterterrorism operations and indicates that Pakistani military will react to every act of terrorism by retaliatory attacks on the headquarters of the militants along the Afghan border.

This dynamic was already in play in response to the killing of 23 soldiers in mid-February, when talks with the Taliban were put on hold and a series of deadly air strikes were carried out in the northwest.

On 22 February, the TTP declared that there was no chance of peace in Pakistan unless the authorities agree to change the country’s political system and establish Islamic law. Islamabad had suspended ongoing talks with the TTP following attacks by the militant group against the military. The decision of 20 February to suspend dialogue with the TTP came hours after the military bombed suspected Taliban hideouts in a tribal area on the Afghan border, opening the way for a major offensive that is ongoing. In a rare admission of casualties, Pakistan’s army indicated that over 100 soldiers had been killed by Taliban fighters since September 2013, when Prime Minister Sharif convened an all-party conference that unanimously opted for peace talks.

Over the past decade, short-lived ceasefires achieved through tentative peace initiatives have often been used by the TTP to buy time to regroup and find new resources to resume fighting. On the other side, the Government’s lack of consultation with the powerful Pakistani military on the decision to begin talks is seen as an important constraint, as military operations continue in North Waziristan, and another sign of the growing rift between the military establishment and civilian authorities.

On 29 January, Prime Minister Sharif’s Government reinvigorated its commitment to a dialogue-first approach to the Taliban insurgency, saying that 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. In response, a TTP spokesman indicated that a Taliban leadership meeting would be convened in the coming days to discuss the issue, while continuing to deny that there was any rift within the Islamist movement.

On 30 October, while at a summit in London, Prime Minister Sharif announced that his Government had started talks with the Pakistani Taliban in an attempt to end the insurgents’ attacks across the country. Since coming to power in May, Sharif has repeatedly suggested that his Government was ready to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban, although counterinsurgency operations were to continue until negotiations started.

Pakistan’s Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP)

On 24 February, security sources reported that Asmatullah Shaheen, a senior commander of the TTP, had been killed by unidentified gunmen in Dargah Mandi village near Miranshah in North Waziristan in the country’s tribal belt. Shaheen had been interim chief of the Pakistani Taliban after the death of Hakimullah Mehsud in November. The killing may be seen as another indication of the increasing fragmentation of the Taliban movement in Pakistan since the death of Mehsud. According to militants’ sources, Shaheen was considered within the TTP to be a proponent of peace talks with the Government.

Hakimullah Mehsud was killed in a US drone strike on 1 November. The TTP promoted Mullah Fazlullah, a 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 further peace talks with 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 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 Mullah Fazlullah had relocated from Afghan Nuristan province, where he had been based since a 2009 push by the army into Swat Valley, and gone back to the 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: 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. According to local sources, the promotion of Fazlullah is already triggering a rift in the TTP despite the reported endorsement of Fazlullah by Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Sources close to the militants have also repeatedly hinted that differences of opinion exist within the TTP regarding the possibility of engaging in peace talks with the Government.

In mid-January, police and militant sources said at least two Afghan Taliban commanders had been killed in Quetta in recent weeks. It is unclear whether the two commanders were targeted by the Afghan or Pakistan security forces, or killed as a result of infighting within the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban movements. Within the Afghan Taliban branch, disagreements on possible talks with the authorities intensified. Taliban sources from both sides of the border have blamed the killings on Afghan and Pakistani security forces. Since the beginning of 2013, at least 18 other Afghan Taliban have been killed in similar attacks.

**Security Context**

**Militants' attacks**

According to an independent count by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 4,286 people were killed and 4,066 injured between January and 31 August 2013 in targeted killings, militant attacks, incidents of terrorism, and security operations by the armed forces and intelligence agencies.

In the first week of March 2014, militant attacks killed at least 19 people in the capital and in the northwest, while large-scale military operations in North Waziristan continued. On 5 March, a roadside bomb killed at least six soldiers near the northwest town of Hangu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. On 4 March, two people were killed in the Jamrud area, in the Khyber Agency of the FATA, in an attack targeting vehicles carrying NATO supplies for Afghanistan. On 3 March, at least 11 people were killed and 30 other injured in a suicide attack on a court in the centre of Islamabad. The attack was claimed by the TTP splinter faction Ahrar-ul-Hind. Militant violence persists despite a Taliban-declared month-long ceasefire to pursue talks with the government. Although Taliban representatives have tried to distance themselves from recent attacks, latest events seem to suggest they are not fully in control of their various factions.

In late February, several militant attacks that killed at least 17 people were recorded across Pakistan. On 24 February, a suicide bombing outside the Iranian consulate in the northwestern city of Peshawar killed two security guards and injured more than a dozen people. The attack was claimed by the Pakistani Islamist armed group Mast Gul, previously known for violently opposing Indian rule in contested Kashmir. The group declared its intention to target other Iranian installations, as well as Shi'ite communities, in Pakistan. On 23 February, at least 12 people were killed, mostly from the Shi'ite minority, following a bombing at a bus stop near government and police offices in the northwestern district of Kohat, according to police sources. On 22 February, a roadside bomb targeting a local leader of a national party killed three people and injured another two in northwestern Buner district, close to Swat Valley.

On 18 February, Taliban fighters opened fire on an army car and killed a senior officer in Peshawar. The previous day, insurgents said they had executed 23 soldiers in revenge for military operations in FATA. A week before, 13 were killed and 20 wounded in an attack targeting a cinema in the northwestern city of Peshawar. Also in Peshawar on 12 February, an attack on the home of a policeman killed nine members of a pro-government militia.

On 13 February, an explosion targeting a bus of policemen near Karachi killed 12 and wounded another 58. The incident was claimed by the Taliban.

In the second week of February, Pakistan's Balochistan province grew more volatile. On 10 February, authorities reported that separatist rebels blew up three gas pipelines, cutting supplies to Punjab, Pakistan's most populous and wealthy province, overnight. The attack was claimed by the banned Baloch Republican Army. On 9 February, eight people were killed following an attack on the home of two pro-government militia leaders. Six of the attackers were then killed in ensuing clashes with members of the militia and armed paramilitary forces.

Shi'ite Muslims comprise a fifth of the country's 180 million population. According to observers, the violence is worst in the western province of Balochistan, and attacks against Shi'ite targets are largely due to Sunni militias such as the Taliban and the Punjabi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Human Rights Watch reported that over 400 Shi'ites were killed in 2013.

**Military Operations**

Despite the resumption of negotiations on 5 March, the Government warned that it could launch a full-scale operation against the Taliban insurgents in tribal areas if the insurgents did not abide by the ceasefire they declared at the beginning of March. Between 20 February and early March, four sets of Government air strikes against militant strongholds in the FATA have left over 100 militant fighters dead. The latest air raids took place in the remote Shawal Valley and Dattakhel areas of North Waziristan, reportedly hosting militant training facilities and compounds. According to security sources, at least 30 militants were killed. On 24 February, at least 38 insurgents were killed in air strikes in North Waziristan according to security sources, adding to at least nine people killed in helicopter attacks in Hangu district, in western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the previous day.

According to security sources, attacks against militant hideouts have been ongoing since 20 February, when Prime Minister Sharif personally authorised military operations, a possible sign that the Pakistani civilian authorities have given in to pressure from the military for tougher action against the Taliban after the peace talks broke down. Government troops have intensified military operations against militant bases in FATA, targeting mainly areas bordering Afghanistan between South Waziristan and North Waziristan, where armed Islamist groups have allegedly established training centres to prepare suicide bombers, according to Pakistani security sources.
According to authorities and as reported by OCHA on 5 March, an estimated 23,000 people have been displaced from North Waziristan into neighbouring districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and into Afghanistan since 20 February. To date, however, access to the area remains heavily curtailed and no reports are available from independent sources, making it impossible to assess accurately civilian casualties or levels of displacement.

In late January, Government forces conducted a first major military operation against Taliban militants in the North Waziristan region that resulted in over 40 militants killed. Local sources reported that dozens of civilians died in the air strikes. 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, most of them had returned home following a discontinuation of military operations, although local sources also reported that the assault had flattened several houses. The military operation followed two high-profile TTP attacks on 19-20 January, targeting Pakistani troops in the northwestern city of Bannu and a market next to Pakistan's military headquarters in Rawalpindi, respectively.

In mid-December, Pakistani troops attacked suspected militant hideouts for several days. Insurgents responded by attacking the military in the North Waziristan district on the Afghan border. According to local sources, over 50 people were killed, including a number of civilians.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 4.2 million people were in need of humanitarian support in November. These include one million IDPs in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1.61 million registered Afghan refugees, 185,000 affected by the Balochistan earthquake, and 1.5 million affected by recent floods.

Access

Over January 2014, OCHA noted that 13 attacks against aid workers had been reported in Pakistan, 11 of them in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the other two in Sindh province. The attacks killed 11 people and injured four.

In early December 2013, OCHA reported that 91 attacks against aid workers had been recorded since the beginning of the year, with 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 FATA with 21 attacks, and Sindh with 20 attacks. Armed groups have killed more than 30 polio workers and troops protecting them in recent years. On 17 February, gunmen abducted a six-member polio vaccination team in Ping village at the border of South Waziristan. A day before, a bombing targeted a polio team in Peshawar, killing a policeman. On 21 January, three polio vaccination workers were killed in a targeted attack in Karachi. On 22 January, seven people were killed and 11 injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Charsadda district after a bomb exploded near a police van used to provide security for a polio vaccination drive.

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.

The aid response to the earthquakes that hit Balochistan in September 2013 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 Baloch militants against security forces and government officials engaged in relief operations were reported.

Disasters

As of early March, local sources reported that the desert area of Tharparkar, in the southern Sindh province, is facing famine-like conditions due to prolonged water scarcity and drought.

According to local sources, at least 121 people have reportedly died in the last three months due to drought-related causes, most of them in the town of Mithi, one of the least developed and most remote districts. As hundreds of thousands are migrating from the region to escape the precarious conditions, the death toll is feared to be higher than recorded. Water scarcity has been an issue for the past three years in the desert area, which is home to an estimated 950,000 people, and where famine killed an estimated 90% of the livestock in 2000.

The regional government of Sindh indicated that this issue is an annual phenomenon, as the local Kolhi and Bheel communities migrate with their cattle toward irrigated areas, and questioned that the deaths reported can be attributed to drought. In January, the Pakistan Meteorological Department National Drought Monitoring Centre reported that no significant rainfall had been recorded over southern Punjab and Sindh regions, and water stress and drought-like conditions had been reported over Khairpur, Cholistan and Tharparkar districts. In addition, no significant rainfall was predicted for southern parts of the country.

Displacement

IDPs

According to OCHA, as of 5 March an ongoing large-scale military offensive conducted by Government troops against militants in North Waziristan in the FATA since 20 February has displaced over 23,000 people into adjacent districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and into Afghanistan. While access is a key challenge, initial assessments indicated that most pressing needs include food, shelter, access to healthcare and WASH facilities. The total population in North Waziristan is projected to be approximately 500,000 individuals, and although the current military operations are targeted at rebel hideouts, further displacement is expected if the strikes continue. A full military operation in the area could displace up to 300,000 people.

In late January, up to 70,000 people had already fled the region and taken shelter in the usually peaceful areas of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan on the edge of FATA, following earlier military operations by Pakistani troops.

As of 15 February, UNHCR indicated that an estimated one million people were now internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA and in need of assistance.
November 2013, local sources suggested that up to 1.6 million IDPs from FATA and from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were located in the Peshawar area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The UN reported on 15 February that almost 110,000 people returned to the FATA in 2013, but since mid-March, Government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militant groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency have led to large-scale population movement to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to UNHCR, in 2013, an estimated total of 140,000 people were displaced across Pakistan, the majority in the FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regions.

As reported by OCHA, 90% of IDPs live with relatives or in rented houses. Most IDPs are subsistence farmers, but displacement has forced many to leave their farms and relocate to the Peshawar area where employment and livelihood opportunities are limited. Many have switched to irreversible coping strategies, taking on debt and selling assets to pay for food.

Refugees

The exact number of Afghan refugees in Pakistan remains difficult to ascertain. According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 31 December 2013, there were an estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, in Pakistan. Most Afghan refugees, the majority of whom were located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, required humanitarian assistance.

In June 2013, 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. National media report that the presence of Afghan refugees is triggering tensions in host provinces.

Food Security

Food insecurity is at emergency levels, with an estimated 58% of Pakistan’s population considered food insecure as of November 2013, as reported by OCHA quoting a National Nutrition Survey. Seven districts face IPC Phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). Inflation, rising fuel prices, and stagnating domestic productivity are pushing up food prices. Prices of wheat and wheat flour have steadily increased since June 2012, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

As of mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.21 million people, almost exclusively IDPs (living both in and outside camps) and returnees, were in critical need of food assistance and were therefore key targets for food distribution.

Health and Nutrition

OCHA reported in mid-February that an estimated 1.21 million people were in need of health assistance. Needs include the provision of basic health services, quality maternal and child health services, and healthcare to treat acute respiratory diseases brought on by cooler weather. Priority targets included over 508,000 IDPs and returnees in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dengue

WHO said that between 1 and 4 January 2014, thousands of cases of dengue fever had been confirmed across various regions: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 9,402; Sindh 5,765; Punjab 2,676; and Balochistan 42. The disease is currently affecting areas that do not usually fall into the traditional endemic belt for dengue fever, marking a significant difference from the usual patterns of cyclical dengue outbreaks. In 2013, dengue fever cases were also reported from less endemic areas, according to WHO.

Polio

According to health officials, the number of polio infections is rising, with 91 cases reported in 2013 compared with 58 in 2012. The outbreak was announced in late August 2013 after the disease was detected in North Waziristan in FATA. To date, most cases have been recorded in FATA, followed by northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eastern Punjab, and southern Sindh provinces. As of 15 February, the number of new polio cases reported in 2014 stands at 11: ten in North Waziristan and one in Bannu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Humanitarian partners warned that displacement from North Waziristan could result in the spread of the virus to neighbouring districts.

Children are especially at risk of polio contamination, with most children affected being under five. Pakistan is one of the only countries globally 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

In 2013, 269 deaths from measles were reported. According to local media, 141 children died of measles in Punjab province alone. In 2013, 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 2012 and mid-May 2013 were not vaccinated against the disease.

Malnutrition

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.59 million people need 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.

Malnutrition rates in some flood-affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the floods in 2012 and are predicted to worsen in 2014. According to WFP as of June 2013, 15% of Pakistani children are severely malnourished, and 40% suffers from stunted growth.

In late January, local media quoted a December 2013 WFP survey expressing concern about malnutrition in remote Neelum Valley, in the mountainous north of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. An estimated 21% of children, well above the national average,
were found to be malnourished in the region.

Shelter

As reported by OCHA in mid-February, 540,000 people across the country need NFIs, such as blankets, quilts, shawls, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, and solar lamps to cope with the harsh winter forecast this year. To a large extent, the humanitarian caseload includes returnees, IDPs in FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and people recovering from earthquakes and floods in Balochistan, Punjab, and Sindh.

Protection

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.08 million people, largely IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and FATA, were in need of protection. Specific needs include specialised protective services and referral assistance for children, women, older people, and people with disabilities in displacement/return areas.

WASH

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 690,000 people, largely among IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and FATA, were in need of assistance for access to safe drinking water and improved knowledge of household water treatment among non-camp IDPs and in areas of return.

Updated: 11/03/2014

BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 28/02/2014.

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.

Politics and Security

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, Lalmonirhat, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Dinajpur.

On 23 February, local sources reported an attack by gunmen on a prison van carrying militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a banned Islamist movement, to a courthouse. The attack resulted in the killing of one policeman and in three militants being freed according to security sources. To date, little additional information is available.

**Security Context - Labour Protests**

Aside from the political crisis, Bangladesh has been hit by a wave of protests in mid-November by garment sector workers demanding a pay raise. According to reports, workers took to the streets, blocked major roads, and attacked factories in the Ashulia industrial belt, on the outskirts of Dhaka. Although information remains limited, over 50 people, including security forces, have been wounded. In spite of the fact that Bangladeshi garment factory owners agreed to an increase of the minimum wage following mediation by authorities on 14 November, protests continued for another day with workers demanding a bigger increase while an estimated 200 factories remained shut down in the country.

The Bangladesh garment sector has already been seriously affected by the several hartals called by the BNP during the political crisis with AL over the past weeks. The mounting violence and strikes are a continuing threat to the country’s garment export industry, on which the impoverished country heavily relies. It employs an estimated four million people, mostly women. Against this background, the garment industry has already been disrupted by several industrial accidents that have killed more than a thousand workers in the last year alone and have triggered widespread protests.

**Security Context – 1971 War Trials Protests**

Since the beginning of 2013, tension between Islamic groups and secular activists, and between the authorities and the opposition, have run high. Over the year, Bangladesh has seen recurrent hartals called by JI or the BNP to protest against the arrest and conviction of senior party officials for committing offences during the 1971 War. The hartals have caused significant disruption to business and losses to the economy.

On 13 December, at least four people were killed in renewed violence after the execution of the JI Islamist leader Abdul Quader Mollah. The execution – the first ever to be held following a conviction for war crimes – triggered lootings, blockades of roads and clashes between supporters of the opposition, including Islamist groups, and supporters of the AL as the country is still in facing a political deadlock. The decision to execute Mollah drew condemnation from various international human rights organizations.

On 3 November, a Bangladesh war crimes court sentenced to death in absentia two men accused of committing offenses during the country’s 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. As both men are currently not in Bangladesh, the sentence may further fuel the ongoing political crisis. Since the beginning of 2013, the tribunal has brought down eight convictions, with six defendants sentenced to death, including senior members of the BNP and the JI. In October, two senior members of the BNP were sentenced, one to death and one to life imprisonment, causing only limited protests across the country. In September, national hartals were enforced after a senior leader from JI was handed the death sentence, overturning a previously imposed life sentence.

While authorities struggled to contain the demonstrations, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in late July that Bangladeshi security forces have frequently used excessive force in responding to street protests, killing at least 150 protesters and injuring over 2,000 since February 2013. HRW has criticised the trials indicating that the tribunal’s procedures fall short of international standards. Several critics also suggested that the trials were used by the AL as a mean to undercut the two biggest opposition parties, the BNP and JI. Several
BNP and JI leaders are still officially on trial.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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.

Health and Nutrition

As reported by ECHO in late February, an estimated 500,000 Bangladeshi children suffer from severe malnutrition annually. Among children under five years of age, 48% are stunted and 13.5% are acutely malnourished, with 3.4% of these, suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Reviewed: 06/03/2014

JORDAN DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

6 March: According to UNHCR, 582,080 Syrian refugees are currently registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

KEY CONCERNS

- Jordan remains affected by the ongoing crisis in neighbouring Syria with the regular flow of Syrian refugees swelling Jordan's population size by almost 10% and placing enormous pressure on scarce water resources and public services.

- 582,080 Syrian refugees have registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

- Humanitarian operations are disproportionately focused on Za'atari refugee camp, 10km east of Mafraq. Since opening in July 2012, the camp population, which had an initial capacity of 60,000 swelled to 130,000 refugees in 2013. UNHCR’s pilot verification exercise has indicated that the population is significantly lower, comprising roughly 105,000 Syrians.

Politics and Security

The Jordanian military has tightly guarded movements crossing the border with Syria, thereby limited the spillover of the conflict into the Kingdom. Nonetheless, hundreds of
Jordanians are reportedly fighting with opposition groups with links to Al Qaeda, particularly Jabhat al Nusra. Dozens of Jordanians have been killed in Syria since the beginning of the conflict. Weapons smuggling from Jordan into Syria has increased significantly, and the Jordanian Armed Forces continue to make arrests.

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 remains 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 25 February, over 582,080 Syrian refugees have registered with UNHCR in Jordan. In December 2013, the average number of daily arrivals rose to 374 per day; the rate of influx has decreased to an estimated 276 per day in January.

The continuous arrivals have swelled Jordan’s population size by almost 10%, placing enormous pressure on public services, particularly with most Syrian refugees having settled in impoverished rural areas in the north where they exacerbate the already weak economic situation of the Jordanian population by increasing competition for jobs in the informal market and contributing to rising costs of housing.

Around 19% of Syrian refugees live in camps, the rest in local communities. The vast majority of refugees are in northern areas near the Syrian border, e.g. Irbid, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa, as well as in Amman.

The winter season is exacerbating the situation for many Syrian refugees. Snowstorm Alexia, the worst winter storm in 20 years, struck Jordan on 11 December, bringing snowfall to higher areas and rain elsewhere. Unexpected shortages of gas cylinders in Mafraq disrupted aid agencies’ winterization activities.

**Palestinian refugees from Syria**

Nearly 11,000 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been recorded by UNRWA, which provides cash assistance for vulnerable PRS who constitute the vast majority of the PRS population. About 200 Palestinians from Syria are in the Cyber City facility, from which they are restricted from leaving. The GoJ has restricted entry of PRS into Jordan. Those who manage to enter the country are subject to a number of protection issues, including refoulements. About 30% of PRS households are headed by women.

**Camps**

Za'atari is the second largest refugee camp in the world and is equivalent of an entirely new city in Jordan. Thousands of refugees have left the camp through both official and unofficial channels to move to urban centers. The lack of security in parts of Za'atari impede access to services, particularly for women and girls. Security incidents and protests in Za'atari camp are frequent.

About 4,000 Syrians live in the Emirates Jordan Camp (EJC). Known as the five-star camp due to its high living standards and extensive support, primarily from the UAE Red Crescent. The camp provides three hot meals each day and caravans for all residents. Despite the improved living standards, a significant number of refugees have also left EJC camp for urban areas or to return to Syria.

An estimated 2,000 defectors from the Syrian military are being held at Jordanian military premises in Mafraq. The GoJ has not permitted UNHCR to conduct status determination for this caseload.

**Non-Syrian refugees**

Due to the conflict in Anbar province in neighbouring Iraq, UNHCR reported that the number of Iraqi asylum seekers in Jordan increased fivefold to 1,300 in December 2013 and the demand persisted in early 2014.

The number of Sudanese asylum seekers continued to increase in 2013. Over 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, Somalia, and other countries currently reside in Jordan.

**Food Security**

In 2012, the GoJ gradually removed fuel subsidies, putting pressure on prices, with fuel and lighting costs increasing by almost 20% year-on-year. In 2013, the average total inflation rate reached 5.6%, however the Government has agreed to introduce a set of structural reforms, allowing for example to maintain wheat bread subsidies.

As a result of the Syrian refugee influx, Jordan’s economy, water, energy, education, and housing resources are 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 chronically high unemployment (around 14%) and inflation.

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. Aid agencies report that some Syrian refugees are donating to poor Jordanians or selling them food received from aid agencies at a discounted price. Northern governates 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 supplies, food, blankets, tents, and other goods provided by the international community are for sale on the black market.

In Jordan, coping behaviour varies between camp and non-camp refugees. Syrian refugees in host communities are resorting to more negative coping strategies due to the high costs of living, particularly for rent. 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 $220 million dollars per year, even as some Jordanians receive less water per capita.

Health and Nutrition
Cases of water-borne and water-related diseases have appeared 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. In January 2013, it was reported that immunisation campaigns have reached 88% of the total registered Syrian refugee population. Jordan has been polio-free since 1992.

Updated: 06/03/2014

LEBANON CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

6 March: The head of the Agricultural Research Institute stated that, despite heavy rains are expected next week, Lebanon will still face significant water shortages during the summer months. There are concerns over the impact of these shortages on access to water for Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees as well as for agricultural productivity.

6 March: A Syrian warplane launched a missile into the outskirts of a border town of Lebanon, Aarsal. This is the 4th time since the start of March that missiles from Syria hit areas in the border region of Lebanon.

5 March: During a summit in Paris, several countries, including France, Finland and Norway, have promised financial support and military support to Lebanon to cope with the Syrian refugee crisis.

4 March: The Minister of Health announced that the 3rd phase of a national vaccination campaign against polio will start on 10 March. The Health Ministry estimates that 98% of children in Lebanon have already been vaccinated against polio.

KEY CONCERNS

- The ongoing conflict in neighbouring Syria is polarising Lebanon, which is witnessing a rise in insecurity and sectarian tensions, with regular bomb attacks, sporadic clashes, and almost daily shelling from Syria into the north and eastern border areas.

- At end February, 901,750 Syrians had registered as refugees with UNHCR and over 48,000 were awaiting registration. An unknown number of Syrians reside in Lebanon who are not registered with UNHCR.

- Intensified fighting in the Qalamoun area of Syria has displaced 12,800 refugees into Arsal from 9-20 February. Despite sporadic fighting reported in and around Yabroud, the pace of the refugee influx significantly decreased toward the end of February, with only 640 new arrivals identified in Arsal between 20 and 25 February. The recent arrivals bring the total refugee population in Arsal to more than 51,000, exceeding the number of resident Lebanese.

- 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.

Politics and Security

International Context
On 9 February, the Hezbollah leadership publicly renewed its vow to continue fighting in Syria alongside President al-Assad’s Government forces. The involvement of the group 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.

The first major clashes between Lebanese Hezbollah fighters and Syrian opposition fighters inside Lebanese territory were reported in June. 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 on the border regions frequently results in casualties.

Lebanon – Israel
On 24 February, an Israeli airstrike targeted the eastern Lebanese-Syrian border area of Janta near the village of Nabi Sheet where Hezbollah has military training camps and key military posts. According to a local security source, the attack was aimed at two trucks transferring missiles and a missile launcher.

On 29 December, the Israeli military fired a barrage of shells into southern Lebanon, in response to rockets which hit Israel. The leader of the Al Qaeda-linked extremist group responsible for several of the bomb attacks in Lebanon was charged with firing rockets into Israel after being apprehended by security forces in January. Tension between Israel and
lebanon had spiked in mid-december, when a shooting took place between the lebanese military and the israel defense forces in the vicinity of the blue line border demarcation separating the two countries at naqoura, along the southern border.

national political context

a new government was formed on 15 february after ten months of political stalemate amid exacerbated sectarian tensions. the new government brings together the powerful shia movement hezbollah and its allies with the sunni-led future movement bloc, who back opposing sides in the syria war. the agreed compromise ensures neither side has veto power over the other.

security context

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. at the start of march, 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, there were no casualties.

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), the most active sunni militant group in iraq who 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 islami sts are said to mostly support the syrian opposition.

al qaeda’s general command officially broke all links with ISIL on 21 January, 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 the situation of ISIL in iraq and syria and its reported newly-founded branch in lebanon.

on 3 march, a suicide bomber detonated a bomb inside a passenger van headed towards the southern suburbs of beirut. he was the only fatality though two others were seriously injured.

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 syria. 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.

repeated inter-sectarian strife was 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.

humanitarian context and needs

both host and refugee populations are impacted by increasing pressure on health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices. tensions are rising between host communities and refugees over strained resources, particularly with regard to overcrowded health facilities and employment. many lebanese families see their livelihoods eroding as wages decrease and rent prices increase, with hard-pressed syrian refugees working for less money and sharing single-family homes with multiple families to save on rent. real economic growth was estimated 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 north of the bekaa valley remains volatile with rocket and shelling hitting a number of towns, impeding humanitarian access, and restricting activities, and the availability of services. access to unregistered syrians detained in lebanon remains challenging.

displacement

as of 3 march, unhcr reported that the number of registered syrian refugees in lebanon stands at 950,479 including over 48,000 awaiting registration. 14,000 syrian refugees fled to the lebanese border town arsal following the eruption of violence in the neighboring qalamoun region of syria on 9 february. despite sporadic fighting still reported in and around yabroud, the pace of the refugee influx significantly decreased toward the end of february, with only 640 new arrivals identified in arsal from 20-25 february. recent arrivals bring the total refugee population in arsal to over 51,000, exceeding the number of resident lebanese. the priority need is shelter. approximately 11% of the newly arrived refugees are setting up tents in areas beyond the lebanese army checkpoints where authorities cannot ensure the safety and security of either refugees or humanitarian workers. there is an urgent need for improvement of waste management to avoid potential hazardous consequences to the health of the refugees and the host community.

an estimated 160,000 lebanese have 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.

with no formal camps, refugees are spread across 1,700 locations of which over 400 are informal settlements. vulnerable syrian families are settling in communal areas including highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.; 69% of refugees are 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.

reports of informal settlements being dismantled by local authorities are on the rise. it is extremely challenging and urgent for 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 65% 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. Health, education, water and sanitation systems have all exceeded their capacities.

According to media sources, the Government is implementing strict entry controls on Syrians attempting to enter the country at all border crossings. Only Syrians with valid identification cards or passports can enter. The measures reportedly aim at preventing extremist and anti-Lebanese groups from entering the country. While most Syrian are granted access, 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 raise concerns of landmines and UXOs incidents on the Syrian side.

Food Security

According to a September 2013 World Bank study, the continuing refugee inflow will increase national vulnerability. Should the rate of refugee inflow continue at its current, more than 170,000 additional Lebanese could fall into poverty by 2014, due to competition with refugees for unskilled labour. Currently, one million Lebanese live in poverty. The study estimates that the unemployment rate in Lebanon could double, exceeding 20% and affecting 320,000 people. An estimated US$1.6 billion will be needed to restore quality and access to health, education, and social safety nets to pre-crisis levels. According to the May 2013 Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees, over 70% of Syrian refugee households need food assistance. The number of people requiring food assistance continues to increase, straining existing resources.

Health and Nutrition

The continuous influx of refugees has vastly increased the workload in the Primary Healthcare Centres, overstretching their capacity to provide healthcare. Physical access to healthcare centres is a challenge for some refugees who live in remote locations. Access is further limited by short working hours and the lack of trained health personnel. Refugees are charged the same medical fees as Lebanese nationals. Despite contributions by UNHCR and humanitarian health partners, many refugees still find it difficult to cover the costs of medical treatment. Some providers require upfront payment of costs not covered by UNHCR, and the current supply of medicines for acute and chronic diseases is insufficient to cover the rising demand. The prevention of disease control and outbreaks presents a challenge in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation.

According to UNICEF, the increasingly volatile situation in the Bekaa (especially in Arsal and Hermel), North Lebanon (Wadi Khaled and Tripoli), and Beirut due to shelling, bombings and increasing tensions between Syrian refugees and the host community has heightened the psychological distress experienced by refugee children as well as children in host communities.

As malnutrition treatment was uncommon in Lebanon prior to the crisis, some hospitals face difficulties with the malnutrition treatment protocol. According a Nutrition Assessment, nutrition status among children <5 has deteriorated in Lebanon, with significant differences existing regionally. The lowest rates were found in Beirut and Mount Lebanon with 4.3%, while the Bekaa valley and North Lebanon have the poorest nutritional status with 8.9% and 6.7% respectively. Cases of severe acute malnutrition were also found in these areas.

Polio

Lebanon launched a comprehensive public health initiative on 8 November to vaccinate all children <5 against polio, following a confirmed outbreak in Deir ez-Zor Governorate in neighbouring Syria. Due to poor immunisation rates in some parts of Syria, the recent outbreak of polio represents a risk for Lebanon, especially considering the continuous influx of displaced. Lebanon has been polio-free for 12 years. The November campaign reached nearly 590,000 children <5, for a 98% coverage rate. A third vaccination campaign will start on 10 March.

WASH

According to local authorities and humanitarian partners in December 2013, 27% of Syrian refugees and Lebanese affected by the refugee influx, 909,000 and 1,500,000 people respectively, are in need of water support, and 29% in need of sanitation assistance. Many refugee settlement locations lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are located in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease. However, there have been low levels of rainfall in Lebanon in recent months. In Beirut, the rainfall up to 20th January of 2013 was 455mm while the average for the past 30 years was around 440mm. But 2014 average so far is a mere 238mm.

Updated: 06/03/2014

PHILIPPINES CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOO

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 28/02/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- The Philippines authorities are finalising 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 remains plagued by attacks from various armed groups who wish to derail the talks.

- The Philippines remains one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world, experiencing several large-scale natural hazards a year.

- In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan affected over 14.1 million people, including 4.1 million people who are still displaced (OCHA). In January 2014, a tropical
depression and a storm affected some areas previously hit by Haiyan, hampering humanitarian access and reconstruction efforts.


Politics and Security

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 Aquino officially swore to crush militants opposed to the recently achieved peace deals in Mindanao. After the Government wrapped up peace talks with the MILF, Manila swiftly deployed its military against a hardline splinter faction, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

On 25 January, in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, 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, opens the way to an historic agreement to end four decades of rebellion that have killed 150,000 people. In December, the two parties 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 the MILF to administer an expanded autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao by 2016, in return, amongst other things, for decommissioning its weapons. Over the years, several armed groups, mostly splinter groups from the MNLF and MILF, have tried to derail the peace talks by conducting attacks in Mindanao. Most believe that the 12,000-strong MILF has compromised too much in the peace process.

Government Military Operations in Mindanao

Despite the conclusion of peace talks between the authorities and the insurgent MILF, the main Muslim insurgent group active in Mindanao, on 27 January, Government forces are still battling splinter insurgent groups on the main Mindanao Island, as well as across several small nearby islands.

On 10 February, it was reported that Government forces killed six rebels from the Islamic Abu Sayyaf insurgent group in the jungle area near Talipao town on Jolo Island, adjacent to Mindanao Island. According to local reports, Abu Sayyaf is still holding a dozen hostages, including two Europeans, in Sulu province, an island province located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On 21 February, security sources confirmed that two Filipino-Algerian filmmakers, kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf some eight months ago, had been released by the militant group.

According to authorities, as military operations are ongoing, there are still an estimated 300 Abu Sayyaf fighters who have survived years of government offensives.

From 28-29 January, a military offensive was launched against the BIFF, a hard line MILF splinter faction, which numbers a few hundred fighters. The clashes occurred in and around remote southern farming villages in Datu Piang and Shariff Saydonia municipalities in Maguindanao Province, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. At least 53 people were killed and, according to OCHA, over 11,000 displaced in five days of fighting. Authorities reported that three child soldiers were among those killed, several civilians were also injured in the fighting. Observers say the clashes should end quickly due to an arrangement with the MILF. In late January, the MILF cooperated with authorities in operations against the BIFF by holding back their own forces and not letting militants seek refuge in MILF territory.

In September and October, fighters belonging to another splinter faction of the original MILF 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 left an estimated 202 dead, including over 160 militants, with an additional 324 injured in the violence, and 140,000 displaced, as reported by UNHCR. Most people remain displaced with heavy fighting having left entire neighbourhoods razed to the ground. As reported by Human Rights Watch, Philippines security forces and Muslim rebels have committed serious human rights 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. On 13 January, an improvised explosive device exploded and injured 24 people, some critically, in Arakan, in the southern island of Mindanao.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Insecurity in parts of Mindanao Island and nearby areas is limiting humanitarian access. The concurrent disasters experienced by the Philippines over the past weeks have also hampered aid delivery for populations affected by Typhoon Haiyan and the Bohol earthquake.

Displacement

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that over 11,000 people had been displaced following a major offensive against MILF rebels in Mindanao.

OCHA reported that all IDPs in Maguindanao province, in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao have now returned home. Thousands had fled to escape fighting...
between the Government and Islamist rebels. In Pikit, North Cotabato, most people displaced by the fighting have also returned, although local authorities say that over 5,400 people remained displaced.

In late February, the Protection Cluster reported that, following the September security crisis in Zamboanga city, 50,000 IDPs were still registered as living with host families and over 26,000 IDPs were hosted in Government supported evacuation centres and transit locations. OCHA reported in mid-January that the most pressing needs of the affected populations were food, nutrition, WASH, health, and protection. According to the Protection cluster, there are ongoing tensions over food, water and electricity in communities that host IDPs.

Disasters

(For Typhoon Haiyan, please refer to a separate section below)

Tropical storm Kaijiki, locally known as Basyang, struck the Philippines archipelago on 31 January. As of 14 February, the storm which was of relatively low intensity had affected at least 47,000 people, including over 5,600 displaced, across nine provinces of the Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and CARAGA. Typhoon Haiyan had previously affected these areas in November. Needs related to WASH and shelter assistance were reported among the affected population.

In mid-January, tropical depression Lingling, locally known as Agaton, caused floods and landslides across the south of the archipelago, affecting 16 provinces in Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN, Caraga regions and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. As of 31 January, at least 70 people had been killed, with an additional nine still missing, and 86 injured. As of 31 January, authorities reported that 1.14 million people were affected by Lingling, including over 49,000 IDPs. Over 3,400 houses were damaged by the disaster. As reported by UNICEF in early February, the last two-weeks of torrential rains brought on by Tropical Depression Agaton over Eastern Samar has also caused damage to shelters in areas affected by Haiyan.

On 15 October, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the southern Philippines, southeast of Manila near the town of Carmen in Bohol province. Authorities reported 223 people dead, eight missing, 975 injured, and 1.25 million people affected across six provinces of Central and Western Visayas regions. The earthquake damaged the homes of over 367,000 people, destroying or damaging over 76,000 houses, 41 bridges, and 18 roads, as well as causing power cuts across affected areas. As of late February, OCHA reported that significant needs in shelter, early recovery and health services remained in the affected areas.

As of late February, an estimated 364,000 people remained displaced following the disaster, with only 1,900 people staying in official evacuation centres that are scheduled to close by the end of March, the rest staying in makeshift tents outside evacuation centres or with host communities. In late January, OCHA reported that 300,000 of the worst affected people are in need of food assistance.

As reported by OCHA, although Typhoon Haiyan did not cause significant damage in Bohol, it directly impacted the response capacity of partners. Many government and international humanitarian organizations shifted resources from Bohol to the Haiyan affected areas.

Health and Nutrition

In November, OCHA reported that congestion in 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). As of late February, 50,000 people displaced by the crisis in Zamboanga are still hosted in evacuation centres and so at risk.

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) were 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 were recorded as of 8 June, more than the 159 cases recorded in 2012.

In the first half of 2013, dengue surged in central Philippines, particularly in the province of Iloilo, south of Manila, where the number of people affected was 71% higher than the number recorded for the same period in 2012.

Malnutrition

An increasing number of children in evacuation centres following the crisis in Zamboanga are malnourished in southern Philippines, notes the UN. According to the December assessment report, SAM was detected in 9.4% of children, an increase of one percentage point from two weeks ago. Cases of MAM had risen to 11.5% from 11.1% among children <5 across several surveyed camps. Although the SAM rate is still under the 10% threshold, humanitarian actors report it as a major concern.

In late February, OCHA reported that a nutrition assessment integrated with immunisations nearly two months after the Bohol earthquake showed a deteriorating situation regarding levels of malnutrition in 17 municipalities. With aggravating factors such as damaged and destroyed water, sanitation and hygiene systems and health facilities, acute malnutrition in Bohol has reached emergency threshold level with between 8% and 15% GAM.

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.

Figures from 14 February estimated that 6,201 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. OCHA estimated that 14.1 million people, including five million children, have been affected by Typhoon Haiyan. As of 24 February, 4.1 million people remained displaced, with the majority sheltering outside evacuation centres.

According to December assessments, the areas affected by the disaster were: Central Visayas region with 5.9 million people reported affected, 30% considered poor; Eastern Visayas region, with 3.87 million people reported affected, 46.6% considered poor; Eastern Visayas region with 3.8 million people reported affected, 28% considered poor; MIMAROPA region with 466,000 people reported affected, 32% considered poor; and Caraga with 70,000 people reported affected, 25% considered poor.

On 24 February, OCHA reported that, in addition to food, water and emergency shelter, the highest priority needs of the affected population included tools and materials to rebuild housing and livelihoods support. Seeds for farmers, displacement management, disease outbreak prevention and nutrition intervention were also reportedly immediate priorities. In 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. As of early January, humanitarian partners indicated that 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.

As of 12 January, authorities reported that over 1.14 million houses had been damaged by the typhoon, including the 550,000 houses that were completely destroyed. Earlier assessments 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 the first Governmental estimates, the cost of rebuilding houses, schools, roads and bridges in typhoon-affected central Philippines could reach $5.8 billion, potentially forcing Manila to seek cheap loans from international development agencies.

Access

As reported by OCHA in early December, humanitarian access to people affected by Typhoon Haiyan has improved, despite logistical constraints and ongoing debris clearance in most affected areas. Extensive damage to local infrastructure, notably roads, is hampering the delivery of aid.

Displacement

As of late February, OCHA and UNICEF confirmed that almost 4.1 million people, including 1.7 million children, were still displaced. Most IDPs (97%) are in Eastern and Western Visayas region where shelter materials are still reportedly needed. Over 98% of IDPs are hosted outside evacuation centres.

Food Security

As reported by FAO in late January, food security in the Philippines is considered satisfactory except in areas that were affected by several storms in 2013, especially in areas affected by Haiyan. The disasters caused significant damage to housing and infrastructure, including irrigation and storage facilities. Losses to stored crops at household level and in warehouses are likely to be high. 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 localised floods also resulted in the loss of stored paddy production and seeds.

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 in need of food assistance. As reported by OCHA on 3 December, an estimated three million people needed life-saving food assistance following Typhoon Haiyan. On 16 December, OCHA reported that 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.

Livelihood

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 that reported that 5.6 million people across 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.

Around 65% of fishing communities in affected areas lost their productive assets, and 28,000, mainly small-scale, fishing vessels were destroyed. As reported by OCHA on 7 January, the Department of Agriculture indicated that an estimated 400,000 people (distributed approximately among ¾ farming and ¼ fishing households) had been directly affected by the typhoon.

On 5 February, Oxfam reported that, despite the huge humanitarian efforts after Haiyan, some sectors of the population had been left out of the recovery effort. Oxfam said that the poorest coconut farmers, traders and fisher people had been severely affected by the Typhoon. These groups, including the over one million families living in typhoon-hit areas reliant on the coconut industry, are still reportedly in need of livelihood support.

Health and Nutrition

A need for treatment of chronic conditions in areas affected by Haiyan was reported. OCHA, WHO and UNICEF indicated that the risk of outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases and measles also remained of concern given the lack of safe water and sanitation, displacement and overcrowding, and sub-optimal vaccination coverage. As of February, communities are reported to need nutritional inputs and clean water to prevent a further spread of acute respiratory infections in the coming months. As of late February, WHO reported that acute respiratory infection was the most common cause (30%) for consultations in areas affected by Haiyan.

On 21 February, the Department of Health in Eastern Visayas reported that it was monitoring Dengue, measles and Chikungunya, three diseases that had reportedly increased in typhoon-affected areas in the region, particularly in the city of Tacloban.
**Dengue and Chikungunya**

Between 1 January and 18 February, 470 suspected cases of Dengue fever with two deaths were reported in Eastern Visayas by local authorities.

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. There are also reports of Chikungunya fever, another viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. In mid-February, the Health Cluster said the number of Dengue cases in the area was declining.

**Measles**

Between 1 January and 18 February, 180 cases of measles with two deaths were reported in Eastern Visayas by local authorities.

**Typhoid Fever**

The Health Cluster reported that they are investigating a reported outbreak of typhoid fever with ten probable cases, including one death, in Aguiting in Eastern Visayas, an area affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

**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. It was also 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 ongoing and concerns remain regarding sanitation. According to the Health Cluster, as of 30 November, sanitation, access to potable water and waste management were 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. OCHA reported that a number of water systems have tested positive for faecal coliform, raising fears of potential waterborne disease outbreaks.

**Shelter**

Before the start of rainy season in June, OCHA stressed in January 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. As of early February, a significant need of shelter was still reported from affected areas.

Reviewed: 06/03/2014

**DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new developments this week. Last update was: 28/02/2014.

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**

- Massive human rights infringements, including against prisoners in prison camps who face starvation and torture, continue to be reported from North Korea. Humanitarian access to the country remains extremely limited (UN).

- Information on the food security situation in DPRK remains limited. As of August, an estimated 16 million people (almost 65% of the country’s population) are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance (OCHA).

- 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 (OCHA).

- North Korea is also a very disaster prone country, regularly experiencing seasonal flooding that, for instance, affected over 800,000 people in summer 2013 (OCHA).

**Politics and Security**

**Human Rights’ Situation**

On 18 February, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged world powers to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC) after a UN report documenting crimes against humanity. The UN team conducting the report also recommended targeted UN sanctions against DPRK civil officials and military commanders suspected of the worst crimes. The report provides also evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations in the country.

In September, UN human rights investigators released a first 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.

**North Korea – South Korea Dialogue**

On 12 February, Seoul and Pyongyang held their first high-level talks in seven years on their fortified border at the Panmunjom truce village, exploring ways to mend ties while the South and the US prepared up for military exercises that have infuriated the North. According to reports, although no pre-arranged agenda was set, the two sides discussed a range of issues including reunions of families separated during their 1950-53 Korean War.

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. Earlier, in September, North and South Korea reopened the joint industrial park in Kaesong after a series of talks concerning this rare bilateral economic cooperation. Kaesong remains a rare source of hard currency for North Korea. 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.

The reopening of Kaesong appears to be a step toward improving Pyongyang's relations with Seoul. After the soaring of the relations between Pyongyang and the West in early spring over DPRK’s nuclear program, relations with South Korea improved after an unexpected North Korean reversal on 6 June. On 9 June, North and South Korean officials held their first talks in years in a positive end to months of military tension.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

Humanitarian access to the country is extremely 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.

**Disasters**

As reported 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 14,800 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.

**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.

In late February, North Korean authorities reported an outbreak of foot-and-mouth, a highly contagious livestock disease. The disease was first reported from a pig farm in a suburb of Pyongyang and has now been spreading to other areas in the capital and to an adjacent county, leading to the culling of thousands of pigs. The outbreak may further heighten food insecurity in the impoverished North Korea.

In 2011, the entire Korean peninsula was hit by an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that led to the culling of more than three million livestock in the South alone.

**Health and Nutrition**

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.
NORTH AMERICA

HAITI  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, HURRICANE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
No new developments this week. Last update: 20/02/2014.

KEY CONCERNS
- Haiti remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters and extreme weather events. The resilience of the population and its capacity to cope with new crises is generally very weak.
- Four years after the 2010 devastating earthquake, an estimated 146,000 IDPs are still living in 271 camps scattered throughout the metropolitan Port-au-Prince and surrounding regions. (IOM, January 2014).
- Half of the world’s suspected cholera cases are in Haiti. 58,608 suspected cases of cholera and 601 deaths were reported in 2013 and a further 45,000 are predicted for the year 2014. In the first six weeks of 2014, the WHO recorded 2,536 cholera cases including 18 deaths. (OCHA, January 2014 and WHO, February 2014)
- Three million Haitians are food insecure. 600,000 Haitians face severe food insecurity and an additional 2.4 million live in moderate food insecurity at the end of 2013 (Haitian National Coordination for Food Security, October 2013). Nearly a quarter of Haitian children <5 experience chronic malnutrition (UNICEF 2013).

Politics and Security
In November 2013, 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.

Late 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
As a result of previous disasters and emergencies, and in a context of extreme fragility, an estimated three million Haitians continue to be affected by the results of both chronic and acute needs. They face displacement, food insecurity and malnutrition. Of these, an estimated 817,000 people in 35 priority communes, out of 140 in the country, remain in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Natural Disasters
Haiti ranks as one of the countries with the highest exposure and vulnerability to multiple hazards including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and droughts. Although no major hurricane has hit the country in over a year, an estimated 5,550 people were affected by floods and heavy rains in 2013. Moreover, the resilience of Haiti’s population and its capacity to cope with new crises is extremely low.

In January, 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.

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.

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.

Displacement
IDPs
On the four year anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, the IOM estimated that 146,000 IDPs were still living in 271 camps, representing a 10% of the initial caseload and indicating a decrease of approximately 90 per cent in IDP population. This also indicated an 83 per cent decrease in the number of IDP sites compared to 2010 when internal displacement in...
Haiti was at its height in July 2010 with a peak of 1.5 million. The majority of IDPs live in the three communes of Delmas, Port au Prince and Carrefour. Delmas still hosts almost 57,000 IDP individuals or 39 per cent of the total, and Carrefour and Port-au-Prince approximately 16,000 and 27,000, respectively. The three communes together account for 68.3 per cent of the remaining IDP individuals in Haiti as of December 2013. 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 adequate 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 were still considered to be at particularly high risk of flooding.

According to Amnesty International, forced evictions are also one reason why camp numbers have fallen. In January 2014, IOM said that about a third of the total number of IDPs (58,000 people) is at risk of being forcibly evicted in some 100 camps. Amnesty International reported in February that approximately a hundred families have been forcibly evicted from an informal settlement in Canaan, Port-au-Prince, in continuance of an illegal eviction process which started in December 2013.

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.

Food Security

Haiti continues to face huge structural challenges, which leave the country very exposed to recurrent food security crises. 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.

According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA) as of October 2013, three million Haitians were reported to be food insecure. Of these, 2.4 million live in moderate food insecurity and 600,000 face severe food insecurity (compared to 1.5 million identified earlier in 2013). This figure indicates a significant improvement in the food security situation in the country, although 13 communes remain in a food crisis situation and 106 communes in food stress.

The prevalence of both severe and moderate food insecurity has reached levels similar to mid-2012, just before shocks stroke Haiti. These shocks include a long period of drought affecting large parts of the country, the passage of tropical storm Isaac in August and of hurricane Sandy in October, which resulted in 1.5 million people living in severe food insecurity and to 5.2 million people facing moderate food insecurity. 44 communes across the country were considered at high risk of food insecurity. Haiti was spared from major shocks affecting food security in 2013, which has facilitated a significant recovery.

According to FEWSNET as of mid-February, 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 and relatively well distributed rains. However, stocks made from this production remain below the five-year average, especially in deficit areas, and will likely be exhausted by end February as the 2014 lean season will be extended 1-2 months due to an expected late start of the spring season. Spring harvests (June-August) are expected to lessen food insecurity throughout the country.

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. Cholera in Haiti remains an epidemic and a humanitarian crisis.

In the first six weeks of 2014, the WHO recorded 2,536 cholera cases including 18 deaths (the cumulative case-fatality-rate for 2014 is so far 0.7%). The weekly average of cases has now reached 422 with 3 deaths; this is considerably lower than those registered in 2013.

In 2013, 58,608 suspected cholera cases and 601 deaths were reported, bringing the total number of people affected since the outbreak of the epidemic in October 2010 to 699,197 suspected cholera cases as of 18 February 2014, with 8,549 reported deaths. The cumulative case-fatality rate remains 1.2 %, with variations ranging from 4.5 %, in the department of Sud Est to 0.6 %, in Port-au-Prince. A further 45,000 are expected for the year 2014, according to OCHA.
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. 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. According to UNICEF in November 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.

Reviewed: 05/03/2014

SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA DROUGHT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

5 March: In Santa Cruz, health authorities reported 354 confirmed cases of dengue including one death. The Ministry of Health sent 99 medical brigades to the affected zones to attend to the victims and prevent outbreaks of illnesses in the country.

27 February: Heavy rains continue to affect Bolivia, causing floods and landslides. According to ECHO as of 27 February, the current focus of the emergency response is in the town of Santa Ana del Yacuma, in Beni Department, where water levels exceeded the safety ring and threatened to flood the city. Local authorities strengthened the defensive wall as a preventive measure.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 299,400 people have been affected by heavy rainfall and flooding across most of Bolivia. Evacuation and delivery of food and non-food items supplies is underway by the government and UN agencies. On 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosí, and Pando were officially declared a State of Emergency. Dengue and malaria outbreaks are of growing concern as the rains continue (Government and OCHA).

- Bolivia is prone to natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, and droughts. The impact of the 2013 drought and the onset of severe frost are still being felt in many areas having affected over 340,000 people and damaged around 87,000 hectares of crops (Government).

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

A series of natural disasters have affected Bolivia since the beginning of the rainy season in October and have had a severe impact on livelihoods and food security.

Heavy Rainfall and Floods

Heavy rains continue to affect Bolivia, causing floods and landslides. According to ECHO as of 27 February, the current focus of the emergency response is in the town of Santa Ana del Yacuma, in Beni Department, where water levels exceeded the safety ring and threatened to flood the city. Local authorities strengthened the defensive wall as a preventive measure.

On 18 February, Bolivian authorities said that heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding have affected an estimated 299,400 people (59,882 households) in 146 municipalities across all nine departments of the country and led to the death of 57 people since the beginning of the rainy season last October. At least 11 others are still missing. Officials reported that over 43,000 hectares of arable lands have been damaged by the heavy rains. Authorities estimate that agriculture is the primary income generating activity of 40% of affected families.

As of 18 February, areas most affected by flooding were Cochabamba (101,300), Chuquisaca (53,230), La Paz (44,450), Beni (38,790), Potosí (25,210), Santa Cruz (24,200), and to a lesser extent Pando and Tarija. In terms of flood-related deaths, the worst affected province is Cochambamba (18 deaths) followed by Chuquisaca (12) and Beni (11).

Evacuation and delivery of food supplies by the government agencies are underway. On 15-16 February, an aircraft chartered by the government left Panama to Beni with more than 1,500 tents. The shipment was sent by the UN and IFRC.

On 28 January, the government declared a State of Emergency, but said that internal
resources were sufficient to deal with the emergency. However, the situation has slowly worsened, and on 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosi and Pando were placed on red alert.

Rainfall is expected to continue over the coming weeks, with the rainy season continuing until March/April. According to reports from previous years, the most affected regions during the rainy season are typically north of La Paz and in the south Andean plateau of Lake Titicaca.

In March 2013, several southern departments were severely affected by torrential rain and floods, especially in Chuquisaca, Potosi, Tarija, and Cochabamba. 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 2013.

Drought

Following the drought in the first quarter of 2013, the government declared a national emergency in June. The affected population is mainly indigenous subsistence farmers. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people were affected by drought, according to government sources. On 22 November, WFP reported that it would 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 six months in response to the severe drought.

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, most of the damage occurred in three Guaraní communities (Cotoca, Las Cutas, and Yateirenda) in the Cabezas municipality in Cordillera province in 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

Heavy rains during January and first half of February 2014 caused rivers to overflow resulting in flooding in the low lying areas of Beni department and its southern borders with the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz where landslides occurred. According to FAO on 27 February, a detailed assessment of the agriculture losses is still not available, but the livestock is expected to be the most affected sector. With respect to cultivated land, estimates indicate that close to 43,000 hectares of different crops, including rice, maize, and cassava have been negatively impacted by the heavy rains and floods. At the time of the severe flooding, the 2014 main de verano season maize crop was in an advanced state and harvesting of the rice crop had just begun. Despite the crop losses in the department of Beni, overall prospects for this year’s de verano season remain favourable, since the main cereal producing departments, namely Santa Cruz, La Paz and Cochabamba, were less severely affected and the abundant rains may have benefited the developing crops in parts. The rainy season typically goes until March/April.

In mid-December, FAO reported that the aggregate maize production (main and secondary seasons) for 2013 was estimated to be 875,000 tonnes, 13% below 2012’s figure. This decline was attributed to lower harvest yields due to prolonged dry weather in the first quarter of 2013 and frosts in July and August. The impact was particularly felt in the departments of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz, Tarija, and Chuquisaca. The cold wave during July and August 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.

Wholesale potato prices in La Paz and Cochabamba decreased by 23% and 17% respectively in December 2013, but were still above their 2012 levels. In the main producing areas of Chiquisaca 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.

Drought in the first quarter of 2013 continues to negatively impact crop production. 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 600 communities reported damage during the first half of 2013. The most serious damage was caused by flooding (51%) and then by drought (33%). On 25 October, the Bolivian Civil Defence reported that it had begun the distribution of 300 tonnes 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 in 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 harvest in April/May 2014.

**Health**

**Dengue**

At the beginning of 2014, national authorities issued an alert for dengue and malaria in
flood-affected regions. In Santa Cruz alone, health authorities reported 354 confirmed cases of dengue, including one death on 5 March.

The Ministry of Health sent 99 medical brigades to the affected zones to attend to the victims and prevent outbreaks of illnesses.

Updated: 06/03/2014
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 on-going 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

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