Snapshot 8–15 April

**Syria:** Violence is intensifying in Damascus, with increased attacks from both the Government and the opposition. In Aleppo, fighting between Syrian troops and opposition fighters is causing further casualties. In the east, infighting between rival opposition factions has led to a reinforcement of Iraqi troops’ positions on the Iraqi side of the border. To date, over nine million people are in need of assistance, and more than 2.6 million have fled the country. In early April, humanitarian assistance was allowed in besieged areas in Aleppo for the first time since June.

**Central African Republic:** The UN Security Council voted a resolution to deploy a UN peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) as of September. Violence continued, with an attack against a Chad-bound convoy of Muslim civilians causing renewed mass displacement in Boguila, Ouham. Between 5 and 8 April, 35 people were killed in clashes in Dekoa, Kemo province, and in Bangui.

**Nigeria:** Violence is escalating across the country, with almost daily attacks by suspected Boko Haram insurgents. In Abuja, a bomb attack killed over 70 people at a crowded bus station. This was the first attack in two years and the deadliest ever on Nigeria’s capital. A string of attacks killed up to 200 people in Borno state, near the border with Cameroon. To date, six million people are affected by the violence and over 57,000 people have
sought refuge in neighbouring countries since May 2013.

Last update: 15/04/2014   Next Update: 23/04/2014
AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

12 April: According to international media, all the remaining Muslim residents of the town of Bossangoa have fled. On 11 April, a convoy of 540 Muslims left Bossangoa for Chad, escorted by Chadian peacekeepers, who were also leaving CAR. The convoy was attacked in the city of Boguila, causing the 7,000 Muslim residents of Boguila to flee to the bush.

10 April: The UN Security Council voted a resolution allowing the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), for one year. The transfer of authority from the AU-led MISCA to MINUSCA is scheduled for 15 September. The resolution allows an initial deployment of up to 10,000 military and 1,800 police. It also authorised the continued deployment of French peacekeeping operation Sangaris in support of MINUSCA.

9 April: According to international media, 2 French peacekeepers were injured in an attack.

8 April: According to international media, 30 people were killed in clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Seleka militias in Dekoa, Kemo province, 300km north of Bangui. Media reports on 10 April indicated that five people have been killed in Bangui since 5 April.

KEY CONCERNS

- A wave of sectarian violence has surged across the country and the humanitarian situation has deteriorated since the political crisis erupted in March 2013. The capital and the northwest have been most affected. Renewed violence in Bangui since 21 March has already caused an estimated 69 deaths.

- 2.5 million people require immediate humanitarian assistance, and 1.6 million people are food insecure (OCHA, March 2014). The entire CAR population of 4.6 million people, half of whom are children, have been affected by the conflict (UNICEF, March 2014).

- An estimated 628,000 people are internally displaced, 200,000 of whom are located in the capital Bangui (OCHA, April 2014). 319,000 mostly long-term CAR refugees are registered in neighbouring countries (OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

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 triggered the deployment of international peacekeeping troops. Authorities are still unable to restore order or even deploy official representatives outside of Bangui while, across the country, new warlords, some foreign, have established dominance over territories out of the authorities’ control.

A northeastern coalition of armed militia known as Seleka, which is majority Muslim, started fighting in December 2012, reaching Bangui and seizing power on 24 March 2013. Seleka leader Michael Djotodia was installed as interim President. In September, as international pressure mounted, Djotodia disbanded Seleka, but ex-Seleka fighters began attacking the mostly non-Muslim civilian population, and ‘self-defence’ militias known as anti-balaka mobilised. In early 2014, as fighting intensified, Djotodia was forced to resign, and Catherine Samba-Panza was elected in his place.

French and EU Military Intervention

On 9 April, international media reported that French police personnel had been deployed to CAR and started patrolling in Bangui as part of the EU Force in CAR (Eufor-RCA). The European Union had announced the upcoming deployment of Eufor a week earlier. Officials said that three-quarters of the troops will be deployed by the end of May. The maximum troop strength will be of 1,000 soldiers; they will be based in Bangui. Eufor-RCA represents the biggest EU military operation in six years. It was decided on 20 January and authorised by the Security Council eight days later.

The UN Security Council authorised the continued deployment of Sangaris in a resolution of 10 April. France had announced the extension of its deployment beyond April 2014, when it was initially due to end, on 24 February. On 18 and 21 February, CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza had asked France to extend its military presence until the CAR presidential election, which should take place in February 2015 at the latest. On 14 February, France said that it would add 400 soldiers to its 1,600-strong force.

French troops were authorised by the Security Council on 5 December and deployed immediately. France had circulated a Security Council resolution in November, which aimed at strengthening the African stabilisation force in CAR as a first step towards turning it into a formal UN peacekeeping mission. Prior to the crisis, 450 French troops were stationed in Bangui, but they had a restricted mandate of securing the international airport and protecting French interests and citizens.

On 9 March, a demonstration against the French peacekeeping operation, Sangaris, took
place in Ndele, in the northern prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran. The Muslim population remaining in CAR became increasingly discontented with Sangaris over the course of the month.

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

French troops and AU peacekeepers stationed in CAR receive logistical support from the US and UK. 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.

**Non-military International Response**

The International Contact Group on the Central African Republic (IGC-CAR), a forum that comprises AU, Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and regional government officials held its fourth meeting in Brazzaville, Congo, on 21 March to discuss the situation in CAR and the political transition. The last meeting of the contact group was held on 8 November.

On 11 March, an inquiry commission, mandated by a Security Council resolution to investigate abuse of human rights and international humanitarian law, arrived in CAR. It is due to report to the Security Council within six months. On 18 March, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights arrived in CAR for a three-day visit. The International Criminal Court announced the opening of a preliminary inquiry into potential war crimes and crimes against humanity in CAR on 7 February 2014.

On 28 January, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution inviting the interim CAR Government to speed up transition and impose sanctions against those responsible for violent incidents. 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 the existing sanctions regime: an arms embargo requiring all countries to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale, or transfer of arms and related material to CAR.

On 10 October 2013, the UN Security Council had reinforced the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA) focusing on five areas of support: implementation of the transition process, conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, stabilisation of the security situation, promotion and protection of human rights, and coordination of international actors.

**National Political Context**

On 21 March, according to the international media, anti-balaka leaders, who had met with a government minister, said they were willing to surrender their weapons and engage in a reconciliation process with Muslims. On 5 March, the CAR Prime Minister met with leaders of the AU mission. Talks were held in Brazzaville, Congo, on 21 March to discuss the situation in CAR and the political transition. The last meeting of the contact group was held on 8 November.

A senior UNHCR official reiterated on 28 February 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 had intensified throughout February. President Samba-Panza had denied such cleansing but, in a noteworthy hardening of tone, warned that criminal anti-balaka would be “hunted”.

In late February, the potential involvement of militant Islamic groups such as Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in the CAR crisis was raised after Nigeria-based Boko Haram had threatened to avenge the killings of Muslims in CAR. However, according
to observers, the spread of Islamic groups to CAR is considered unlikely due to logistical and operational difficulties.

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. The UN Secretary General has indicated that there was a “distinct risk” the CAR could end up divided as a result of sectarian violence. Various sources also 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.

Information remains difficult to obtain, 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.

**Political Transition Process**

On 14 March, the press reported that the CAR National Transitional Council had started working on a new constitution, which is expected to be ready by May.

On 25 January, interim President Samba-Panza appointed André Nzapayeke, former Secretary General of the African Development Bank and Vice President of the Development Bank of Central African States, as her new Prime Minister. Nzapayeke 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 on 20 January, about a week after Djotodia resigned. 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.

Djotodia, who was sworn in in August, was supposed to head an interim administration for 18 months, with the task of restoring order and organising elections. He was forced to resign as fighting intensified under his leadership.

Seleka took up arms in December 2012, claiming that the Government had failed to honour 2001 and 2007 peace deals declaring amnesty for fighters who laid down their arms. Throughout March 2013, Seleka took control of towns and advanced until it seized Bangui on 24 March and toppled President Bozizé, who fled to Cameroon.

**Dissolution of Seleka and Disarmament of Operations**

In mid-September, President Djotodia officially announced the dissolution of Seleka. 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 during Seleka’s advance towards Bangui and seizure of the capital. According to local sources, only some Seleka fighters will be officially integrated in the regular CAR forces (FACA); most of the group is to be disarmed. At present, the disarmament operations are handled by French and MISCA troops after a period of voluntary disarmament ended without much result in mid-September. Since March, disarmament conducted by government troops has triggered widespread violence and looting, and has been heavily criticised for resulting in indiscriminate attacks against civilians, according to international observers.

**Conflict Patterns and Military Operations**

A UN death toll in early February 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. As of late March, observers had noted an increase in both Seleka and anti-balaka activism, and the increased targeting of international peacekeepers by armed groups.

On 3 April, Chad announced the withdrawal of its troops from the international peacekeeping operation. Tensions have been increasing around the Chadian presence in CAR. A statement by the MISCA command On 26 March following the killing of a Chadian MISCA soldier suggested rising antagonism between MISCA and the anti-balaka. On 29 March, around 30 civilians were killed after Chadian soldiers escorting a convoy of Muslims in Bangui fired on a civilian crowd after reportedly being attacked by a Christian militia, the OHCHR reported. UN officials said that the Chadians soldiers were not part of the MISCA. On 24 March, according to the African Union, a clash between MISCA peacekeepers and armed men presumed to be associated with anti-balaka in Boali, north of Bangui, resulted in the death of one MISCA soldier and 12 attackers.

As of 5 March, an estimated 8,000 French and AU peacekeeping troops were deployed in CAR. In mid-February, half the French troops were deployed in Bangui, while the other half were in the regions. According to latest reports, international troops are currently deployed in the northwestern provinces of Paoua, Bozoum, Baoor, Bour, Bossangoa, Bouca, and Kaga Bandoro as well as in Bangui, Yakoke, Boali, Bambari, Ndele and Bangassou.

As of mid-March, French troops were focusing activity on the road linking Bangui to Cameroon, in an effort to improve the economic and trade situation. According to observers, a limited stream of commercial transport had resumed along the route in mid-March.

In early March, fighting was still occurring in the PK5, PK12 and Combattants neighbourhoods of Bangui. Twenty Muslim men were reportedly killed near Sibut, a town located some 150km to the northeast of Bangui, whilst trying to escape to Chad.

In early March, Seleka fighters were said to be attempting to take back northern areas of CAR, including Ndele in Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture. Reports indicate that Muslim ex-Seleka fighters are regrouping and establishing strongholds in the northeast after having largely deserted Bangui under pressure from the international peacekeeping force, and local sources reported that foreign fighters belonging to Darfur militia, including Janjaweed, Misseriya and Rizeigat, were arriving in Vakaga to support the Seleka. However, unspecified diplomatic sources report that the ex-Seleka are more fragmented than ever.

On 2 February, following negotiations with ex-Seleka fighters, Operation Sangaris and
MISCA troops peacefully retook control of the occupied northern town of Sibut, a gateway to the northeast of the country.

In late February, disarmament operations by international peacekeeping forces had focused on the anti-balaka, and were ongoing in Bangui, especially in the PK13 and Boy Rabe districts, 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. Attacks were reported in the western town of Cantonnier near the Cameroon border on 16 February, where eight people including two anti-balaka were killed in a clash with MISCA soldiers. On 8 February, anti-balaka seized the western town of Berberati, which is CAR’s second city and had been a Seleka stronghold for months. INGO Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that 6,000 people were trapped in the western town of Bouar. Anti-balaka are reported to have gathered in cities along axes used to evacuate convoys of Muslims, namely Yaloke and Boali.

In early March, an INGO report on conflict trends indicated that the patterns of violence in CAR reflect a predominantly urban conflict. Attacks by Seleka, anti-balaka, and religious or communal groups (Christian, Mbarara, Mbororo and Fulani groups), constituted the bulk of violent incidents against civilians.

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**

On 11 April, a convoy of 540 Muslims left the northern town of Bossangoa for Chad, escorted by Chadian peacekeepers who were also leaving CAR, international media reported. The convoy was attacked in the city of Boguila, causing the 7,000 Muslim residents of Boguila to flee to the bush. All Muslims are now thought to have left the town of Bossangoa.

According to press reports on 12 April, 14,000 Muslims currently living in the city of Boda are surrounded by anti-balaka militia and unable to leave.

At 11 April, UNHCR reported a massive exodus of Central Africans to Cameroon. People anti-balaka attacks have reportedly compelled people to use alternative routes to the main Garoua Boulai and Kenzou entry points.

On 8 April, according to international media, 30 people were killed in clashes between anti-balaka and ex-Seleka militias in Dekoa, Kemo province, 300km north of Bangui. Media reports on 10 April also indicated that five people had been killed in Bangui since 5 April. On 3 April, according to OCHA, armed attacks in the area of Paoua, in Ouham-Pendé province, caused the renewed displacement of 2,500 people.

At 31 March, OCHA reported that minority groups threatened by militias primarily resided in Bossangoa, Boda, Boboua, Godzi, and Berberati towns, and the Carnot and PK12 districts of Bangui. 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% –85% of Bangui’s minority population had fled. Médecins Sans Frontières state that up to 100,000 Muslims have fled north. According to OCHA, localities where the entire Muslim population had fled or been evacuated by early March included Yaloke (previously home to 10,000 Muslims), Baioro (4,000 evacuees), and Mbaiki. Most Muslim inhabitants of Boali and Bossemplete had also left (500 and 190 people evacuated in early March). UNHCR reported in early March that 15,000 Muslims were still at risk of attack, especially in the PK12 district of Bangui, and in Boda, Bouar and Bossangoa. On 7 March, 1,800 people were reportedly trapped in PK12. On 26 February, eight people were killed in an attack against Muslims in the village of Bowaï, northwest of Bossangoa.

As of 21 March, renewed violence has torn Bangui: the death toll of recent attacks in the capital is over 69. On 29 March, according to international media, at least 24 civilians were killed in a clash between armed groups and MISCA soldiers who were escorting a convoy of Muslims through district PK12. On 27 March, 20 people were killed in a grenade attack against a Christian community in the Kango neighbourhood. According to the Red Cross, 18 people were killed in clashes in the capital on 22–23 March. Other reported hotspots include PK5 and the third and eight districts. On 22 March, four people were killed in clashes in PK5, which required MISCA and Sangaris intervention. On 18 March, a Central African army staff was killed in the third district. Also on 18 March, the Government called for all fighters to surrender illegally possessed arms. The security context had improved slightly in mid-March, and the curfew of 1800–0600 declared on Bangui on 5 December was revised to 2300–0500 on 13 March.

In mid-March, according to OCHA, renewed violence affected northern parts of CAR, especially Bamingui-Bangoran.

In early March, anti-balaka armed groups, retaliating for widespread abuses committed mostly against Christians by Seleka fighters, were massively targeting Muslim populations and committing various abuses. In mid-February, French military sources further reported that the anti-balaka have emerged as the main threat to peace in the country.

On 12 February, a UN source warned of an ongoing “ethnic-religious cleansing” following the discovery by international peacekeepers of a mass grave at a military camp occupied by Seleka fighters in Bangui. Similar warnings were issued by several international organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. As early as November 2013 a UN official had suggested that a genocide might take place if the conflict dynamics remained unchanged.

By 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, 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. In early February, violence was reported from several western, southwestern and northwestern towns, including Boda, where 75 people were killed in an attack on 3 February.

In January, according to various sources, violence in Bangui left at least 50 dead and over
As of 11 December, according to French official sources, there were an estimated 3,000–8,000 armed fighters in Bangui: ex-Seleka members, anti-balaka group members, former members of the armed forces and various militias. French sources state that no reliable estimate regarding the number of combatants in the whole country was available.

**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 the extensive looting of premises and equipment. Basic services in CAR were already almost non-existent or covered only a limited part of the territory prior to the crisis.

Widespread looting of health facilities and other public buildings has largely deprived the population of access to basic services. As of late February, 2.5 million people (half of whom are children), 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-sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA). The MIRA reported that the whole population of the country, 4.6 million people, was living in affected areas.

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

In Bangui and surrounding areas, MIRA reports that the priorities 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 is not cited as a problem by any key informants in the urban sites around the city.

**Access**

Access to people in need of humanitarian assistance remains a challenge. Most of the country remains altogether out of reach because of insecurity in the cities and along the roads, and poor infrastructure. 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 and 9 March, one aid worker was killed in Ndele and one in Bangui, bringing the death toll of aid workers since September 2013 to nine. Two violent incidents against humanitarian staff were reported between 31 March and 1 April, OCHA reported on 2 April. Staff abduction, vehicle theft, death threats and physical attacks have all been reported.

As of mid-February, WFP began airlifting food assistance from Cameroon for distribution to IDPs in CAR. Food stocks are to be pre-positioned across CAR before the start of the rainy season in May, when many roads will become 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. On 23 January, MISCA sent troops to the border with Cameroon to escort convoys loaded with humanitarian aid towards the capital Bangui.

OCHA reported that the surge in violence since early December has had serious consequences for humanitarian assessment and response. In the countryside, the security of humanitarian workers remains dependent on the willingness of local strongmen who control particular areas, while insecurity affects transport routes.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

At 11 April, OCHA reported that there were an estimated 628,000 IDPs in the country, including 200,000 in Bangui. The new wave of violence since 21 March has resulted in a new increase in IDPs. According to OCHA at 31 March, numbers had begun slowly decreasing in January.

On 6 April, OCHA reported that the 70,000 IDPs still living in the Bangui airport camps were exposed to a risk of flooding with the rainy season due to start in May. On 26 March, UNHCR had expressed concern over the vulnerability to flooding of IDPs across the country.

In early February, OCHA had reported that there were 838,000 IDPs in CAR, including 413,000 in Bangui. At least half of the displaced were reportedly children. New displacement had been recorded in mid-February as attacks against Muslim communities became increasingly systematic. As of mid-February, according to MSF, up to 100,000 Muslims have fled north, leaving Christian-dominated areas.

As reported in the MIRA, the dynamics of displacement within CAR vary considerably: rural inhabitants flee their villages and seek refuge in the surrounding countryside, while urban inhabitants seek safety in different districts. IDP sites are often characterised by the presence of armed elements, according to the MIRA.

**CAR Refugees in Neighbouring Countries**

As of 31 March, OCHA reported that there were 319,000 CAR refugees in neighbouring countries, 91,000 having arrived since December 2013. This suggests a slight increase from the 312,000 figure reported by UNHCR on 19 March, which included 144,000 refugees in Cameroon, 90,000 in Chad, 63,000 in DRC and 13,000 in Congo. In mid-February, MSF had reported that escalating violence in CAR had triggered a surge in the number of people crossing into neighbouring countries in recent weeks. On 11 April, UNHCR reported a massive exodus of Central Africans to Cameroon. The weekly rate of arrivals of CAR
refugees to Cameroon stood at 10,000.

**Refugees in CAR**

As of 28 February, UNHCR indicated that there are an estimated 16,500 long-term refugees in CAR, mostly from DRC and Sudan. According to UNHCR, as of 14 March, there were an estimated 1,600 South Sudanese refugees in CAR. 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.

On 10 April, UNHCR reported that 6,000 refugees from Equateur province, DRC, and who lived in the camp of Batalimo, Lobaye province, have expressed a wish to be repatriated.

**Third-country Nationals Fleeing CAR**

As reported by OCHA on 30 March, an estimated 92,000 returnees, refugees and third-country nationals have been registered by IOM in Chad upon arrival from CAR since 21 December 2013, 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 in an evacuation cargo flight in January, although the circumstances of these deaths are unclear.

On 10 February OCHA reported that over 65,000 people had been evacuated from CAR – more than twice the figure recorded on 31 January. Meanwhile, a human rights NGO has 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, but the crisis has disrupted the livelihoods of the majority of the population.

On 31 March, FEWSNET reported that due to the continuing effects of conflict and displacement in CAR, Bangui, the northwestern and central-western areas of CAR would remain in IDP Phase 3 (Crisis) through June.

In late February, FEWSNET reported that due to continuing violence, CAR was experiencing a food crisis (IPC Phase 3 – Crisis). 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 northwest – humanitarian NGOs have warned that food insecurity is likely to increase further in the coming months.

According to FAO in mid-February, 1.6 million people are in immediate need of food assistance. This figure constitutes a significant increase compared to earlier estimations by WFP and FAO of around 1.3 million. FAO reported in late January that of these 1.3 million people, approximately 60% are in IPC Phase 3 and 40% are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The most affected areas were the districts of Ouham, Nana-Grébizi, and Mbomou. Following fighting in December, the situation is also likely to have deteriorated to IPC Phase 4 in the prefectures of Lobaye, Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, and Ombella-Mpoko. WFP assessments in November also indicated significant food insecurity in the northern Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures. Most IDPs are facing at least IPC Phase 3 food insecurity levels.

Humanitarian organisations, including FAO, WFP and the Food Security Cluster, indicate that CAR will most likely experience rising food insecurity in 2014, mainly due to reduced harvest yields. In late January, FAO reported that the main reason for poor harvest, despite generally favorable rainfall, was the lack of access to fields, shortages of seeds due to looting, the adoption of irreversible coping mechanisms, and delays in harvesting due to the conflict. As of mid-January, seed-distribution assistance was a key concern ahead of the 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 in January, food reserves are almost non-existent. Some 60% of interviewed households reported having 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.

Food availability has decreased, because insecurity has caused frequent market closures and prevented access to markets. 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 to the road with their goods, for fear of targeted attacks, has also hampered food availability and led to price hikes. 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.

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 interruption of economic activities has 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 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 healthcare.
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 healthcare system was already in an extremely poor state prior to the 2013 crisis; it has since entirely collapsed. Health structures have been almost exclusively supported by international NGOs and religious organisations, and cover 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.

**Meningitis**

As of 2 March, WHO reported that 42 cases of cerebrospinal meningitis had been recorded in CAR in 2014.

**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 targeted 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 consultations. In the first six months of 2013, MSF had recorded 36,910 cases of malaria in Boguila, 50km 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.

**HIV/AIDS**

As of mid-August, over 13,000 people living with HIV/AIDS had their antiretroviral 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 under five 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 under five was above the WHO emergency threshold by 2% in nine of 16 prefectures.

**Protection**

The announcement on 3 April of the withdrawal of Chadian troops from the international peacekeeping operation in CAR triggered concerns among humanitarian agencies regarding the protection of the remaining Muslim population in CAR, OCHA reported on 9 April. Chadian troops had been involved in the protection of Muslim enclaves and with the evacuation of Muslims from CAR.

The protection of civilians remains a key issue of concern as fighting between armed and so-called self-defence groups rages across several parts of the country. In February, Amnesty International released a report warning that "ethnic cleansing" was ongoing against the Muslim population – although this has been disputed by some NGOs and within 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 conflict. Documented violations included attacks, executions and torture of civilians, indiscriminate shelling, sexual and gender based violence, and forcible recruitment of children. Since March, several international organisations have expressed similar accusations. Armed violence has increasingly targeted Muslim civilians since late January, raising the alarm among humanitarian actors about the potential for large-scale killings in the country.

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. In particular, the re-recruitment of children by armed groups, some of whom had been recently demobilised, remains an issue.

**Education**

According to a February Education Cluster report, 65% of schools remained closed across the country. All schools are closed in Kemo, Ouham and Sangha-Mbaere, which are the most affected provinces. Two-thirds of school students registered in 2012/2013 had reportedly dropped out in 2013/2014, representing 278,000 children.

A UNICEF report in late 2013 indicated that seven of ten children had 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-Pende, and Ouaka.
WASH

As of 19 March, according to OCHA, 2.6 million people in CAR were experiencing emergency needs in WASH. According to the January MIRA, significant WASH concerns remain in the majority of displacement sites where the concentration of IDPs surpasses the number of WASH facilities available.

Updated: 14/04/2014

CHAD FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 April: The Chadian Government announced the withdrawal of its 850 soldiers from the African Union peacekeeping force in CAR (MISCA) after being accused of violence. Chadian troops have been involved in several controversial incidents since arriving in the country, mostly clashes with Christian militias. In the most recent, on 30 March, soldiers reportedly opened fire on civilians in the capital Bangui, killing 30 and injuring 300, according to UN figures.

Late March: Assessments conducted by UNICEF at the transit sites hosting CAR evacuees in the south of Chad indicate levels of malnutrition above 15%, requiring emergency humanitarian interventions.

KEY CONCERNS

- Chad remains at the junction of four major crises in the region: CAR, Libya, Nigeria, and Sudan. An estimated 467,000 refugees currently live in Chad (OCHA, January 2014).
- Over 94,400 CAR refugees, Chadian returnees and third-country nationals have arrived in Chad since December 2013. The majority are women and children, many children separated from their parents, in urgent need of humanitarian assistance upon their arrival at camps and informal settlements (IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF, April 2014).
- 2.4 million people are food insecure, including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity (OCHA, November 2013 and January 2014).
- High prevalence of malaria: deaths nearly doubled in 2013, with over 2,000 deaths registered and 780,000 cases diagnosed (OCHA, November 2013). There has been a significant increase in the number of malaria cases in endemic areas (Logone, Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, and Chari Baguirmi).

Politics and Security

Central African Republic crisis

On 3 April, the Chadian Government announced the withdrawal of its 850 soldiers from the African Union peacekeeping force in CAR (MISCA) after being accused of violence against civilians. On 30 March, at least 30 people were killed and another 300 injured by Chadian soldiers in the CAR capital Bangui, after reportedly being attacked by a Christian militia. The soldiers were not part of the official African Union peacekeeping force, but were present to help Chadian nationals leave the country. According to an initial investigation carried out by a UN human rights team, the convoy reached the market area in district PK12 and reportedly opened fire on the population without any provocation. CAR’s interim President Catherine Samba Panza has announced the opening of an investigation.

Chadian soldiers were the largest contingent of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) deployed in December 2013 to contain violent unrest in CAR. Since arriving in the country, they have been involved in several controversial incidents, mostly clashes with Christian militias. On 24 February, Chadian peacekeepers shot dead three civilians in a Christian neighbourhood of Bangui. In another incident, MISCA reported that two Chadian peacekeepers were shot and killed and another wounded. Soldiers from mainly Muslim Chad have been repeatedly accused of siding with the ex-Seleka rebels (some of whom came from Chad), which held power from March 2013 to January 2014, and of showing passivity towards abuses that ex-Seleka have carried out against the population.

In January, a UN human rights team travelled to CAR to gather evidence and testimonies relating to allegations that Chadian citizens, including peacekeepers, carried out mass killings during the violence in CAR. Chad has always denied the charges.

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 had publicly called for UN intervention. On 5 March, the Security Council received a report from the UN Secretary General regarding the possible transformation of MISCA into a full UN peacekeeping mission. The peacekeeping operation is expected to comprise 12,000 troops.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

According to OCHA, humanitarian organisations in the southeastern Tissi area and in the landmine-affected northern region of Tibesti have limited access due to proximity to conflict-affected border areas, heavy rains, and general insecurity.

Displacement

Refugees, Returnees, and Third-Country Nationals from CAR

Chad is the largest recipient of CAR evacuees and refugees. As of 7 April, UNHCR had registered the arrival of 94,400 CAR refugees, Chadian returnees, and third-country nationals in Chad since December 2013.

While some continued their journey to final destinations in Chad, 62,000 people are in the transit sites of Sido, Doyaba, Goré, Doba, Mbitoye, and Moundou in the south, and in the
capital N'Djamena. They lack clean water, decent shelter, and food, according to Médecins Sans Frontières on 28 February. Sido camp had only 20 latrines and four water points for more than 10,000 people, and refugees had only received one WFP food distribution in five weeks (on 20 January). The situation may deteriorate further with the approaching rainy season.

However, efforts are being undertaken to relocate people into a smaller number of sites. The Government of Chad has closed six transit centres in N'Djamena, requiring returnees either to return to their areas of origin, or to move with refugees and third-country nationals to Gaoui transit centre, northeast of the capital. Two other transit centres remain operational in N'Djamena, and two new sites have been prepared in the south: the population of Doyaba and Sido transit centres will be relocated to the Danamadj site, while those from Goré and Doba centres will be relocated to the Danamadj site. A third site is being identified.

IOM profiling indicates that most of the first arrivals were women and children, their numbers later being equalled by men. Chadian returnees represent 60%, while 36% are CAR refugees and 4% third-country nationals. UNICEF has also registered the arrival of 1,060 unaccompanied or separated minors in Chad since December 2013.

On 17 March, IOM repatriated 1,500 Chadians and third-country nationals who had fled from CAR to Cameroon. Some 10,000 who fled from CAR to Cameroon have been stranded, with no shelter and little or no assistance, since the beginning of the year.

Chadian Returnees

Chad stepped up the evacuation of its citizens from CAR as violence intensified. Many Chadians were reportedly being targeted by Christian militia, who accused them of having links to Seleka. The evacuation operations, both on emergency flights and in land convoys, stopped in mid-February. However, more people continue to arrive, and the living conditions of returnees are deteriorating. According to government figures, over 300,000 Chadian nationals lived in CAR prior to the current crisis.

The Government has increased the maximum stay in transit centres from ten days to one year to allow the restoration of family links and better prepare relocations.

Many returnees are entering Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship, which may lead to concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee). Second- and third-generation Chadians from CAR have been recognised as de facto nationals. UNHCR is working with authorities to formalise this recognition and avoid statelessness. According to government figures, over 300,000 Chadian nationals lived in CAR prior to the current crisis.

As of late November 2013, 150,000 Chadians had 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 brought about 3,500 returnees and 553 Nigerian refugees to the west, near 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 in Bol and Mao.

Refugees in Chad

Being at the junction of four major regional crises has resulted in significant population movements. According to OCHA in January 2014, Chad was host to 467,000 refugees. More than 87,000 new arrivals (refugees and returnees) from CAR, Libya, Nigeria, and from Sudan's Darfur region were recorded in the first half of 2013. These new arrivals have placed additional burdens on host communities.

According to UNHCR on 24 March, escalating violence in CAR has brought 12,000 refugees to Chad since December 2013. The total population of CAR refugees is over 90,000, of whom 76,200 are in camps and host villages in the south.

Fleeing clashes between Maaliji and Rizeigat ethnic groups in Darfur, 30,000 Sudanese refugees and 22,000 Chadian returnees have arrived at the border town of Tissi in the southeast. A new camp has been set up in Abgadam, a remote area of eastern Chad. Another wave later crossed into Chad fleeing inter-communal violence between Salamat and Misseriya in Central Darfur. In February, the total Sudanese refugees in Chad exceeded 352,900.

Humanitarian needs of incoming refugees are primarily access to clean drinking water, hygiene, shelter, and health and nutrition care for children and women. UNICEF reported in late April 2013 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.

IDPs

According to OCHA on 19 November, an estimated 90,000 IDPs are living in protracted displacement in the east. 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 cuepers de route. The preferred option of most IDPs is local integration in their place of refuge or resettlement. However, 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, which have had adverse, long-term impacts on household assets and savings. In January 2014, OCHA reported that 2.4 million people were food insecure, including 1.2 million at risk of extreme food insecurity. The Government, WFP, and FAO conducted a food security assessment between October and November 2013, which showed that the Sahel region (central Chad) is twice as affected than the Sudan region in the south. The worst affected region is Wadi Fira (eastern Chad), where 61% of the population is reportedly food insecure. The recent arrival of over 94,400 vulnerable people from CAR puts additional pressure on local resources.
As of late March, FEWSNET reported that below-average and poorly distributed rainfall during the 2013 rainy season caused significant deficits in agricultural production in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazal. Pastoral conditions were below average, and food stocks and agricultural income were reduced. An atypically fast increase in cereal prices combined with lower household food stocks and unfavourable livestock-to-cereal terms of trade for pastoralists will limit household food access in the coming months.

The lean season is therefore expected to start early: in April rather than June. Since October 2013, poor households have been engaging in lean season strategies not normally observed during harvest and post-harvest periods. Households also started migrating in October, compared to February/March in a normal year, in search of labour opportunities in large regional centres, such as N’Djamena and Abéché, and zones with more intensive off-season agriculture, such as Am Timan and Sarh.

Currently, poor households in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazel are having difficulty meeting their food needs without reducing essential non-food expenditure and are experiencing Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2). However, the ability of these households to significantly expand their coping strategies beyond currently observed levels will be limited. Food consumption gaps are likely between April and the end of the lean season in September, driving Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity.

During the peak of the lean season, households in Wadi Fira and Barh el Ghazel will face some of the most severe food security outcomes in West Africa’s Sahel this year.

Health and Nutrition

**Measles, Polio, and Meningitis**

In late January, UNICEF reported that the CAR–Chad border region is prone to recurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, and meningitis. Immunisation rates among refugee and returnee children are unknown but believed to be low.

Despite a mass vaccination campaign against measles in 15 districts, covering 700,000 children in total and 15,000 in transit sites, an additional 13 districts have reported over 520 new cases of measles as of 30 March.

**Malaria**

Malaria is a major health problem with a prevalence rate of nearly 30% across all age groups and about 36% among children under five, according to UNICEF. IRIN noted that malaria deaths nearly doubled 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 (Logone Moyen Chari, Tandjile, Batha, and Chari Baguirmi). Erratic rainfall with intermittent dry spells may have encouraged the breeding of mosquitoes and development of larvae.

Since July 2013, 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 diarrhoea, especially affecting younger and older people; camp authorities reported 22 deaths during August.

**Malnutrition**

The nutritional situation in Chad’s Sahel belt is at critical levels with a GAM 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).

At 30 March, assessments conducted by UNICEF at the transit sites in the south of Chad indicate levels of malnutrition above 15%, requiring emergency humanitarian interventions.

UNICEF forecast that an estimated 500,000 children under five are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2014, including 126,000 from SAM. Across the Sahel region, an estimated five million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition.

Updated: 09/04/2014

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

3 April: An estimated 32,860 returnees and another 6,200 newly displaced were reported in Burora, Nyabiondo, Kanjda and Bonde-Lushebere, on the Nyabiondo–Lukweti road in North Kivu, according to two INGOs in the province. They fled clashes between FARDC and APCLS insurgents that occurred on 15 February–13 March.

2 April: Over 500,000 people are currently displaced in Katanga. This is an increase of 100,000 since December 2013. Some 68% of recorded displacements are due to armed attacks in the Triangle of Death between Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto, and in the territories of Malemba Nkulu and Moba. The other IDPs were displaced in Pweto and Kalemie territories after fighting between FARDC and Mayi Mayi militias.

26 March: UNHCR reported that 18,000 refugees from CAR have entered DRC since December 2013, bringing the total number of CAR refugees in DRC to 64,000.

25 March: North Kivu remains the province most affected by IDPs, with 1,076,745, representing more than a third (37%) of DRC’s total IDP population. However, this figure is a decrease of some 14,800 people (1%) since February, due to returns in the territories of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru, where the security situation improved.

**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 internally displaced (Commission on Population Movements, December 2013).
- Katanga province is of particular concern, with 500,000 people displaced across the province in March 2014. (OCHA, March 2014).
- DRC is host to over 260,800 refugees. The crisis in CAR has caused 64,000 CAR refugees to cross into DRC (UNHCR, March 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 DRC and triggered mass population displacement. Despite increased counter-insurgency efforts by the army, the country remains highly unstable and is the theatre of sustained military operations and infighting between armed groups and non-state actors, mainly in eastern regions. DRC is also affected by the ongoing crises in CAR and South Sudan and is embroiled in longstanding tensions with its eastern neighbours.

Political Context

On 24 February 2013, 11 states signed a Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and Region in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A year on, the peace and security situation in eastern DRC has improved considerably, owing to a number of concerted national, regional, and international efforts. Since the Framework was agreed, a Regional Oversight Mechanism has been established to monitor progress and implement recommendations. The UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region visited DRC on 14 February and called on national authorities to fulfil their commitments to the PSC Framework.

In January 2014, at the last Summit of the African Union, the Framework members adopted a plan of action, and Kenya and Sudan also agreed to join the Framework process.

There are concerns about DRC’s commitments to the PSC Framework, which include accelerating reforms within the security sector, setting up a thorough disarmament and demobilisation process to repatriate M23 combatants in Uganda and Rwanda, as well as social and economic reforms. The National Oversight Mechanism lacks operational capacity, the implementation of national dialogue recommendations is delayed, there is no single harmonised road map for the implementation of national reforms.

On 4 February, as UN forces prepared to target the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), its interim leader indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kigali. UN peacekeepers said they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet. The FDLR was officially set up in 2000 by mainly Hutu Rwandan fighters operating in eastern DRC, where the remnants of the extremist Hutu militia fled after the defeat by the Tutsi-led army that ended Rwanda’s genocide. Kigali has previously refused talks with the rebels, accusing them of still wanting to exterminate Tutsis. Tanzania’s call on Rwanda to hold talks with its rebels was angrily rejected by Kigali.

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 – although officially defeated in November 2013 - is still receiving support from Rwanda, including recruitment, troop reinforcement, ammunition deliveries, and fire support. The Group of Experts indicated that sanctioned M23 leaders were moving freely in Uganda. 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 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.

Security Context

Despite the end of fighting between FARDC and the M23 in November 2013 and the subsequent launch of a disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process, other conflicts drag on in North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, and Equateur provinces, where fighting between armed groups and FARDC have triggered mass displacement. Several counter-insurgency campaigns are ongoing.

National Context

On 28 March, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) and its intervention brigade charged with “neutralising” foreign and domestic armed groups until 31 March 2015. MONUSCO also said on 2 April it is preparing a gradual withdrawal from the country.

On 2 January 2014, a senior military officer, Colonel Ndala, and three other FARDC soldiers were killed in an ambush. The Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU) was first accused by the Government, but some observers suggested it could have been linked to internal strife within the FARDC armed forces.

On 30 December 2013, Congolese security forces repelled 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. On 7 January, the Military Justice of Katanga arrested 57 suspects in Lubumbashi accused of carrying out the attacks in Kinshasa.

Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration

The DRC Government and M23 signed a peace deal on 12 December 2013, which included the dissolution of M23 as an armed group and the intention of the DRC Government to work for the DDR of former combatants and the drafting of an amnesty law.
Approved by parliament on 4 February 2014, the law grants amnesty for acts of insurgency, acts of war and political offences dating back to 2006. International envoys welcomed the law’s approval and commended it 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 M23 members who fled to Uganda after defeat. Close to 1,300 have been 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.

On 30 January, stressing that M23 must be stopped from regrouping in DRC and expressing concern at DRC 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, on individuals or entities acting in violation of applicable international law.

On 13 January, Martin Kobler, Head of MONUSCO, 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 DDR and urged Uganda and Rwanda to prevent M23 elements from sheltering troops. In a public statement to Kobler, M23 rebels denied the UN’s accusations.

The end of the M23 uprising has been followed by several waves of surrender in the east, including militants from the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura, the Hunde-dominated Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo, and the Nduma Defence of Congo. Since late January, 100 rebels from the Coalition of Ituri Armed Groups (Cogai), the Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI) and the Congolese People’s Liberation Army (ALPC) have surrendered in Ituri district of Orientale province, according to officials.

The start of the reintegration process has led Raiya Mukombozi and Raiya Mutomboki to announce the end of their rebellion on the condition that their fighters can join Government forces. However, renewed acts of violence allegedly committed by surrendered rebels were ongoing in early 2014. A DDR process was initiated in Shabunda territory, South Kivu 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.

M23 once made up the strongest army in Kivu. Having led a rebellion since April 2012, violence escalated in May 2013 in North Kivu. Heavy fighting against Government troops caused the deaths of an estimated 900 people including 700 rebels. 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.

**Counter-insurgency Campaign in the East**

According to MONUSCO as of mid-January, ADF-NALU and FDLR still pose a serious threat to DRC civilians.

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 Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU) attacked their vehicle with a grenade near Mavivi airport in Beni, North Kivu. This attack immediately followed comments from a DRC army spokesman that FARDC had destroyed ADF-NALU bases in Mbau region, North Kivu. As of 11 March, FARDC has regained the localities of Nadui, Makayoba, the last bastion of the rebel group in Beni territory, and Semiliki bridge.

ADF-NALU, believed to number up to 1,400 fighters, is an alliance of groups opposed to the Ugandan Government. It has operated from bases in eastern Congo since the mid-2000s, undermining Kinshasa’s control in the area. Kampala has said it would share intelligence and capture fleeing rebels but would not intervene directly in operations on the ground in the DRC.

On 17 February, FARDC 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.

On 11 December, MONUSCO announced the launch of a military operation against 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 13 March, local media reported that the FARDC had regained the city of Kahumo in North Kivu without resistance, after two years of occupation by FDLR.

The UN announced that an additional 100 soldiers would be deployed to support MONUSCO in the town of Pweto, northern Katanga province, where militia violence is worsening. Mayi Mayi militias calling for Katanga’s secession have torched scores of villages and clashed with Government forces, forcing 400,000 people to flee their homes. 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 Incidents Involving Insurgent Groups**

**North Kivu**

On 13 February, MONUSCO reported 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 armed clashes between Government forces and APCLS in Masisi territory. Violence reportedly caused population displacement in the town of Kitchanga.

On 14 January, Mayi Mayi Sheka, an armed group operating from bases in Walikale territory, attacked the village of Pinga, leading to a gunfight with FARDC. MONUSCO said...
four DRC soldiers were killed.

In December 2013, MONUSCO discovered the bodies of 21 civilians killed in attack by suspected ADF-NALU in the area of Beni, North Kivu. ADF-NALU has been blamed for a spate of attacks and kidnappings around Beni, which killed at least 60 civilians in December

**South Kivu**

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

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

**Katanga**

According to ECHO on 25 March, the security situation in Katanga remains volatile. Ethnic conflict between pygmy and Bantu is intensifying with the creation of self-defence groups on the axis Moba–Kalemie. Several Bantu chiefs have been suspended by the authorities after expressing hate messages about the pygmy population.

According to OCHA, insecurity has spread in Katanga since the end of December 2013. Population movement is fluid, with OCHA reporting a total of over 500,000 IDPs in the province, of whom almost 70% are in the Triangle of Death between Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba territories, and Malemba Nkulu. MONUSCO has started to deploy peacekeepers in Pweto 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 80 villages have been burned down since December 2013 as part of a scorched earth campaign by militias, with schools and health centres also affected.

According to ECHO on 25 March, the security situation in Katanga remains volatile. Ethnic conflict between pygmy and Bantu is intensifying with the creation of self-defence groups on the axis Moba–Kalemie. Several Bantu chiefs have been suspended by the authorities after expressing hate messages about the pygmy population.

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**Orientale**

OCHA said raids, looting, ambushes, and other incidents, allegedly committed by members of the LRA have been reported since mid-February in Haut Uele and Bas Uele, 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 Uele. In February 2014 the LRA abducted 35 people in 20 attacks in Haut Uele, the highest number of abductions the group has committed in one month since April 2012.

As reported by local media on 17 March, a voluntary disarmament campaign for civilians launched in Ituri district, Orientale province, in early March has been extended to the districts of Haut Uele, Bas Uele and Tshopo. The inhabitants are invited to hand in their weapons voluntarily and receive motorcycles, bicycles and grain mills to engage in new income-generating activities. The provincial Ministry of the Interior is responsible for organising and executing this three-month operation.

On 18 February, OCHA said that intensified raids and looting, allegedly committed by the Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI), have been reported in South Ituri, 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 insecurity in CAR is starting to impact the northern part of Bas Uele, with the arrival of heavily armed elements suspected to be ex-Seleka members.

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 affect Orientale’s Ituri district. Some ADF-NALU militia have retreated into Mambasa forest and Ituri territory. Observers fear the deterioration of security in this region, where the Mayi-Mayi Morgan remain active.

**Maniema**

According to UNICEF as of 8 March, 40 people have been abducted by Rayia Mutomboki rebels and a local chief was shot dead in Pweto territory.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to OCHA in January 2014, 6.3 million people – 8% of the population – need humanitarian assistance. Conflict-affected areas record 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.

**Access**

Access is limited across DRC, but mainly in the east, where insecurity is a major constraint. According to humanitarian partners, over 250 incidents against humanitarian workers were recorded in 2013.

The mountainous and volcanic terrain, and lack of tarred roads pose significant physical obstacles, especially in Maniema.

In Katanga, poor roads, the threat of violence, and insufficient resources are hampering efforts to assist up to 500,000 people displaced by violence. 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. On 9 January, MSF reported that violent clashes over November and December between Mayi Mayi militias and Government forces in Katanga have hindered access to medical care and humanitarian assistance. UNICEF reported that the Shamwana, Kisele, and Kibambi axis, in Manono territory, remain inaccessible. Heavy rains have also left roads impassable. In areas where assistance can be delivered, agencies often find themselves targeted by Mayi Mayi militias seeking to pillage supplies.

In North Kivu, OCHA reports on 3 April that some sections of the Sake–Masisi road have been significantly damaged due to heavy rainfall. Some secondary roads near Masisi are also inaccessible, such as Karuba–Ngungu Kibabi–Katoyi, Kibabi–Luko and Nyabiondo–Lukweti, isolating thousands of displaced people. In Walikale territory, OCHA has reported illegal checkpoints on many roads. On the Musenge–Hombo axis, southern Walikale, Raiya Mutomboki rebels reportedly erected over 30 barriers on a 35km section, where local populations and humanitarian partners are subject to taxes.

In South Kivu, Shabunda territory, OCHA reported that Raiya Mutomboki rebels were hampering access to medical supplies, potentially affecting 25,000 people.

**Displacement**

According to OCHA, 2013 mirrored 2012 with continuous instability and violent events causing population 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 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 IDPs**

As of 25 March, the Commission on Population Movements reported that North Kivu is the province most affected by IDPs, with 1,076,745, representing more than a third (37%) of DRC’s total IDP population. This figure is a decrease of some 14,800 people (1%) since February, due to returns in the territories of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru, where the security situation improved.

Mass displacement is a constant in the conflict-affected province. At end March, 66% of IDPs were living with host families and 34% in public buildings and camps. Over 90% of displacements are related to violence or insecurity.

At 3 April, an estimated 32,860 returnees and some 6,200 newly displaced people were recorded in the localities of Burora, Nyabiondo, Kaandja and Bonde-Lushebere, on the Nyabiondo–Lukweti axis, as reported by two INGOs in the province. They had fled clashes between FARDC and APCLS insurgents that occurred over 15 February–13 March.

According to OCHA in late March, some locations regained by the FARDC on the Mba’u–Kamango axis are beginning to see the gradual return of residents, although the security situation in the area remains fragile.

Beni territory has been particularly impacted by violence in past months. Increasing activity of suspected ADF-NALU groups in Kamango and Nobili (northeast 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 APCLS, 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 IDPs**

According to OCHA at 31 December 2013, there were 579,607 IDPs in South Kivu, a decrease compared to September as security improved in Shabunda territory. Clashes between Nyatura and Raiya Mutomboki in mid-October in Kashovu (Masisi, North Kivu) were the main cause of displacement over 2013. As of 12 February, OCHA reported the return of some 26,000 IDPs. 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 a process of disarmament of Raiya Mutomboki in Shabunda, civilian protection has not improved: in 2013, protection incidents increased by about 51% (2,858 against 1,894 in 2012).

On 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 Muturule (Uvira territory) have returned, after 7,180 were displaced last August in the areas of Luvungi, Nyakabere, and Sange.

**Orientale IDPs**

According to OCHA at 3 April, 6,200 newly displaced people were recorded in the localities of Burora, Nyabiondo, Kaandja and Bonde-Lushebere, on the
On 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 group activities in Tshopo. Returns increased by 73%, from 90,000 to 156,350 people, mainly in Uele.

The major causes of displacement since mid-2013 have been conflict between FARDC and FRPI rebels, and the activities of natural resources warlords Morgan, Thoms, and Luc, leading to more than 250,000 IDPs, most of whom are in South Irumu territory in Ituri. At least 30% of IDPs in Ituri and Tshopo are inaccessible due to insecurity. Logistical constraints are also a major obstacle in several areas, especially in eastern Tshopo.

According to local sources quoted by OCHA on 26 March, an estimated 20,000 IDPs have been living in the bush for almost two months following the burning of their houses by militias in the area of Opie in Bafwasende territory (Tshopo district). Despite the deployment of FARDC in the area, they still fear to return home.

The terror spread by the LRA continues to be the cause of significant displacement in the Uele districts, with new displacements recorded in 2013 and 2014 – although there have been more returns than displacements, leading to an overall downward trend. According to OCHA on 12 February, an estimated 5,000 people fled their homes in Niai 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 FARDC’s military operation against ADF-NALU in North Kivu is affecting Ituri district: local authorities report that 24,000 people have crossed into Ituri. The humanitarian community is highly concerned as capacities in the district are already overstretched. According to ECHO, movements of ADF-NALU from North Kivu to Ituri had already displaced 30,000 people on 10 December. OCHA expressed concerns that Ituri may become a reservoir for both ADF-NALU and persistent M23 forces, which would further deteriorate the precarious security situation in southern Ituri.

FRPI continues to launch targeted actions against FARDC in South Irumu, but humanitarian partners have reported a gradual return of IDPs to certain parts of South Irumu since February. According to OCHA at 19 March, some 28,000 IDPs had returned to Bukiringi and Aveba as security conditions improved.

On 21 January, local media reported that an estimated 12,000 people remain displaced in Balobe forest (Bafwasende territory, 260km from Kisangani). They originally fled clashes between FARDC and Mayi-Mayi rebels. On 29 December, FRPI rebels attacked Soke (50km from Bunia), which displaced 30,000 people from the town to the forest. 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.

Katanga IDPs

At 2 April, OCHA reported that over 500,000 people are currently displaced in Katanga, of whom almost 70% are in the Triangle of Death between Pweto, Manono and Mitwaba territories, and Malemba Nkulu and Moba. The remaining IDP population (32%) was displaced in the territories of Pweto and Kalemie due to fighting between FARDC and Mayi Mayi militias. The situation is of particular concern as the number of returnees has decreased in the first quarter of 2014.

The territory of Malemba-Nkulu has recorded the largest increase, with more than 35,000 IDPs in the past three months due to the activism of Mayi Mayi militias. Humanitarian partners face difficulties in accessing these communities due to 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.

Pweto has also recorded an increase of 23,770 people in the first trimester of 2014 and remains the territory most affected by violent events, hosting up to 185,000 IDPs (35% of IDPs in the province).

Some ten new Mayi Mayi movements have been created in the Triangle of Death and in the territories of Malemba Nkulu and Moba in recent months, in addition to the secessionist movement Bakata-Katanga. At 5 March, the chieftain of Kasenga Nganye, one of the six chieftains of Moba territory, was the most affected by activities of Mayi Mayi groups. The surge in violence has led to the creation of several self-defence groups. Recurrent clashes between Mayi Mayi rebels and FARDC, and between rebels and self-defence groups, continue to trigger displacement.

Local media also reported on 15 March that an estimated 15,000 people had been displaced in eastern Manono, following clashes between FARDC and Bakata-Katanga militias.

Unlike other provinces in the country, there is no IDP camp in Katanga: 86% of IDPs are living in host families who are themselves already living in dire conditions, while 14% are spread across four informal camp sites in Kalemie, Manono, Pweto, and Moba.

Maniema IDPs

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 Raiya 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 Pangí.

Equateur IDPs

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

Refugees in DRC

UNHCR reported on 26 March that 18,000 refugees from CAR have entered DRC since December 2013, despite the closure of the border in December. Of a total of 64,000 CAR refugees in DRC, half are living in four refugee camps in Equateur (Buyabo, Inke and Mole) and Orientale provinces (Mboti), the other half with host families. The strategy for support to refugees in host communities remains problematic as DRC authorities at the provincial level continue to insist that assistance should only be delivered within the camps.

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 DRC 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.

**Returns**

On 27 March, Ugandan authorities said at least 251 DRC refugees hoping to return home from a refugee camp in Uganda died when a boat capsized on Lake Albert.

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

According to UNHCR early February, roughly 6,200 DRC 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 DRC 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. This is 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 in five territories of three provinces: Katanga (Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories); Maniema (Punia territory); and Orientale province (South Ituri 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 as 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 (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 infrastructure, and the effect of economic shocks.

**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. As of 8 March, UNICEF has recorded 4,277 cholera cases and 79 deaths, representing a case fatality rate of 1.8%. According to local health authorities, 27,000 cholera cases were recorded in 2013, including 491 deaths (case fatality rate of 1.8%), 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 8 March, 1,525 cases of cholera including three deaths have been registered in South Kivu, with Uvira, Ruzizi and Nundu health zones still reaching epidemic levels.

According to OCHA on 3 April, an outbreak of cholera has been ongoing since early March in Uvira health zone, with 282 cases and five deaths reported, following the interruption of the water supply by the public company responsible for water distribution due to power cuts in the region.

UNICEF also reported 705 cases and 12 deaths in North Kivu province. The cholera epidemic continues to gain ground in Katanga province. As of 8 March 2014, almost 2,000 cases of cholera including 62 deaths have 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.

In Orientale province, the district of Ituri registered 12 cases and 2 deaths (case fatality rate 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 8 March, UNICEF reported 6,700 cases of measles and 78 deaths in 16 health districts of five provinces so far in 2014. In 2013, DRC recorded 89,000 cases of measles,
including 1,392 deaths.

**Malnutrition**

GAM in DRC is 11%. According to UNICEF as of December 2013, an estimated two million children under five suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Local response capacity is limited, and health stakeholders struggle to monitor epidemics of disease and displacement, key contributors to the high rates of acute malnutrition.

According to UNICEF at 8 March, Bukama territory, Katanga province, is showing signs of a serious nutritional crisis, with worrying rates of SAM (4.8%) and Kwashiorkor (90%), potentially affecting over 7,000 children. Early January, UNICEF also reported alarming rates of GAM in Katanga, especially in Manono (19.8%), Malemba Nkulu (19.3%), and Kambove (18.8%).

**WASH**

According to UNICEF on 27 March, 38 million people in DRC (53.5% of households) do not have access to safe drinking water.

**Protection**

Armed groups and armed forces are all 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 since 2008.

Updated: 08/04/2014

**GUINEA FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

8 April: The number of suspected and confirmed cases of Ebola fever amounted to 157 – 67 of which have been laboratory-confirmed – and 101 deaths. The epidemic is affecting mainly the prefectures of Guéckédou, Macenta, Kissidougou, Dinguiraye, Dabola and Conakry and the ability for the disease to reach other areas remains significant.

8 April: WHO said that it expects to have to confront an outbreak of Ebola fever in West Africa for the next two to four months. In Liberia, 21 cases, including ten deaths have been recorded. Five cases have been confirmed. Two suspected cases have been reported in Sierra Leone and nine in Mali; tests so far show that two were not Ebola. A suspected case in Ghana was found not to be Ebola.

**4 April**: An MSF team was assaulted by local youth in Macenta, who blamed the NGO from bringing Ebola to the area.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- A fast-spreading outbreak of deadly Ebola haemorrhagic fever, with 157 cases and 101 deaths registered since 9 February in the southeastern forest districts of Macenta, Gueckedou, N’Zerekore and Kissidougou, and in the capital Conakry (WHO, Government and UNICEF, April 2014).

- Over 220,000 people (of 6.7 million) in Boke, Kindia, Conakry (West), and N’Zerekore (South) suffer from severe food insecurity. An additional 1.8 million people are estimated to be moderately food insecure (FAO, November 2014).

- Since the beginning of 2014, a measles outbreak has killed five children and led to at least 1,300 suspected cases in the Conakry municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma (UNICEF, February 2014).

- In December 2013, 139,200 children were suffering from acute malnutrition, 609,700 from chronic malnutrition, and another 1,592,890 from anaemia (WFP, December 2013).

- Concerns about cyclical epidemics of cholera remain, with 291 cases and 29 deaths reported between January and November 2013. The rainy season, dirty water, and population movement are amplifying the spread (OCHA, November 2013).

**Politics and Security**

Legislative elections late 2013 led to 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 change ahead of the next presidential vote in 2015.

**Political Context**

On 15 January, just four months after the presidential election, the entire government resigned 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. Mohamed Said Fofana will continue as Prime Minister. Francois Louceny Fall will continue in the position of Foreign Minister. In total, 19 ministers were reinstated.

On 12 December, the European Union announced full resumption of development cooperation with Guinea. The EU had suspended aid after the 2008 coup, setting out a roadmap for its gradual resumption with the return to constitutional order and democracy. With the holding of parliamentary elections in September 2013, Guinea fulfilled the conditions for full resumption. With the exception of Hope for National Development, all
opposition parties now have a seat in the National Assembly.

On 25 November, at least one person was killed and several were wounded during a protest over the results of the 28 September parliamentary election. Guinea's opposition parties also 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.

In October 2013, OCHA reported continued tensions in response to the official results of the 28 September parliamentary elections. Results were initially due to be published by 2 October but were delayed to 17 October and gave the lead to the Rally of the Guinean People party headed by Condé. The opposition insisted that electoral fraud had occurred and called for the annulment of the elections. On 9 October, the international community – including Special Representative of the UN 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 Independent National Electoral Commission has admitted errors but labelled them as minor.

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, 160km north of Conakry. The violence came little over a week after two people were killed and 33 others injured in protests against frequent power cuts in Conakry.

Inter-communal Violence

The Government reported in July 2013 that a sudden outbreak of ethnic violence between 15 and 17 July killed at least 100 people, a significant increase on the previously announced death toll of 58. UNHCR reported on 19 July that 242 were wounded when Guerze tribesmen, who form the majority in Guinea's forest area, allegedly attacked three ethnic Konianke in the town of Koule. Fighting spread to the provincial capital Nzerekore, and clashes reached the town of Beyla on 17 July. According to the UN, security and defence 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 reside in Guinea. Several international organisations reported on 23 July that 30,000 people were displaced following the ethnic violence of 15–17 July: on 19 July UNHCR had reported that several hundred IDPs had sought refuge in military camps in NZerekore and Beyla.

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in mid-February, Guinea's food security outlook until August 2014 remains unchanged from 2013 and the five-year average. Guinea is expected to experience Minimal food security (IPC Phase 1) until June as well as during the lean season, expected over June–September 2014. In late January, above-average harvests of rain-fed crops and, in some cases, the first harvests of off-season crops were improving conditions by providing households with a diversified supply of food.

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

Ebola Fever

On 24 March, Guinea's Ministry of Health notified the WHO of a fast-spreading outbreak of deadly Ebola haemorrhagic fever in the country since early February. As of 8 April, the total number of suspected and confirmed cases amounted to 157 including 67 confirmed by laboratory – and 101 deaths. Another 665 people have been identified as contacts. All age groups have been affected but most of the cases are adults aged 15–59. At least eight of the dead in Guinea have been medical staff, including the head of the regional hospital in Macenta, at the heart of the crisis.

The epidemic now affects mainly the prefectures of Guéckédou, Macenta, Kissidougou, Dinguiraye, Dabola and Conakry. The risk of the disease reaching other areas remains significant. The Government confirmed for the first time four cases of Ebola in Conakry. The spread of the disease from the southeastern forest districts of Macenta, Gueckedou, Nzerekore and Kissidougou to the capital, where some two million people live, marked a significant escalation in the spread of the disease.

On 4 April, a Médecins Sans Frontières team was assaulted by local youth in Macenta, who blamed them for bringing the disease to the area.

On 8 April, WHO said that it expects to have to confront an outbreak of the highly contagious disease in West Africa for the next two to four months, across a region where health systems are ill-equipped to cope. In Liberia, there have been 21 cases, including ten deaths; five of the cases have been confirmed as Ebola. There have also been two suspected cases in Sierra Leone, affecting people believed to have been infected in southern Guinea but who died over the border. In Mali, there have been nine suspected cases; so far, tests have shown that two were not Ebola. A suspected case in Ghana eventually turned out not to be Ebola. Senegal has closed its normally busy land border with Guinea in the southern region of Kolda and the southeastern region of Kedougou in order to prevent the spread of the disease.

To date, no treatment or vaccine is available for Ebola, which kills between 25% and 90% of victims, depending on the strain of the virus. The disease is transmitted by direct contact with blood, faeces or sweat, or by sexual contact or unprotected handling of contaminated corpses.
Measles

UNICEF reported a sharp increase in measles cases in 2014, echoing an earlier confirmation by the Ministry of Health of 1,300 new suspected cases and five child deaths in and around Conakry as of mid-February. With 143 suspected cases and 38 confirmed positive in December 2013 and early January 2014, the measles outbreak is shown to have crossed the epidemic threshold in several districts.

UNICEF, MSF and the Government of Guinea have started a massive emergency vaccination campaign to reach over 1.7 million children, starting in Conakry and rolling out to affected communities throughout the country.

The Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak in the Conakry municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma on 25 January. On 27 January, the health authorities reported they that were struggling to control the spread of the disease, which had reached 15 districts (among them, Boké, Coyah, Dubreka, Kissidougou, and Mandiana). One child was reported dead from measles in mid-November. Almost all cases have been reported among children under ten. According to the Demographic Health Survey, only 37% of Guinea’s children have been fully vaccinated. Low immunisation coverage has raised fears of a major epidemic.

Periodic measles outbreaks occur in Guinea: the last outbreak in 2009 saw 4,755 cases and ten deaths, with the region of Conakry most affected. The latest 2014 figures represent a dramatic increase on the 2013 figures provided by the IFRC, with only 54 confirmed cases of measles.

Cholera

On 4 November 2013, UNICEF highlighted concerns about a cyclical epidemic of cholera in Guinea, with 294 cases and 28 deaths reported until November. The rainy season, dirty water, and population movements amplify the spread of the disease.

Guinea experienced severe cholera outbreaks in 2012 but the number has declined steadily over 2013, with 5,523 cases (and 105 deaths) until September 2013.

Malnutrition

In December 2013, WFP highlighted that child malnutrition remains a serious problem in Guinea. At least 139,200 children suffer from acute malnutrition, another 609,700 from chronic malnutrition, and at least 1,592,890 from anaemia.

Updated: 09/04/2014

MALI CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

7 April: There have been nine suspected cases of Ebola haemorrhagic fever in Sibiriibougou and Koulikoro regions; so far, tests have shown that two were not Ebola. In neighbouring Guinea, the Ebola outbreak has killed 101 people out of 157 cases registered since January.

5 April: Planning Minister Moussa Mara was promoted to the premiership after Mali’s first post-war Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly quit just six months into office. Mara announced he would form a government that would prioritise security and reconciliation.

Late March: UNHCR reported that an estimated 142,970 Malians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries: 59,100 in Mauritania; 50,000 in Niger; and 32,170 in Burkina Faso.

Late March: OCHA reported that 2.1 million people are moderately food insecure, while 1.5 million are in need of immediate food assistance. The districts of Bandiagara (Mopti region), Menaka, and Bourem (Gao region) are the most affected.

KEY CONCERNS

- Security, 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, carjacking, and kidnapping incidents have been reported in the north, and access is limited for aid workers. Security in and around the northeastern region of Kidal, where French troops are largely based, is of particular concern due to a lack of law enforcement.

- An estimated 186,880 people are currently internally displaced, largely as a result of conflict and food insecurity (Malian Committee on Population Movement, February 2014).

- An estimated 2.1 million people are moderately food insecure, while 1.5 million are reported to be in need of immediate food assistance (OCHA, March 2014).

- An estimated 136,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, another 360,000 from moderate acute malnutrition. These figures represent a decrease compared to July 2013 UNICEF estimates of 660,000 acutely malnourished and 210,000 SAM (OCHA, February 2014).

Politics and Security

Mali continues to face political challenges, including restoration of security in the north and 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 the Sahel region is still heavily reliant
on the presence of armed foreign troops. The Malian and French armies, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) troops are all present 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 EU training mission currently operating within Mali.

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

Regional context

On 16 February, the Presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to monitor and align 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 within the region. The next G5 meeting will take place in Chad within six months.

On 19 January during a meeting in Algiers, Malian President Keïta welcomed the Algerian Government’s initiative to hold exploratory talks with Malian rebel groups in preparation for possible inclusive peace negotiation talks with the Malian Government. On 14 January, President Keïta concluded a visit to Mauritania to improve security and military cooperation and organise and support the (voluntary) return of Malian refugees from Mauritania.

National Context

On 5 April, Planning Minister Moussa Mara was promoted to the premiership after Mali’s first post-war Prime Minister Oumar Tatam Ly quit just six months into office. Mara announced he would form a government that would prioritise security and reconciliation for the deeply-divided country.

The Tuareg Rebellion and the National Reconciliation Process

On 25 March, the leader of a new armed group in Mali’s troubled north said the central Government could face another uprising of the Tuareg people if it resists pressure to launch long-delayed talks on the region’s future. Ibrahim Ag Mohamed Assaleh, a leading Tuareg negotiator, launched the Coalition for the People of Azawad (CPA) in March 2014 after a dispute with the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA), the main Tuareg separatist group behind the 2012 uprising. The CPA sent requests in March to Bamako to resume political talks via the MINUSMA. CPA members claim that their group is backed by 8,000 fighters, is less radical in its aims than MNLA, and respects Mali’s territorial unity.

On 18 February, in UN-led preliminary talks in Bamako, opposition groups agreed with the Government to a roadmap and a timetable for confining members of their groups to barracks in northern Mali, including in Lere, Kidal, Gao, and Timbuktu.

On 3–4 February, a UN Security Council delegation visited Mali, meeting with the Governor, local authorities and civil society in Mopti, and then travelling to a MINUSMA camp for troops from Togo. The delegation met Government officials as well as representatives of the three main armed groups. The delegation called upon both sides to push forward with peace talks and expressed concern that a failure to do so might undo fragile security gains and risk a further radicalisation of fighters, who must lay down their weapons in accordance with the provisions of the peace accord while awaiting disarmament regulations. These need to be developed in cooperation with MINUSMA.

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 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 against the Government, Islamist rebel groups Ansar Dine and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA) began a separate insurgency, as they wished to impose sharia in Azawad and push Tuareg rebels out of major cities. In response, the MNLA sought negotiations with the Government. The conflict was further complicated by a military coup in March 2013 and, later, fighting between Tuareg and Islamist rebels. At the request of the 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 a five-month ceasefire, rupturing the process to honour the June peace deal, which had led to 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 had 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.

Security Context

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 ordnance and landmines remain a significant threat. A number of so-called self-defence militias, formed in 2012 in opposition to separatist and Islamist armed groups, and functioning outside state-controlled security structures, are also active.

More than a year after France mounted Operation Serval to rid northern Mali of jihadists, local sources and security forces reported that Islamists have regained a foothold in several areas and pressured families hostile to their presence to leave their homes. Over the past six months, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have murdered several people who helped the French military, in particular Tuareg members of the MNLA.
On 5 March, French and Malian forces killed ten suspected AQIM fighters during an operation in the northeastern mountainous Adrar des Ifoghas region.

On 26 February, a vehicle belonging to Médecins du Monde ran over an improvised explosive device near the airstrip of Kidal airport, seriously injuring two passengers.

On 24 February, Malian authorities found five corpses in army uniform in two graves near the headquarters of a former military junta in Kati 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, about 20km north of the capital. Mali’s new government is trying to ascertain the fate of 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 in the north. Tuareg and Fulani communities accuse each other of cattle rustling and organising robberies. Already strained relations between minority Tuaregs and other communities in the north, such as the Fulani and Songhai, have deteriorated since the Tuareg rebellion began in 2012.

On 22 January, French forces killed at least 11 suspected Islamist fighters and seized large amounts of weapons and ammunition 100km north of Timbuktu. French troops continue to conduct 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 Mountains, close to the Algerian border, killing its emir in the Sahara, Abou Zeid.

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 in the humanitarian situation.

Access

State authorities and humanitarian aid workers are impeded from working in northern regions due to insecurity. However, according to OCHA, humanitarian access continues to improve and aid is increasingly accessible in 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 sociopolitical factors, massive population displacement has taken place.

IDPs

In late February, the Malian Committee on Population Movement reported that around 186,880 people are internally displaced. This figure is a decrease from 256,000 in December 2013 and 350,000 in June 2013 and can largely be attributed to an improvement in security. Bamako hosts the largest number of IDPs, followed by the northern regions of Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao.

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 towards the south, with 39,000 people reported to be displaced between January and September 2013.

Malian Refugees

As of March, UNHCR reported that an estimated 142,970 Malians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries: 59,100 in Mauritania; 50,000 in Niger; and 32,170 in Burkina Faso.

The majority of Malian refugees remain cautious and say they are willing to return only when security improves considerably. An increase in the number of incidents, such as attacks by armed groups, especially in Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu since September, are not encouraging. Consequently, some Malians continue to leave in search of a safe haven in neighbouring countries. Some 2,600 Malians went to Niger in November and December, following fighting between the Malian army and a rebel group in Aghazraghan, Gao region. They found refuge in Intikane, in the Tahoua region, where they received UNHCR assistance.

Refugees in Mali

Mali hosts over 14,000 refugees from countries including Cote d’Ivoire and Mauritania.

Returnees

According to IOM on 25 March, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal regions are now hosting nearly 196,000 returnees who are in urgent need of humanitarian aid. Access to basic services such as water and primary healthcare, as well as shelter, are now major concerns.

Additionally, a total of 1,700 Malians had been evacuated from Central African Republic as of 17 March, through joint operations by the Malian government and IOM.

As of 9 January, UNHCR stated that there is a risk of reprisal attacks on returning refugees and IDPs, and socioeconomic conditions have not been restored to pre-conflict levels. In light of the greater normalisation in the south, 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.

Food Security
Late March, OCHA reported that 2.1 million people are moderately food insecure, and 1.5 million are in need of immediate food assistance. This is an increase from 970,000 in February and 812,000 in December 2013, according to Cadre Harmonisé findings. If adequate food assistance is not provided, the figure is expected to reach 1.9 million in June. Bandiagara district (Mopti region), and Menaka and Bourem districts (Gao region) are the most affected.

Many households are expected to continue to face food insecurity due to poor 2013 crops and the consequences of the 2012/2013 conflict. The estimated results of the agropastoral season, according to the Government and its partners, indicate a total drop of 9% in agricultural outputs compared to the five-year average (2008–2013) and a drop of 6% compared to the difficult 2011–2012 crop year.

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 and 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 the north due to the significant decline in agricultural production and the effects of the sluggish economic climate. Without humanitarian assistance, these areas, as well as the north riverine areas, where livelihoods have not fully recovered from conflict, will face crisis outcomes during the 2014 lean season of June–August. Pockets of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels can be expected during the lean season 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 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 (in Bandiagara and Koro) are classified at risk of food shortages, and 18 (in Djenne, Mopti, and Douentza) are in economic difficulty.

Key drivers of the food crisis are chronic vulnerability due to recurrent shocks as drought, floods, epidemics, locusts, and increasing poverty and market instability have contributed to deterioration of livelihoods. National food insecurity is further influenced by 20 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 under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 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**

**Ebola Fever Outbreak in Guinea**

There have been nine suspected cases of the deadly Ebola virus in Sibiribougou and Koulikoro regions; so far, tests have shown that two were not Ebola. In neighbouring Guinea, an outbreak of Ebola has killed 101 people out of 157 cases registered since January.

**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 are a decrease compared to July UNICEF estimates of 660,000 acutely malnourished and 210,000 SAM.

The Global Nutrition Cluster on 3 February shared findings on chronic malnutrition among children under five. 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.

**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 remained largely unreported, and that people’s awareness of the legal system and the justice system remains limited. The Ministry of Justice only provides legal assistance in cases of sexual violence.

**Updated: 10/04/2014**

**MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late March:** UNICEF reported that 125,300 children will be affected by acute malnutrition in 2014, including 30,740 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM). This is almost 30% higher than the 2013 caseload. An estimated 90% of expected SAM cases live in the seven most vulnerable regions.
Late March: According to UNICEF, 140,000 people were affected by floods in 2013 and will need humanitarian assistance in 2014.

Late March: UNHCR reported that Mauritania currently hosts 59,100 Malian refugees.

KEY CONCERNS

- 800,000 people are estimated to be food insecure, of whom 190,000 are severely food insecure (OCHA, February 2014).

- Mauritania’s acute malnutrition level has already surpassed the estimated 2014 caseload (SMART survey), with a reported 31,000 SAM and 95,000 MAM children (UNICEF, March 2014). This is a 30% increase on 2013 (125,300 acutely malnourished and 30,740 SAM).

- Security challenges continue to be a problem in Mbera refugee camp on the border with Mali. The camp currently hosts most of the 59,100 Malian refugees in Mauritania. Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali (UNHCR and OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Regional Context

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to institutionalise a common approach for the monitoring and coordination of 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 US$8 billion by the international community to fight terrorism and support development in the region. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad within six months.

In a bid to strengthen bilateral relations, Malian President Keïta concluded an official visit to Nouakchott on 13 January. President Keïta 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 regarding the increased threat of militant terror groups in the Sahel region.

National Context

Reinstated on 3 January, Prime Minister Laghdaf, trustee of the President, presented his new Government on 12 February. All key ministers – defence, interior, foreign affairs, finance, and justice – retained their positions. 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 2013. These were the first parliamentary polls since 2006. The National Electoral Commission announced a record turnout of 75% of 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 population, who claims it is being marginalised concerning 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 teargas 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

Mauritania continues to suffer from a multi-dimensional crisis related to food insecurity, high prevalence of malnutrition, the presence of Malian refugees, and significant flooding that hit the country in 2013. According to the 2014–2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, an estimated 531,000 people will require assistance in 2014, including 315,200 children.

Disasters

Floods

According to UNICEF in end March, 140,000 people were affected by floods in 2013 and will need humanitarian assistance in 2014.

Displacement

Malian Refugees

Mauritania is the largest recipient of refugees fleeing the conflict in Mali. As of late March 2014, UNHCR reported that Mauritania currently hosts 59,100 Malian refugees. UNHCR reports that almost all refugees live in Mbera camp, a remote desert location on the border with Mali that has 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. Mbera camp is located in a poor region, where food insecurity and malnutrition are high and government services are few. Security problems and the inaccessibility of areas of northern Mali make it difficult to obtain return figures. At the moment, a tripartite agreement is being prepared between UNHCR, Mali, and host countries to facilitate the safe return of refugees.

Food Security

According to OCHA in late February, Mauritania is experiencing widespread food insecurity. Chronic poverty and limited access to basic services have created high levels of vulnerability, with nearly 800,000 people, a fifth of the total population, currently food insecure, including 190,000 severely food insecure.
The overall number of food insecure people has increased dramatically since the last estimate of 470,000 presented in January. Half of the country records malnutrition rates above the emergency threshold, and humanitarian partners indicate that a third of the country’s population require humanitarian assistance.

According to a joint assessment conducted by WFP and UNHCR in Mbera camp in October 2013, food security has improved. Global acute malnutrition is stagnating at 21.6% in March 2013 and 22.2% in October 2013, rates of severe acute malnutrition have gone down from 13.6% in March 2013 to 2.9% in October 2013. Increasingly, households are transitioning from severe to moderate food insecurity.

Despite two good harvest years, the country is still feeling the effects of both the 2012 Sahel food and nutrition crisis and the 2013 floods, which affected some 140,000 people. 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-year average, according to FAO. By contrast, pastures have been affected by insufficient rains in several regions, notably in Brakna, Gorgol, and Guidimaka.

As of 20 February, FEWSNET reported that the 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was recorded as average. However, erratic rainfall in 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 poorer than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than normal.

Northern Guidimaka in Mauritania is anticipated to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity between April and June. The ability of households to expand their coping beyond current levels will be limited in the coming months. 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 agropastoral zone has 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 agropastoral 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 will be in a situation of Stress (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity between January and June 2014.

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 decreasing, but relatively tight coarse-grain markets are anticipated in both Senegal and Mali due to reduced cereal harvests in these countries.

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 under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition.

Health and Nutrition

Malnutrition

Late March, UNICEF reported that 125,300 children will be affected by acute malnutrition in 2014, including 30,740 children with severe acute malnutrition; an increase of almost 30% compared to the 2013 caseload. An estimated 90% of expected SAM cases live in the seven most vulnerable regions.

According to the post-harvest Nutrition Survey of December 2013, 6% of under-fives are affected by acute malnutrition, and 0.7% by SAM. However, these malnutrition rates are likely to rise with the approach of the summer lean season. According to ECHO, over 114,000 Mauritanian children needed therapeutic feeding in 2013.

Updated: 10/04/2014

NIGER FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late March: According to UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee, 15,000 Nigerian refugees and 30,000 returnees have crossed into southeastern Niger (Diffa region) following the declaration of the state of emergency in Nigeria’s northern Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states on 14 May 2013. This is a significant increase from 37,000 in September 2013 and 6,400 in July 2013. Urgent needs include shelter, NFI’s, WASH, and health.

KEY CONCERNS

- 4.3 million Nigeriens (24% of the population) are food insecure, with 420,000 severely food insecure. Another 7.5 million are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity in 2014 (ECHO, February 2014).
- Around 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (OCHA, January 2014).
- Crises in neighbouring countries have led to the arrival of an estimated 100,000 people from Mali (50,000) and Nigeria (50,000) (UNHCR, March 2014).
- Niger is affected by a cholera epidemic, reportedly linked to the one in neighbouring Nigeria. Since January 2014, 95 cases and two deaths have been recorded (UNICEF, March 2014)

Politics and Security

Recorded (UNICEF, March 2014)
Political Context

Regional Context

Niger is affected by instability in a number of neighbouring countries.

In the north, Niger is at the heart of international efforts to tackle Islamist groups in the Sahara, following a French-led offensive in 2013 against Al Qaeda-linked groups who occupied neighbouring northern Mali.

In the south, the potential spillover from Nigeria's Islamist uprising is also threatening Niger's security as a growing number of incidents, including the seizure of arms and arrest of militants, has been recorded.

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to coordinate and institutionalise the alignment of 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 from the international community for US$8 billion to these countries to fight terrorism and support development regionally. The next meeting of the G5 will take place in Chad within six months.

National Context

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 that took place in December 2013. The Government accused a leading opposition figure of calling for a coup and inciting ethnic strife. In addition, at least six journalists and three civil society leaders had 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 discontent over the reported failure of the Government to improve living standards. It was the largest public protest for three years, and took place after a ban on opposition demonstrations was lifted in November.

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. On 5 October an opposition coalition of 15 parties was formed, the ARDR.

In August, President Issoufou appointed a national unity government in an attempt to reinforce political stability, address regional security threats, and deal with corruption, impunity, and demographic and economic challenges.

Security Context

Since May 2013, insecurity has been rising in Niger and across the region due to a series of crises in neighbouring Libya, Mali, and Nigeria. The fragile socioeconomic and political environment is further affected by terrorist threats, including the Nigerian Boko Haram Islamist rebel group, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa.

In January 2014, 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 travel in convoy.

Niger is also facing increasing communal tensions connected to the Tuareg insurgency. Divided along fault lines of class, clan, and generation, 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 has recommended humanitarian teams to travel in convoy.

Displacement

An estimated 100,000 people sought refuge in Niger following crises in neighbouring Mali and Nigeria.

Mali Crisis

UNHCR reported in March that 50,000 Malian refugees are in Niger; 80% are women and children. Most live in the three camps established in Tillabéry region in 2012, namely Abala, Mangaze and Tabarybarey. In 2013, in an attempt to adapt to the specific needs of nomadic refugees, two ‘refugee hosting areas’ were established in Intikane and Tazalit, Tahoua region. After the 2013 French and ECOWAS military intervention and the creation of the MINUSMA force, refugees continued to cross into Niger. Since the presidential elections over July–August 2013, there has been a back-and-forth movement between Niger and the areas of origin in Mali. In November 2013, UNHCR and the Niger authorities began facilitating a voluntary repatriation programme. According to UNHCR in late March, 1,124 Malians have returned spontaneously to Mali.

In late March, UNHCR reported that the crisis in northern Mali since 2012 has also led to the return of 5,120 nationals of Niger who had been living in Mali’s Gao region.

Nigeria Crisis

As of late March, 15,000 Nigerian refugees and 30,000 returnees have crossed into
southeastern Niger (Diffa region) following the declaration of the state of emergency in Nigeria’s northern Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states on 14 May 2013, according to UNHCR and the International Rescue Committee. This is a significant increase from totals of 37,000 in September 2013 and 6,400 in July 2013. Urgent needs include shelter, NFIs, WASH, and health.

These refugees have fled into Niger due to clashes between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian military. The majority of refugees are women and children, who are living with host families with limited food and water resources in Bosso, Abadam, Main Soroa, Diffa, Kablewa, Tchoukoudjani, Garin Amadou, and Baroua.

The Government has reportedly been slow in giving the newly arrived Nigerians refugee status, despite a decree issued in early December granting refugee status to people fleeing places in Nigeria under a state of emergency. On 10 February, however, the Government with UNHCR and UNICEF launched a civil documentation campaign.

CAR Crisis

Since December 2013, 1,160 Nigerien nationals were repatriated from CAR by the IOM in coordination with the Government of Niger.

Food Security

On 14 February, ECHO reported that 4.3 million Nigeriens (24% of the population) are food insecure, with 420,000 individuals in a severe condition. Another 7.5 million are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity in 2014. According to OCHA in late February, 80% of the food insecure people are reported to live in rural areas. In addition in late March, another 30,000 Malian refugee children living in camps and hosting areas are also in need of food assistance.

As of late February, FEWSNET reported there are localised production deficits in agro-pastoral areas of the Tillabéry, 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 agro-pastoral and poor households, who will face 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 an increase in livestock sales, these households will still be unable to meet all their non-food needs and will also be facing Stressed levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) between January and June.

Certain households in Tillabéry, Tahoua, Zinder, and Diffa will have trouble meeting their basic food needs between January and June of this year in spite of efforts to augment income and limit 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 localised pockets of acute food insecurity, most households in Niger will be able to meet their basic food and non-food needs without resorting to irreversible coping strategies. The national food security situation will be marked by Minimal levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and June 2014.

On 7 February, ECHO reported that the violence in Nigeria and the displacement of 40,000 people into Niger has affected large areas of farmland. The ICRC adds that poor security conditions almost halted trade with Nigeria, 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 food insecurity situation is further influenced by the fact that some 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, as reported by OCHA on 3 February.

As of 20 February, FEWSNET states that 2013/14 regional crop production in the Sahel was average. However, erratic rainfall in localised areas of the southern Sahel resulted in crop losses of up to 50% 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

Since January 2014, a total of 95 cholera cases have been registered including two deaths, representing a fatality rate of 2.11% in Tillabéry, Dosso, Maradi, and Zinder regions, as reported by UNICEF in March. The WASH cluster reported that more than 8,200 cases of cholera were recorded in Niger between 2011 and 2013, 7,000 of which were in Tillabéry region, in the departments of Ayorou, Tera, Tillabéry, Kollo, and Gotheye.

In mid-February, Niger’s health authorities stated that the epidemic is linked to the one raging in neighbouring Nigeria, where 6,600 cases and 229 deaths were recorded in 2013. The epidemic is exacerbated by polluted water, limited access to safe drinking water, and unsanitary conditions.

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 Tillabéry, 120km 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 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition, amounting to a caseload of one million children under five suffering from acute malnutrition. This is an increase compared to 2012 and 2013, when, respectively 567,700 and 625,500 children suffered from acute malnutrition. UNICEF reported in mid-October that more than 2,500 children under five died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

Updated: 10/04/2014

SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- 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. Two million people, a third of Somalia’s population, are considered to be at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2). More than 203,000 children under five are acutely malnourished, mainly in south-central Somalia (FAO, March).

Politics and Security

Political Context

Somalia suffers from a chronic fragility of state institutions as a result of two decades of civil war. On 4 March, human rights groups called for the arms embargo against Somalia, which had been partially lifted by the UN Security Council in March 2013, to be tightened, citing Government failure to control the flow of arms into the country, and its participation in the diversion of weapons. The lift was, however, renewed on 5 March until October. In mid-February, a leaked UN report accused the Federal Government of supplying weapons to militant group Al Shabaab. These claims had been made in earlier reports.

In early February, 700 soldiers demonstrated against their dismissal from the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF): local observers reported that the Government had neither disarmed the fired soldiers nor provided them with appropriate reintegration plans.

On 21 January, new Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed named a new Cabinet, following a vote in the Federal Parliament. Following the dismissal of Prime Minister Shirdon on 2 December, Ahmed was appointed by President Mahamud on 12 December, ending a government crisis that had raised significant concerns over security. Infighting between presidents and prime ministers is a recurrent problem, and while the swift replacement of Shirdon is seen as a positive development, the political situation remains unstable. The choice of Prime Minister Ahmed 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

Since the launch of the SNAF and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) military offensive against Al Shabaab-held areas of Somalia in early March 2014, security is said to have deteriorated. The number of attacks and fatalities in the country had decreased between 2010 and 2013, but south-central Somalia remains particularly affected by non-state armed groups, and semi-autonomous northeastern and northwestern territories Puntland and Somaliland are subject to inter-communal violence.

2011–2012 marked considerable strategic gains in Mogadishu and its surroundings by the Somalia–AU campaign, especially after the deployment of Ethiopian and Kenyan troops in 2011. The expansion of the Federal Government has pushed Al Shabaab both southwards and northeast, and the group retains strongholds in parts of rural southern and central Somalia and in the mountains of the semi-autonomous Puntland region.

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 lead
to increased raiding activity among the various groups.

**Al Shabaab Attacks**

Al Shabaab is reportedly fleeing in advance of the SNAF-AU offensive, but has repeatedly pledged to increase retaliatory attacks. Uganda and Kenya, who contribute troops to AMISOM, announced that they anticipated retaliatory terrorist attacks by Al Shabaab in their countries following the offensive.

On 2 April, the media reported that the town of Qoryooley in Lower Shabelle has suffered a number of attacks, causing an unconfirmed number of casualties. Qoryooley had been captured by Al Shabaab on 22 March and Al Shabaab militants are said to have retreated to the outskirts of the town. On 26 March, OCHA reported that four civilians had been killed in a suicide attack near a hotel in Bulo Burto in Hiraan. On 18 March, observers reported eight people dead after a suicide bombing in the town of Buulo Burde, in Hiraan. Buulo Burde had been recently taken by SNAF-AMISOM. In late February, Al Shabaab had vowed to recapture all Somali territory that it had lost in 2013.

On 15 March, a car bomb near a Mogadishu hotel popular with government officials injured at least one person. The same hotel had been bombed, and several people killed, in November 2013. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in Mogadishu in February, with a death toll of 28 and targets including the intelligence headquarters, the presidential palace, and a UN convoy near the airport. On 10 February, two car bombs wounded five people in Mogadishu. No group has claimed responsibility, but authorities blamed the incident on Al Shabaab.

A twin bombing in Mogadishu on 2 January, which killed 11 people, represented the start of Al Shabaab’s 2014 insurgency campaign, according to the group. On 27 December, a suspected Al Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab bomb attack killed eight people in the Daynille district of Mogadishu, though Al Shabaab did not claim responsibility.

Security in Mogadishu is still better than at its lowest point in August 2011, but Al Shabaab attacks in urban centres and along transport axes are common. Sporadic violence by other armed groups, targeting mostly soldiers and security forces, is also an issue.

On 31 March, an INGO analysis confirmed that there had been a surge in conflict events in February. These were reportedly due both to attacks involving Al Shabaab (which represented 40% of events) and to communal and militia violence (over half of events).

Observers consider that the recent resurgence of attacks is due both to insufficient military commitment by the Government and AU and to discontent with the state’s inability to provide basic services, which fuels armed groups’ leverage for recruitment campaigns.

**Puntland**

On 7 April, international media reported that two UN consultants were killed in a suspected targeted attack by two gunmen at Galkayo airport, in Puntland. Observers fear that the current military effort to force Al Shabaab out of urban areas is pushing the group into the northern semi-autonomous region of Puntland. Puntland is struggling to uproot Al Shabaab 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 detained in the same locality. On 29 September, the defence forces of Puntland raided Al Shabaab positions in the Galgala Mountains, reportedly inflicting casualties.

On 8 January, former Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali was elected President of Puntland in a tightly contested poll unseating President Farole. Elections were initially set for July 2013, but had been postponed due to the risk of violence and tension between the central Government and Puntland authorities. The region, home to 2.5 million people, declared itself semi-autonomous in 1998. In late August, 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 towards Mogadishu, on the grounds that central authorities refused to share power and foreign aid with the region.

**Military Operations and International Presence**

As of 26 March, according to OCHA, the SNAF-AMISOM offensive launched in early March to recover Al Shabaab-controlled areas of southern and central Somalia continued. An estimated three million people live in these areas, which comprise Bakool, Gedo, Lower and Middle Shabelle, Galgaduud, Hiraan, Bay, and Middle and Lower Juba.

On 22 March, according to the AU, the SNAF, with the support of AU forces, recaptured the town of Qoryooley, located 120km southwest of Mogadishu, in Lower Shabelle. However, reports indicated that Al Shabaab militants remained on the outskirts of the town on 2 April.

On 7 March, Somali forces captured the previously Al Shabaab-held city of Hudur, capital of Bakool region, with the help of Ethiopian AMISOM troops. Twelve people were reportedly killed during the attack.

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 states to provide AMISOM with financial and military support. Following the Westgate attack in Kenya in September, 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 2013, an estimated 3,000 AU peacekeepers had been killed in Somalia since 2007. Tensions between local authorities and the different military forces in Somalia had prompted Ethiopia, on 22 April, to announce its wish to remove troops from the country. However, it has no plans for a complete withdrawal. In January 2014, according to official reports, Addis Ababa pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is achieved. During March–April 2013, 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**
Access

Insecurity continues to affect humanitarian work, with reports in late December and early January of aid workers being targeted by armed groups, including Al Shabaab, for arrest and detention in the areas of Bakool, Bay, Gedo, and Lower and Middle Juba. In the south, where floods have affected the population since November, humanitarian access is reportedly hampered by bureaucratic impediments to the recruitment of staff and implementation of assistance operations.

The withdrawal of Al Shabaab from key towns in the south had enabled increased international presence in some areas, but on 26 March, OCHA reported that Al Shabaab retains control of some supply routes, which continues to hamper commercial activities as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Roadblocks had been set up in various locations, including Xudur, Bakool region, according to a 21 March OCHA report. FAO noted that conflict has disrupted the movement of food and other basic commodities in most southern regions, particularly Bakool.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who had worked in Somalia since 1991, ceased all Somali operations on 14 August, after attacks against its staff increased. On 15 August, the Government urged MSF to reconsider its withdrawal. On the same day, Al Shabaab militants looted MSF hospitals in Dinsoor (Bay region) and Mararey (Middle Juba region).

Displacement

Internal Displacement

At 1 April, according to OCHA, an estimated 1.1 million Somalis were IDPs. According to January UNHCR figures, most are in the south-central region (893,000), and 130,000 in Puntland and 85,000 in Somaliland. In the south-central region, 369,000 IDPs are living in makeshift camps in Mogadishu.

On 7 April, UNHCR figures indicated that 40,000–44,000 people were estimated to have been displaced since the beginning of the SNAF-AMISOM military offensive. On 18 March, OCHA had reported the displacement of at least 39,000 people, including 16,000 people in Bay region, and 21,000 people in Hiraan region, since early March, while on 26 March OCHA had reported 12,000 displaced in Bay and Hiraan just between 17 and 22 March. As of 12 March, according to OCHA, approximately 5,000 IDPs had arrived in Baidoa, Bay region.

In January 2013, authorities announced plans to relocate IDPs from the capital to camps outside the city, as a consequence of urban development. The UN estimates that several thousand IDPs were evicted during August and September 2013, and 27,000 people evicted from different settlements in Mogadishu in November and December. While the official relocation plans are on hold, trends show that eviction of IDPs by private landowners has increased. The proposed solution is to move IDPs to the Daynille district, west of the city centre. This area is considered particularly insecure, and ownership issues raise the question of whether the land is public property and thus available for relocation purposes. As of 7 March, Government sources estimated that 30,000 Somali IDPs in Mogadishu were awaiting relocation.

Refugees

As of March, UNHCR reported that 966,398 Somalis were refugees in neighbouring countries, the majority in Kenya (around 439,000), Ethiopia (245,000), and Yemen (230,000).

In March, UNHCR announced that 34,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya during 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 25 March, according to international media, the Kenyan Government issued an encampment order for all Somali refugees in Kenya, which restricts them to the Dadaab and Kakuma camps.

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 shutdown 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 compounded by the early seasonal outbreak of clan fighting. Insecurity prevented the repair of a breach in the Shabelle river embankment, resulting in floodwater pouring onto the plain. Water has contaminated wells, disrupted markets, destroyed crops, and delayed crucial planting for the next crop season. A major frontline between AU troops and Al Shabaab is further limiting access and the provision of assistance.

On 10–11 November, Tropical Cyclone Three made landfall on the impoverished region of Puntland, with rain and high winds 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 services was 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.

Food Security

The situation has improved only slightly since the 2011 Horn of Africa drought and famine, when the number of people requiring urgent assistance peaked at four million. As of February, according to a November–December 2013 assessment, insecurity, disasters, and a below-average harvest are all affecting food security. According to observers, populations in regions affected by the SNAF-AMISOM offensive are experiencing rising food prices and reduced availability of basic commodities. According to OCHA on 7 April, shortages were reported on local markets in towns affected by conflict, including Bulo Burto (Hirana region), Buur Dhubu (Gedo region), and Rab Dhuure, Waajid and Xudur (Bakool region). According to OCHA on 26 March, prices in the town of Xudur have increased by 26% since the beginning of the month. FEWSNET reported on the same day that food security was likely to deteriorate in areas affected by the military offensive, especially Middle and Lower Shabelle, while on 21 March, OCHA reported that fighting had affected planting activities in Bakool. On 18 March, OCHA had reported that the military offensive could disrupt the gu planting season (March/April), whose harvest could in turn be negatively affected in August/September, especially in the Shabelle and Juba regions and in parts of Bay and Bakool regions.

On 31 March, FAO reported that the number of people currently in acute food security crisis (IPC Phase 3 and 4) was 603,000, with a total of 857,000 projected to be at Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity from February to June 2014. The number of Somalis at Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2) is two million; however, their situation remains fragile, and any significant shock could put them at Crisis or Emergency levels.

An estimated 74% of people experiencing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity are IDPs. Most are located in the northern regions of Sanaag, Sool, Bari, and Nugaal, the central regions of Mudug, Galgaduud and Hiran, and the southern regions of Middle Shabelle, and Middle and Lower Juba. In late February, according to Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit, 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 are increasing in the southern Juba and Shabelle regions.

In Bari and Nugaal in Puntland, the areas hit by the November cyclone, the widespread loss of assets, livelihoods, and livestock present a challenge to the local population. In the south, a deterioration in the food security situation is expected in parts of Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle, and Hiraan regions. This is mainly due to recent floods and the poor performance of the deyr rainy season (October–November), which affected production and caused displacement and livelihood disruption. In most urban centres, the population is expected to remain at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels due to the relative stability of food prices. Rainfall is expected to be below-average to average throughout the gu rainy season (March–May).

Health and Nutrition

Polio

The first confirmed case of the wild poliovirus since 2007 was reported in Mogadishu on 9 May 2013. The total number of confirmed cases in 2013 stood at 194 as of March 2014. The polio epidemic has spread to neighbouring countries with 14 in Kenya, six in Ethiopia, and three cases reported in South Sudan. The first vaccination campaign began on 14 May 2013. However, fighting in Kismayo halted the planned July polio vaccination campaign, 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 Somalia is high due to substantial population immunity gaps.

Malaria

As of 28 February, a malaria screening 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 tested positive, according to an IOM report.

Malnutrition

Nutrition indicators in Somalia have improved since the 2011 famine. However, according to a February FAO report, the prevalence of malnutrition remains critical and above WHO’s emergency threshold of 15% for GAM. Critical rates of GAM reportedly affected child IDPs in south Somalia.

According to an OCHA report released on 1 April, 304,000 children under five years are in need of treatment for acute malnutrition. At 31 March, a post-deyr FAO nutrition assessment conducted from November to January indicated that 203,000 children are acutely malnourished, a slight decrease compared to January 2013, when the caseload was 215,000. As of March, FAO indicated that an estimated 51,000 children suffered from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), an increase from 45,000 at the same period in 2013.

At the start of August 2013, FAO had reported critical levels of GAM in northeast, central, and south Somalia. GAM of 19% were reported in Kismayo, a flashpoint area of tribal fighting.

WASH

According to an INGO report, Gedo region has been affected by a severe water crisis, with four out of five water sources reportedly dry. According to OCHA on 26 March, access to water is limited for the people recently displaced by conflict in Bakool.

Updated: 08/04/2014
KEY DEVELOPMENTS

11 April: The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) announced that Monitoring and Verification Teams for the 23 January ceasefire, had started operations in Bor (Jonglei state) and Bentiu (Unity state).

10 April: According to an aid organisation, fighting between government forces and SPLA was ongoing in Kaka and Wodikona near Malakal, Upper Nile state.

7 April: According to UNHCR, the city of Neem, in the northern part of Unity state, was bombed by a suspected military aircraft. An aircraft was also spotted in the area of Yida two days later. These are, respectively, transit and hosting areas for Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan.

KEY CONCERNS

- The security situation in South Sudan remains volatile with ongoing conflict and clashes, particularly in Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile states.

- Since December 2013, the conflict has caused the internal displacement of 817,000 people (OCHA, April). There are over 353,000 refugees in neighbouring countries; 283,000 have fled since the outbreak of the crisis in December (UNHCR, April). An estimated 67,000 people are sheltering in eight UN peacekeeping bases (IOM, April).

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

- Humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people are currently facing Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phases 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority located in the eastern states. Overall, an estimated 4.9 million people are considered in urgent need of humanitarian assistance (OCHA, January).

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 on 23 January, violence continues and tensions are running high, especially in Unity, Jonglei, Lakes and Upper Nile states. According to local sources, internal strife has progressively adopted characteristics of an inter-communal conflict between the Dinka tribe allied to South Sudan President Kiir and government forces on one side, and Nuer forces loosely allied with former South Sudan Vice President Riek Machar on the other. Peace negotiations have been showing slow progress.

On 2 April, the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan held its second meeting. The Commission had been appointed by the AU on 7 March, and is tasked with investigating human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict that erupted in mid-December 2013.

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.

On 22 March, local sources reported that South Sudan and Sudan had agreed to accelerate negotiations towards the implementation of the security mechanism and of a border buffer zone, which had been agreed by the two countries in September 2012.

On 19 March, local sources reported that Sudan and South Sudan had agreed to reactivate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). South Sudan had withdrawn from the agreement in November over a border dispute.

In early January, Sudanese President Bashir met with his southern counterpart President Kiir, and expressed his willingness to support the Government of South Sudan 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

On 11 April, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which is brokering negotiations, announced that Monitoring and Verification Teams, agreed as part of the South Sudan peace talks, had started operations to monitor the implementation of the 23 January ceasefire in Bor (Jonglei state) and Bentiu (Unity state). IGAD had dispatched a 14-person joint technical committee, comprising both Government and opposition representatives, to the main flashpoint towns of Juba, Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu in early February. The team was deployed to initiate the establishment of the Monitoring and Verification Mechanism 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.

On 31 March, observers reported that the second round of peace talks in Addis Ababa had again been suspended, this time at the request of IGAD mediators. Negotiations have been slow, and stalled several times. Parties have not agreed on a framework for the peace talks and there is reportedly disagreement over the release of political detainees, the participation of seven former political detainees in the negotiations, Uganda’s role as an observer at the talks, and the inclusion of certain territories within the joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM).

On 26 February, IGAD had presented a proposal for an interim government in South Sudan, pending presidential elections. Both warring parties accepted the proposal in principle, dismissing rumours that this interim government would exclude both South Sudan’s President Salva Kiir, and former Vice-President turned rebel leader Riek Machar.

In a separate development, on 28 March, according to local observers, a peace agreement was signed between South Sudanese authorities and the Jonglei-based rebel group South Sudan Democratic Movement – Cobra Faction (SSDM-Cobra faction). The movement had waged a small-scale rebellion against the Government since the 2010 general election that preceded South Sudan’s independence.

In late February, an exiled South Sudanese opposition organisation requested participation in the peace talks. The South Sudan United Democratic Alliances (SSUDA), 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. Three other exiled opposition parties agreed on 15 March to take part in peace talks as an umbrella organisation under the leadership of the SSUDA. The three parties are the National Revolutionary Democratic Party/Front (NRDP/F), Revolutionary Alliance for South Sudan (RASS) and the South Sudan Republican Party (SSRP).

Security Context

Although the 23 January cessation of hostilities agreement led to a considerable reduction in violence in February, reports indicate fighting persists on the ground and both sides continue to trade accusations that each is violating the terms of the truce. Clashes took place in Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity in February and March. The security situation remains relatively calm in the states of Central and Eastern Equatoria, and fighting between rival factions reported in Juba on 5 March was contained by 6 March.

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. In January, the International Crisis Group estimated the death toll to be 10,000. As of 12 March, humanitarian partners reported that over 5,900 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds since mid-December; although the number of gunshot patients has decreased significantly since early February, possibly due to fewer clashes between the warring parties compared to January.

On 7 April, according to a UNHCR report, the city of Neem, in the northern part of Unity state, was bombed by a suspected military aircraft. An aircraft was also spotted in the area of Yida two days later. UNHCR reported that Yida hosts 70,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan, while Neem is located on a road used by incoming Sudanese refugees.

Fighting in Upper Nile State

According to an aid agency, on 10 April fighting between government forces and SPLA was ongoing in Kaka and Wodikona near Malakal, Upper Nile state.

Humanitarian organisations reported that the situation of Sudanese refugees in Maban county remained critical. In late March, clashes had occurred in Malakal and Maban counties. Clashes in Fashoda were reported by OCHA in mid-March, and fighting was reportedly triggered by the oil fields of Adar earlier in the month. In areas around Melut and Malakal, the conflict was reportedly moving north, and aid agencies indicated that both parties continued to mobilise.

As of late February, the security situation in the key oil-hub town of Malakal was tense following heavy fighting between government and opposition forces from 18 to 20 February. The fighting represented the biggest clash since the ceasefire was signed, and was reportedly triggered by an assault by the insurgents.

The town was deserted, with opposition forces present near the airport and hospital. 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. Looting was reported across the town. The week before, inter-communal clashes broke out inside the UN base, which shelters 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.
**Fighting in Jonglei State**

According to the Health Cluster on 3 April, clashes between SPLA and opposition forces in Jonglei state caused the displacement of over 10,000 people from Twic East and Duk counties to the area of the state capital, Bor (Bor county).

Over the last week of March, according to local sources, over 30 civilians were killed in violence between pro- and anti-government armed groups in Duk county. Clashes causing displacement were also reported by OCHA in mid-March, and tensions in Duk and Twic East counties continued to trigger displacement towards Awerial county, Lakes state in early March.

On 24 February, local authorities reported that an attack by rebel fighters killed three civilians and displaced over 68,000 people from their villages in Duk county. Most displaced were said to be moving towards Twic East county.

Clashes were also reported in Gadiang, north of the state capital Bor, on 23 February. According to military sources, over 170 insurgents were killed in three rounds of attacks, while the SPLA lost 19 soldiers.

Jonglei remained relatively calm in early February, although 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.

**Fighting in Unity State**

Late March, Leer county was the scene of fighting. Humanitarian partners had reported a significant military presence in the area at the end of February, but no new incidents had been reported since clashes earlier in the month. OCHA also indicated continuing clashes in Guit county.

The town of Bentiu was reportedly tense but stable at the end of February; new arrivals in the UN base were fearing a possible attack by armed forces.

Local sources reported that nine people were killed in an attack on a civilian convoy in Mayom county on 10 February. Local authorities blamed the attack on anti-government forces, but this was denied by the insurgents.

**Fighting in Lakes State**

Late March, clashes were reported in Cueibet county. In early February, OCHA reported clashes in the area of Rumbek East that caused temporary suspension of movement between Rumbek and Yirol.

**International Military Presence**

As of 19 March, the UNMISS command told the UN Security Council that it would suspend its current activities to focus on protection of civilians, prevention of inter-communal clashes, and support to IGAD as requested.

On 16 March, South Sudan approved the deployment of the Protection Deterrent Force (PDF), a regional force drawn from IGAD member countries. While the size, mandate, command and deployment timeframe of the contingent are still under discussion, it is expected to come in addition to the over 10,000 UN peacekeeping personnel, and will be tasked with providing protection to the IGAD Joint Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) agreed by the warring parties in the 25 January ceasefire deal. The East African force will also be charged with the protection of oil fields in the northern states of Unity and Upper Nile, on the grounds that these areas are considered rebel strongholds.

In late February, Uganda announced it would withdraw its troops from South Sudan, where it is supporting the SPLA, as soon as IGAD’s regional stabilisation force is ready to take over.

On 4 February, a contingent of 266 additional peacekeepers arrived in South Sudan, and more battalions are expected. 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 persistent inter-communal violence, concentrated in Jonglei state and the central tri-state area of Lakes, Unity, and Warrap, with incidents in Northern Bahr-El-Ghazal and Western Equatoria as well.

On 3 April, according to local media, representatives of the Nuer community have stated that over 17,000 Nuers had been killed by pro-government forces since December.

South Sudan’s stability is still challenged by the polarisation of divergent ethnic and political communities. In late November 2013, the Government 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 resulted in a significant reduction in insurgency, mostly in the Greater Upper Nile region of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile states. As of November, 13 armed groups had responded to a general amnesty. Juba underscored that efforts must continue to bring rebels on board, and 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.

**Inter-communal Violence in Jonglei State**

On 8 April, according to local sources, peace talks between Kuei and Rup Dinka over tensions in Rumbek Central county broke down. They were aimed at solving a cattle ownership dispute that had been ongoing since November. On 21 March, dialogue between two Dinka subgroups, the Gaak and the Manuer, took place in Rumbek North county. Nine people had been killed in a clash between the two groups on 10 March.

As of 21 March, according to foreign media, clashes between Panyar and Waat subgroups of the Dinka Gok ethnic group in Cueibet county, Lakes state, had left 15 people dead.

**Inter-communal Violence in Lakes State**

On 18 March, according to local observers, three people were killed in a fight between
villagers and cattle raiders in Twic East county. The raiders reportedly came from neighbouring Pibor county. Each of the two counties is populated by tribes allied to opposed sides of the South Sudan conflict.

On 31 January, the Jonglei-based rebel leader David Yau Yau (South Sudan Democratic Army) signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government in Juba, which could signal the end of one of the longest-running insurgencies in the country. While the talks are set to continue, the two sides have agreed to set up a monitoring and verification team composed of church mediators, UNMISS, and a military unit made up equally of Government 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.

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 widespread militarisation of the population and availability of small arms during the second Sudanese civil war and. Deaths from inter-communal fighting have increased, along with attacks and abductions of civilians and significant population displacement. In 2013, the rise of ethnic violence in Jonglei forced 120,000 people to flee to the bush, where they are cut off from aid and face severe food insecurity. According to observers, the lack of state-provided authority, security and justice mechanisms pushed many Murle to join Yau Yau’s SSDA.

**Inter-communal Violence in Warrap State**

On 10 April, humanitarian organisations reported that 21 people were killed during cattle raids in Tonj East and Twic county. On 18 February, local sources reported two cattle raids in Akop Payam, Tonk North county, and Paliang Payam, Tonj East county. 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.

On 15 and 16 March, dialogue was reportedly facilitated by UNMISS between Apuk Juwir and Thony communities in Tonj South county.

In early February, local sources reported that at least 42 people had been killed in attacks on two areas in Tonj North county. While it is unclear who carried out the attacks, cattle were reportedly taken.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

At 4 April, OCHA reported that an estimated 4.9 million people – over 40% of the total population – are in need of urgent assistance. Only one million have been provided with humanitarian assistance. Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity are priority states for humanitarian assistance, and priority sectors are food security and livelihoods, health, non-food items and shelter, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene.

The crisis that erupted 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.

**Access**

On 3 April, OCHA reported that the onset of the rainy season in late March, and the flooding of roads, was impeding access to populations in need and increasing the cost of humanitarian assistance in a context of already insufficient humanitarian funding.

Several humanitarian organisations have reported that impediments and logistical constraints due to bad road conditions threaten to complicate access to vulnerable populations in Upper Nile, Jonglei and Unity states through the humanitarian corridor established from Gambella, Ethiopia, to these regions.

As of 21 March, UNHCR reported that the South Sudan government claimed to have intercepted arms and ammunition in UNMISS-contracted vehicles in Rumbek, Lakes state, and announced it would implement routine searches of UN and relief organisations convoys.

As of 19 March, OCHA reported that access constraints were increasingly hampering the delivery of aid, forcing humanitarian organisations to resort to airlifting humanitarian supplies to areas that cannot be reached otherwise, especially in Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile states.

As of 13 March, OCHA had reported that renewed tensions and violence in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile are hampering humanitarian access, notably in three counties – Duk in Jonglei, Leek in Unity, and Fashoda in Upper Nile. Insecurity continues to constrain road movement, and many private transporters are reportedly reluctant to move humanitarian goods, alleging increased levels of intimidation, impediments to paying staff, and the imposition of arbitrary taxes by non-state actors or local authorities. Additionally, physical impediments still prevent aid organisations from reaching rural areas, limiting the ability of agencies to preposition supplies ahead of the onset of the rainy season in June.

In January, the UN accused both rebels and government 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 metric tons 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 3 April, OCHA reported that over a million South Sudanese have been displaced internally and across borders since conflict erupted in December 2013. 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. 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

According to OCHA, as of 10 April the number of IDPs in South Sudan stood at 817,000. At 3 April, most IDPs located in the central state of Lakes (104,000), the northern state of Unity (240,000), the northeastern state of Upper Nile (88,000) and the eastern state of Jonglei (198,000). According to UNICEF on 10 March, 377,400 children are among the IDPs. An estimated 76,600 people are sheltering in ten UN bases, mostly in Juba and Malakal.

On 9 April, UNMISS reported that 67,000 people were sheltering in eight peacekeeping bases. Overcrowding in these bases reportedly posed significant risks for the IDPs. A relocation of IDPs from the Tomping UNMISS base, and expansion works at the Juba (Central Equatoria), Malakal (Upper Nile) and Bor (Jonglei) UNMISS bases, were in process.

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 suggests that the displaced are not attempting 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 24 March, UNHCR reported South Sudan hosts an estimated 235,000 refugees, mostly from neighbouring Sudan, and who are mainly in Upper Nile and Unity states (125,000 and 80,000 refugees, respectively). In late March, humanitarian organisations had expressed concern over the tensions between Sudanese refugees and host communities in Maban county of Upper Nile state, South Sudan, where, according to OCHA on 3 April, 126,000 Sudanese refugees reside in four refugee camps.

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

On 8 April, UNHCR reported that the number of South Sudanese in neighbouring countries stood at 353,000, 283,000 of whom had left due to the recent conflict, according to 11 April figures. At 10 April, UNHCR reported that over 92,000 South Sudanese refugees had arrived in Ethiopia, 96,000 in Uganda, 33,000 in Kenya and 60,000 in Sudan. Humanitarian partners reported the daily rate of arrivals is estimated at 1,000 for Ethiopia, 890 for Uganda, 360 in Kenya, and 350 in Sudan. The humanitarian community expects the total number of South Sudanese refugees in the Gambella region of Ethiopia to reach 150,000 over the course of 2014.

In late March, disagreement arose between Sudanese and UN officials regarding the status of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals in Sudan. According to a statement by UNHCR on 3 April, the Sudanese Government has refused to recognise the South Sudanese nationals as refugees and instead has announced that it considered them to be Sudanese citizens. In late March, the Sudanese Government stated that all foreigners in Sudan had to legalise their situation by registering with the immigration administration by 1 April. UNHCR has declared that this dispute over the status of these South Sudanese nationals constitutes an obstacle to their access to humanitarian assistance.

Disasters

On 4 April, IOM reported that the onset of the rainy season had triggered flooding and the collapse of temporary shelters in displacement sites across the country. In late March, UN agencies had reported that the rainy season had started early, and that flooding was likely to increase humanitarian needs and the risk of a food crisis among IDPs. In 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–October). Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people currently reside in flood risk areas. According to OCHA on 10 March, early rains in the capital Juba caused flooding in the UN Tomping displacement site, which hosts over 20,000 people. According to local observers, swamp communities of the Dinka ethnic group from Bor county, Jonglei state, who had fled to Tok area, Central Equatoria state, following fighting in December, are now seeking to relocate given the flooding forecast in Tok. Flood risk is also reported as high in the Mingkaman displacement sites, in Lakes state.

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-E1-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 Phases 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority located in the eastern states of Jonglei, Unity, and Upper Nile. This represents almost four times the pre-crisis estimate of one million food insecure.

While the overall food security situation had improved slightly over the last two years, the
Food Security Cluster has reported high food insecurity in conflict-affected areas. As of 7 March, Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4) were recorded in most of Jonglei state, in northern Unity state, and in parts of Upper Nile state. Crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) were recorded in most of Central and Eastern Equatoria, northeastern Jonglei, southern Upper Nile, southern Unity, and northern Lakes. The rest of the territory is showing Stressed levels (IPC Phase 2), except for Western Equatoria state, which records Minimal levels (IPC Phase 1) of food insecurity.

Outlook for Food Security

Conflict is affecting major supply routes, displacing traders and leading to a rise in food and fuel prices. Local markets are also disrupted. Given that 78% of the rural population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, this disruption is concerning. In mid-January, FAO warned that violence was threatening to hamper the March planting season for maize, groundnuts, and sorghum.

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. 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 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 health 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

At 3 April, humanitarian partners reported that suspected measles cases had been reported in IDP settlements in Bentiu and Yida (Unity state), Lankien and Yuai (Jonglei state), Nasir (Upper Nile state), Tomping (Central Equatoria state), as well as Cueibeit county (Lakes state).

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 Poliovirus

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 2013, global acute malnutrition among under-fives stood at 18.1%. In August, WFP estimated the average national GAM rates to be at around 11%, with Jonglei, Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states showing serious to critical levels ranging from 14% to 21%.

WASH

As of mid-March, local authorities in Central Equatoria warned of the risks of a cholera outbreak in the capital Juba, if water and sanitation facilities are not improved before the April–October rainy season starts.

Updated: 14/04/2014

SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

6 April: The Sudanese Government announced that it had expelled rebels from the town of Kutum, North Darfur, local media reported. Air strikes by government forces were reported on the same day. On 3 April, according to the same source, a clash between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Border Guards in Kutum had caused the death of three security and military officials. Attacks in the region by pro-government militia have reportedly caused the displacement of 10,000 people in the last two weeks. On 1 April, the North Darfur state government convened a meeting in El Fashir to discuss an emergency plan for the people affected by the recent surge in militia attacks.

3 April: UNHCR reported that the Sudanese Government has refused to recognise newly arrived South Sudanese as refugees, but has demanded that they receive humanitarian aid. UNHCR has declared that the dispute over these people’s status is an
2 April: According to a local NGO, fighting between two Arab tribes, Nawayba and Ergat, in the Nertiti area of Central Darfur, caused the death of two people.

31 March–1 April: According to local media, attacks by the pro-government militia Rapid Support Force (RSF) have razed 127 villages in the vicinity of Nyala, South Darfur.

KEY CONCERNS

- Sudan is facing protracted insurgencies by several armed groups across Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile states. Tensions continue to run high due to the conflict in South Sudan. Khartoum has expressed concern about an influx of refugees and arms as the unrest continues.

- Clashes between rebel groups, militias, and the Sudanese army in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 207,000 people since 17 January (OCHA, April 2014), and local sources have reported dozens of civilians killed. There are an estimated 2.8 million IDPs in Sudan. According to OCHA in March 2014, there are two million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 who were displaced in 2013.

- An estimated 61,000 South Sudanese have crossed into Sudan since the beginning of the South Sudan crisis in mid-December (UNHCR, April 2014).

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

- An estimated 4.2 million people face Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity. Most food insecure people are in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and the disputed Abyei area.

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

For information on Darfur and on Blue Nile, West Kordofan, and South Kordofan, see separate sections below the general section on Sudan.

Sudan

Politics and Security

Tensions continue to run high between Sudan and South Sudan, where conflict since mid-December is affecting oil transit and causing population displacement. Khartoum is also dealing with numerous protracted insurgencies waged by several coordinated armed groups across the states of Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

On 11 March, according to Amnesty International, one person was killed and over 100 students were arrested following peace demonstrations in Khartoum.

The east of the country, in contrast, has not seen a deadly conflict since 2006, but is still challenged by fighting within the Eastern Front (EF) alliance of armed groups, 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 bringing South Sudanese refugees. Oil and transit fees make up both countries' main source of foreign income.

On 22 March, local sources reported that South Sudan and Sudan had agreed to accelerate negotiations towards the implementation of a security mechanism and a border buffer zone, which had been agreed by the two countries in September 2012. Three days earlier, the two countries agreed to reactivate the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). South Sudan had withdrawn from the agreement in November over a border dispute.

Clashes in the disputed Abyei region between the Misseriya and Ngok Dinka tribes caused Sudanese officials on 2 March 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 has seen the arrival of 2,500 South Sudanese refugees since December, according to IOM.

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 also said 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: Sudan and South Sudan discussed their respective complaints and claims relating to the presence of, and support to, rebel groups in both countries. The two sides had issued a joint statement agreeing to expel rebel groups from the demilitarised zone between the two countries and open crossing points for oil export two months earlier. Tensions had risen in June over Juba's alleged support for Sudanese rebels and Khartoum's alleged support for rebels in Jonglei state, South Sudan.

In March 2013, the two countries signed a technical agreement on 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.

Insurgent Groups
Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups in the states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur. Violence in Blue Nile and South Kordofan has grown significantly since South Sudan won independence in 2011, and 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 in Darfur, which continues today.

**Sudan Revolutionary Front**

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).

On 20 February, three SRF leaders met with the US Special Envoy to Sudan to discuss their position on the comprehensive peace process, unification of the negotiation platforms, and their view on President Al Bashir’s call for dialogue. 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 to 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 2013, SRF representatives met with French, German, and UK representatives in Europe to discuss the humanitarian situation in rebel-held areas of Sudan and gather support for a comprehensive peace process. 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, warning that they would take measures against insurgents, and demanding that the UN Security Council also agree sanctions, if the insurgents rejected its appeal.

Peace talks remain deadlocked because the SRF demands a holistic process while the Government of Sudan is only willing to discuss the conflict in Darfur. Despite Khartoum’s peace gestures towards separate rebel factions, 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 mid-2014. A large-scale military campaign was reportedly already ongoing in the three areas at the end of January 2013.

**Instability in the East**

Despite being home to the largest gold mine and Port Sudan, where all the country’s oil exports transit, east Sudan 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), the alliance that signed the agreement seven years ago. Factions of the EF have been calling for regime change, and claim they wish to join the southern and Darfuri-based SRF, because of spreading conflict and Khartoum’s alleged failure to implement the core elements of the ESPA. In 2012, activists demanded separation from Khartoum and the creation of the Democratic Republic of Eastern Sudan on the grounds that the Government 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 Government is reportedly buying off tribal leaders by allowing local militias to arm, and boosting support to Arab tribes, raising fears of renewed inter-communal violence.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

The humanitarian situation remains critical, with several regions dealing with large-scale internal displacement, widespread food insecurity, malnutrition, lack of access to basic services – including 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 remains a major problem, particularly in conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian operations are heavily hampered by insecurity, the presence of mines and ERW, logistical constraints, and Government restrictions.

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

On 4 October 2013, 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, the transport of citizens stranded at the borders, the relocation of refugees from the demilitarised zone, and the repatriation of prisoners of war. However, information on whether these measures are implemented is lacking.

On 21 August, the Sudanese Interior Minister announced that the Government would reportedly buy off tribal leaders by allowing local militias to arm, and boost support to Arab tribes, raising fears of renewed inter-communal violence.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

According to OCHA, as of 31 January an estimated 2.3 million Sudanese are internally


displaced due to conflict, food insecurity, and environmental conditions. On 3 April, OCHA reported that clashes between rebel groups, militias, and the Sudanese army in the Darfur region are estimated to have caused the displacement of 207,000 people since 17 January.

**Sudanese Refugees in Other Countries**

In late March, humanitarian organisations expressed concern over the tensions between Sudanese refugees and host communities in the Upper Nile state of South Sudan, where, according to OCHA on 3 April, 126,000 Sudanese refugees reside in four refugee camps.

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

As of 9 March, OCHA reported that there were 353,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad, 237,000 in South Sudan and Ethiopia, and 5,000 in Central African Republic.

**Refugees in Sudan**

According to UNHCR, by mid-February Sudan was hosting 156,000 refugees, mostly from Eritrea, with smaller numbers from Chad, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan.

There is concern about the arrival of refugees from South Sudan, and the potential return of 200,000 Sudanese refugees originally from South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, given that the violence in South Sudan is reportedly most intense in the northeastern states of Upper Nile and Unity, where most Sudanese refugees are living.

At 1 April, UNHCR reported that 61,000 South Sudanese nationals had arrived in Sudan since 15 December. An estimated 2,500 South Sudanese had settled in the disputed area of Abyei, 30,000 in White Nile, 12,000 in South Kordofan, 14,000 in Khartoum, and the rest in West Kordofan and Blue Nile. UNHCR reported earlier in March that the daily rate of arrival averaged 350 people. The Sudanese Humanitarian Aid Commission had reported in late January that the number of South Sudanese refugees in Sudan was estimated at 8,100, most of whom were located in White Nile state.

In late March, disagreement arose between Sudanese and UN aid officials regarding the status of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals in Sudan. According to a statement by UNHCR on 3 April, the Sudanese Government has refused to recognise newly arrived South Sudanese nationals as refugees and instead has announced it would consider them as Sudanese citizens. In late March, the Sudanese Government stated that all foreigners in Sudan had to legalise their situation by registering with the immigration administration by 1 April. UNHCR has declared that this dispute over the status of these South Sudanese nationals constitutes an obstacle to their access to humanitarian assistance.

**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 four million in March/April due to the early onset of the lean season, rising food prices, and the impact of conflict.

The IDP population is considered most at risk from food insecurity, representing an estimated 80% of food insecure people 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. 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 season were 20–50% below average, according to FEWSNET. The late start of the rains resulted in a delayed July–September planting season, increasing the risk 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. Insecurity and conflict are expected to reduce 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 below-average sorghum harvest. Staple food prices had risen across most markets during the December harvest, with sorghum and millet prices being on average 30% above their 2012 levels, and 104% above their five-year averages, although food prices in general decreased, according to FEWSNET in January. Prices are likely to increase until June 2014.

As of 3 March, FAO reported that desert locusts were continuing to develop, mostly along the coast and in the Nile valley. The outbreak is expected to intensify in March, 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. This likely deterioration is based on below-average harvests, the likely continuation of conflict, refugee influx, rising prices, and limited food aid access. The deterioration is expected to affect primarily IDPs.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles**

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

**Malnutrition**
According to WHO, global acute malnutrition among children under five stands 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 reportedly the highest in Sudan, with 28% of children suffering from moderate or severe acute malnutrition in Red Sea state, although it is difficult to obtain consistent data across the country.

Protection

On 22 March, local Sudanese officials announced that they would implement measures in border areas to stop human trafficking. On 14 March, members of the UN Human Rights Council had called on the governments of Sudan and Egypt to investigate and prosecute cases of abduction, torture and murder of Eritrean refugees by traffickers. According to a February human rights NGOs report, between 2010 and 2013 Sudanese traffickers kidnapped Eritrean refugees in Sudan and sold them to Egyptian traffickers in Sinai.

Darfur

Politics and Security

For over a decade, the Darfur states have been affected by various conflict dynamics, including fighting between Government forces and rebel groups, and inter-tribal fighting. The region also faces rampant crime.

The Darfur Peace Process

Though some progress has been made, the Darfur peace process is currently stalled because it does not include all opposition groups, and because some groups have requested a comprehensive settlement for the whole of Sudan, and not a dialogue for Darfur only.

The process does not include SLA-MM, SLA-AW, or JEM, who have consistently rejected the Doha process and have been responsible for clashes with Government forces across the state since April 2013. 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 Bashar, a splinter group of JEM.

On 7 March, African Union–UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) officials met with the leaders of JEM and SLM-MM in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of UN–AU mediation in the Darfur conflict. On 10 February, Joint AU–UN senior officials met with representatives of SLA-AW, SLA-MM, and JEM in Uganda, to follow up on outcomes of a technical workshop on peace and security in Darfur held in Ethiopia the previous December.

This three-day All Inclusive Peace and Security in Darfur Technical Workshop aimed to draw the Darfur movements that did not sign the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) to the negotiating table and revive the peace process. 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 24 January, JEM had suspended its participation in meetings on the implementation of power sharing and security arrangements agreements, accusing the head of Darfur peace implementation of deliberately slowing the process. JEM also underlined the delay in the formation of the ceasefire commission, and added that UNAMID had not yet started the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) process. On 26 January, Sudanese President Al Bashir reportedly met with the leader of JEM in a bid to resolve the conflict.

On 20 November, the Government and the non-SRF-affiliated LJM 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.

Over 13–16 November, the AU–UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur met with the Vice President of South Sudan and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National Security in Juba to discuss peace efforts. The visit was part of a larger tour including a number of Sudan’s neighbours in an attempt to build consensus around the importance of regional cooperation to implement measures announced in the DDPD.

Military Operations

On 6 April, the Sudanese government announced that it had expelled rebels from the town of Kutum, North Darfur, local media reported. Air strikes by government forces were reported on the same day. On 3 April, according to the same source, a clash between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Border Guards in Kutum had caused the death of three security and military officials. Attacks by pro-government militia in the region have reportedly caused the displacement of 10,000 people in the past two weeks. On 1 April, the North Darfur state government convened a meeting in El Fashir to discuss an emergency plan for the people affected by the recent surge in militia attacks.

On 22 March, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) announced that they had recaptured SLM-MM-held areas of North Darfur. On 13 March, the SLM–MM had announced it had captured the town of Mellit, 80km north of the North Darfur capital, El Fashir. Sudanese officials said the Sudanese Armed Forces had repelled the attack. According to local sources, 78 army personnel, 9 rebels, and 10 civilians were killed during the clash. On 20 and 21 March, according to local sources, a further five people were killed in SAF bombardments of Mellit.

On 27 March, according to local sources, a Sudanese Air Force raid on the area of Khazan Tunjur, in East Jebel Marra, south Darfur, killed three civilians. Local sources reported that aerial bombings by the Sudanese Air Force intensified in the East Jebel Marra area of South Darfur 16–20 March, causing an unspecified number of deaths and the displacement of thousands of people. Since August 2013, the Sudanese Air Force has carried out regular air raids targeting East Jebel Marra and Nyala in South Darfur, and Kadja and Dady in North Darfur. Security has reportedly deteriorated significantly since late December, with almost daily air strikes. At least 14 deaths have been reported since August 2013, with dozens of casualties, and widespread damage.
Insecurity and Violence Targeting Civilians

On 6 April, local sources reported that the El Fashir–Kutum road had been closed for four weeks. Earlier local reports indicated that this was due to the insecurity generated by Rapid Support Force (RSF) attacks in the area of Kutum.

As of 16 March, according to OCHA, attacks against civilians in Darfur have caused the displacement of 215,000 people in 2014. Militia attacks against civilians have continued through late March, with at least four civilians reportedly killed in attacks targeting IDP camps in Central, North and East Darfur. At 5 March, according to local sources, dozens of civilians had been killed by the pro-government RSF militia in South Darfur, 11 in militia attacks in North Darfur, and six in Central Darfur. According to local sources on 12 March, IDPs in camps across North Darfur, South Darfur, Central Darfur, and West Darfur have requested protection against attacks by pro-government Janjaweed militias. As of 17 March, according to Sudanese aid officials, nearly 32,000 people have been displaced since late February, due to attacks by the Janjaweed militia led by Musa Hilal in the Saraf Omra locality, North Darfur.

On 18 March, according to local sources, clashes between police and border officers in El Fashir, the capital of North Darfur, led to an unconfirmed number of deaths. At 24 March, according to OCHA, SLM–MM attacks in the El Taweisha area, North Darfur, had displaced 81,000 people.

Infighting within the Sudan Liberation Movement led by Abdel Wahid Al Nur (SLM–AW) has also reportedly caused the displacement of thousands of people in the East Jebel Marra area of South Darfur.

On 15 March local sources reported that the RSF, which had been deployed to South Darfur from North Kordofan in late February, attacked East Jebel Marra before the SAF bombed the area. On 27 February, according to OCHA, clashes occurred between the SLM-MM and the SAF in Nyala, South Darfur, following the deployment of the RSF. According to local sources, the RSF attacked civilians and IDP camps, causing IDP representatives to request protection measures from UNAMID and Humanitarian Affairs Commission (HAC) officials.

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

Tribal Violence

On 2 April, according to a local NGO, fighting erupted between two Arab tribes, Nawayba and Ergat, in Nertiti area of Central Darfur, causing the death of two people. Violence between local tribes has intensified as resources become scarce.

On 9 September, Darfuri leaders took part in a conference in Khartoum to discuss the root causes of recent tribal conflicts and seek solutions for peaceful coexistence among tribes. This was the first event, organised by UNAMID after its mandate was renewed in late July until 31 August 2014, to address the causes of the escalating violence across Darfur. Participants recommended disarmament, the establishment of laws regulating relations between farmers and pastoralists, and the settlement of disputes over land resources.

Yet regional tribal conflicts continue to impact on the humanitarian situation. On 2 February 2014, representatives from the AU, the Government of Sudan, 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.

North Darfur Tribal Violence

Since early March, fighting has intensified in the area of Saraf Omra, North Darfur, causing the displacement of thousands of people, according to UNAMID. Violence between militias and Tama tribe members led to the closure of school and government institutions. Eleven people were reportedly killed. A heavy presence of the SLM–MM had been reported in the Taweisha and El Lait areas.

On 26 July, the rival Abbala and Beni Hussein tribes signed a comprehensive peace agreement in El Fashir, and on 18 August the treaty came into effect. Roads linking Saraf Omra with Al Sareif Beni Hussein were reopened. The two tribes agreed to cease hostilities, hold outlaws from any side accountable, and return all stolen agricultural lands. The tribes had clashed violently since early 2013 over control of the Jebel Amer gold mine in Al Sareif Beni Hussein, leaving 839 people dead as of August, according to authorities. The UN reported that an estimated 150,000 people had been displaced. UN reports further note that the gold mine death toll is twice the number of all people killed by fighting in Darfur in 2012.

South Darfur Tribal Violence

According to the UN Department of Safety and Security, the Misseriya and Salamat tribes in South Darfur signed a peace agreement on 15 December 2013, which aimed to pave the way for the deployment of Government forces to secure the area, the return of IDPs, and the disarmament of tribesmen. On 17 March, local sources reported that the Beni Halba and Gimir tribes had signed a reconciliation agreement in Nyala, after a year of negotiation. As of 16 March, according to OCHA, renewed tribal violence between various groups has caused the displacement of an estimated 59,000 people in the area of Um Gunya.

Central Darfur Tribal Violence

Localised fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central Darfur state has flared over past months. The fighting is primarily linked to a longstanding conflict over access to resources. Between 17 and 20 February, clashes between Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen in Um Bukhun, Central Darfur, 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 National Intelligence and Security Services and the Central Reserve Forces from the region. On 12 March, pro-government militias reportedly killed two people and stole 100 cattle.
In mid-November 2013, unverified reports suggested that over 50 people were killed and many others wounded following violence in the Abuza IDP camp, in the area of Um Dukhun town. Only a week earlier, three days of tribal clashes had killed 100 people injured many more. Heavy fighting between the Salamat and the Misseriya and their Ta’aysha allies closed markets and roads; there were also reports of civilian abuse by combatants. The fighting escalated following cattle raiding, with tit-for-tat attacks. At the same time, fierce fighting reportedly took place in Amar Jadid in Mukjar. 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.

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 allegedly killed around Um Dukhun, on the border with Chad.

**East Darfur: Rizeigat and Maaliya Tribes**

On 20 March, 17 people were killed in clashes between Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes in the village of El Sahab, in East Darfur. The two tribes had been engaged in a reconciliation process; in early December 2013, the AU–UN Joint Special Representative had met with state authorities and traditional leaders of the Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes in East Darfur.

From mid-July, tensions over land ownership and cattle had increased between Rizeigat and Maaliya in Kulaykil Abu Salama in Adila. On 22 August, a peace deal was signed between the two Arab tribes, aimed to end the fighting and the displacement of 144,000 people, and prepare for a reconciliation conference. But in September, more clashes caused the death of over 40 people and injured dozens. On 23 October, local media reported that three people from the Maaliya tribe were killed in an attack by members of the Rizeigat tribe in Bakhit, Abu Karinka locality.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

Access to Darfur remains restricted due to hostilities and insecurity, including the direct targeting of aid workers and peacekeepers. On 20 March, an aid worker died after being hit by a stray bullet in El Fashir.

On 26 March, UNHCR reported that access to locations affected by new displacement was improving. However, on 6 April local sources have asserted that thousands who fled attacks by armed militia in North Darfur in early April are receiving no humanitarian assistance. On 31 March, OCHA reported that humanitarian agencies had access to 132,000 out of an estimated 199,000 new Darfur IDPs. Inaccessibility is a major issue in El Taweisha, El Lait and Kutum, which has been cut off from El Fashir since early March due to the closure of the road. The East Jebel Marra region of South Darfur has been virtually inaccessible since 2010. In East Darfur, Abu Karinka and Adila localities have been inaccessible since August 2013. In Central Darfur, insecurity is hindering the movement of humanitarian supplies by road, especially to the southern corridor localities of Um Dukhun and Bindisi.

On 3 March, UNAMID reported that authorities denied its peacekeeping soldiers access 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. On 29 November 2013, the UN reported that two Sudanese health ministry workers helping to vaccinate children were killed. On 23 October, the leader of a national NGO was killed by gunmen in South Darfur, according to OCHA.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

On 3 April, OCHA reported that 207,000 people have been internally displaced since 17 January due to clashes in Darfur. According to OCHA on 31 January, there are nearly two million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 displaced in 2013. This figure is over twice the number of people internally displaced in Darfur in 2011 and 2012 combined.

At 24 March, OCHA reported that there were 81,000 IDPs in the El Taweisha area of North Darfur. The same source indicated that violence had displaced 11,000 people in the Saraf Omra area of North Darfur. Earlier OCHA figures on 16 March indicated that fighting had led to the displacement of 65,000 people in Saraf Omra, 53,000 of whom had reportedly returned. According to local sources, attacks by pro-government militia in the area of Kutum have reportedly caused the displacement of 10,000 people in the last two weeks. According to local sources, another 30,000 people were displaced by RSF attacks on 16 March in the area. According to an inter-agency assessment on 13 March, IDPs’ most pressing needs are household items, food, and WASH. Protection needs are also considered high due to the presence of armed groups.

As of 24 March, according to OCHA, tribal and militia violence was estimated to have displaced 61,000 in the Um Guniya area of South Darfur. The bulk of displacements occurred around El Salam and Nyala. As of 11 March, according to an inter-agency assessment, the priority needs of IDPs from the Um Guniya area are food, household supplies, shelter, water, sanitation, health and education services. Between March and November 2013, according to HAC, an estimated 55,000 people had been displaced due to inter-tribal fighting in South Darfur. According to a December assessment, most pressing IDP needs were water, non-food items, and health services.

As of 17 March, according to Sudanese aid officials, 32,000 people had arrived in the Fassi area of Central Darfur, following clashes in Saraf Omra. Over 25,000 people have been internally displaced in Central Darfur 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 people to Chad and 3,300 to CAR, according to UNHCR.

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 Rizeigat and Maaliya tribes. Of these, 140,000 have been displaced as a result of tribal clashes that began in August 2013. While Government restrictions have prevented humanitarian organisations from assessing the needs of these people or verifying their number, ECHO reported on 12 September that the most urgent needs appear to be food, non-food relief supplies, shelter, WASH, and healthcare.

Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

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. Some 3,400 new Sudanese refugees have arrived in CAR from Central Darfur since January 2013.

Food Security

Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) are expected in Darfur January–June. As of January, FEWSNET reported that continued violence is impacting harvests and access to markets and food assistance. IDPs are most affected, with at least 30% of recent IDPs who missed the harvest season in 2013 not yet receiving any humanitarian assistance. This situation is likely to be compounded by increasing staple food prices, mainly due to below-average harvests. According to FEWSNET, as of late February, retail sorghum harvest output were 50% below average in Darfur.

In late February, FEWSNET indicated that households in drought-prone areas of North Darfur are expected to evolve from Minimal (IDP 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 of food insecurity, of whom a million in North Darfur, 520,000 are in South Darfur, 490,000 in Central Darfur, 460,000 in West Darfur, and 230,000 in East Darfur due to displacement, and 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. According to local sources, diarrhoea and vomiting has broken out in a camp hosting IDPs from the Nyala area, 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 2013, 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.

WASH

According to local sources, IDPs in the Um Gunya area of South Darfur are currently experiencing acute water shortages.

Blue Nile, West Kordofan, 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

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 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 had begun on 13 February, with both sides meeting for the first time and broken down five days later.

The SPLM-N, is an offshoot of the group that initially led the southern rebellion during the 1983–2005 civil war and is now in power in South Sudan. Negotiations were adjourned this time as the two delegations failed to agree on an agenda. SPLM-N reportedly demanded humanitarian access to the civilians in rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, which Khartoum rejected on the grounds that rebels would take advantage of humanitarian assistance. On 23 February, the AU had proposed an agreement that 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. But no progress was made.

The Government 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. Negotiations between Khartoum and SPLM-N had previously collapsed in April 2013.

Security Context

Armed clashes between SAF and SRF forces continue to cause death and displacement in...
South Kordofan, West Kordofan, and Blue Nile. Aerial bombardment by the SAF has reportedly escalated, and tensions have intensified as roads become passable with the end of the rainy season in mid-November.

According to a January 2014 INGO report, South Kordofan has 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 north-central Al Sunut and Delling counties.

On 12 March, three children were killed in an aerial bombing on El Nagara, in the Nuba Mountains region of South Kordofan. According to an INGO report, at least 30 people were killed in aerial bombings in February. Local sources reported that suspected SPLM-N rebels launched a rocket attack against Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan on 19 February, a day after peace talks with the Government broke down. According to the January INGO report, Government forces suffered heavy losses of life and equipment in early January in South Kordofan, near the border with South Sudan. Since mid-January, the military has refocused operations on Blue Nile state, increasing air strikes. 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 Government authorities severely restrict access to the fighting zone.

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.

Aerial bombing and fighting between SAF and SRF, and between SAF and SPLM-N, continued throughout November and December 2013. An August 2013 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 bombarded the area of Yabuis 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. In mid-January, local sources reported that SAF aerial bombing killed three civilians and injured four. In October 2013, the monitoring platform South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN-CU) reported that Sudan Air Force aerial bombardments resulted in civilian casualties and displacement in multiple localities.

Armed clashes in West Kordofan between the Hamar and Maaliya 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 Government-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-Government 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. The authorities have banned foreign groups from accessing rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. As of mid-October, there has been 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 Government permission. The NCP Secretary stated that some organisations previously working in Sudan who had been expelled due to violating Government policies were trying to sneak back in. He claimed that these groups sought entrance through political organisations and people with connections to rebels in order to collect information on the humanitarian situation and fabricate reports with the help of organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

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 Government-controlled areas. In SPLM-N areas, 700,000 people in South Kordofan and 90,000 in Blue Nile are displaced or severely affected by conflict, according to local estimates. With no presence in SPLM-N controlled areas, the UN is unable to verify these figures.

OCHA, estimates that 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 Adlia 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.

SKBN-CU reported that in late November 2013 over 3,800 people from South Kordofan and Blue Nile crossed into South Sudan and Ethiopia. During September, refugees arrived in Upper Nile state, South Sudan, from Talodi and Abu Jubaia areas of South Kordofan due to aerial bombardments and acute food insecurity, according to SKBN-CU. Following
ground fighting in Blue Nile, 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, fighting is likely to trigger further displacement, disrupt market access, and have a further adverse effect on food security: 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 SPLM-N controlled areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, 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 continuation of conflict, refugee influx, rising prices, and limited food aid access. The deterioration is expected to affect primarily the IDP populations.

As of October 2013, according to a joint Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 104,240 people in South Kordofan, and 100,000 people in Blue Nile, faced Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels of food insecurity. An estimated 30% of IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan 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 Government-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 development were ongoing in the Nile valley, with the outbreak expected to intensify over the course of the month, 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 Poliovirus

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 the Government and SPLM-N unable to agree on logistics. In late October, the Government 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. If the vaccination campaign is implemented, it will be the first cross-line access into SPLM–N areas 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 hemorrhagic fever, including 14 deaths, presenting a case fatality rate of 31.8%; 12 localities in West and South Kordofan were affected as of late November.

Updated: 07/04/2014

BURKINA FASO FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late March: According to the results of the Cadre Harmonisé held in March, almost 3.3 million people (18% of Burkina Faso’s population) are at risk of food insecurity in some 19 provinces across the country.

Late March: OCHA reported that 430,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, including 115,000 from severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

Late February: According to biometric registration by UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF), over 34,000 refugees, including 32,170 Malians, reside in Burkina Faso. Most reside in the four refugee camps (12,300 in Mentao, 9,970 in Goudoubo, 1,900 in Sagnioniogo and 1,150 in Bobo-Dioulasso), while 25% live in villages in Oudalan province.

KEY CONCERNS

- Long-term displacement of 32,170 Malian refugees continues to put pressure on the resources of host communities (UNHCR, February 2014).

- An estimated 3.3 million people are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, March 2014).

- 430,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, of whom 115,000 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (OCHA, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Regional Context

On 16 February, the presidents of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger met in Nouakchott to create the G5-Sahel, an initiative to institutionalise alignment as well as monitor and coordinate 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 US$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 six months.

National Context

Burkina Faso has been generally politically stable for over two decades, but of late has suffered from fallout of the political and military crisis in neighbouring Mali. Instability and unrest in Niger and Côte d’Ivoire further impact 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.

Large-scale public protests organised by opposition parties took place on 18 January 2014. A new political party, the Mouvement du peuple pour le progrès (People’s Movement for Progress, or MPP), was created by those leaving the ruling party on 25 January. The President of the MPP is the former head of the National Assembly, Roch Kabore. The ruling party created an alliance called the Front républicain with 40 other political parties. On 4 February, public sector unions staged a 48-hour strike across the country. By March, an attempted mediation of the sociopolitical crisis had not succeeded in resolving the issue of amending Article 37 of the Constitution. Protests have been peaceful so far, but significant upheaval could ensue if the President were to push through the amendments.

Burkina Faso remains at risk of social unrest stemming from disputes over land, traditional leadership, and increasing inequalities. In 2011, a number of violent protests erupted in various cities due to public distrust in the ruling authorities.

**Health and Nutrition**

**Refugees**

According to biometric registration by UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF), as of late February, over 34,000 refugees reside in Burkina Faso. Most reside in the four refugee camps (12,300 in Mentao, 9,970 in Goudebeou, 1,900 in Sagniogodo and 1,150 in Bobo-Dioulasso), while 25% live in villages in Oudalan province (Inabao, Tin-Hedja, Dibissi, Déou, etc.).

The total number of Malian refugees is 32,170, 22,605 of whom are in the three refugee camps (Mentao, Goudoubo and Sagniogodo). This figure is a decrease of 17,700 since April 2013. UNICEF has also registered 1,400 unaccompanied or separated children.

**Food Security**

According to the results of the Cadre Harmonisé held in March, almost 3.3 million people (18% of Burkina Faso’s total population) are at risk of food insecurity in some 19 provinces across the country, due to chronic structural vulnerabilities, compounded by recurrent shocks such as drought, flood, epidemics, and locusts, which have eroded household and community resilience, and caused families to rely on negative coping strategies.

The food insecurity and malnutrition crisis affecting the Sahel region had a lingering effect on Burkina Faso in 2013. The time needed for affected families to recover from the 2012 drought and acute food crisis, combined with chronic problems such as insufficient access to health services and water and sanitation, continue to expose the most vulnerable households to a wide variety of risks affecting their nutritional status.

On 22 March, FEWSNET reported that Burkina Faso will face Minimal food security (IPC Phase 1) in September 2014 and will not need external food assistance. The key lean season will take place from July to September 2014. On 24 February, FEWSNET reported 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.

Regionally, the 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was average. However, FEWSNET reported that localised erratic rainfall in northern areas and the southern Sahel has 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 20 million people currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region, 2.5 million of whom need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. An estimated five million children under five are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, 1.5 million of whom 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.

Continued food assistance is needed in the Sahel, north, and east as a result of localised 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 arrival of 32,000 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 assessment showed that 15% of 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 Burkinabé host communities, with an estimated 52% of refugees and 58% of host populations affected by food insecurity.

On 24 March, the UN reported that severe food shortages in the Sahel and West Africa are also the result of inefficient intra-regional trade, placing significant strain on food availability, and exacerbating hunger. Poor roads and railways, high transaction costs, lack of sufficient market information, incoherent trade policies by governments and bureaucratic hurdles are among limitations to free trade in West Africa.

**Meningitis**

On 19 March, WHO reported that from 24 February to 2 March, 141 cases of meningitis were reported, and 15 people died. Since the beginning of 2014, 957 cases and 98 deaths have been reported. An alert threshold has been reached in the areas around Bobo-Dioulasso (West) and Bousse (Centre).

Located in the African meningitis belt, the country has faced a series of outbreaks since
1996, with 2,800 cases and 320 deaths (fatality rate of 11.5%) reported as of 15 December 2013 in all 63 districts of Burkina Faso since the beginning of the year.

**Measles**

From January to October 2013, 2,832 cases of measles were reported, with a mortality rate of 0.42%. Of these cases, 976 cases (34%), but no deaths, were reported in the Sahel region.

**Malnutrition**

As of late March, OCHA reported that 430,000 children suffer from acute malnutrition, including 115,000 from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). The latest SAM caseload represents a significant increase compared to October 2013, where UNICEF reported 96,000 cases.

Malnutrition is of particular concern among certain Malian refugee communities, especially in Mentao (GAM: 5.5%; SAM: 2.1%) and Goudebou (GAM: 10.6%; SAM: 1%).

As reported by OCHA on 11 March, the national SAM rate was 8.2% in 2013, down from 10.9% in 2012, while chronic malnutrition rate dropped fractionally, to 31.5% from 32.9% over the same period, according to government health statistics.

UNICEF estimates that one million under-fives in Burkina Faso are affected by stunting due to chronic malnutrition. Stunting rates are particularly high in the Sahel (46%) and East regions (43%).

Updated: 10/04/2014

**ETHIOPIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

7 April: OCHA reported that over 90,000 South Sudanese refugees have registered in Ethiopia since fighting broke out in South Sudan in December. An estimated 13,000 people hosted near the Akobo entry point and 9,400 people in Pagak are awaiting relocation. Leitchuor camp was hosting 39,000 people, and Kule camp 30,506. In total, 150,000–200,000 refugees are expected to arrive over the course of 2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Armed insurgencies continue to affect the southeastern Ogaden region. Can and inter-communal tensions cause frequent violence.

- Ethiopia is host to over 500,000 refugees, including people from Kenya and South Sudan (UNHCR, March 2014). Over 90,000 South Sudanese refugees are hosted in the northern Gambella region, 95% of whom are women and children (OCHA, April 2014).

- An estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance, a 12% increase on the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia, Somali, Amhara, Tigray, and Afar (FAO, March 2014).

- Measles cases have surged since mid-January 2014, with over 5,000 suspected cases reported to date (OCHA, March 2014).

**Politics and Security**

Ethiopia is considered comparatively stable, but two decades of deadly conflict in the southeastern 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 persist against the backdrop of wider regional rivalries involving neighbouring Somalia and Kenya. The Government has successfully suppressed protests and contained armed insurgencies in Ogaden and Oromo regions, but has yet to address the root causes of the violence.

Ethiopia has been involved in peacekeeping and counter-terrorism military operations in the East African region. On 5 March, Ethiopia announced it was considering sending troops to South Sudan as part of a protection and stabilisation force. Peace talks on the South Sudan conflict, under the mediation of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, are in progress in the capital, Addis Ababa. The latest round of negotiations was held on 27-31 March. Talks are expected to resume in late April.

On 7 March Ethiopian troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) helped Somali forces capture the Al Shabaab-held city of Hudur, capital of Bakool region in southwestern Somalia. In January 2014, according to official reports, Addis Ababa pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is achieved. The Somali militant group Al Shabaab has repeatedly threatened Ethiopia since Ethiopian troops arrived in Somalia. On 13 October 2013, a bomb blast killed two people in 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 Al Shabaab.

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 Meles 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**
At 7 April, OCHA reported that over 90,000 South Sudanese refugees, mostly from Jonglei and Upper Nile states, have registered in Ethiopia since fighting broke out in South Sudan in December. On 3 April, OCHA reported a weekly rate of arrival of 1,000 people. However, according to 7 April OCHA figures, this rate seems to have since decreased, with 1,700 new arrivals reported between 1 and 7 April. Most refugees have crossed into Ethiopia via the Pagak and Akobo Tergol border points. Camp facilities are reportedly overwhelmed. At 7 April, according to OCHA, an estimated 13,000 people were hosted near the Akobo entry point, and 9,400 people in Pagak, and are awaiting relocation. Leitchuor camp hosts 39,000 people, and Kule camp 30,506. On 7 April, OCHA indicated that 150,000 refugees were expected to arrive over the course of 2014, but that this figure was likely be revised upward to 200,000.

On 31 March, OCHA reported that with the onset of the rainy season, the Leitchuor and Kule camps hosting South Sudanese refugees in Gambella are at risk of flooding. As of 28 February, UNHCR reported that Ethiopia was hosting over 500,000 refugees, including 239,000 Somalis, 87,000 Eritreans, 135,000 Sudanese, and refugees from other countries. December saw the arrival of more than 3,600 refugees, mostly from Eritrea. As of 17 February, according to local press, there were renewed tensions in the border district of Moyale. Tensions and clashes had risen in September 2013, leading to a significant escalation of violence along the Ethiopian border. 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 into Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, latest reports indicate that some remain with host families. Priority needs include food, WASH, shelter, and healthcare. In early September, ECHO reported that in the same area displaced over 25,000 people in July-August, many into 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 Saudi Arabia, 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 24 March, most parts of Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia, respectively in the north, north-west and south-west, are expected to be experiencing IPC phase 2 (Stressed) levels of food insecurity through June, whilst poor and very poor households are expected to experience IDP phase 3 (Crisis). In Afar, Somali and the South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNP) regions, in the north-east, the east and the south-west respectively, most livelihood zones are also experiencing Stressed levels. Food insecurity in these areas is due to below-average rainfalls which had a negative impact on the meher harvest and on pasture (October to January). Poor to very poor pastoral households and ginger-producing households in Afar and SNNP regions are expected to experience phase 3 through June.

According to the Government and humanitarian partners, an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance due to consecutively below average 2013 belg and sugum rains (February to May and March to May 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

On 17 March, according to OCHA, a new case of polio had been confirmed in Somali region, bringing the caseload in Ethiopia to ten since the outbreak started in May 2013. All cases were reported in woredas (districts) that share borders with Somalia, where the regional polio outbreak started in May. An immunisation campaign targeting over three million children is ongoing.

Measles

On 31 March, OCHA reported over 5,000 suspected cases of measles in Amhara, Gambella, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray regions since mid-January 2014. At 20 March, according to OCHA, there were 50 cases of measles in the South Sudanese refugee camp of Pagak in Gambella region. Between 3 and 10 March, 690 new cases had been reported nationally, over half of which in the Amhara region, bringing the total to over 4,300. According to WHO, the measles epidemics initially affected SNNP, Oromia, and Amhara in early 2014 and later spread to Tigray, Somali, and Gambella regions.

In mid-February, over 90% of cases had been recorded in SNNP region. A vaccination campaign targeting 6.8 million children under 15 was due to start on 11 January, but continues to be delayed due to lack of resources. At 31 March, fewer than two million children had reportedly been vaccinated in SNNP region, and 250,000 in Amhara. OCHA reported on 16 December that 2,860 cases of measles were confirmed between January and October 2013 nationally, with children under five constituting 37% of the affected.

Malaria/Dengue

As of 17 March, 15 new cases of dengue have been reported in Gode, Somali region,
bring the caseload to 55 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**

According to OCHA, 35 suspected cases were reported over 3-10 March in the Dilla area, about 250km south of the capital. Another 66 cases were reported across Oromia, SNNP, and Gambella regions, where the ongoing seasonal meningitis outbreak requires an estimated two million doses of vaccine.

**Child Malnutrition**

As of 7 March, malnutrition rates in the South Sudanese refugee camp of Pagak were reportedly extremely high, with 37% of children under five suffering from global acute malnutrition, and 11% from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). As of February 2014, according to OCHA’s nutrition hotspot mapping, priority woredas in terms of nutrition were located along the Eritrea border in Afar region, in Oromia, and in Tigray. Hotspots were also recorded along the South Sudan border in Gambella.

**WASH**

The onset of the gu rains in late March has led to an improvement in water availability in drought-affected Ethiopian regions, although shortages were still reported in some regions at 7 April, according to OCHA. As of 17 March, water shortages across Oromia, Afar, Tigray, Amhara and Somali regions affected an estimated 360,000 people. A week earlier, according to local government, critical water shortages had been recorded in almost half of the Somali region’s woredas. As of 17 February, water shortages had been reported in drought-affected woredas in Oromia and Afar. An estimated 130,000 people were in need of trucked water in Oromia. Over 20,000 people were in need of trucked water in the northeastern Afar region until March, prior to the start of the rainy season.

**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 the southwest. This raises concerns over indigenous people’s livelihoods. Forced resettlement of indigenous people in the area has also been reported.

A government-run land development plan to allow sugar-cane plantations, dam construction, and commercial agriculture is expected to relocate 150,000 indigenous people into permanent sedentary villages.

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

2 April: International media reported that 1,000 Somalis were arrested in the Somali-dominated Eastleigh district of Nairobi during an anti-terrorism operation. Three bomb blasts killed six people in Eastleigh on 31 March. On 25 March, the Kenyan Government had ordered the 50,000 refugees living in urban areas to relocate to the refugee camps of Kakuma and Dadaab.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Conflict is ongoing in the northeast, where two-thirds of violent attacks have been attributed to the Somali Islamist Al Shabaab movement.

- Inter-communal tensions remain high. 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), and Moyale (north).

- Kenya currently hosts over 587,000 refugees, including at least 477,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the northeastern Dadaab refugee camp complex (UNHCR, January 2014; OCHA, February 2014). An estimated 27,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into Kenya in recent weeks (UNHCR, March).

- 1.3 million people are acutely food insecure (KFSSG, February 2014). 1.6 million are expected to need urgent food assistance in the first half of 2014 (GoK, 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 affected by two decades of conflict in neighbouring Somalia. Kenya’s political stability is facing major challenges, including the implementation of a devolution process, land reform, and national reconciliation. Institutions are perceived to be weak, and minority groups are said to use politically motivated violence to influence the devolution process, which risks polarising the country further while the 47 newly established counties are seeking to tackle socioeconomic 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 in the coming year.

**Al Shabaab Insurgency**

While regional and socioeconomic inequality threatens Kenya’s national stability, most conflict drivers are concentrated in the North Eastern province. The region, dominated by ethnic Somalis, has suffered for more than 30 years from unequal development,
insurgency, repression, chronic poverty, and poor infrastructure. It 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.

Tensions appear to be mounting regarding the presence of Somali refugees in Kenya. On 2 April, the police reportedly arrested 1,000 Somalis in the Somali-dominated Eastleigh district of Nairobi during an anti-terrorism operation. On 31 March, six people died following three seemingly coordinated bomb blasts that targeted the district, international media reported. On 25 March, the Government had ordered 50,000 refugees living in urban areas to relocate to two refugee camps: Dadaab, near the Somali border in the east; and Kakuma, in the northwest. This development closely followed an armed attack that claimed the lives of six people during a church service in Mombasa on 23 March. On 19 March, a member of parliament publicly expressed discontent regarding the negative effects of the presence of refugees in Dadaab.

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 was active prior to Kenya's intervention in Somalia in October 2011, but the frequency and scale of attacks have increased dramatically since 2011, as has the nature of the violence, with 40% of events now targeting civilians. In September, an unprecedented attack was conducted by Al Shabaab fighters on Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, killing 67 people and raising fears of increased communal tensions and discrimination against Somalis and Muslims.

While the Government is focusing on counterterrorism, 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 by government forces and the Kenyan population. In September, the Society for Threatened People reported that the Westgate attack may have serious consequences for the Muslim population, 11% of Kenya's 40 million inhabitants, and for Somali refugees in Kenya. On 25 October, Kenyan authorities 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 that broke out after Friday prayers in the coastal city of Mombasa. Around 300 men, some armed, blocked the roads in protest at the arrest of 130 Muslim men accused of attending a radicalisation session in a mosque. A few days earlier, local sources reported clashes between 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 launched after the police received information that an alleged jihad convention was 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 authorities have been dismantling recruitment networks among Muslim communities.

Over the past year, five Muslim clerics have been killed in Mombasa on allegation that they were terror suspects recruiting in mosques for Al Shabaab. In October, there were riots in Mombasa after the killing of a Muslim preacher. Rising sectarian tensions also affect the city's Christian community: two separate attacks conducted on 19 October claimed the lives of two Christian clerics.

**Inter-communal Violence**

On 6 March, the local Red Cross reported that tribal clashes along the border between Kericho and Kisumu districts, in the west, had caused five deaths.

As of mid-February, the local press reported that tensions remained high in the northern region of Moyale, along the Ethiopian border. On 21–22 February in Nairobi, the Marsabit Peace Initiative brought together leaders from the communities that have experienced conflict over recent years, namely the Borena, Gabra, Burji, Sakura Garre and Corner communities. These communities live in Moyale district and in Marsabit county. The event, organised by the Government, aimed to negotiate peace and unveiled the Boma Peace Agreement. All leaders pledged to form a multi-ethnic committee to steer joint peace talks 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, be allocated fairly to all communities.

Violence in Moyale had erupted in December 2013 and sharply escalated from 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 had displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and into Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, local authorities are concerned by the threat of retaliatory attacks. The Government had reportedly deployed troops, and the situation stabilised, while authorities established a Directorate for Cohesion and Non-state Coordination, in an effort to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation in the area.

On 10 February, local sources reported that two Ethiopians were killed in a clash between raiders from the Ethiopian Daasanach community, also known as Merille, and local herdsmen and Kenyan Police Reservists in Kokuro division, Turkana county. According to local sources, confrontations are traditionally over pasture and water. Ethiopian raiders have allegedly killed over 20 people in the past two months, most in neighbouring West Pokot county.

Inter-clan violence erupted early December on the West Pokot-Turkana border (in the northeast), where pastoral communities clashed over resources, causing more than 20 deaths and displacing hundreds of families. On 3-4 March, a peace meeting was held between the Turkana and the Pokot as part of an initiative to end the conflict between the two communities in the Turkwel Gorge.

Armed clashes between the rival communities had previously flared in July–August 2013, and stem from longstanding disputes over land, water, and land-grazing rights. The Rendille and Garri communities have also been drawn into the conflict, amid political antagonism following the March 2013 general election. In 2012, over 40,000 Kenyans sought refuge in Ethiopia due to similar unrest. A growth in the population of both people and livestock has led to more frequent cattle raiding and violence. The region is also
affected by the availability of small arms, due to its proximity to Somalia. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front rebel group is said to have made several deadly incursions into Kenya.

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

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

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 a marginal decrease compared to 2012, when 503 were killed and 1,315 injured in similar events. Population displacements due to inter-communal conflicts were significantly lower year-on-year, from 116,000 recorded in 2012 to 47,000 in 2013.

The areas most affected by inter-communal violence are the south eastern county of Tana River, which recorded 222 deaths, the northeastern county of Mandera, and the Moyale area in Marsabit county, which recorded 40,000 displaced for 2013. Across the rest of Kenya, sporadic and localised clashes were 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

Disasters

On 1 April, the local press reported that floods were currently affecting counties of Baringo, Turkana, West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet in the Rift Valley region. Nairobi was also reportedly affected by heavy rains on 26 March, causing several deaths according to the local press.

Displacement

Internal Displacement

According to OCHA on 20 January, fighting that erupted in December 2013 in the northern region of Moyale displaced an estimated 72,000 people both internally and into Ethiopia. While over half the displaced have reportedly returned, weeks of sporadic violence have impacted household food security and livelihoods at the very beginning of the dry January-March season.

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

Refugees

As of 29 January, UNHCR reported that Kenya was hosting more than 587,000 refugees.

As of 2 April, according to UNHCR, more than 32,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into Kenya since mid-December; they currently reside in the northwestern camp of Kakuma. The camp, which has a capacity of 150,000, has almost reached 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.

As of February, UNHCR reported that there were 439,000 Somali refugees in Kenya, a decrease of 38,000 from earlier 2014 estimates of 477,000 Somali refugees. Most Somali refugees are in the northeastern Dadaab and Alinjugur refugee camp complex, which in early February hosted 353,000 Somali refugees, according to OCHA (a revision of January UNHCR figures recording 391,000 Somali refugees in Dadaab). Other Somali refugee settlements include the northwest camp of Kakuma (54,000) and the capital Nairobi (32,400), according to UNHCR.

On 2 April, 1,000 Somalis were arrested in the Somali-dominated Eastleigh district of Nairobi during an anti-terrorist operation, according to international media. The arrests came one week after the Kenyan Government had ordered 50,000 refugees residing in urban centres to relocate to Dadaab or Kakuma refugee camps. In 2012, according to a human rights NGO report, a similar encampment order had been issued to 100,000 refugees living in urban areas, and had led to the arrest of more than 1,000 Somalis and Somali Kenyans from the Eastleigh district.

On 28 February, OCHA announced that 30,000 people had crossed into Somalia from Kenya in 2013. Although their status is not specified, it is implied that these people are mostly Somali refugees.

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.

Food Security

As of February, 1.3 million people were estimated to be acutely food insecure, according to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG). As of March, according to FEWSNET, most of the country remains at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) level of food insecurity. Acute food
insecurity was reportedly concentrated in pastoral areas of northern, coastal, and northern Kenya, in Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Tana River, and Wajir counties. 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.

As of March, according to FEWSNET, much of Turkana and Marsabit counties in the north are experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels. As of February, in 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. FEWSNET forecast that these areas will slowly recover to Phase 2: Stressed with the onset of the long rains (March–May), which are expected to be two to three weeks late. As of February, FEWSNET indicated that food insecurity was expected to increase due to declining food availability and rising prices, but will likely remain at IPC Phase 2 throughout the 2014 lean season (August–November). The availability of legume harvests through May is expected to mitigate the effects of declining food security.

According to OCHA in mid-November, the food insecure population declined from 1.1 million in February to 850,000 in August, 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.

On 26 March, NGO reports cited by international media indicated that the Turkana region was facing a potential humanitarian crisis due to the prolonged drought currently affecting the area. A drought report released on 27 January by local authorities indicated that the Turkana region, home to 850,000 people, has 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 Turkana region indicated that more than 346,000 people were in urgent need of food assistance. Over 500,000 head of cattle are also at risk as water and pasture run out.

Health and Nutrition

Measles

According to OCHA, as of 24 February, a measles outbreak was reported in the Kakuma refugee camps, with 96 cases confirmed.

Polio

According to WHO on 14 November, the outbreak of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) had reached a case count of 14 for Kenya, most reported in the eastern area of Dadaab, and more than half the caseload originating from the refugee community. This is the first WPV1 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, where nearly 50% of children have not been vaccinated, compared to less than 5% nationally.

Malnutrition

According to FEWSNET in July 2013, malnutrition levels remain below the five-year average, except for the southeastern county of Lamy, 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 nutrition status is critical.

LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 25/03/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- Food security conditions have improved significantly since 2013. However, 223,000 people remain food insecure, with the largest proportion (27%) located in the western Maseru district. The number of food insecure marks a 70% decrease compared to 2012, mainly due to strong production gains 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 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Lesotho will not be needing external food assistance in the period up to September 2014. In September, the food security situation will be Phase I: Minimal, which represents an improvement compared to both the same period last year and the five-year average. Earlier, in February 2014, FEWSNET reported that stable income opportunities from agricultural activity, ongoing poverty reduction and humanitarian programmes, and the start of the green harvest are all expected to contribute to improved access to food.

On 7 March, FAO presented its crop prospects and food situation report, stating that food security conditions remain stable. An estimated 223,000 people were assessed as 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%) are 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 70% decrease compared to 2012, mainly due to strong production gains in 2013 compared to the drought-affected harvest of 2012. Production has doubled compared to 2012.

In February, FAO reported that in the more marginal producing zones of the centre and southeast, production levels may be negatively affected by delayed planting following a late start of seasonal rains.

Health and Nutrition

On 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 healthcare system. Lesotho already struggles with a lack of qualified staff and facilities. WFP reported in June 2013 that the country records a HIV prevalence of 23.5% among adults, the world’s third highest rate.

Malnutrition

In June 2013, WFP reported that 39% of children under five are stunted, and iron deficiency anaemia stands at 47%.

Politics and Security

Since the army-backed coup by Andry Rajoelina, who ousted President Ravalomanana in 2009, Madagascar has been in political turmoil. In late October 2013, the first presidential election took place since the coup. The elections were hailed by international observers as free, transparent, and peaceful despite isolated incidents of violence and organisational flaws that prevented some from casting their ballots. On 17 January, the Special Electoral Court (CES) announced the final results of the second round of the December presidential election. Former Finance Minister Rajaonarimampianina was announced as the new President-elect, with 53.5% of the votes. The defeated rival candidate, Jean-Louis Robinson, who demanded a recount following more than 300 complaints to the CES, swiftly rejected the outcome. Rajaonarimampianina was sworn in on 25 January.

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, the Mouvance Ravalomanana 31, independent candidates 49, and other political entities 19.

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 in the 2009 coup, and Jules Etienne Raharivony, a would-be presidential candidate who was kept from running by the CES for not fulfilling all criteria. The Prime Minister is yet to be appointed.

On 13 March, international media reported that the International Monetary Fund had restored ties with Madagascar, five years after the 2009 coup.
On 21 November, the Government sacked the regional administrators of eight of 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 the main reasons for the move. Several local observers accused the 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, authorities dismissed seven regional leaders, replacing them with civilian appointees.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters: Cyclone Hellen-14

Tropical Cyclone Hellen-14 struck Madagascar at about 1200 GMT on 31 March. The cyclone weakened rapidly just before landfall in Boeny region, northwest Madagascar. Hellen brought one-minute maximum sustained winds of around 157km/h.

Disaster management authorities stated that moderate Tropical Cyclone Hellen resulted in three deaths and nine people are still missing after their boat capsized off the coast of Soalala. In total 2,141 people were affected, 1,736 left homeless and 437 homes were destroyed. Mahajanga, Mitsinjo and Soalala districts were most affected. Most IDPs have returned home, but those from Mahajanga and Marovoay are still in Ambalavola, or in school buildings in Mahajanga and Marovoay.

The Government of Madagascar stated on 4 April that there was also damage to roads and public buildings, and over 5,500 hectares of rice fields and 114 hectares of crop fields were submerged.

On 3 April, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that additional rainfall during the coming week may exacerbate ground conditions that were already impacted negatively by the cyclone.

Food Security

Damage to agricultural lands due to floods and tropical storms in early 2013, insufficient rains throughout the remainder of the year and a locust infestation caused for the domestic rice harvest falling 18% below average and for food prices to rise. These factors are all contributing to persistent food insecurity.

According to an FAO/WFP crop and food security assessment, as many as four million people (of a total population of 22 million), mostly in rural areas, are food insecure following a poor 2013 harvest. A further 9.6 million people, according to the Food Security Cluster and FEWSNET, mostly in Betioky and Ampahitry in the southwest, are at risk of food insecurity, IPC Phase 3. Significant and severe food insecurity is also occurring in the southern regions of Androy, Atsimo Atsinanana and Atsimo Andrefana, in Hirombe, on the southern plateau, and in the eastern ‘food basket’ region of Alaotra Mangoro.

On 1 April, FEWSNET reported that poor households in Menabe (Manja and Belo-Tsiribihina districts), Atsimo Andrefana (Antsalova a Melaky and Morombe districts), and Atsimo Atsinanana (Vaingaindrano district) will experience persistently high food prices, limited resources and low purchasing power, and face difficulties meeting their food and non-food needs. Poor households will improve to Minimal conditions (IPC Phase 1) in April–June, following the main harvest. Poor households in the Atsimo-Andrefana region (Ampahitry and Betioky districts) and Androy region (Tsihombe, Beloha, and Bekily districts) are expected to improve to Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in April–May, with a return to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) by August.

Agricultural Outlook

The US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported on 26 March that during mid-March, a significant decrease in rainfall was observed over the southern and eastern parts of Africa. Little rain (less than 10mm) fell in southwestern Madagascar.

In 2013, the global production of rice was well below the ten-year trend of over 2% per annum. The negative results in Madagascar are attributed to weather disruptions. According to FAO/WFP, the country is estimated to have a rice deficit of about 240,000 metric tons for the 2013/14 marketing year (April/March). Approximately 48,000 metric tons of imported maize would be required to satisfy the national maize deficit.

Locust Outbreak

Since April 2012, Madagascar has faced a plague of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, largely concentrated in western and southwestern areas, which threatens the livelihood of 13 million people, nine million of whom earn a living from agriculture, according to FAO. The locusts have expanded beyond their endemic areas in the southwest to affect over two-thirds of the country. This has damaged crops and discouraged farmers from planting. The impact of the locust plague has been most severe in the southwest — where it had a significant impact on households as well — which contributes on average about 7% to the national rice output. A three-year eradication campaign is ongoing.

On 31 March, FAO reported findings from a May 2013 damage assessment that rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10% to as much as 40% in 17 of Madagascar’s 22 regions. FEWSNET added that much of the locust infestation is largely concentrated in western and southwestern areas of the country between Besalampy in Melaki and Toliara in Atsimo Andrefana.

USAID reported on 19 March that extensive locust surveys were carried out during the second half of January. By the beginning of February hopper groups and bands as well as immature and mature adults were reported on some 360,000 hectares in the outbreak and invasion areas. Locust outbreak control teams at the airbases in Toliar and Morondava were re-deployed. Aggressive control began at the end of January had treated and destroyed. Mahajanga, Mitsinjo and Soalala districts were most affected. Most IDPs have returned home, but those from Mahajanga and Marovoay are still in Ambalavola, or in school buildings in Mahajanga and Marovoay.

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Optimum rainfall for the Malagasy locust was recorded during the first half of February, and as good rains continued, second-generation breeding progressed. More locusts are expected to appear in the outbreak and invasion areas during the forecast period. The prevailing wind was from east to west in the outbreak area and from northwest to southeast in the invasion areas.
Health

**Polio**

On 21 March, WHO reported that outbreaks due to type 2 cVDPV (cVDPV2) in Madagascar appear to have been interrupted.

**Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague**

Between 300 and 1,200 cases of bubonic and pneumonic 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 in 27 districts of ten regions in the north, northwest, southwest, and central highlands. With heavy rains during the peak of the rainy season between February and March, and poor waste management, there is concern that the disease could spread to other areas.

**Updated: 08/04/2014**

**MALAWI: FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated 07/04/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

- Around 180 new HIV infections are occurring every day. HIV prevalence is 10% among people aged 15-49. More than 40% of new infections are among 10–19 year olds (UNAIDS, March 2014).

- Up to 43% of people have experienced some form of gender-based violence and women represent more than 50% of victims.

**Politics and Security**

Malawi is making efforts to overcome decades of underdevelopment and the impact of a growing HIV/AIDS problem. Since 2007, Malawi has made real progress in achieving economic growth, and healthcare, education, and environmental conditions have improved. However, turbulent politics have hampered governance, and more than half the population lives below the poverty line.

On 19 March, Malawi’s President reportedly confirmed that clashes between opposition protesters and police after an election rally left a police officer and a protester dead. Stating the violence was likely to be politically motivated, the President called for an investigation. On 17 March, international media reported that the event had triggered concerns that violence could increase in the period leading up to national elections in May 2014.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

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

**Disasters: Heavy Rainfall and Floods**

FAO reported on 7 March that rainfall had increased during the first week of March, as torrential rains over the western and northern part of southern Africa continued. High rainfall (over 50 mm) was recorded in Malawi.

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that since the onset of the 2013/14 rainy 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 to houses and property.

**Food Security**

On 7 March, UNICEF reported that the number of food insecure people remains at 1,894,780, or 12% of the population.

On 1 April, FAO reported that updated results from the 2013 Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee’s (MVAC) evaluation in November indicated deterioration in national food security conditions. Approximately 1.9 million people were assessed to be food insecure until the end of March, up 27% from the figure released in July 2013. The largest numbers of food insecure people are in the districts of Mzimba (Northern region) and Mangochi (Southern region). The revised figures were based on a continuing increase in the price of food (as well as the generally high cost of living), as approximately 54% of a household’s income is allocated to food purchases. Food security conditions are anticipated to improve in the coming months, with the start of the 2014 harvest in April.

On 25 March, FEWSNET reported that due to humanitarian assistance and expected green harvests within the month, acute food insecurity among poor households in targeted areas is expected to remain at Minimal (IPC Phase 1) until September 2014. Between April and June, the majority of poor rural households are expected to be able to access adequate food through a combination of purchases from markets and household stocks, and will be facing Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 3 April, the Southern African Development Community reported that more rainfall is expected over northern Malawi 2–10 April. From April to June, increased chances of normal to above-normal rainfall are forecast over northern and southern Malawi.
Mid-season dryness is likely to reduce yield potential in some parts of Malawi. However, prices are expected to remain stable or decrease in April, when ADMARC sales and humanitarian interventions are expected to come to an end, as green and early harvest availability will reinforce household supplies.

On 3 April, FEWSNET reported that while maize prices increased throughout the region between January and February, Malawi was an exception to this general trend. Maize prices decreased country-wide by an average of 6% – and by 19% in southern Malawi – in response to expanded subsidised grain sales through the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC), which also improved overall market supply. A favourable harvest outlook, the start of green harvest consumption in some areas, and the scaling-up of humanitarian assistance to affected households also contributed to decreasing prices.

FEWSNET added that informal maize imports in the 2013/14 season have remained above the five-year average as well.

**Red Locust Outbreak**

On 25 March, FEWSNET reported that red locust monitoring and control efforts by the Government have been limited, resulting in an increased risk of swarms in the coming months. An outbreak of red locusts damaged 2,500 hectares of crops in the southern area around Lake Chilwa.

**Armyworm Outbreak**

On 19 March, USAID reported that isolated late African Armyworm outbreaks may appear. On 2 March, OCHA said that an outbreak of African armyworm affected 16 districts and a total of 10,903 hectares of land in 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.

**Health and Nutrition**

**HIV**

On 8 March, UNAIDS reported that the Government is revitalising its national HIV prevention strategy. In 2012, new HIV infections among children 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 progress, 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 more new admissions in 2014 than in January 2013. Districts that showed increased admissions were Blantyre, Chikhwawa, Dedza, Karonga, Kasungu, Machinga, Mchinji, Mzimba, Mtcheu, Salima, Thyolo, Nsanje, Neno, Mangochi, Balaka, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, and Dowa. Nutrition rehabilitation unit (NRU) admissions were lower in most districts in January 2014 as compared to January 2013 except for nine districts: Thyolo, Nsanje, Machinga, Rumphi, Ntchisi, Nkhotakota, Kasungu, Karonga, and Dowa. High NRU admissions are mainly a result of late presentation to the CMAM programme, leading to severe acute malnutrition with complications.

**Protection**

On 26 March, WFP reported that according to the Government of Malawi, up to 43% of people have experienced some form of gender-based violence and more than 50% of victims are women. Malawi ranks 124 out of 148 on the UNDP gender inequality index.

WFP reported that according to Government statistics, half of all girls in Malawi will be married by their 18th birthday, with some being forced to marry aged nine or ten. Human Rights Watch recently released a report stating that the Government should increase efforts to end child and forced marriage or risk worsening rates of poverty, illiteracy, and preventable maternal deaths.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

**NIGERIA**

**INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**7 April:** Clashes between gunmen on motorbikes, suspected to be Fulani Muslim herdsmen and youth from the rival Hausa ethnic group led to at least 79 deaths in Yar Galadima village, northwest Zamfara state. Fulani gunmen had already been accused of killing more than 110 people in several attacks in central Nigeria in March.

**6 April:** Suspected Boko Haram militants attacked a village in northern Yobe state, killing 17 people and setting houses and cars alight.

**Late March:** According to FEWSNET, poor households in the conflict affected northeast will continue to rely on atypical coping strategies as Borno and Yobe states continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Adamawa state continues to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. In western Niger state, poor households will deplete their food stocks earlier than usual and intensify their market purchase as they face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity from April.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 9.5 million people in Nigeria are affected by or at risk of natural disasters and conflict. The Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast is a key concern.

- Almost 6 million people in the conflict-affected state of emergency (SoE) states of Yobe, Adamawa and Borno are directly affected by violence. Since the
beginning of 2014, more than 1,500 have been killed (HRW). Over 300 people, mainly civilians, were killed in February 2014 alone. Due to the significant increase in violent attacks, the International Criminal Court qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013.

- Almost 471,000 people are internally displaced, of which 255,000 from the SoE states (OCHA/NEMA, February 2014).
- Nigeria has 1.74 million acutely malnourished: some 540,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and a further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, January 2014).
- Nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water (UNICEF).
- 6,149 cholera cases reported so far in 2014 are 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**

Alongside fears of a possible military failure in the fight against the Islamist-led insurgency of Boko Haram, political instability could arise due to pressure from opposition factions on President Jonathan, who are questioning his intention to run again in the February 2015 elections. Public distrust in the Government has grown due to its failure to ensure public order or implement peacebuilding measures, economic decline, and growing inequalities.

**Political Context: The 2015 Elections and Tensions within the Ruling People’s Democratic Party**

Internal political divisions on whether President Jonathan should seek another term in office continue to stoke tensions in 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 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.

On 12 February, in a fresh attempt to resolve the political crisis within his ruling party, President Jonathan fired four cabinet members on corruption accusations.

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, Air Marshal Alex Badeh. These dismissals came amid growing concern about the military’s failure to end the Islamist-led insurgency, despite the state of emergency imposed on three states in May 2013.

**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 qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013.

**Counter-insurgency Campaign against Boko Haram**

On 19 March, the National Security Adviser unveiled measures in what is to be a new and broader approach of ‘soft power’ to tackle the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency. The Nigerian Government will implement de-radicalisation programmes for suspected and convicted BH fighters, and cooperate more closely with communities affected by the violence.

The Nigerian authorities have been fighting BH since 2009. Founded in Maiduguri, Borno State, BH has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in the predominantly Muslim regions of northern Nigeria.

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 a state of emergency (SoE) was declared in mid-May 2013 in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states. 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. 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.

In a separate dynamic, civilians have formed vigilante groups or self-defence militias, reportedly with the tacit backing of the Nigerian Government, which in turn has led to retaliation 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.

**Boko Haram Incidents**

On 6 April, BH militants are said to have attacked a village in northern Yobe state, killing 17 people and setting houses and cars alight.

On 1 April, BH was held responsible for the killing of 15 civilians in a suicide bomb attack
on a state oil company facility in Mule, on the outskirts of Maiduguri, in the northeastern state of Borno. Another 17 civilians and five soldiers were wounded by the blast.

On 23 March, at least 17 people were killed by an explosion in a village market in Nguro-Soye, Borno state. More people were injured and many residents fled to the state capital Maiduguri. Ten days before, militants had attacked the Giwa military barracks in Maiduguri, Borno state, leaving at least a dozen insurgents, soldiers and civilians dead. The barracks is the headquarters of a 10-month-old government offensive against the group in northeast Nigeria and held hundreds of suspected rebel fighters, many of whom were able to flee following the attack.

In early March, the military stated it had killed 20 BH when repelling an ambush in Mafa village, Borno state. There has been no independent confirmation of the death toll. This followed an attack on 2 March where BH fighters killed 29 people in Mafa.

On 2 March, at least 20 people were reportedly 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.

On the same day, BH fighters clashed with Cameroonian soldiers when crossing the border into the Cameroonian Far North Region, killing seven soldiers. 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.

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

In late 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. In a similar incident, militants attacked the Federal Government College at Buni Yadi, Yobe state. The attack left some 45 children between 13 and 17 dead. Students fled surrounding boarding schools, refusing to stay overnight. 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.

Amnesty International reported in late March that more than 1,500 people have been killed in more than 40 attacks in the first three months of 2014. In the past six months some 2,700 people have been killed.

**Inter-communal Violence**

On 7 April, clashes between gunmen on motorbikes, suspected to be Fulani Muslim herdsmen, and local youth from the rival Hausa ethnic group led to the death of at least 79 people in the remote village of Yar Galadima, in northwest Zamfara state.

Fulani gunmen were already accused of the killing of more than 110 people in March, in several attacks on three mostly Christian villages in the south of Kaduna state – Chenshyi, Ugwar Sankwai and Ungwan Gata and on a farming community in central Nigeria.

On 13 March, gunmen on motorbikes in Katsina state, northwest Nigeria, killed at least 69 people and torched several homes in Mararrabar Maigora, Kura Mota, Ungwuwa Rimi and Maigora villages. According to the state’s police chief, the violence was perpetrated by ethnic Fulani herdsmen.

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

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. Thousands have been killed since the early 1990s in competition mainly between Muslim Fulani herdsmen and Christian Tiv farmers for land and water across Nigeria’s Middle Belt.

**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. In claiming responsibility, it stated that it served as a reminder of the rebel group’s presence in the oil-rich delta. There were no casualties.

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 Niger Delta 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”.

**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. On 14 March, the UN reported that humanitarian needs are mounting. A rapid assessment mission by OCHA established that food, water, and sanitation are priority concerns. OCHA estimates that half of the 12 million people living in the three states under a state of emergency (SoE) – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – are directly affected by violence.

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 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.

IDPs

As of March, a multi-sector assessment covering the three SoE states (Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) indicated that an estimated 255,000 people are internally displaced. This figure indicate a decrease of 40,000 compared to late 2013, and is believed to be due to the fact that some IDPs have migrated westwards to the states of Bauchi and Gombe. Borno state is considered most affected in terms of population movements, with an estimated 111,000 people displaced. Yobe and Adamawa record 76,000 and 67,000 IDPs, respectively. The assessment showed that the vast majority of IDPs live with host communities, while some 5,300 currently reside in temporary camps.

In February, OCHA reported that almost 471,000 people are internally displaced across Nigeria, half of them children.

Refugees

OCHA reported that approximately 10,400 people (5,700 Nigerien returnees and 4,700 Nigerian refugees) sought refuge in Niger’s Diffa region in March. This brings the amount of refugee and returnee people fleeing to Diffa to 37,000.

Temporary refugee status has been granted to those Nigerians fleeing the three states under an SoE. UNHCR has advised against forced returns to the northern areas. Cameroon is hosting 12,428 Nigerian refugees.

On 28 January, UNHCR reported that nearly 4,000 people had fled to the Logone-et-Chari area after 10 days of violent attacks by BH militants. Thirty people were killed, villages were bombed, and two villages were burned to the ground.

Food Security

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity in Nigeria. On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that conflict has strained household resilience to acute food insecurity as poor households have been reverting to atypical levels of coping over consecutive years.

According to FEWSNET at late March, dry season harvests have begun and land preparation activities for the upcoming planting season continue, increasing income opportunities and food access for most households in the country.

In western Niger state, poor households will deplete their food stocks two to three months earlier than usual, intensifying their market purchase after a significantly below-average harvest. These households will seek more labour opportunities and increase their animal sales as well as limit non-food expenditures as they face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity from April.

Food Security in the State of Emergency States

However, households in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, impacted by the Boko Haram conflict, as well as people in Niger state affected by erratic and below-average rainfall during the 2013 rainy season, face difficulty in meeting their food needs.

Poor households in the conflict-affected northeast will continue to rely on atypical and unsustainable coping strategies, including atypical sales of livelihood assets and labour migration, or begin to face food consumption gaps. Borno and Yobe states continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, as it has since January 2014 and Adamawa state continues to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. As of March, a multi-sector assessment covering the three SoE states indicated that meal consumption has dropped from three to one per day in most communities.

As the conflict has spread to rural areas, the 2013/14 agricultural season has been severely impeded. As a result, household food stocks are significantly below average. Conflict is also limiting off-season livelihood activities, at a time when people would typically be participating in fishing and dry-season cultivation. Household incomes from seasonal labour are also dropping as labour demand decreases. This situation is expected to continue through April until August as conflict constrains the normal, seasonal increase in labour demand for land preparation and cultivation.

Markets are also negatively impacted. Supply is low because of the below-average local production and disruption in trade flows caused by check points, road blocks, and traders’ security concerns. With low market supply, staple food prices are higher by 10% or more than last year’s prices and upwards of 30% above their five-year average. For households with below-average seasonal incomes and increasing market dependence (as they exhaust their own stocks), atypically high prices sharply hinder food access.

Regional Outlook
The food security situation in Nigeria, especially in 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 agropastoral areas of the Sahel, some 20 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity throughout the region, of whom 2.5 million need urgent lifesaving food assistance.

**Health and Nutrition**

As of March, a multi-sector assessment covering the three SoE states – Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa – indicated that only 37% of health facilities in these states are functional. 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**

In March, WHO reported that the northern states of Bauchi, Adamawa, and Kano continue to report cholera, with a total of 1,394 cases including 12 deaths in week 10 of 2014. Bauchi is considered most affected and accounted for 94% of reported cases. In 2014, 12 states in Nigeria have so far recorded 6,149 cases of cholera, with 67 deaths (case fatality rate 1.1%).

These figures represent a significant increase compared to the same period in 2013. According to OCHA, at 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 were identified. The 2013 figures themselves represent an eightfold increase compared to the same period in 2012.

This is a worrying caseload, 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**

As of March, WHO reported 208 suspected Lassa fever cases with 17 deaths (case fatality rate 8.2%) in nine states in the first three months of 2014. 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.

**Wild Poliovirus**

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative reported that as of 12 March, one case of wild poliovirus (WPV1) had been reported in 2014, and 53 in 2013. The total number of type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) cases for 2013 remained four.

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.

The large indigenous type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) outbreak in northern Nigeria, first detected in 2005, appears to have dropped to a very low incidence. Outbreaks due to cVDPVs continue to emerge in settings of insecurity, poor infrastructure, and widening immunity gaps. In Nigeria, polio cases have been associated with both indigenous and imported cVDPVs. When children are accessible, outbreaks caused by cVDPVs have been stopped by supplementary immunisation activities. Successive supplementary immunisation rounds of increasing quality appear to have brought incidence down, but a new outbreak due to imported cVDPV2 has occurred in insecure areas of the northeast.

**Meningitis**

As of March, WHO reported 268 cases of meningitis, with 39 deaths across 17 states in the first three months of 2014.

**Malnutrition**

As of March, UNICEF and humanitarian partners estimated that some 510,000 children under five will suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in 2014. An estimated 80,000 of them reside in the SoE states.

As of 30 January, OCHA said that 1.74 million are acutely malnourished in Nigeria. Some 540,000 children are suffering from SAM. A further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition. An estimated five million children under five years of age will experience 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.

Updated: 08/04/2014

**SENEGAL FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late March**: According to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2.25 million Senegalese are likely to be food insecure in 2014, 480,000 requiring immediate aid. In
addition, 340,000 children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition, including 79,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). These figures represent an increase compared to 2013, in which 63,323 SAM and 255,675 MAM cases were reported.

KEY CONCERNS

- 2.5 million Senegalese (20% of the population) are estimated to be food insecure in 2014, among whom around 675,000 people (5%) will be severely food insecure (WFP, December 2013).

- 340,000 children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition: 79,000 from severe acute malnutrition, and 261,000 from moderate acute malnutrition (UNICEF, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Although Senegal enjoys a reputation for stability in a largely volatile region, the country has 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 yet agreed on demining as part of the peace negotiations.

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

According to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2.25 million Senegalese are likely to be food insecure in 2014, 480,000 requiring immediate aid. Recurrent shocks from drought and flooding, poor infrastructure, and inadequate social safety nets continue to increase the chronic overall vulnerability of the population, while households and community resilience continues to erode due to poor coping strategies.

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 in Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2) from April.

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

OCHA reports that cereal production has decreased by 17%, 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 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 reportedly the worst affected. Agriculture land was 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.

Sahel Food Crisis

The Regional System for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) reported on 9 April that almost 4.9 million people need immediate assistance in the Sahel. It warns that this number could reach eight million during the lean season if action is inadequate. It is expected that global acute malnutrition (GAM) will pass critical thresholds and possibly reach emergency levels between June and August 2014 in several areas in Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and Burkina Faso.

On 3 April, FEWSNET reported that regional food availability will remain stable in March, and then decline progressively. On the same day, FAO added that production declines had been recorded in several zones, especially in Chad, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

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

ECHO had already reported a dramatic increase in people expected to be food insecure in the Sahel on 7 February; from 11.3 million in 2013 to 20 million in 2014. ECHO estimated five million children under five will suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and 1.5 million will face acute malnutrition.
Health and Nutrition

**Ebola Fever Outbreak in Guinea**

On 9 April, UNICEF reported that no Ebola cases have been reported in Senegal.

On 29 March, Senegal closed its land border with Guinea in the southern region of Kolda and the southeastern region of Kedougou in order to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus, which authorities say have killed over 100 people in Guinea so far. Suspected or confirmed cases have also been reported in Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone, causing fears that the highly contagious disease could spread in a region where health systems are ill-equipped to cope.

**Tsetse Fly**

On 10 January, FAO reported that Senegal had radically reduced the numbers of tsetse flies, which transmit sleeping sickness and devastate livestock. The most affected area is Niayes, near the capital. Senegal aims to eradicate the tsetse fly population completely by mid-2014.

**Malnutrition**

According to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 340,000 children are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition, including 79,000 from SAM, and 261,000 from MAM. These numbers represent an increase compared to 2013, in which 63,323 SAM and 255,675 MAM cases were reported.

Following the national Food Security and Nutrition Survey of June 2013, 17 of 45 departments were found to be in a nutritional crisis. Furthermore, the survey showed a critical prevalence of GAM in all three departments of Matam (Matam 21%, Kanel 18%, and Ranerou 16%) and in the bordering department of Podor (17%). St Louis, Bakel, Goudiry, Medina Yoro Foula, Bounkililng, and Mbour all had a critical prevalence of more than 2% SAM. Twelve more departments are seriously affected with a prevalence of 10 –15% GAM.

Eleven of 14 regions, Diourbel, Fatick, Kalfrine, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sedhiou, Tamacoudna, and Thies needed humanitarian assistance in 2013 due to high GAM and aggravating factors such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections.

In October 2013, Senegalese authorities launched a policy of free healthcare for children under five who now can get free treatment in nutritional facilities and health centres.

**Updated: 10/04/2014**

**SWAZILAND FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last update: 25/03/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

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

- HIV prevalence among adults stands at 26.5%, which represents the most severe level of HIV infection worldwide.

**Politics and Security**

The Kingdom of Swaziland is an absolute monarchy, with King Mswati III ruling by decree since 1986. A long-awaited constitution, signed by the King in 2005 and introduced in 2006, cemented his rule. Observers state the Government is in financial ruin, running out of cash for salaries, health services, and fuel. Thousands have lost their jobs as garment and sugar export industries have lost trading concessions.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

On 10 March, OCHA reported that eight people have drowned in various parts of Swaziland. Ten rivers flooded following heavy rainfall over most of Southern Africa in the beginning of March, causing infrastructure damage. On 21 March, the Southern African Development Community added that heavy rains affecting South Africa and Mozambique over the last two weeks have also caused damage and casualties in Swaziland, mainly in the Incomati basin, which is shared by the three countries.

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

**Food Security**

The UN states that as of 3 March, 167,000 people (or one in ten Swazis) receive direct food assistance. The SADC and World Bank estimated that 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity in 2014, of whom 56,300 (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 has increased primarily due to poor crop performance in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 and increases in prices of food and agricultural inputs. A fiscal crisis, caused by a reduction in Government revenues, has aggravated food insecurity and led to an increase in unemployment and cuts in social services.

While 70% of Swazis rely on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, consecutive years of drought have undermined crop production, particularly maize.
On 3 March, the UN reported that a prolonged dry spell with scorching temperatures has undone an optimistic outlook for the main maize harvest. Experts are predicting another round of scarcity and assistance in the perennially food-insecure country. Hard-hit regions are Shiselweni and Lubombo, where the crops have been decimated by lack of rainfall and high temperatures. The dry spell in January 2014 was part of an emerging pattern over the past decade; certain parts of the country have gone dry by mid-summer since 2006. The maize harvest has dropped by a third from its pre-2000 levels, to about 70,000 tonnes per year on average. Cereal is now imported to meet annual consumption.

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.

**Health and Nutrition**

**HIV**

Swaziland has the most severe level of HIV infection in the world. HIV prevalence among adults aged 15-49 stands at 26.5%, according to the latest numbers from WHO in 2012. In 2011, 566 people per 100,000 people died due to HIV/AIDS.

 Reviewed: 15/04/2014

**TANZANIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

4 April: FEWSNET reported that heavy rainfall throughout central Tanzania during the last week has resulted in flooding, damage to infrastructure, population displacement, and damage to crops and livestock in Kagera, Singida, and Dodoma regions. Moderate to heavy rainfall is forecast over southwestern Tanzania for the next seven days.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- An estimated 1,615,450 people are currently food insecure (OCHA, February 2014).

- 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 under a multi-party system introduced in 1992. The political union between Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania has weathered more than four decades of change: Zanzibar has its own parliament and president. The country hosts over 100,000 refugees fleeing conflict in the neighbouring Great Lakes region.

On 7 March, international media reported that the Government is planning to open special regions. Moderate to heavy rainfall is forecast over southwestern Tanzania for the next seven days.

**Disasters**

According to FAO, heavy rains on 21–22 January caused flooding in the districts of Kilosa, Mvomero, and Gairo in the Morogoro region. An estimated 13,560 people have been affected, and damage to infrastructure, farms, and food stocks has been reported.

**Agricultural Outlook**

On 4 April, FEWSNET reported that heavy rainfall throughout central Tanzania during the last week has resulted in flooding, damage to infrastructure, population displacement, and damage to crops and livestock in Kagera, Singida, and Dodoma regions. Moderate to heavy rainfall is forecast over southwestern Tanzania over the next seven days.

On 31 March, FEWSNET reported that in early 2014 wholesale dry bean prices have increased by up to 6%, or have remained atypically stable, for those that were already at higher levels. This is due to three consecutive seasons of below-average production and high regional demand.

On 27 March, FEWSNET reported that significantly below-average vegetation conditions were measured in the Lake Victoria basin. Also, crops are currently in the emergence stage in the north.

**Red (Nomadic) Locust Outbreak**

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Tanzania is forecast to face Phase 2: Stressed levels of insecurity in September 2014. However, it will not be needing external assistance. Deadly clashes between pastoralists and farmers have broken out as persistent drought and dwindling water resources have pushed pastoralists to the edge of survival, and farmers have accused them of destroying their crops by allowing animals to feed and trample on them. In January, ten farmers were killed in Keteto district, central Tanzania.

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On 8 March, international media reported that Tanzania is embroiled in a feud with Rwanda after Tanzania’s President urged Rwanda’s Government to negotiate with the DRC-based Rwandan opposition group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The Rwandan Government suggested Tanzanian President Kikwete sympathised with FDLR, which he strongly denies.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

OCHA reported in mid-February that 1,615,450 people are food insecure.

On 9 March, international media reported that Tanzania is embroiled in a feud with Rwanda after Tanzania’s President urged Rwanda’s Government to negotiate with the DRC-based Rwandan opposition group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The Rwandan Government suggested Tanzanian President Kikwete sympathised with FDLR, which he strongly denies.
Red locusts are expected to have bred successfully. Hopper groups and bands may have begun forming in outbreak areas in Tanzania, USAID reported on 19 March.

**African Armyworm Outbreak**

On 19 March, USAID reported on African armyworm outbreaks (AAW) in Tanga and coastal regions and control operations that were launched by affected farmers with technical and material assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives. AAW outbreaks are forecast to continue.

**Quelea Birds**

On 19 March, USAID reported that Quelea (QQU) birds had damaged sorghum, millet, and rice in Kilimanjaro and Shinyanga regions. QQU damage is forecast to continue.

**Displacement**

Tanzania has long been a major country of asylum, having hosted many 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 live in Tanzania.

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. Many of the expelled had lived in Tanzania for several decades, and back in their country of origin, the returnee population is largely deprived of access to basic services. For Ugandan returnees in Sango Bay, IOM warned of a looming shortage of food rations. The Rwandan Government has reported that the most pressing need is for reintegration assistance, especially shelter. For Burundians, there is concern over family reunification, as most returnees wish to return to their families in Tanzania.

**Protection**

Despite strong laws prohibiting it, women farmers still face discrimination, and local attitudes make it difficult for women to access decent land. On 14 March, while discussing the boosting of food security by eliminating the gender gap in agriculture, the UN reported that an outmoded system of land tenure continues to restrict women from land ownership. A male-dominated system, social stereotypes, and outdated traditions undermine women's land rights. According to USAID, women own only 20% of registered land; even less land is held under customary law.

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last update: 31/03/2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Whereas the food security situation in Zimbabwe mostly improved following the start of the green consumption and humanitarian assistance, the situation in southwestern areas – where assistance is limited – shows Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes as of March 2014.

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

- A state of disaster has been declared in the southeastern Masvingo province with an estimated 60,000 people at risk of flooding in the dam basin and downstream. There are significant humanitarian needs at transit points and relocation sites, especially for WASH, education, and food.

- The HIV rate is 14.7%. In Gwanda, in the southwest, an estimated 21% of adults are HIV positive and poverty prevents many from continuing treatment.

**Politics and Security**

President Mugabe has been in office since 1980 and, with his party Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF), gained a new term in controversial elections in 2013. After the 2008 elections, a power-sharing deal between Zanu-PF and the opposition party Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai (MDC-T) was agreed for the first time. Just before the 2013 elections, this shaky coalition succeeded in agreeing a new constitution.

On 31 March, international media reported that President Mugabe boycotted the EU–Africa summit in Brussels after his wife was refused a visa to attend.

On 21 March, international media reported that a deepening economic crisis in Zimbabwe is worsening the high levels of unemployment and driving a fresh wave of labour migration into neighbouring countries. A recent survey by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions of its affiliate members found that 75 companies had shut down since January, putting around 9,000 breadwinners out of work. Economists put current levels of unemployment at over 80%, although real unemployment levels are almost impossible to gauge given the countless Zimbabweans making a living in the informal sector.

On 10 March, international media reported that opposition party MDC-T, led by former Prime Minister Tsvangirai, has been in a serious crisis, and analysts fear a split. Criticising the party's Secretary-General Biti for heavy losses to Mugabe in the 2013 election, Tsvangirai said that those opposed to his continued leadership (he has been at the helm of MDC-T since 1999) were free to leave.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**
Disasters

Heavy rains, which started in late January, led to flooding across 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 Chivhu, Masvingo, and Tsholotsho, in Matebeleland North province. According to local authorities, the drought-prone Masvingo province received nearly double the annual average rainfall, causing water levels to rise rapidly at the partially constructed Tokwe Mukosi dam. On 21 March, OCHA reported that the total water inflow at the Tokwe Mukosi dam has increased significantly to 86.97m3/s from 105.28m3/s. Dam levels elsewhere across the country increased during the course of the week. On average, national dam levels have increased by 0.94% per cent since 10 March and now stand at 83.6%. Chances of flooding in vulnerable areas of Zimbabwe, including Muzarabani, Gokwe, Middle Sabi, Tsholotsho, Malapati and Chikwakakwala, remain high until the end of the rainy season.

On 17 March, international media reported that over 100 houses in Dete’s Mutuya township had been destroyed by heavy rains in Matebeleland North province. OCHA reported that over 22,000 people had been moved to Chingwizi resettlement camp by 7 March, straining limited facilities and resources. Heavy rains at the camp over 2–3 March have raised fresh health and shelter concerns, as around 800 families were without shelter. A bridge on the road to Chingwizi was temporarily submerged, hampering access to the camp for two days. Significant humanitarian needs, especially in the WASH, health, shelter, education, and food sectors, persist at transit points and relocation sites.

A state of disaster was declared in Masvingo province on 9 February. Authorities called upon the international community to help evacuate and assist an estimated 60,000 people at risk in the Tokwe Mukosi dam basin and downstream. Both shelter and crops have been affected, and continued heavy rains could have a negative impact on crop yields.

Food Security

National Overview

FEWSNET on 19 March reported that the recent floods have damaged an estimated 1,056 hectares of food crops, leading to a loss of 718 tonnes of potential harvest. Food and nutrition security risk being severely compromised until the 2015 harvest. 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.

On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that as the lean season ended in February, food insecurity improved to Phase I: Minimal, and there will be no need for external assistance before the end of the outlook period in September.

Nonetheless, following a Government-led survey in 2013, the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee estimated in early February that 2.2 million people (25% of the rural population) will remain food insecure until April. This is the highest level of food insecurity in Zimbabwe since early 2009, and is a significant increase compared to the 1.67 million people considered food insecure at the same time in 2013. The escalation is largely due to lower domestic production and poor cereal harvests in 2013 in the south and west. The highest proportions of food insecure households are currently estimated to be in

Zvishavane, Midlands (52%), followed by Binga, Matebeleland North (50%).

According to WFP, 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 31 March, FEWSNET reported that maize grain and meal prices continued to increase atypically in parts of Zimbabwe. Earlier, FAO reported that harvesting of the 2014 maize crop is expected to begin in April/May, and current production prospects remain favourable. Preliminary planting estimates for maize indicate an 18% expansion. Heavy rains in the first quarter of 2014 caused some flood damage to crops. Production of sorghum and millet are also expected to increase on last year’s good outputs due to more extensive planting.

On 24 March, FEWSNET reported that the consumption of green harvest products like groundnuts, pumpkins and green mealies is ongoing in most parts of the country, especially in northern and central areas that had an early start to the season. The start of this green consumption and humanitarian assistance are contributing to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity in central and northern districts. However, southwestern areas where assistance is limited still show Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes.

FEWSNET added that the first-round crop and livestock assessment report indicates that crop conditions range from good to very good, with a 16% increase in area cropped when compared to last season. The continuation of rains into mid-April are expected to result in good harvests, even for the late-planted crops.

On 6 March, USAID reported that Quelea (QQU) birds were attacking sorghum and millet in February in Kenya and Tanzania. This threatens to damage the rain-fed and irrigated small grain cereal crops in Zimbabwe. Also, locust hoppers in neighbouring countries might spread to cropping areas in Zimbabwe.

Health and Nutrition

Following the floods in February and heavy rainfall on 2–3 March, there are health concerns in Chingwizi resettlement camp, Masvingo province. A quickly growing camp population is straining facilities and resources. Water delivery has been limited, due to hampered access to the camp. Food needs are covered for March, but young children and pregnant and lactating women have special needs that need to be addressed. There is a high risk of communicable disease, especially malaria and waterborne diseases. There are no anti-rabies vaccines, despite concerns with jackals in the area and, to date, one case of a suspected rabid dog attack.

Dysentery

On 19 March, the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR) reported that health staff are attending to at least 100 cases of dysentery every day. ZADHR is also deeply concerned by reports of a diarrhoea outbreak in Chingwizi transit camp in Masvingo, where at least 15,000 people displaced by the Tokwe Mukosi dam flooding are...
temporarily sheltered. The diarrhoea outbreak is attributed to contaminated food and water, poor sanitation and overcrowding at the holding camp.

**HIV**

IFRC has raised concerns about the impact of the HIV epidemic, especially in the town of Gwanda in the southwest. An estimated 21% of adults in Gwanda are HIV positive and many halt or disrupt 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. Nine cases have been confirmed in the area so far. Four months of water shortages has resulted in many residents drinking water from unprotected wells in the surrounding Chizhanje area.

**ANGOLA**  **DROUGHT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

1 April: The Government reported that following the Cavaco River flood, five bodies have been found.

26 March: The Government of Angola reported that at least 400,000 people are affected by drought in Sumbe and Porto Amboim, central Cuanza Sul province. Conda, Ebo, Kilenda and Seles municipalities have also been affected.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Angola suffered from outbreaks of cholera, dengue fever, measles and malaria in 2013. Its population remains highly vulnerable to outbreaks, especially in the case of natural disasters in the epidemic-prone south and the hyperendemic areas in the north.

**Politics and Security**

President dos Santos has been in power for over 30 years. The rivalry between the governing Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and UNITA dates from before independence in 1975.

Much of the country’s oil wealth lies in Cabinda province, which is cut off from the rest of Angola by DRC. For decades, a low-intensity separatist conflict has simmered between the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) and the Government. FLEC signed a ceasefire in 2006, which was rejected by the Paris-based president of FLEC’s armed wing.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

**Floods**

On 1 April, the Government reported that following the Cavaco River flood, five bodies have been found.

**Drought**

On 26 March, the Government of Angola reported that at least 400,000 people are affected by drought in Sumbe and Porto Amboim, central Cuanza Sul province. Conda, Ebo, Kilenda and Seles municipalities have also been affected.

On 16 March, the Government reported that almost 23,000 people in the Bocoio municipality, in the central Benguela province, have been affected by the drought that hit their crops in the first 2013/2014 agricultural season.

Angola has a history of drought-related emergencies. The last was in mid-2013.

**Food Security**

Angola is to expect Phase 2: Stressed conditions until at least September 2014, and the lean season will last until July.

For poor households in Cuanza Sul, Namibe, and Cunene provinces, government food assistance and supplies from neighbouring Huila remain the main sources of food. These provinces are expected to face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity until June. The lean season will be extended for households in Namibe and Cunene, and the continued migration of households will introduce complications for food assistance programming.

On 25 March, FEWSNET reported that the poor 2013 nacas (flood recession) season and lower than expected 2013/14 main cereal harvest over May–June complicate the food access situation. The beginning of 2014 saw lower than average rainfall in most of Angola, and the planting season was erratic due to the inconsistency of rains, according to OCHA in February 2014. However, in February rainfall improved in parts of eastern and northern Namibe, southern Huila and northeastern Cunene provinces.

**Displacement**

On 31 January, UNHCR reported that 558 DRC refugees reside in Angola. Also, some 71,755 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 people registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 people who have opted for local integration.

**Health and Nutrition**

Angola was affected by numerous epidemics during 2013. An estimated 6,655 cholera cases were reported, including 86 deaths, according to WHO. A total of 1,081 cases of dengue fever, including ten deaths, were reported. At the end of 2013, there was a measles outbreak in 60% of municipalities. Some 15,000 malaria cases were registered,
including 75 deaths, in the first quarter of 2013.

Updated: 08/04/2014

BOTSWANA  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 31/03/2014.

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 are contributing to food insecurity (FAO, 2014).

Humanitarian Needs and Context

Disasters

Following widespread and heavy rains with high rainfall (over 50mm) over the past weeks, the US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported on 26 March that little rain (less than 10mm) fell in eastern Botswana from mid-March onwards; a significant decrease in rainfall was observed across southern and eastern parts of Africa. On 22 March, FEWSNET reported that southeastern Botswana registered moderate to heavy rain – over 150% of average rainfall, in the beginning of the year. On 17 March, local media reported that three border gates between South Africa and Botswana, Groblersburg, Zanzibar, and Platjan, remain closed due to overflowing of the Limpopo river.

Food Security

Food insecurity is linked to an ongoing drought affecting the whole country and adversely impacting crop growth in the main agricultural areas of the east and south. On 26 March, the US’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported that little rain (less than 10mm) fell throughout eastern Botswana in mid-March; there was a significant decrease in rainfall across southern and eastern parts of Africa.

On 11 February, FAO announced that the upcoming cereal harvest was expected to be below average due to dry conditions in late 2013. The harvesting of the 2014 cereal crop, planted between November and December, is due to take place in April. The Government officially declared the 2013/14 agricultural season a drought year following an assessment that confirmed that rainfall was poorly distributed and much below normal in most parts of the country. Areas most affected by the drought are Ngamiland, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Southern, and Central districts.

The 2012/13 cropping season was largely characterised by a prolonged period of below-average rains, punctuated by intense rainfall in January 2013, which caused localised flooding and minor damage to the agricultural sector. The aggregate cereal production for 2014 is estimated at 45,000 tons, 17% below the five-year average. Although domestic production covers only 10% of total national consumption requirements, FAO says poor production in the subsistence sector and deterioration in livestock conditions have aggravated the food security situation.

As of late November, FAO estimated 372,000 people, 49% of the rural population and 18% of the total population, to be at risk of food insecurity in 2013–2014. Government estimates indicate that 28% of the total population is chronically food insecure.

According to Government sources, water levels in dams in the south were low in January 2014. This will be an aggravating factor for food insecurity and will lead to water rationing in some regions.

WASH

On 6 March, 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 unable to meet 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.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

BURUNDI  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, POLITICAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS
10 April: The UN warned Burundi leaders to address political violence and human rights restrictions, threatening international prosecution if human rights abuses were committed. The warning follows a series of violent acts by the ruling party’s youth wing and the police.

KEY CONCERNS
- Below-average harvests in the central region of Plateaux Humides means households in this area are likely to experience IPC Phase 2: Stressed levels of food insecurity until June 2014 (FEWSNET, March 2014).

Politics and Security

Burundi is struggling to emerge from a 12-year civil war: between 1993 and 2005, fighting between Tutsis and Hutus claimed around 300,000 lives in inter-ethnic killings. As laid down in the Arusha Peace Accord of 2000, peace was built on a system of quotas, with 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi representation in parliament and other public institutions. The quotas serve to protect the Tutsi minority from domination by the Hutus, who make up some 85% of the population.

Since the President’s re-election in 2010, scores of political killings, intimidation of the opposition, and a crackdown on media freedom have all been reported, which has cast a shadow over the post-civil war reconciliation process. Most recently, observers stated...
concerns on restrictions on civil and political rights, following a series of violent acts by the ruling party’s increasingly militant youth wing, Imbonerakure.

In February 2014, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) until 31 December 2014.

2015 General Elections: Proposed Constitutional Amendments

After years of relative stability, relations between the parties within the ruling coalition are deteriorating. Tensions stem mainly from the desire of President Nkurunziza, elected in 2005 and again in 2010, to run for a third term in the 2015 elections. The President had pressed the parliament to adopt amendments to the constitution, which allows only two terms, to enable him to run again. Failing to gain parliament’s support, Nkurunziza announced in March 2014 that a referendum would be held on the issue. This triggered a political crisis, due to the perceived threat to the inter-ethnic power-sharing agreement. Five senior figures of the predominantly Tutsi UPRONA party – including the first Vice President – had resigned in February, refusing to support the proposed amendments to the constitution. On 14 February, Prosper Bazombanza was sworn in as the new Vice President, despite not having majority support from his own UPRONA party, which boycotted the vote.

On 10 April, the UN warned Burundi leaders to address political violence and human rights restrictions, threatening international prosecution if human rights abuses were committed. The warning follows a series of violent acts by the ruling party’s youth wing and the police.

On 8 April, local media reported that President Nkurunziza met with Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the UN and Mark Simmonds, responsible for British Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in Africa. The President said at the meeting that there will not be a referendum and that the 2015 election invites all political actors to contribute and participate freely.

At the beginning of March, police forces disrupted opposition parties’ public meetings. Several members of the Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) opposition party were injured in clashes and another 71 were arrested. The Burundi authorities have ordered the arrest of MSD Chairman Alexis Sinduhije for participating in an insurgency movement and rebellion. MSD has been suspended and its headquarters placed under police guard. Possible opposition candidate for the 2015 elections and head of the former rebel and Hutu-dominated National Forces of Liberation, Agathon Rwasa, had warned of a political crisis that risks sparking new unrest.

On 26 March, the UN office in Burundi – cooperating with the Government of Burundi – stated that it plans to convene a meeting with political actors by May. The meeting aims to resume political dialogue and help ease tensions in the lead-up to the general election.

In February, the UN Secretary General was tasked with establishing an electoral observer mission to monitor the situation ahead of, during, and after the 2015 presidential election.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

Land scarcity and high population density has resulted in pervasive tensions over land ownership. This is aggravated as a high number of IDPs and refugees are returning to their places of origin and claiming land where other families, often of a different ethnic background, have since settled.

Returnees

UNHCR reported that as of 28 February, 9,751 Burundian refugees were residing in DRC.

As of January, IOM reported that 43,000 Burundians living in Tanzania have been forcibly repatriated. Limited information makes it difficult to quantify the exact number of people expelled since the end of July 2013. Many returnees, 65% of whom are women and children, have chosen to return to their province of origin without being registered due to a lack of reception facilities at entry points.

IDPs

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre states that although there has been no new displacement recorded since 2008, since 2011, there are still up to 79,000 IDPs, mostly ethnic Tutsis. They are mainly located in and around 120 sites across northern and central Burundi.

Refugees

As of late October 2013, UNHCR reported that Burundi was host to over 47,200 refugees and 8,300 asylum seekers. Refugees are mainly located in the border regions of Ngozi (north, alongside Rwanda), Ruyigi, Muyinga, and Cankuzo (east, alongside Tanzania) and Bubanza (west, alongside DRC). More than 46,000 refugees are fleeing violence and armed conflict in DRC. Over 6,000 new refugees arrived between January and August 2013, compared to 3,500 over the same period in 2012.

According to UNHCR as of late November, Burundi’s three refugee camps (Bwagiriza, Musasa and Gasorwe) have reached their maximum capacity with a total population of 26,000 refugees. In May 2013, UNHCR opened a new refugee camp in Kavumu, Cankuzo province, to cater for refugees fleeing fighting in eastern DRC.

Food Security

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Burundi is expected to face Phase 2: Stressed conditions again in September 2014. The food security situation is worse than in the same period last year and worse than the five-year average. The next lean season in the bimodal cycle will run from October to December 2014.

On 27 March, FEWSNET reported that the planting of beans, maize, Irish potato and sorghum for Season B (February–June) 2014 is almost complete, with slightly above-average rainfall in February. From end March through June, households in most livelihood zones will experience Minimal food insecurity except the Plateaux Humides zone, which will be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) conditions until season B harvests in June. The FAO announced in February that harvests of the A season crop, which run from September to...
February, were slightly below average due to plant diseases and heavy rains, and that the Plateaux Humides region was most affected.

Prices of the main staple commodities generally stabilised in February compared to January. However, in Ngozi, a key market in the Plateaux Humides livelihood zone, sweet potato prices increased by 28% in February compared to last month and were 88% and 101% higher than last year and the five-year average, respectively.

Update: 14/04/2014

ZAMBIA  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new significant developments this week, 15/04/2014. Last updated: 07/04/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- 200,000 households are at risk of food insecurity, mostly in the south (FAO, February 2014).
- Since the end of January, there has been a significant increase in waterborne diseases.

Politics and Security

In 2011, Michael Sata won the presidency, unseating a Government that had been in power for 20 years. Zambia has a reputation for political stability and a relatively efficient, transparent government.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

On 10 March, FEWSNET reported that high rainfall of more than 50mm was recorded in the north at the start of the month. On 19 March, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration stated that consistent above-average rains over the past several weeks have raised the Zambezi River near to flooding levels in western Zambia. The rainbelt is expected to move north, increasing the chance of flooding along downstream areas, as moderate to heavy rains are forecast to persist. On 24 March, OCHA added that localised flooding has particularly affected the city of Kitwe, where houses and infrastructure were damaged and some local residents displaced.

Food Security

On 20 March, FEWSNET reported that Zambia will not need external assistance until at least September 2014, when the country will face a Phase I: Minimal food security situation.

Agricultural Outlook

On 4 April, FEWSNET reported that little to no rain fell in southern Zambia in March. The greatest moisture deficits remain over eastern Zambia. An early cessation of the monsoon may adversely impact crop development and ground conditions.

On 31 March, FEWSNET stated that maize grain and meal prices continued to increase atypically in parts of Zambia, especially in Choma (14%) in the south and Solwezi (15%) in the northwest. Prices remain significantly above 2013 and five-year averages due to reduced national production, higher fuel prices, and strong regional demand (particularly from DRC in Solwezi).

As of 15 February, FAO reported that according to 2013 vulnerability assessments, one million people were at risk of food insecurity. They are mostly located in the south. 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.

Red (Nomadic) Locust Outbreak

Red nomadic locusts are thought to have bred successfully: hopper groups and bands may have begun forming in outbreak areas in neighbouring countries and in Zambia, to a lesser extent.

Health and Nutrition

Waterborne diseases

OCHA reported on 10 March that 298 cases of dysentery and 172 cases of typhoid fever have been reported in Lusaka district since the end of January. Since the beginning of March, 36 suspected cases of dysentery and nine suspected cases of typhoid fever have been reported.

HIV

UNICEF indicated in 2012 that the prevalence of HIV among adults (15-49 years of age) is 14.3%.

Reviewed: 15/04/2014

ERITREA  FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Early April: Eritrea is currently undergoing the belg or short rainy season (February –April). In mid-March, according to media reports, a hailstorm hit the capital Asmara, which led to the flooding of roads.

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 prioritisation.

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 2013, 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. Conscription to national service is reportedly poorly paid and can last for an indefinite period of time. On 31 March, interviews with Eritrean asylum seekers by UN Human Rights Council officials revealed that the main reason for fleeing the country was to avoid compulsory national service. Harassment of citizens by authorities, on the grounds of their plotting to leave Eritrea, is reportedly widespread.

On 5 February, participants at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council pointed out that human rights abuses remained widespread in Eritrea. Between 5,000 and 10,000 political prisoners are being held in a country of just over six million people. The UN human rights chief has accused the Eritrean government of torture and summary executions.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Eritrea is currently undergoing the belg or short rainy season (February–April). In mid-March, according to media reports, a hail storm hit the capital Asmara, leaving large quantities of ice that led to the flooding of roads.

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 2013, providing direct humanitarian assistance in Eritrea remains a challenge due to limited access and humanitarian space.

Displacement

Eritrean Refugees

According to 2012 UNHCR figures, there are 300,000 Eritrean refugees in neighbouring countries as well as in Europe and Israel.

On 22 March, Sudanese officials announced that they would implement measures in border areas to stop human trafficking. On 14 March, members of the UN Human Rights Council had called on the governments of Sudan and Egypt to investigate and prosecute cases of abduction, torture, and murder of Eritrean refugees by traffickers. According to a February human rights NGOs report, between 2010 and 2013 Sudanese traffickers kidnapped Eritrean refugees in Sudan and sold them to Egyptian traffickers in Sinai.

According to UNHCR, the number of Eritrean refugees crossing to neighbouring Ethiopia is on the rise while the number entering Sudan has dropped compared to 2012. In December 2013, 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, who are mainly settled in four camps in the northern Tigray region and two others in the Afar region. 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 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 hosts at least 114,500 Eritrean refugees. Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

Hundreds of Eritrean refugees are currently 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 January 2014, Eritrea hosts 3,468 Somali refugees.

Food Security

At 3 March, FAO reported that desert locust development was ongoing south of Massawa, along the central portion of the Eritrean coast. The northern coast was also affected. The outbreak was expected to intensify in March.

As reported by FAO on 11 February, erratic rainfall 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 the crucial grain-filling phase of crop development. FAO indicated that livestock with poor pasture conditions had also probably been affected.

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 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, and 50% suffer from anaemia. About 59% of the Eritrean population consumes less than the daily calorie requirement.

According to FAO in 2013, over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished during 2011–2013.

Updated: 09/04/2014

AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

7 April: A roadside bomb killed 13 civilians and wounded five others on the outskirts of Maiwand district, Kandahar. The attack was blamed on Taliban militants, but there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

6 April: A roadside bomb hit a truck carrying ballot boxes in the north of the country, killing three people a day after the presidential election. Although polling day appeared to pass without major disruption, the Taliban claimed that they staged more than 1,000 attacks and killed dozens on 5 April. Security officials argued this was a gross exaggeration.

5 April: The Independent Election Commission (IEC) reported that around seven million people turned out to vote in the presidential and provincial council elections. Observers indicated that 14% of polling stations in the south and southeast did not open as the military were unable to provide security where the Taliban presence is strong. Overall, the turnout of over 50% was bigger than expected. Preliminary results are due 24 April. If no candidate secures more than 50% of the vote, a runoff is set for late May.

KEY CONCERNS

- Throughout 2013, the Taliban has intensified attacks against foreign and local military and humanitarian targets as the country prepares for the withdrawal of NATO-led troops. According to UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan figures, 2,959 civilians were killed during 2013 (OCHA, March 2014). In the first months of 2014, violence has further escalated ahead of the 5 April presidential and provincial council elections.

- Protracted conflict has triggered massive displacement, with over five million Afghans in Pakistan and Iran. Over 647,000 people are internally displaced; 113,000 people were displaced in 2013 (UNHCR; OCHA, February 2014).

- Other main humanitarian needs are also conflict-induced. An estimated 7.7 million people 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

As the NATO force has started withdrawing from the country and handing over security to local troops, peace seems to be more elusive than ever. The bulk of the 86,000 foreign troops are scheduled to leave the country by the end of 2014. Since the beginning of 2013, insurgent numbers have reportedly increased by 15% while Afghan security forces and civilian causalities are now close to the record levels registered during the peak of the insurgency in 2011. So far, the central authorities have not been able to deal a decisive blow to the insurgents, who continue to control remote parts of the south and southeast, near the border with Pakistan. The April 2014 presidential election is a test for the country’s stability, but with no significant progress in talks with even part of the Afghan Taliban, more attacks and further destabilisation are expected.

Afghanistan–Pakistan

In mid-January, police and militant sources said at least two Afghan Taliban commanders had been killed in the Pakistani city of Quetta. It is unclear whether the commanders were targeted by Afghan or Pakistan security forces, or killed as a result of infighting within the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban movements. Since the beginning of 2013, at least 18 Afghan Taliban have been killed in similar attacks.

The Pakistani Taliban recently appointed a new leader, who refused peace talks with Islamabad, reversing his predecessor’s stance. Disagreement over talks with authorities has also intensified within the Afghan branch. Taliban sources from both sides blame the killings on Afghan and Pakistani security forces.

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. Afghan conditions for the BSA include an immediate end to US military raids of Afghan homes, the need for a clear US commitment to peace talks with the Taliban, and the handover of the remaining Afghan detainees from Guantanamo Bay. The Afghan leader also requested a commitment from Washington to refrain from backing any candidate in the upcoming elections, a stark reminder of blame placed on the US for meddling in the
2009 presidential election. The proposed BSA would allow US troops to remain in Afghanistan after 2014. Despite mounting pressure from Washington in January, Karzai is refusing to sign the BSA ahead of the April elections. On 25 January, Karzai further toughened his stance, openly stating that, in exchange for the BSA, the US should 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 to sign the BSA to his successor and that the US might be ready to wait until then before making a 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.

While Karzai’s reluctance to sign the BSA is seen as a high-risk gamble by the international community, local supporters, including endorsement of the BSA by the assembly of local elders, Loya Jirga, in November, 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 continue to accuse Afghan leader 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 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 had planned to leave more than 10,000 troops in Afghanistan for counter-terrorism and training of Afghan forces. Failure to sign the bilateral pact could lead to the end of US financial support and 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. 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.

Most of the over 86,000 international troops, including an estimated 60,000 US personnel, 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 NATO forces started withdrawing. An estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen died, and over 2,700 were wounded between April and September 2013.

**National Political Context**

**April Presidential Elections**

On 5 April, the Independent Election Commission (IEC) reported that around seven million people turned out to vote in the presidential and provincial council elections. Polling day passed off without major attacks by militants. Overall, the turnout of over 50% was larger than expected. Preliminary results are due on 24 April. If no candidate secures more than 50% of the vote, a runoff is set for late May.

On 15 March, the EU deployed its Election Assessment Team to Afghanistan, upon official Afghan request, to monitor the elections. Following the 20 March Taliban attack against a hotel in Kabul, the two other major international election observer missions, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) announced the withdrawal of their staff from the country.

Campaigning got under way in early February amid concerns over the country’s ability to hold polls because of rising insecurity. In the near-absence of a party political system, the elections are likely to be determined by votes based on identity politics. According to international observers, there are no favourite candidates to succeed President Karzai, Afghanistan’s only leader since the US intervention in 2001.

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 chosen 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 President Karzai and supported by Karzai’s brother who withdrew from the race on 6 March, in a bid to consolidate a pro-Karzai candidate; Abdullah Abdullah, Tajik, a former ophthalmologist he turned Mujahidin in the 1980s who ran against Karzai in 2009, but in whose administration he held the foreign minister position up to 2006; Abdul Rahim Wardak, a Pashtun and former guerrilla commander who was 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.

In mid-February, Hezb-e-Islami, a major Afghan militant group, active since the 1980s and led by former Prime Minister Hekmatyar, announced its intention to participate in the upcoming elections by calling supporters to vote for candidate Qutbuddin Hilal, who is not a main contender, but used to be part of Hezb-e-Islami. 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. Since the announcement, informal militant sources have reported rifts within the Taliban ranks. On 5 March, the Hezb-e-Islami Shura Alliance, mostly consisting of members of Hezb-e-Islami who have separated from the leadership of Hekmatyar, announced its support for presidential candidate Zalmay Rassoul, who already has the support of Karzai’s brother.

The Taliban has announced that it would boycott the 2014 presidential elections and continue fighting until all foreign troops leave the country. On 11 March, the Taliban issued a statement in which they warned Afghans not to participate in the polls, saying it will use force to disrupt voting. Two teams working for frontrunners have been attacked since campaigning began. During the 2009 elections, the Taliban were responsible for 73 violent incidents on polling day alone, which cost the lives of at least 30 civilians and 26 soldiers.

According to official sources in Kabul, Afghan forces will provide security for most polling stations during the presidential elections.

**Release of Detainees**
On 13 February, the Government released 65 detainees despite repeated warnings from the US that the detainees were dangerous and linked to the killing of Afghan and foreign troops in Afghanistan. The prisoners are part of a 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 by Afghan authorities prompted US objections in early January. Detained at the jail at the Bagram air base north of Kabul, control of which has only recently been handed to Afghan authorities by the US, the release is likely to further strain relations between Kabul and Washington. On 14 February, the US indicated that it did not currently plan to actively target any of the 65 detainees released by the Afghan authorities, although President Karzai’s official rejection of US criticism the previous day had further inflamed tensions between the two countries.

**Peace Talks with the Taliban**

Several attempts were made by Kabul and/or the US to re-launch peace talks with the Afghan Taliban in 2013. Since 2001, Karzai’s Government has cultivated informal contacts with current and former Taliban figures and seems to have renewed efforts to establish a dialogue with militant representatives in recent months, according to observers. To date, both Washington and Kabul remain interested in peace negotiations with the insurgents. Although various official and informal sources have evoked renewed preliminary contacts, no substantial talks have yet been launched.

In late March, militants and security sources reportedly indicated that the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have secretly agreed to focus on operations in Afghanistan, with Pakistani militants announcing a ceasefire with Islamabad in order to preserve military bases used to stage cross-border attacks.

**Afghan-led Initiatives**

On 19 February, a Taliban spokesman 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 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 conflict, 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.

In late January, a senior Pakistani official said that Islamabad sees a chance to resume peace talks, stalled since summer, between Afghanistan 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 widens.

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 for the first time since taking 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, captured in Pakistan in 2010, is considered by Kabul as key to reaching moderate Taliban commanders and involve them in the peace talks.

**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. Renewed contacts, which was supposed to lead to negotiations between the US and the Taliban, has been cited by Karzai as a necessary step before Kabul agrees to sign the BSA.

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.

**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 has intensified offensives in Afghanistan, amid the ongoing withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Since May, insurgents have targeted foreign military, humanitarian personnel, and civilians seen to cooperate with the Government. A Taliban spokesperson indicated in June that the insurgents have no intention of changing tactics despite possible peace talks. The east and the southeast are most affected by violence, although an increasing numbers of attacks are hitting the northwest and Kabul.

On 7 April, a roadside bomb killed 13 civilians and wounded five others on the outskirts of Maiwand district, in the southern Kandahar province. Although the attack was blamed on Taliban militants, there was no immediate claim of responsibility.

On 6 April, a roadside bomb hit a truck carrying ballot boxes in the north of the country, killing three people a day after the country voted for a successor to President Hamid Karzai. Although polling day appeared to pass without major disruption, the Taliban claimed that they staged more than 1,000 attacks and killed dozens on 5 April, but security officials argued this was a gross exaggeration, adding that there were dozens of minor roadside bombs and attacks on polling stations, police and voters, but that the overall level of violence was much lower than the militants had threatened.

More than 350,000 security forces were deployed, and rings of checkpoints and roadblocks secured Kabul. In the south and southeast, observers indicated that 14% of polling stations did not open as the military were unable to provide security in areas where the Taliban presence is strong. Casualties were reported from small incidents around the country.
Observers fear that, considering the wave of attacks in the run-up to the vote, the Taliban may have deliberately laid low to give a false impression of improving security.

On 2 April, a Taliban suicide attack targeted the closely-guarded Afghan interior ministry in Kabul, killing six police officers. On the same day near the Pakistan border, a bomb attack killed at least two people and injured another 13 in the Vash Mandi area, Kandahar province. While the incident was not immediately claimed, Afghan officials indicated Taliban insurgents were likely responsible.

On 29 March, the Kabul Headquarters of the IEC was attacked, triggering a firefight with Afghan security forces. Five insurgents were reportedly killed. Four days earlier, a similar attack on the IEC killed five civilians and two policemen, as well as at least five attackers.

On 25 March, three suicide bombers reportedly attacked a government-run bank in Kunar, eastern Afghanistan, leaving one civilian and four security guards dead. Five civilians were also reportedly killed in a suicide bombing in Kunduz province, northern Afghanistan.

On 20 March, an attack by four Taliban gunmen against a hotel in Kabul left nine civilians dead, including an Afghan journalist and four foreigners. Local sources noted that the targeted hotel hosted most foreign election observers. On the same day, a truck bomb and gun attack against a police station in Jalalabad, in the east, left ten policemen, one civilian, and all seven attackers dead. According to the UN, these developments brought the civilian death toll of attacks to over 50 over the week.

On 18 March, at least 16 people were killed in a suicide bombing in a market in Maimanah, the capital of the northern Faryab province. On 12 March, three men associated with a presidential candidate’s campaign were also assassinated in the province. The attacks are the latest of a series of violent incidents targeting election and campaign workers since the Taliban announced on 10 March that they would use all force to disturb the upcoming elections. On 12 March, four election workers were abducted in Nangarhar province. On 9 and 10 March, according to a human rights NGO, attacks against the campaign offices of presidential candidates in Helmand and in Herat killed two election workers and two security officers. Already in early February, two members of the election campaign team of presidential candidate Abdullah were shot dead in the western Herat city.

Mid-March, Reporters without Borders announced that since the beginning of the presidential election campaign in February, it had recorded 20 violent incidents against local journalists. On 20 March, an Afghan journalist was one of nine civilians killed in the attack against a hotel in Kabul. On 11 March, according to international media, a Western journalist was shot dead in full daylight in Kabul. According to observers, the incident was deemed unusual and suggests an increase in execution-style killings of Westerners designed at deterring international support of the election process.

In February, a high-profile attack on an Afghan army outpost in the eastern Kunar province killed 21 soldiers, as the US and Kabul attempted to launch peace talks with the Taliban. A series of other attacks targeted mostly security forces and foreign military troops, and killed at least five people.

In January, several attacks were recorded in Kabul and surroundings, targeting mostly Afghan and NATO military personnel. A high-profile attack in the capital’s diplomatic district killed over 20 people, including foreign UN and IMF workers.

As indicated in a February UNAMA report, the number of civilians killed or injured in 2013 increased from 2012. The report documented 2,959 civilian killed and 5,656 injured in 2013. These figures mark a 7% increase in deaths and a 17% increase in injuries compared to 2012 and are similar to record high numbers of civilian casualties documented in 2011. The new figures further suggest a slight increase in the number of killed and injured during the second part 2013.

While improvised explosive devices used by anti-Government elements were 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. UNAMA 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, and 5% of casualties were unattributed.

Military Operations

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. ISAF reported that a joint force of Afghan troops and foreign soldiers called in the strike after being ambushed by Taliban insurgents. 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 the 13 passes in Ghor province are closed during winter with snow hampering 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.

On 28 March, Taliban militants attacked a guesthouse used by a US anti-landmine charity in Kabul, killing two people. In February, insecurity severely constrained operations across several Afghan provinces. As of 28 February, OCHA reported that 15 incidents of violence targeting humanitarian aid workers had occurred in February, bringing the total to 35 in 2014. Two fatalities were reported amongst aid workers in Helmand, and the body of an aid worker was found in Balkh.

In Farah province, humanitarian organisations are severely constrained in their movement outside of Farah city with almost no work taking place in the east and north. In Ghor province, NGO movements 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 reportedly killed after being abducted in the district of Gulran. The main transport axis is also unsafe with increasing militant presence in rural areas.

As of 30 November, OCHA recorded 266 incidences against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets 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 a significant rise in incidents attributed to pro-Government forces, especially in contested areas. 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.

Displacement

IDPs

On 11 February, the Government launched a policy aimed at providing a systematic framework for addressing internal displacement issues. 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 28 February, according to OCHA, there were 647,000 conflict-induced IDPs, mostly in Herat, Helmand, Ghor, Farah, and Badghis provinces.

In mid-December, OCHA reported that the number of IDPs rose from 80,000 in 2011 to 113,000 in 2013. Most of the country is vulnerable to new waves of displacement due to the conflict and natural disasters. In 2013, an estimated 60,000 people were displaced in north western Faryab province because of conflict, according to OCHA as of 30 November.

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.

Afghan Refugees in Other Countries

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. Roughly 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including 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 face persecution, 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; 60% of Afghan refugees are in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where they are 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 647,000 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. Local sources indicate that 63 people have died and 12 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, Badakhshan, 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. At 19 March, according to IOM, heavy rainfall and flash floods were affecting much of the country, causing small scale displacement and casualties.

Food Security

According to OCHA in mid-December, an estimated 2.2 million people were classified as severely food insecure. A further eight 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. A WFP/FEWSNET mission reported that 80% of rainfed areas and 24% of irrigated areas were affected. In October, an estimated 2,700 people...
needed food assistance in eastern Ghor and Herat areas and had moved to urban centres in search of income to buy food.

According to a mid-August WFP report, a preliminary forecast put the 2013 wheat production at 4.9 million tonnes, slightly below the 2012 harvest, 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 from April to June 2013 only to slightly increase again from July 2013 to January 2014. The January average price of wheat in main cities 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, was slightly lower by 4.8% compared to the same month in 2013, 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 was 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 number of people being treated for weapon wounds, stretching trauma care needs beyond the existing response capacity. The conflict is causing widespread disruption to health services.

**Polio**

Afghan authorities confirmed the first polio case in Kabul since 2001 on 11 February 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 Pakistan. The highly contagious polio virus remains endemic in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

**Malnutrition**

According to figures from OCHA in mid-June, 125,690 children under 5 suffer acute malnutrition, including 28,650 with severe acute malnutrition.

*Updated: 08/04/2014*

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**SYRIA CIVIL WAR**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

13 April: President Bashar Al-Assad said that the three-year conflict in Syria is turning in the Government's favour, the state news agency SANA reported. Government forces have made significant advances in recent months, particularly near the Lebanese border and in Homs governorate.

13 April: Government warplanes attacked opposition strongholds on the outskirts of Damascus, including the besieged eastern Ghouta and Douma. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported air strikes against Hammuriyeh, east of Damascus, and barrel bomb attacks on Daraya, an opposition stronghold southwest of the capital. Government-held areas in the capital continue to suffer mortar attacks.

12 April: The Syrian Government, the Syrian National Coalition, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights announced that a poisonous gas was released in the village of Kfar Zéita in Hama. The Government and the opposition are blaming each other for the incident.

12 April: Syrian Government troops battled opposition fighters around a military intelligence base in Aleppo in what the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has described as the fiercest fighting in the city since mid-2012. The Observatory said there were casualties on both sides and civilians had fled. Opposition forces seized a large area of Aleppo in a major offensive in mid-2012 but the front line has since remained largely static.

11 April: Al Nusra Front and its allies regained the border town of Abu Kamal amid fierce fighting a day after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had captured it. ISIL withdrew to the T2 oil site, 60km southwest of the town and where a Syria–Iraq pipeline lies. The border crossing itself remains in the hands of the Free Syrian Army. The conflict led to Iraqi authorities reinforcing their positions on the Iraqi side of the border.

9 April: Twin car bombs killed at least 25 people and wounded 100 in the largely Alawite, Government-held Karam al Luz neighbourhood of Homs, state news agency SANA reported. The attack was claimed by Al Nusra Front.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- UN estimates indicate that 6.5 million Syrians are currently internally displaced. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment reported over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern provinces in November 2013. The total number of people displaced internally and externally now exceeds 40% of Syria’s pre-conflict population. At least half of the displaced are children.

- Over three million people in Syria live in areas that are difficult to reach.
242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the Government or opposition forces. At least 325,000 children under five live in areas not currently accessible to humanitarian aid (UNICEF). Humanitarian conditions in inaccessible locations are reported to be deteriorating (OCHA). OCHA stated on 28 March that only 6% of the people living in besieged areas have received assistance in the past month.

- According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative as of 9 April, 39 cases of polio have been confirmed in Syria: 27 cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and 12 cases from contested areas (Aleppo, Idleb and Deir-ez-Zor) not yet reflected in official figures. One case has been confirmed in Iraq.

- As of 14 April, the total number of Syrians registered or waiting to register as refugees outside Syria stands at 2,692,694. Over 1,014,000 are registered in Lebanon (Government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total), 713,500 in Turkey, 590,000 in Jordan (Government estimates 600,000 Syrians in total), over 219,500 in Iraq, and over 136,000 in Egypt (Government estimates up to 300,000).

- According to WFP, cumulative rainfall from September to mid-February was less than half of the long-term average. Given the conflict and dry weather, wheat production is expected to be at a record low of between 1.7 and 2.0 million metric tons. This will further increase import requirements: last year’s wheat needs stood at 5.1 million metric tons.

- The Syrian pound was trading at 176 against the dollar on 13 April, compared to 156 last week, in a trend which has seen it lose more than three-quarters of its value against the US currency since March 2011.

Politics and Security

Pro-Government forces have made significant advances in recent months, particularly near the Lebanese border and in Homs governorate, and fighting in Aleppo city and Damascus and its surroundings has intensified.

Security Context

On 9 April, government troops fighting in the Qalamoun region near the Lebanese border seized the town of Rankus, tightening their grip on the strategic area, through which a key highway runs between Damascus and Homs. Government warplanes launched an attack against opposition strongholds on the outskirts of Damascus on 13 April, including the besieged eastern Ghouta and Douma. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported air strikes against Hammuriyeh, east of Damascus, and barrel bomb attacks on Daraya, southwest of the capital. Government-held areas in the capital continue to suffer mortar attacks.

In Aleppo, Syrian Government troops battled opposition fighters around a military intelligence base in what the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has described as the fiercest fighting in the city since mid-2012.

On 11 April Al Nusra Front and its allies regained the border town of Abu Kamal amid fierce fighting a day after the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had captured it. ISIL withdrew to the T2 oil site, 60km southwest of the town and where a Syria-Iraq pipeline lies. The border crossing itself remains in the hands of the Free Syrian Army. The conflict led to Iraqi authorities reinforcing their positions on the Iraqi side of the border.

Chemical Weapons

On 12 April the Syrian government, the Syrian National Coalition, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights announced that a poisonous gas was released in the village of Kfar Zeita in Hama. The Government and the opposition are blaming each other for the incident. This is the first reported chemical weapons attack since August 2013.

On 4 April, the OPCW–UN Joint Mission in Syria confirmed that the 12th consignment of chemicals had been transported to the port of Lattakia and removed from the country. The OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, expressed the hope that Syria will expedite the removal process.

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 led a process of verifying, securing, and transporting Syria’s chemical weapons stocks. The transfer is running several months behind schedule. On 20 March, the OPCW–UN Joint Mission verified the removal of another consignment of Priority 1 chemicals from Lattakia port, raising the amount of Syrian chemicals that are now out of the country to nearly half of the total stockpile. A total of 11 consignments of chemicals have now been transported out of Syria for destruction outside the country. Currently, 35% of Priority 1 chemicals have been removed and 86% of Priority 2 chemicals, totaling 49% of all chemicals. The deadline for completing the destruction of Syria’s entire chemical weapons stockpile is 30 June 2014.

Regional dynamics

Infighting between opposition groups on the border with Iraq has led to Iraqi authorities deploying more troops to their border region. ISIL’s attempts to take the border crossing and surrounding areas are presumed to be a bid to secure the group’s access between Syria and Iraq. The Abu Kamal border connects Syria to Iraq’s Anbar governorate, where ISIL, local tribes, and the Iraqi authorities are fighting.

On 23 March, Turkish fighter jets shot down a Syrian warplane for violating Turkey’s
airspace. On 26 March, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said his country was ready to take any measures, including cross-border military operations in Syria, against threats to its national security. Once-friendly relations between the neighbouring countries have collapsed since conflict began in 2011. Turkey toughened its rules of engagement after one of its fighter jets was shot down by the Syrian air force in June 2012, declaring any military approach of the border from Syria would be considered a threat.

Political Developments

On 13 March, Syria’s parliament set residency rules for presidential candidates. Section 30 of the draft law stipulates that candidates for the office of president of the republic must have maintained continuous, permanent residence in the Syrian Arab Republic for a period of no less than 10 years at the time of seeking nomination. Assad has not yet announced whether he will stand for a third term. UN–Arab League peace mediator Lakhdar Brahimi warned on the same day that the Syrian opposition will most likely not be interested in pursuing any peace talks with the government if it goes ahead with an election.

On 22 February 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 that 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.

Humanitarian Context and 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 provinces in November 2013.

A Syrian Centre for Policy Research study on the socioeconomic impact of the crisis estimates that over half the population, around 11 million, now lives in poverty; 4.5 million live in extreme poverty and are unable to meet their basic needs. The Economist Intelligence Unit 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 rely completely on the subsidies 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 for 2014.

Access

UNRWA was able to distribute a limited number of food parcels in Yarmouk Palestinian camp on 8 April, the second consecutive day of distribution following seven days of suspended access. On 9 April UNHCR and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, with agreement from the government and opposition forces, have delivered the first humanitarian aid into the besieged neighbourhood of Boustan al Qaser, eastern Aleppo, since last June.

At the end of March, successful access negotiations and an improved supply chain enabled WFP to dispatch food for a record 4.1 million people across all 14 governorates. In terms of the anticipated number of recipients, this represented an 11% increase on the 3.7 million reached in February. It was the first dispatch to all governorates in six months.

OCHA’s latest figures from the Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP) appeal published mid-December put over three million people in dire need of humanitarian assistance due to access limitations; 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, preventing the provision of food assistance to over 500,000 people. Some of these areas have not been accessed for over a year. For humanitarian organisations operating from Damascus, access is particularly difficult to the eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo city and the northern provinces of Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa.

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.

Displacement

IDPs

Due to the recent outbreak of conflict in Lattakia governorate, by 25 March approximately 1,050 families had left the Kassab area and surrounding villages for Lattakia city, including the entire Armenian population of Kassab. The majority of IDPs are residing with family or have rented housing. Approximately 44 Armenian families are sheltering in a church. Many left behind all belongings and documentation. In addition to immediate assistance, they will require legal support to restore their proof of identity.

An estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced, with the highest concentration of IDPs in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idlib, Tartous, Hama, and Deir-ez-Zor. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern provinces in November 2013.

Refugees in Neighbouring Countries

As of 14 April, the total number of Syrians registered or waiting to register as refugees outside Syria stands at 2,692,694. Over 1,014,000 are in Lebanon (Government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total), 713,500 in Turkey, 590,000 Syrians in Jordan (Government estimates 600,000 Syrians in total), 219,500 in Iraq, and over 136,000 in Egypt (Government estimates up to 300,000).

The total number of refugees registered by UNHCR is expected to exceed 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 and Nutrition
Nearly two-thirds of Syrian Ministry of Health public hospitals – 59 of 91 – are functioning, however many are providing only limited healthcare services. Many are operating without emergency physicians or do not have adequate services for treating malnutrition, according to the Health Resources and Services Availability Mapping System.

Lack of medicines, particularly for chronic diseases, continues to be a critical problem. According to the GoS, 674 medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged or are out of service. The shortage of intravenous fluids is worsening. Insulin, oxygen, and anaesthetics 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. Taking currency deprecation into account, the price of medicine has increased by 25–50%. Medicine is imported, primarily from Lebanon. Lengthy administrative procedures surrounding the supply of clinics have caused delays in distributing medical equipment and medicines to some areas.

**Maternal Health and Sexual and Gender-based Violence**

According to the United Nations Population Fund, an estimated 200,000 pregnant women are in need of care in Syria, and every day some 1,480 women give birth in dire conditions. The proportion of deliveries by caesarean sectio has increased from 19% in 2011 to 45% in 2013. Domestic violence, along with other forms of gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment and early marriage, have also increased as a direct consequence of conflict.

Aleppo University hospital has reported a reduction in the number of normal births from 5,251 in 2011 to only 937 in 2013. Caesarean-section deliveries increased from 42.5% in 2011 to 55.7% in 2013, due to the growing number of complicated cases admitted to the hospital. The findings also revealed an increasing number of sexually transmitted infection cases and a shortage of family planning and maternal health medicines and supplies.

According to UNFPA, healthcare providers in Aleppo have observed an increase in cases of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. An average of one to two cases per month were reported by different clinics in Aleppo, though formal protocols for case management are not in place. Living conditions, such as overcrowding and lack of regular electricity supply, in addition to the scarcity of female staff in IDP shelters, have contributed to the observed increase.

The increase in cases of sexually transmitted infections have been associated with an increase in the exchange of sex for money among internally displaced women. In addition, early pregnancy and domestic violence are not uncommon phenomena among the IDPs, as reported by UNFPA partners in the field. UNFPA reported being unable to verify these findings due to limited access and lack of agreed protocols.

**Access to Health Services**

In Homs governorate, four out of 12 hospitals are reported as functioning; none are in Homs city. Over half of the reported functioning hospitals (31) in the country are operating without emergency physicians. In Dar’a, six out of nine functioning hospitals are operating without emergency physicians, while two reported no specialists. In general, availability of specialised health services is limited in public hospitals. For example, management of severe acute malnutrition is only available in 30% of public hospitals.

**Measles**

UNICEF reported an increase in measles cases, particularly in Syria’s northern governorates of Aleppo, Al Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, and Idleb. As of 13 March, relief agencies had reported 280 suspected measles cases, with approximately 60% of the reported cases among children under five years of age.

**Polio**

According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative as of 9 April, 39 cases of polio have been confirmed in Syria: 27 cases reported by the Ministry of Health, and 12 cases from contested areas (Aleppo, Idlib and Deir-ez-Zor) not yet reflected in official figures. One case has been confirmed in Iraq (northern Baghdad), with onset of paralysis on 10 February. On 6 April, a nationwide polio vaccination round commenced, aiming to reach 2.8 million children with a special focus on hard-to-reach children in conflict zones and besieged areas. It is estimated that 104,000 children have not been vaccinated in any of the five rounds since the outbreak was identified in 2013, mainly in East and West Ghouta areas of Rural Damascus governorate, including parts of Douma district, and also in some villages in Zabadani district.

**Food Security**

WFP says rainfall since September has been less than half the long-term average, and will have a major impact on the next cereal harvest. Dry conditions across the region, coupled with the impact of the conflict, will seriously affect the agricultural sector. Wheat production is expected to reach a record low of between 1.7 and 2 million metric tons, further increasing import requirements; Syria’s wheat needs last year stood at 5.1 million metric tons. The increased dependence on cereal imports will further increase food prices.

The worst affected governorates account for close to 50% of Syrian wheat production: Aleppo, Idlib and Hama, with poor conditions extending also to Ar-Raqqa, southern Al-Hasakeh and areas of Deir-ez-Zor. Most of these governorates show poor crop development, with the worst affected showing very similar signs to 2008, a major drought year in Syria. Conflict has devastated irrigation capacity, damaging pumps and canals, caused power failures, destroyed tractors and made it unsafe to work in the fields. Livestock and pastoral livelihoods will also suffer from water shortages and poor pasture availability.

An estimated 6.3 million people in Syria are highly vulnerable to food insecurity and in critical need of food and agriculture support. The crisis has severely limited food production, marketing and imports. Many families report reducing their number of meals and opting for cheaper and less nutritious foods. The most vulnerable groups will be unable to produce or access adequate food to meet basic needs this year, necessitating the continued and expanded provision of multiple forms of emergency food and agricultural assistance.

Agriculture-based livelihoods face severe constraints from production to market: restricted...
access to land; population displacement; reduced availability and increased cost of farming inputs; physical damage to land, equipment and infrastructure; and reduced veterinary supplies and services.

Protection

Recent field visits to Aleppo, Homs and Tartous noted reports of child marriage, domestic violence among IDPs, and an increase in incidents of sex and gender-based violence, including rape.

Almost 70% of migrants in Syria are at risk of food insecurity and have little access to healthcare. Many lack diplomatic representation, have been displaced, lost documentation and been subject to abuse, including employer exploitation. It is estimated that 6,800 of 120,000 migrants in the country are extremely vulnerable – over 300 of them located in hard-to-reach and besieged areas of Aleppo governorate. Since January 2014, emergency evacuation and repatriation has been provided to 157 vulnerable stranded migrants – 68 of them since the middle of March.

On 5 March, the Commission of Inquiry published its seventh 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, having carried out torture, massacre, 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 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.

WASH

Problems have been reported at water plants in Damascus, Idleb, and Deir-ez-Zor due to depletion of the water table, and due to lack of fuel, which is needed to pump more water. Homs, Idleb, and Hama have high water needs. In Hama city, damage to the water and sewage network has led to a sharp decrease in water pumping. Water has been rendered unsafe due to infiltration of the sewage line to the drinking line, leaving three million people without access to safe drinking water.

Education

According to a local media source, the school enrolment rate has decreased from 97% prior to the crisis to 15%. Three million children in Syria are outside the education process. 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: 15/04/2014

YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

14 April: International media reported that an armed group kidnapped a foreign doctor – of Uzbek or Russian nationality – in Marib province, east of Sana’a.

13 April: The first case of the deadly MERS coronavirus was reported in Sana’a. MERS has a more than 40% death rate and emerged in Saudi Arabia in 2012. It is of the same family as the SARS virus.

11 April: 12 of 21 governorates are facing serious and critical malnutrition conditions. UNICEF estimated that 1.9 million people are in need of nutrition assistance, of whom one million require emergency assistance.

11 April: More than 300,000 people are in protracted displacement throughout the country. A lack of adequate protection institutions and weak rule of law are exposing vulnerable groups to abuse, exploitation, and gender-based violence.

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity continue, with regular attacks by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Huthi militants in the north, and secessionists and government forces in the south.

- Conflict has triggered large-scale internal displacement of over 309,000 people as of February 2014 (OCHA, April 2014).

- 14.7 million people (58% of the population) will need some form of humanitarian assistance in 2014 (OCHA, April 2014).

- An estimated 10.58 million people (42% of the population) are food insecure. Another 5.54 million are severely food insecure (WFP, OCHA, March 2014).

- Around 8.6 million people have no access to healthcare (OCHA, April 2014).

- An estimated 13.1 million people do not have access to safe water; 12.1 million are without access to improved sanitation; and 4.4 million lack access to adequate sanitation (OCHA, April 2014).

- Around one million children under five are acutely malnourished and another 280,000 severely malnourished and at risk of death (OCHA, UNICEF February 2014).

- Around 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants are in need of lifesaving services (OCHA, April 2014).

Politics and Security

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab region and the seventh most food-insecure country in the world, with 14.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The country is currently undergoing a political transition process aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in 2014, but 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) throughout the country. Urban centres in western and central governorates have also seen civil unrest.

The Yemeni economy will continue to decline if the Government cannot improve protection of oil pipelines, according to observers. A report released by the Yemen Central Bank in mid-February found that oil revenues declined almost 30% between January 2013 and January 2014. Tribesmen have been attacking pipelines, mainly in an effort to pressure the Government to provide jobs, settle land disputes, and free relatives from prison. Most attacks have occurred in Hadramout province, the centre of Yemen's oil production.

Political Context

Under a US-supported power transfer deal, President Hadi is overseeing reforms after the long-serving President Saleh was forced to step down in 2012. The political factions extended Hadi’s interim period by a year in January 2014 to allow him to facilitate the drafting of a new constitution as well as changes to the federal system that were decided upon in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC). The NDC arrangements include a reshuffle of the cabinet and restructuring of the Shura Council to guarantee sufficient representation of both northern and southern insurgents, for whom the outcome is designed to accommodate demands for more autonomy.

Under the new system, the country will consist of six regions. The more populous north Yemen will consist of Sabaa, Al Jund, Azaal, and Tihamah regions. Huthi insurgents from the far north have rejected this division, claiming it is unequal in terms of wealth distribution. Huthis are currently largely settled in Sa’ada governorate and will be included in Azaal, which has no significant natural resources nor access to the 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 had declined to take part in the NDC, aim for full independence of a unified south and therefore reject the accord.

On 28 February, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2140 in support of the Government and population during the transition process. Included in resolution 2140 are travel bans and asset freezes for people in Yemen who obstruct or undermine the country’s political transition and those who commit human rights violations. Earlier in February the Security Council had expressed concerns regarding reports documenting the continuing interference of former authorities, notably former President Saleh, in the reconciliation talks.

Security Context

Strategic Importance and International Military Involvement

Yemen is of strategic importance as it flanks top oil producer Saudi Arabia and major shipping lanes. During a US-backed military offensive in 2012, Islamist militants were largely driven out of their strongholds. Since then, they have regrouped and continue fighting. From early August 2013, local security forces have been on high alert, fearing an attack by Al Qaeda in the capital Sana’a. Security has been stepped up around government buildings and possible foreign targets. Despite criticism of the many civilian casualties, the US – with the consent of the Yemeni authorities – has intensified drone strikes against militants, which have killed over 70 people since July 2013.

Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

Despite counter-insurgency operations by military forces and backed by US drone strikes, AQAP remains extremely active, retaining strongholds in the east and south. Since the start of the military campaign in 2012, army and security forces have been a target, with an estimated 80 officers killed so far. AQAP has also been abducting foreigners, and regularly targeting oil pipelines. In the beginning of 2014, Yemeni security officials expressed concern about the increase in AQAP attacks in the past months, which they link to dozens of Saudi Islamist militants who have come to Yemen from the battlefields in Iraq and Syria.

On 10 April, six civilians were wounded in a roadside bombing in Yafea district, in the southern Lahij governorate. Security forces have since cordoned off the area. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, although the Government blamed AQAP.

On 3 April, AQAP claimed an attack on an army headquarters in a tightly secured coastal district of Tawah in Aden governorate. Twenty people died, most of them militants. AQAP stated the attack was part of its campaign to "target the joint operation rooms that manage the US drones in the country".

In a separate incident, on 2 April, security forces detained four AQAP fighters in the western governorate of Al Hadida. Fresh clashes then erupted in which two soldiers and two AQAP fighters were killed.

On 30 March, two members of Yemen’s auxiliary Popular Resistance Committees were killed in an overnight ambush by presumed AQAP members on a road between Loder and Moudia, northeast of Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan province.

Southern Secessionists

On 7 April, unidentified gunmen killed three soldiers and one civilian at a security checkpoint at the western entrance to Mukalla city in Hadramout governorate. They went on to attack the security department in the Broom district of Mukalla, where they wounded two soldiers. The Interior Ministry website reported that several gunmen were killed during the attack. The Ministry denied local reports that seven soldiers had been kidnapped.

Clashes between armed groups and government forces in Al Dhale’e governorate subsided in March: local media reported on 27 March that fighting between the 33rd Armoured Brigade and armed supporters of the Southern Movement had died down. A joint assessment team reported that most displaced people had returned to their homes. OCHA reported on 11 April that markets were functional and movement within the city was normal. However, unconfirmed reports indicate widespread human rights abuses of civilians, including children and women, by parties to the conflict.

A presidential mediation committee had brokered an agreement between the two sides earlier in March. The Southern Movement called for the removal of all military camps and checkpoints from Al Dhale’e, demanding that security positions in the province be handed over to local security personnel. The army was willing to adhere to the agreement and evacuate brigades from Al Dhale’e city as well as replace military guarding the government...
compound with soldiers from the Special Security Forces.

Many southern leaders fear the new division of the south is a way to limit their authority by depriving them of control over important areas such as Hadramout, where some of Yemen's oil reserves are found. A number of leaders and a large portion of the population in the south continue to ask for a mechanism that would allow the region to transition back to full independence.

**Conflict in Northern Yemen**

On 8 April, local media reported that following a week of fighting that left five dead and five injured, residents of Samh and Wazze villages in the Dhoran district of Dhamar governorate agreed to a truce on 5 April. Samh village is associated with the Salafis, and Wazze with Huthis.

10 April is the final day of a 15-day truce between the Huthis and the Government in Amran governorate. There have been reports of a troop build-up at entry and exit points (mainly at checkpoints) on the outskirts of Amran city, particularly the exit towards Sana’a. According to OCHA at 11 April, the general situation in the city remains calm and humanitarian operations are continuing. On 9 April, a clash was reported at a checkpoint near Qaren village, 8km from Amran city, on the main road to Hajjah governorate. Should further clashes erupt, then the people inside the city (estimated population 85,000) could find themselves trapped.

The temporary truce was agreed on 22 March, after fighting between Government forces and Huthi militants, mainly around the Al Dhabr checkpoint 5km north of Amran city, according to OCHA on 24 March. On 26 March, OCHA added that tensions remain high in Amran governorate, with militants reportedly arriving in Raydah district to join protestors at Beir Aidih village. Beir Aidih is about 450m from Al Dhabr checkpoint.

On 22 March, international media reported that 12 people — eight rebels, two soldiers, and two civilians — were killed in clashes between Yemeni forces and Huthi opposition on the outskirts of Amran. The rebels, on their way to a demonstration, wanted to cross a checkpoint with their weapons when shooting started. On 24 March, OCHA added that the fighting did not break the temporary truce that had been agreed on the same day. The fighting displaced 400–500 families, estimated to be a precautionary measure against potential future violence.

Since October 2013, intermittent fighting has been taking place between Zaidi Shi’ite Huthi insurgents and tribesmen from the Sunni Hashid confederation and their allies. The Huthis, also referred to as Ansarullah, have been advancing from their mountain stronghold near the Saudi Arabian border in Sa’ada governorate, towards other majority Shi’ite areas near Sana’a. Most of the fighting is taking place in Amran governorate.

The conflict started after Huthi fighters accused Sunni Salafi groups of recruiting foreign fighters to prepare an attack against them. By December, fighting between the tribes had attracted Salafi-affiliated tribesmen and spread to Al Jawf, Amran, and Hajjah governorates. In January 2014, local sources said the fighting had spread to Hashid groups as they supported Sunni Islamist groups fighting the Huthis.

As of late January, consolidated casualty figures remained difficult to obtain, but since 30 October at least 300 people have been killed on the Salafi-Hashid side, including 210 people who died in more than two months of clashes near the city of Dammaj. Casualty figures for the Huthi group have not been released.

**Tensions at the Saudi Arabian Border**

On 10 April, international media reported that unidentified gunmen had killed two patrolling Saudi border guards in Dhaheen al Janoub in the southwestern province of Asir. The attack has not been claimed, yet work on the security fence on the border has often been halted by protesting Yemeni tribesmen, who say it prevents them from reaching pastures. In the past, such protests have often ended in violent clashes between Yemenis and Saudi border patrols.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

An estimated 14.7 million people (58% of the population) will need some form of assistance in 2014, including nearly all two million people in Sa’ada and Al Jawf governorates in the north, according to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview and the 2014 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan.

The central governorates, Amanat, Al Asimah, Al Bayda, Dhamar, Ibb, Ma’rib, Sana’a, and Taizz, where 11.3 million people reside, have the highest levels of food insecurity. An estimated six million people need assistance, including food aid, improved water, adequate sanitation, and primary healthcare.

In the northern provinces, years of conflict have destroyed local infrastructure. Landmines and explosive remnants of war are a major concern. In the western provinces of Al Hudaydah, Raymah and Mahwit, where 5.8 million people live, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition continue to be recorded. To date, more than half of this region’s 3.8 million people, including 82,000 IDPs, are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In the south and east, the provinces of Aden, Abyan, Lahj, Al Dhale’e, Shabwah, Hadramout, and Al Mahrah, where 4.89 million people reside, have a large number of returnees who fled the flash floods in mid-August 2013, pockets of instability, and limited livelihood and income opportunities.

**Disasters**

Ibb, Taizz, Raymah and Sana’a were affected by drought during the first half of 2013. Flash floods hit some districts of Abyan, Shabwah, Taizz, Dhamar, Sana’a, Ibb, Hajjah and Al Hudaydah in mid-August 2013. Desert locust affected Hajjah and Al Hudaydah end of November 2013 and could possibly extend to Taizz, Lahj, Hadramout and Shabwah in the coming months.

**Access**

Humanitarian access remains impeded across Yemen, especially in Amran and Al Dhale’e governorates, where tribal conflict, civil unrest, natural hazards, and obstacles imposed by
non-state actors have prevented humanitarian workers from reaching those in urgent need.
On 10 April, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen called upon parties
to avoid further escalation of the conflict and allow humanitarian partners full and
unfettered access to people affected, to ensure the delivery of assistance, and effective
protection of civilians.

Médecins Sans Frontières, ICRC, and OCHA have reported that parties to the conflict
continue to cut off humanitarian assistance to vulnerable IDPs living in camps and host
communities as well as to people newly displaced by conflict in the northern province of Al
Jawf, Al Dhale’e in the south, Al Mahwit and Raymah in the west, and Al Maharah in the
east. Obstructions are partly a result of civil disobedience campaigns set up as the NDC
began. Civilians in Sa’ada are out of fuel and those in Dammaj and Kitaf are running out of
food, water, and medical supplies.

**Kidnappings**
The UN reported on 2 April that the diminished capacity of state security forces since the
political crisis began in 2011 has created pockets of lawlessness. In January, the UN
Security Council responded to the alarming spike in kidnappings for ransom with a
resolution warning that the jump in ransom pay-outs, and political concessions to secure
the release of hostages, were benefiting terrorist organisations.

On 14 April, international media reported that an armed group kidnapped a foreign doctor –
of Uzbek or Russian nationality – in Marib governorate, east of Sana’a. On 25 March two
UN workers were kidnapped and rapidly released. Humanitarian agencies have responded
to the new security environment by scaling up protective measures, including minimising
travel. In March, the ICRC decided to lower its profile in Amran, following threats against
personnel, closing a northern-based office also as part of the restructuring of its Sana’a
delegation. The increasing frequency of threats to patients and personnel in hospitals and
health centres forced Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to halt lifesaving services in Al
Dhale’e in February, as well as pull staff from facilities in Amran province in August 2013.

**Displacement**
Tribal conflict, the current fluidity of displacement, tribal traditions, and a lack of access to
affected populations are all hindering identification of new IDPs.

Yemen is also a transit country for migrants seeking to reach wealthier states with better
job opportunities. Recently, measures by both Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia led to a massive
reduction in the number of African migrants and refugees entering Yemen and caused
many Yemenis to return from Saudi Arabia.

**IDPs**
On 11 April, OCHA reported that as of 28 February 309,820 IDPs reside in the country.
Significantly declining from around 500,000 after September 2012, the figure has stabilised
at around 300,000 between May 2013 and February 2014.

**IDPs in Amran and the North**
In late 2013, the UN reported that almost 307,000 IDPs remain in north Yemen, including
Sana’a. As of February 2014, OCHA reports that 95% of IDPs are hosted in five
governorates: Hajjah (81,940 people), Amran (54,270 people), Al Jawf (24,700), Sa’ada
(103,010 people), and Sana’a (42,760 people).

As of 30 March, OCHA cited unconfirmed reports that, after fighting between government
forces and Huthi militants in Amran governorate, 400 to 500 families fled. They are staying
principally in districts north and west of Al Dhab village and in other areas of Amran
district. These reports also indicate that demand for food has increased substantially in
local markets, indicating that people may be making bulk purchases. Humanitarian
partners are particularly concerned about the impact on Amran city and its estimated
population of 85,000, should tensions escalate.

As of 17 March, OCHA reported that 75,000 people have been displaced within Amran
governorate – an increase of 5,000 in a month. The figures includes 44,000 people
displaced prior to 2011, and 31,210 displaced people registered since October 2013.

Around 13,500 IDPs from the Amran governorate have been verified and provided with
assistance. The relatively low number of registrations in Amran city could be because
IDPs in large cities tend to live with relatives. OCHA states that Amran city has the
highest number of displaced people, but the highest number of verified IDPs, namely 5,220
people, is in Bani Suraim. Protection Cluster partners are verifying the reported 5,820
people from Amran governorate who have arrived in the capital Sana’a.

In the beginning of January, about 10,000 Salafis came homeless to 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 Dammaj, Sa’ada governorate, had to leave. Although the
Government, which had appointed a committee to broker the agreement, committed to
provide housing and transportation, the displaced reportedly did not receive this 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 for other parts of Yemen.

**IDPs in Al Dhale’e and the South**
On 17 March, OCHA reported that conflict between government forces and separatist
militants in Al Dhale’e governorate 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, or protection.

**Refugees**
On 11 April, OCHA reported 2,717 new arrivals (refugees and migrants) as of 28 February.
This figure represents a significant increase on 450 new arrivals in December 2013.
Around 800,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are in need of lifesaving services.

UNHCR added that 8,148 new arrivals so far in 2014 indicate a significant decline from
103,154 arrivals in 2011, 107,532 in 2012 and 65,319 in 2013. Ethiopia has tightened
policing of illegal border crossings in 2013 and has pursued traffickers more aggressively,
according to its Migration and Passport Authority. According to IOM, these measures by
bordering countries contributed to the lower number of African migrants and refugees
making their way to Yemen.

UNHCR reported at 9 April that 230,878 Somali refugees reside in Yemen. On 10 April, the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat added that an estimated 498 Somalis arrived on Yemeni shores in February 2014, an 18% increase from January 2014. February 2014 arrivals averaged 69% less than the arrival figures for February 2012 and 2013. New arrivals were mainly from south-central Somalia and Somaliland, particularly Woqoyi Galbeed, Awdal and Togdheer.

Returnees

On 11 April, OCHA reported that there are 236,147 returnees from Saudi Arabia, of whom 163,196 are in Abyan, 64,796 in Sa’ada, and 8,155 in Al Bayda governorates. As reported by UNHCR, the Yemeni returnees, who returned via al Tuwal in Haradh district, northeast Yemen, have acute humanitarian needs. The majority are undocumented migrant workers. The returnees place a burden on Yemen’s fragile political transition.

In March 2013, the Saudi Government adopted a new amendment to Article 39 of the Saudi labour law, which stipulates that foreigners cannot work for anyone other than their original sponsors to the country. On 4 April, the IFRC reported that since November 2013, 154,995 Yemenis returning from Saudi Arabia have been registered at several entry points. Although the number of returnees fluctuates monthly, an estimated 400,000 more Yemeni nationals may return in 2014.

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 March, the total number of food insecure people in Yemen was estimated to stand at 10.58 million, or 42% of the population. Another 5.64 million are severely food insecure and require immediate improved household access to food. Food consumption on average is poor (17.9%) or borderline (24.6%) for all 19 governorates.

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report for December 2013–February 2014 stated that food security and consumption has improved in Aden, Al Hudaydah, Al Bayda, Al Mahwit and Dhamar governorates due to a better civil security situation as well as increased use of credit.

However, significant deterioration is reported in Abyan, Lahj, Hajjah and Al Dhale’e– where between 50% and 75% of the population are food insecure – due to insecurity and political instability. These governorates have a high number of recently returned in need of assistance. Furthermore, insecurity is hampering agricultural activity, leading to volatile food and commodity prices. Crop production levels will be lower due to drought and locust infestation in the northwest.

Overall food insecurity remains high due to inadequate physical and financial access to food, chronic extreme poverty, high food prices and limited sources of income. Acute malnutrition is also high due to poor food utilisation, water and sanitation and health issues.

In 2014, the situation could worsen as hundreds of thousands of Yemeni workers are returning from Saudi Arabia, leading to loss of remittances, reduced purchasing power, and high inflation.

On 2 April, local media reported that the Agriculture Office in Sa’ada distributed hormonal traps and legal pesticides to fight the Tuta absoluta, a pestilent moth that has destroyed much of the governorate’s tomato harvest. The Yemeni Agriculture Ministry said the moth has cost Yemen around 71 billion Yemeni rial (USD 330 million) since its emergence until last August.

On 19 March, FEWSNET reported that the Yemeni population will be in need of external assistance until September 2014 at least, when it will be facing a food security situation of Phase 3: Crisis. The key upcoming lean season lasts from March/April until June.

Agricultural Outlook

On 31 March, WFP reported that the food security situation for poor households who depend on purchases is believed to have improved marginally. The supply of food items was normal in February 2014 in most of the monitored markets, though the flow of commodities was disrupted in some parts of the country due to conflict.

Despite below-average first-season rains in the southwest and the locust outbreak in northwestern cropping areas, 2013 national cereal production is estimated to have been slightly above the five-year average. Areas experiencing shocks or conflict are likely to face the worst food security outcomes.

FEWSNET states that the March–June 2014 forecasts suggest near-average rainfall 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

On 2 April, FAO reported that locust numbers may increase slightly. On 6 March, OCHA reported that thus far US$ 46 million has been lost in crop value since locusts invaded Yemen in June 2013.

Locust infestations are mainly concentrated on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea. Infestations have also been reported on the southern coast near Aden, where work in the fields is limited by insecurity. Local authorities estimate that the locusts have destroyed about 90% of the sesame and millet crops in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah.

Health and Nutrition

A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 has severely disrupted access to health services, clean water, and basic sanitation. OCHA reported that, as of 28 February, an estimated 8.6 million people have limited access to health services: qualified medical staff are in short supply as is medical equipment. On 11 March, the UN reported concerns for the Al Dhale’e population of 400,000, where food supplies and health facilities are affected; four hospitals have been shelled.
WHO and the Government reported that between 15 and 22 February, acute respiratory tract infections, acute diarrhoea, and suspected malaria were the leading causes of morbidity.

**Malnutrition**

On 11 April, OCHA reported that Yemen suffers from alarming rates of malnutrition, with 12 out of 21 governorates facing critical conditions. UNICEF estimated that 1.9 million people are in need of nutrition assistance, of which one million children require emergency assistance. As of mid-March, WFP reported wasting in 13% of children under five, and stunting in 47% of children.

UNICEF stated that 1,060,000 children under five are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 279,150 suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). On 7 March, UNICEF added that the severely malnourished are likely to die from the condition.

According OCHA, Al Hudaydah and Raymah provinces have the worst levels of acute malnutrition among children under five. For those in conflict-affected areas, the situation is worsening due to the destruction of facilities and displacement.

**MERS-Coronavirus**

On 13 April, the first case of the deadly Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) coronavirus was reported in Sana’a. MERS – which has a more than 40% death rate – emerged in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and is from the same family as the SARS virus.

**Polio**

WHO reported on 21 March that outbreaks due to type 2 vaccine-derived polio (cVDPV2) in Yemen appeared to have been interrupted. However, new outbreaks of cVDPV3 were detected.

Over April 2012–July 2013 cVDPV3 was isolated in five patients and two contacts in the insecure northwestern provinces of Sa’ada, Hajjah, and Al Hudaydah. The cVDPV3 outbreak followed a cVDPV2 outbreak (11 reported cases, two independent contacts) during April 2011—February 2012.

**WASH**

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that an estimated 13.1 million people do not have access to safe water, 12.1 million are without access to improved sanitation, and 4.4 million lack access to adequate sanitation.

In Amran, 1,300 displaced families, including 5,000 children, 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.

**Protection**

On 11 April, OCHA reported that more than 300,000 people are in protracted displacement throughout the country. More than 236,000 IDPs returned in Abyan, Sa’ada and Al Bayda.

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On 25 March, local media reported that the Demining Center, which is part of the National Committee for Landmines, estimated that since 1999 landmines have indiscriminately killed almost 4,000 people nationwide, including 504 children. Over 2012–2013, 37 people – including four children – were killed by landmines in the valleys of the Kushar district of Hajjah province, civil society organisation Wethaq Foundation reported in March 2013. Landmines were planted in Kushar district during the 2011 clashes, and in several other province – including Taizz, Hajjah and Sa’ada – during Yemen’s 1994 civil war.

On 17 March, OCHA reported that serious protection concerns persist among IDPs in Amran governorate.

In January, OCHA reported that an estimated five million people, including the IDP population, are in need of protection assistance in Yemen. 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.

**Child Recruitment**

On 7 March, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2143, condemning child recruitment in armed conflict. The Security Council is concerned over the lack of progress on the ground in situations of concern, and the military use of schools by armed forces. It states that the protection of children in armed conflict should be an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy to resolve conflict and build peace, and it is the primary role of the Government to provide protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict, while recognising the importance of strengthening national capacities in this regard.

On 4 March, the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict reports that three parties, Huthi, Ansar al Sharia, and state-armed forces are recruiting children. On 28 February, the Security Council 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, reported that the civilian population in Al Dhale’e and Amran needs protection, especially survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). In the northwest, up to 35% of Ethiopian migrants, registered in Haradh district in Hajjah governorate, are subject to physical abuse or GBV.

**Education**

OCHA reported in the beginning of April that an estimated 2.5 million children are not in school. The drop-out rate is more than 20% in the 37 most affected districts. Over 350 damaged schools require rehabilitation or reconstruction.

In early 2014, OCHA reported that education facilities in Sanah, Al Dhale’e province, were
destroyed by shelling, hampering access to education for almost 1,500 students.

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: 14/04/2014

IRAQ CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

13 April: A death count by Agence France Presse based on Iraqi security and medical sources indicated that more than 2,550 people have been killed since the beginning of 2014, including over 320 people in April. An estimated 600 Iraqis — mostly civilians — were killed and another 1,250 injured in acts of terrorism and violence in March, a slight decrease compared to over 760 deaths recorded in February. None of the figures cover casualties from the fighting in Anbar governorate.

13 April: A suicide bomber detonated a car bomb at a police checkpoint in Dibs, northern Iraq, killing seven police and four civilians, and wounding 18. Angered by the lack of protection from attacks, a local mob then burned the local courthouse and five homes, including official residences. Also on 13 April, gunmen attacked a police officer’s house in Suleiman Bek, killing two of his relatives and two other civilians. Also in Suleiman Bek, unknown attackers killed an anti-Al Qaeda militiaman. Near Tikrit, a roadside bomb killed three people and wounded six.

11 April: Clashes in Ramadi resulted in the death of 50 Iraqi security forces and seven opposition fighters.

10 April: A car bomb near a petrol station in eastern Baghdad killed seven people and wounded 35. Another car bomb in a shopping area of Sadr City, Baghdad, killed six people and wounded 18. Near Baqubah, Diyala governorate, a military officer was assassinated and one civilian was killed by a roadside bomb.

9 April: On the eleventh anniversary of the US takeover of Baghdad, 13 car bombs targeted Shi’ite communities and killed 18 people. Eight of the bombs were detonated in Baghdad, killing at least 11 people and wounded another 50, while mortar fire killed 1 person. A similar string of attacks in Wasit governorate killed six people and wounded over 40.

24 March: 14 years after Iraq was declared polio free, the first case involving a six-month boy in northern Baghdad was confirmed. While the child had no links to Syria, the type of polio is the same genetic strain as that found in Syria.

KEY CONCERNS

- With over 2,800 people killed in 2013, tension and violence between Iraq’s Shi’ite and Sunni communities have escalated to levels unseen since 2008. An independent death count based on security and medical sources indicated that over 2,550 have died since the beginning of 2014 (UNAMI, AFP April 2014).

- Heavy fighting in the majority Sunni Anbar governorate, where Al Qaeda militants took control of Fallujah and Ramadi in December 2013, has led to the displacement of over 400,000 people. In February, the conflict in Anbar began spilling over to neighbouring provinces (UNAMI, Gol, March 2014).

- Prior to the displacement triggered by violence in Anbar governorate, between 1.13 and 1.3 million people were already internally displaced by sectarian strife (UN, IOM, December 2013).

- The conflict in neighbouring Syria continues to impact Iraq, bringing thousands of refugees to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkapor crossing in Duhok governorate. As of 30 March, about 220,000 people have crossed into Iraq from Syria since the conflict began (UNHCR).

Politics and Security

Iraq is suffering from violence linked to the long-running political dispute between Prime Minister Nuri Al Maliki and religious and ethnic groups opposing the allegedly sectarian policies of his Shia-led Government. Since the start of 2013, widespread discontent within the Sunni Muslim minority has fuelled unrest. Tensions are at their highest since US troops left the country two years ago. As violence grows, the country is getting closer to general destabilisation.

International and Regional Context

In early November, visiting Washington for the first time in two years, Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki openly blamed the resurgence of Al Qaeda-affiliated armed groups in Iraq on regional unrest rather than internal issues. Most observers believe, however, that the unrest is mainly related to divisive policies implemented by authorities in Baghdad. During his trip, Maliki also discussed possible increased military assistance to Iraq. 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 reported that trucked exports of oil from Iraq to Jordan have been halted due to deteriorating security in Anbar province. Although 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 deteriorating security across Iraq on Baghdad’s plans to rebuild the national oil industry.

Political Context

Escalating violence 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 2013, authorities passed a new electoral law, opening the way for parliamentary polls to be held in April 2014 and alleviating concerns that they would be delayed because of insecurity. The voting on the election bill had been long delayed because of a dispute between the central authorities and ethnic Kurds, who run their own region in the north. The upcoming general election is seen as a litmus test of the country’s political stability amid growing sectarian strife.

In April 2013, provincial elections, the first held since the departure of US troops, were a proxy indicator of national stability. Although it failed to win a majority in any district, the current Prime Minister’s State of Law coalition came top.

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

Violence surged in 2013 to its worst level in five years, bringing Iraq closer to general destabilisation due to increasing sectarian tensions. Most observers expect violence to increase ahead of the 2014 elections currently scheduled for 30 April.

The UN reported that over 8,800 people, including 7,800 civilians and police, had been killed in the violence in 2013, making it the deadliest year in Iraq since 2008. July was the deadliest month, with over 1,050 killed and 2,320 wounded, the highest casualty numbers recorded since April 2008. Baghdad was one of the most affected areas.

As reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), 759 Iraqis, including 661 civilians, were killed and another 1,345 wounded in acts of terrorism and violence in December 2013. Both estimates exclude casualties resulting from violence in Anbar province because of limited information. Most attacks in Iraq are attributed to the Sunni militant Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) who rely on strongholds in Anbar, Nineveh, Kirkuk, most of Salah Al Din, and parts of Babil, Diyala, and Baghdad areas. The Sunni militant group, the largest in Iraq, allegedly seeks to create an Islamic state across the Iraq–Syria border.

On 10 February, ISIL withdrew its forces from Syria’s oil-rich eastern province of Deir- ez-Zor, according to local sources. The move followed several days of heavy infighting with rival militant groups in the area. The withdrawal may be related to the statement released on 3 February by Al Qaeda’s general command indicating that it has officially broken all links with ISIL. There had been months of tension with ISIL, and 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.

Since December 2013, ISIL has been involved in an open confrontation with Government forces in Anbar province. It continues to target Government security facilities, checkpoints and 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 Shi’ite targets since November–December.

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 but was rebuked by Al Qaeda’s general command. ISIL had been controversial among Islamists for a decade. The group was criticised for staging attacks with heavy civilian casualties and alienating part of the local population when it took control of the Sunni-dominated Anbar province in late December 2013.

**Anbar Governorate**

As of early April, the clashes in the towns of Ramadi and Fallujah continued and spread towards Diyala and Salah Al Din governorates. Although security forces have reportedly managed to take back most of Ramadi, Fallujah remains under Islamist militant control, and several incidents between ISIL militants and Iraqi military in the vicinity of Baghdad are raising concerns that the rebels are seeking to open a front towards the capital.

ISIL fighters have gradually fortified their hold over a major dam located just outside Fallujah in recent months. ISIL fighters closed the gates of the dam on 13 April, which could be used to flood Fallujah in order to lift the siege by Iraqi security forces. Areas downstream face electricity shortages due to their reliance on hydropower and irrigated areas may also experience water shortages.

There has been sporadic fighting in the mainly Sunni Anbar governorate since December 2013. Opposition fighters, mainly ISIL, captured positions in the provincial capital Ramadi and the city of Fallujah on 1 January. The two cities have been a bastion of Sunni insurgency since the 2003 US-led invasion. The current standoff represents the most direct challenge to the Government since the departure of US forces two years ago.

According to local sources, fighting has displaced up to 400,000 people, most within Anbar, but also in Nineveh, Salah al Din, and Diyala. As of 27 March, local medical sources also reported that 336 Iraqi civilians have been killed in the violence since January 2014, 154 in Fallujah alone. Another 1,562 were reportedly injured.

Local sources indicated that militants are policing the streets of Fallujah and implementing Sharia rulings, with the stated aim of winning the support of the local Sunni population.

On 26 March, the Anbar Provincial Council held a meeting to discuss initiatives to end the violence, including the withdrawal of military forces, amnesty for militants, and compensation for the people affected. The Council announced the creation of three negotiating committees to engage with the central government, tribal leaders opposed to the national authorities, and religious scholars. This followed Prime Minister Maliki’s 22 March reaffirmation of his commitment to implement the Anbar Peace Plan. Adopted by the Council of Ministers on 18 February, the plan pledges to restore stability in the province, reconstruct damaged property, resettle displaced families, and integrate tribal fighters who fought alongside the military into the police. The measures are the latest in an attempt to pacify Anbar province and Iraq’s broader Sunni minority, who have repeatedly complained of being marginalised by the Shi’ite-dominated government of Maliki and unfairly targeted by heavy-handed security measures.

The deadly clashes in Anbar ignited in early December after the arrest of a Sunni politician on terrorism charges and the Government’s dismantling of an opposition Sunni protest camp in Ramadi. While ten years ago many tribes in Anbar shared the US troops’ goal to rout ISIL, ISIL’s resurgence has divided the tribes, some sympathising with and supporting
the Islamist militants, others vowing to help the Government regain control.

**Militant-related Incidents and Attacks**

Iraq is subject to almost daily bombings and security incidents. As of 13 April, a death count by Agence France Presse based on Iraqi security and medical sources indicated that more than 2,550 have been killed since the beginning of 2014, including over 320 people in April. An estimated 600 Iraqis – mostly civilians – were killed and another 1,250 injured in acts of terrorism and violence in March, a slight decrease compared to over 760 deaths recorded in February. None of the figures cover casualties from the fighting in Anbar.

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On 9 April, the eleventh anniversary of the US takeover of Baghdad, 13 car bombs targeted Shi’ite communities and killed 18 people. Eight car bombs in Baghdad killed at least 11 people and wounded another 50, including in a traffic police office and a market. South of Baghdad, a similar string of attacks in Wasit governorate killed six people and wounded over 40.

On 8 April, security sources reported that soldiers killed 25 militants in an ambush southwest of Baghdad. The fighters allegedly belonged to ISIL, and were planning to attack an army base they had attempted to hit last week. The day before, Iraqi security forces said they killed 19 militants in clashes south of Baghdad, as well as in and around Ramadi and Fallujah to the west. On 4 April, clashes broke out south of Baghdad during attempted raids of militant strongholds in Yusifiyah, Latifiyah and Jurf al Sakhr, killing 15 militants and three members of the security forces. On 3 April, Iraqi soldiers killed more than 40 militants near Baghdad, when militants attacked an army camp in Yusifiyah.

In a separate dynamic, a string of suspected militant attacks across the country during the first week of April killed at least 64 people and wounded dozens.

On 8 April, attacks left 19 dead in Diyala, Salah al Din, Kirkuk and Nineveh, and included the murder of six members of the same family in the northern city of Mosul. Two car bombs targeting checkpoints in Mishahada and Tuz Khurmatu killed three and four policemen, respectively. Six other people were killed in attacks in and around Baqubah, Tikrit and Baiji. A day before, three people were killed by gunmen in Baghdad.

Similar incidents killed ten people on 6 April. The deadliest attack took place south of Baghdad, in the confessionally mixed city of Latifiyah, where six Sunni were reportedly killed by militants, although the circumstances remain unclear. Attacks were also recorded in Kirkuk, Nineveh and Salah al Din, where four civilians and six militants were killed.

On 4 April, violence killed over 12 people and wounded dozens in the capital, in predominantly Sunni areas of Nineveh, Salah al Din and Kirkuk provinces, and in Anbar. A bomb killed two people in Baiji, while bombings in Baghdad and in northern provinces killed six others. On 3 April, a series of attacks, including four car bombs, killed eight people and wounded 12 in Tuz Khurmatu and Tikrit, north of Baghdad.

On 2 April, attacks against security forces killed 12 people and wounded 30 in northern Iraq, while attacks and firefights south of the capital and the main northern city of Mosul left three policemen dead.

**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 would help ease pressure on Iraq’s Shi’ite leadership.

Nonetheless, Baghdad continues to suppress Kurdish’s push for greater economic independence by reasserting control over the oil resources in the region. Baghdad insists it has the sole right to export Iraqi resources, including those from the northern Kurdish region, which gained de facto autonomy in 1991. Among other countries, Turkey is currently engaged in negotiations with Kurdish authorities to begin oil exports.

In September 2013, Kurdistan’s main opposition party came second in the region’s parliamentary election, beating the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of regional President Barzani came first. Since 2005, KDP and PUK have ruled through a coalition Government as part of a wider deal in which they divide up posts in Erbil and Baghdad.

The regional Government has delayed the next election for the regional presidency to 2015, extending the term of Kurdish leader Barzani. The opposition has denounced this move as illegal.

**Kurdish Regional Security Context**

On 16 November, on his first visit to the Turkish southeast in two decades, Kurdish regional President Barzani called on Turkish Kurds to back the fading peace process with Ankara, ostensibly showing support for Prime Minister Erdogan. Given their 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 Iraqi Kurdistan and settle the issue of the stalled peace process in Turkey. Iraqi Kurds are also concerned over retaining the regional leadership of Kurds over the Syrian Democratic Union Party, which has links to the Turkish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). While Barzani was calling for more Kurdish support to Ankara, the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy...
Party (BDP) was denouncing Ankara’s regional policies in a counter rally 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 Turkish Government to take steps agreed under the peace process, which has not moved forward since the March ceasefire. Despite the start of 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, 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 issue continues to be a regional one and the Syrian conflict is impacting the situation of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. While the arrival of former PKK insurgents in Iraq is likely to strain tense relations between the regional Kurdish authorities and Baghdad, it remains unclear how the movement of PKK groups will impact the Syrian conflict, where armed Kurdish groups have been increasingly active, pursuing their own political agendas. A senior Iraqi Kurdish official indicated in August that Iraqi Kurdistan had no plans to send troops to Syria to defend fellow Kurds. However, as fighting between Kurds and Islamist anti-government forces continues in northern Syria, the wider region is becoming increasingly involved in the Syrian conflict. Various regional Kurdish groups are trying to assert transnational leadership.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

While Iraq continues to cope with over one million IDPs and returnees, the conflict in neighbouring Syria has also led to a large influx of refugees, mostly into the Kurdistan region. Iraq is also facing new humanitarian challenges due to violence in the central Anbar province, where fighting between Government forces and insurgents since late 2013 has triggered new waves of population displacement. Sectarian violence also increased during 2013 and 2014, when almost daily bombing affected civilian safety and security across the country.

Health

Fourteen years after Iraq was declared polio free, one case of wild poliovirus was confirmed on 24 March. The case involved a six-month boy in northern Baghdad with no links to Syria, although the type of polio is the same genetic strain as that found in Syria. Polio is believed to have spread due to the conflict and displacement in Anbar governorate, which borders Syria’s Deir-ez-Zor governorate, where polio was first found in October 2013. As part of the regional immunisation campaign, Iraq’s Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and WHO started a five-day national vaccination campaign on 6 April targeting over 5.6 million children under five across all 18 governorates.

Access

In January, the UN system declared Anbar to pose extreme security risks, meaning that UN staff are not permitted to travel to or within the governorate. In addition, the communications coverage has been disrupted, making remote operations through implementing partners challenging as well. The road from Baghdad to Ramadi is highly unsafe due to military operations in the area. As reported by OCHA and ICRC, fighting makes main roads impassable, and several bridges, including one linking Fallujah with Baghdad, have been destroyed. Several humanitarian partners have reported that administrative constraints are also hindering humanitarian access.

On 24 February, UNAMI reported that hundreds of people demonstrated in Fallujah for an end to the Government’s artillery bombardment in the area and for authorities to allow supplies to enter the city.

Although humanitarian access is less restricted elsewhere in 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 activities can be carried out by helicopter.

Displacement

IDPs

As of early 2014, UNHCR has warned that the significant increase of sectarian violence threatens to spark new internal displacements of Iraqis fleeing insecurity.

The recent outburst of violence in Anbar governorate has triggered population displacements from Ramadi and Fallujah. As of 9 April, authorities estimated that up to 426,000 people (over 71,000 households) have been displaced by fighting since January 2014, with about 70% displaced within Anbar governorate. Numbers are difficult to confirm. Ongoing military operations are likely to trigger additional population movements in Anbar and Salah al Din. According to OCHA and IOM, many IDPs have scattered around Anbar. Others have moved to Salah al Din, Kerbala, Baghdad, and Najaf governorates. Up to 29,000 have reportedly sought refuge in the Kurdistan region. According to local sources, the influx of IDPs imposes a significant burden on host communities.

Thousands of people are reportedly trapped in what are described as siege-like conditions in Fallujah and Ramadi. According to the UN, the most pressing needs of the IDPs are food, NFIs, healthcare, 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 governorate in late December, an estimated 1.3 million people were internally displaced in Iraq. In 2013, the UN had estimated that only 1.13 million people were internally displaced in Iraq.

Some Iraqis from Anbar have attempted to flee to Jordan but were reportedly blocked from entering by Jordanian authorities. Others have been able to enter by flying into Amman airport, although 1 family was reportedly turned back at the airport despite holding valid visas.

Syrian Refugees

As of 30 March, UNHCR reported that up to 220,000 people had entered Iraq from Syria
since the beginning of the crisis. This represents a significant increase since March 2013, where the number stood at just under 120,000 refugees. The Kurdistan Region in Iraq currently hosts an estimated 98% of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq. The remaining 2% reside near the border town of Al Qa’im, in Al Obaidy camp and in non-camp settings.

Since early 2014, Syrian refugees continue to cross into Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkapor crossing in Duhok province, but are subject to rigorous screening; many of the new arrivals had been waiting on the Syrian side of the border because of the border restrictions. Kurdish regional authorities have been granting access only to “genuine cases of asylum”. In practice, entry has been allowed for the following groups: Syrians able to prove they had family members in the Iraqi Kurdistan; medical cases who hold supporting documentation; and some Syrians coming to study. The Al Qa’im border crossing in Anbar governorate remains closed since March 2013.

Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq’s Dohuk province, is reportedly overcrowded. However, up to one-third of refugees receiving assistance in the camp reported that they are living outside the camp. As a result, local authorities in Iraqi Kurdistan and UNHCR will begin a verification exercise to avoid duplication of assistance between those living in camps and non-camp areas.

The vast majority of refugees are scattered in and around urban centres in Iraqi Kurdistan, but information sharing and analysis on their humanitarian situation are limited. The three governorates (Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyyah) have different policies towards Syrian refugees, leading to challenges in coordinating the humanitarian response. For example, in non-camp areas of Erbil, local authorities do not allow the provision of NFI or shelter assistance, in order to dissuade refugees from living in urban areas.

Returnees

Over 68,000 Iraqis have returned from Syria since mid-July 2012, with Baghdad receiving the largest number of returnees.

Updated: 15/04/2014

MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

30 March: Local authorities began a 12-day population survey, the first since 1983. Fears are increasing that the process will further inflame tensions by forcing the population to answer questions on ethnicity, religion, citizenship, and status. Before the census started, the Government announced that Muslims will not be able to register their ethnicity as “Rohingya”, a move aiming at appeasing Rakhine Buddhists, who fear any official recognition of the stateless minority could herald a move towards political rights.

Late March: According to local sources, an estimated 200 villages in central Myanmar are suffering from acute water shortages, due to the continuing long dry season. Latest reports indicated that the problem is mainly affecting the supply of safe drinking water.
**Peace Negotiations**

Since independence in 1948, internal conflicts have been endemic in Myanmar. They developed mainly in remote and economically marginalised areas where ethnic and/or political groups conducted protracted insurgencies such as in Kachin, Kayin (Karen ethnic group), Kayah (Karenni), Rakhine, and Shan states. In 2013, authorities signed several separate peace deals with the various insurgent movements, with the exception of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), and the ethnic Ta’ang army. This effort is seen as potentially opening the way towards a nationwide peace accord, and the Government says it hopes to consolidate these agreements into a nationwide ceasefire deal. However, local sources reported that the Myanmar military were weakly involved in the current peace process, which is mainly handled by the civilian authorities through the Myanmar Peace Center.

On 10 March, local sources reported that the umbrella group Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team, a coalition bringing together 16 ethnic groups, agreed to partner with the government’s Internal Peace Making Working Committee in the finalisation of the draft national ceasefire agreement. A meeting between the two parties resulted in a statement pledging the formation of a bipartisan committee, composed of nine representatives from each side, with Government representatives from the President’s office, parliament, and the army. This agreement, which reportedly aims to produce a single ceasefire text before political dialogue takes place, precedes the planned Hpa-an peace talks reset for April after several postponements.

In a separate development in early March, local sources reported that a senior leader from the United Nationalities Federal Council, the other coalition gathering 11 ethnic armed groups that are 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.

**Security Context**

Despite peace negotiations between the authorities and various insurgent groups, the security situation remains tense in parts of Myanmar. Massive human rights infringements against the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine state continue to be reported.

On 30 March, local authorities began a 12-day population survey, the first since 1983. Fears are increasing that the process will further inflame tensions by forcing the population to answer questions on ethnicity, religion, citizenship, and status. Before the census started, the government announced that Muslims will not be able to register their ethnicity as “Rohingya”, a move aiming at appeasing Rakhine Buddhists, who fear any official recognition for the stateless minority could herald a move towards political rights. According to local observers, several minorities have expressed misgivings about the use of a list of 135 official ethnicities, fearing it could be used for political purposes. Minority groups make up some 30% of the estimated 55–60 million population.

On 6 February, ECHO reported that tensions have escalated in Rakhine state, as between 500 and 2,000 people, including Buddhist monks, participated in demonstrations in northern Buthedaung. The demonstrations, which reportedly remained peaceful, started after clashes in Du Chee Yar Tan village in south Maungdaw on 13–14 January displaced an estimated 2,000 Muslims.

According to local sources and several human rights organisations, at least 40 people, including women and children, were 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, though it acknowledges that clashes took place. The UN are calling for an investigation into the incident. Tensions remain high, with authorities imposing restrictions on the displaced Muslim minority.

Multiple violent incidents have been reported with fresh inter-communal violence between Buddhists and Muslims near Yangon in early October, and in Thandwe, a coastal township in western Rakhine state, in late September, which led to casualties.

In June and October 2012, sectarian confrontations between 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.

**Military Operations**

On 4 March, local sources citing Shan ethnic rebels reported that Myanmar military forces captured two strategic outposts of the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N), at the junction connecting northern and southern Shan state. Insurgents were reportedly forced to withdraw from two of their camps as they suffered two consecutive days of bombardments and attack-s in late February. Fighting between the regular army and the SSA-N has continued despite agreeing a ceasefire in January 2012, with the rebels claiming it has lost five camps to Government troops and engaged in over 100 clashes since the deal was signed.

Although peace negotiations are ongoing, various local reports indicate that small-scale military operations continue in Kachin state. On 12 February, a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) outpost was reportedly seized by Government troops in Kachin state. Government troops had launched a renewed offensive against the KIA in the north on 26 December 2013. Local media reported artillery at a frontline outpost near Nam Lim Pa village in Mansi township, in southern Kachin state. Accurate information regarding these clashes remains scarce and the impact of this spike in violence on peace negotiations is unclear.

On 18 November, Kachin campaign groups called for an immediate end to clashes between Government troops and the KIA, ongoing since October despite a ceasefire having been agreed in the middle of the month. Violence has reportedly 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 border with China.

Heavy fighting in northern Kachin state and in the northern part of Shan state were reported in September as authorities reinforced their troops in these areas. Local and international organisations reported various human rights abuses being committed in Kachin state.
Reports indicate that though the army is still deployed in Karen state, almost no fighting has occurred in the area since a ceasefire was signed in January 2012. Little information is available on the situation in other areas as of early 2014.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

In late March, attacks were reported against the premises of international relief organisations and the UN in Sittwe, Rakhine state, with unidentified groups throwing stones and damaging buildings. While no casualties have been reported so far, many humanitarian workers are evacuating the area as tensions are expected to escalate during the census. In early February, ECHO reported that some demonstrators were demanding the departure of the UN and INGOs in Buthedaung, northern Rakhine state.

Humanitarian activities have been heavily constrained by these unprecedented attacks, in a region where many displaced people, mostly Rohingya Muslims, are completely reliant on humanitarian assistance. 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 Myebon township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe.

OCHA also reported that, in the second half of 2013, community resistance against international organisations working in Rakhine state increased. Rising anti-aid worker sentiment has created a difficult operating environment and in some areas 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 in Kachin state as major highways, 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. OCHA noted that six cross-line missions in January successfully accessed locations beyond Government control in Kachin state where approximately 30,000 IDPs currently live.

Displacement

IDPs

As reported by UNHCR in late March, over 640,000 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 continue to face abuse 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 people, mostly Muslims, are estimated to be without citizenship in the northern part of Rakhine State.

On 21 November, authorities rejected a UN resolution urging them to grant citizenship to the Rohingya Muslims, accusing the UN of encroaching on its sovereignty. Myanmar continues officially to state that the estimated 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims are migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, thus 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

According to UNHCR as of late March, over 415,000 refugees originate 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 Rohingya are also denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities. 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 access to education, health care, and non-food items. In late 2013, an additional 2,000 people were displaced by violence near the Mann Si Township.

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 disaster 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 in 2013 because of the violence.

Food Security
In late January, FAO reported that the food situation is generally improving. However, the negative effects of localized floods in 2013, particularly in Kayin state and Bago region, have raised the levels of food insecurity for flood-affected households. All 649,000 IDPs in Myanmar are at risk of food insecurity.

**Health and Nutrition**

As noted by OCHA in mid-July, a vulnerability mapping exercise showed that 36,000 Rohingya Muslims 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 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.

**WASH**

According to local sources in late March, an estimated 200 villages in central Myanmar are suffering from acute water shortages, due to an ongoing long dry season. Latest reports indicated that the problem is mainly affecting the supply of safe drinking water.

**Protection**

As reported by OCHA in February, adolescent girls in camps in Kachin and Rakhine states face increasing violence and abuse, including SGBV.

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**10 April:** Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held a fresh round of US-mediated talks. The peace dialogue hit a new impasse in late March after both sides traded accusations of failing to honour prior commitments. On 29 March, Israel called off the planned release of 26 Palestinian prisoners until it received assurances the Palestinian leadership would continue with US-brokered negotiations beyond an initial end of April deadline. US Secretary of State Kerry to Jerusalem swiftly visited Jerusalem in a bid to get the talks back on track, but his efforts were further challenged by the signing of 15 international conventions by Palestinians, a move which reportedly gives them greater leverage against Israel.

**10 April:** Local authorities reported that Israeli soldiers shot and wounded three Palestinians near Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip. Witnesses reported they were labourers collecting gravel for construction. Israeli military source indicated soldiers fired warning shots to disperse some 140 Palestinians who had gathered near the Erez personnel crossing.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip limits access and movement of both people and goods. Recent operations to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai have 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**

On 10 April, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held a fresh round of US-mediated talks. The peace dialogue hit a new impasse in late March after both sides traded accusations of failing to honour prior commitments.

On 29 March, Israel called off the planned release of 26 Palestinian prisoners until it received assurances the Palestinian leadership would continue with US-brokered negotiations beyond an initial end of April deadline. US Secretary of State Kerry swiftly visited Jerusalem in a bid to get the talks back on track, but his efforts were further challenged by the signing of 15 international conventions by Palestinians, a move which reportedly gives them greater leverage against Israel.

The agreement to release prisoners was not only subject to an extension of the peace talks, but it was also conditional on the Palestinian commitment not to go to the UN and join conventions, which have since been signed by Abbas on 1 April. Although the signed conventions dealt with social and human rights rather than the quest for full membership of...
UN bodies, Israel announced that the signatures had created new conditions, and that the prisoners will not be freed.

The talks aim at creating a Palestinian state and ending decades of conflict, but they have stalled over Palestinian opposition to Israel’s demand to be recognised as a Jewish state, and the issue of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Palestinians want an independent state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem – lands captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

In late December, Israel released 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, with the release of the fourth group still pending. 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, with at least 19 Palestinians and four Israelis killed in the occupied territories since the negotiations began.

Besides, the talks have reportedly reached an impasse due to Jewish settlement activity, as which threatened to jeopardise the peace talks, Israel announced a push for more construction in Jewish settlements, 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. At the time, Israeli negotiators already 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.

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. 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. Far-right members of Israel’s governing coalition have repeatedly threatened to topple the Government if Netanyahu caved to Palestinian territorial demands.

US Secretary of State Kerry and his mediation team have progressively lowered the bar for the success of dialogue, from a comprehensive peace agreement to a framework for a deal, but it appears that keeping dialogue open beyond the initial end of April deadline will be a challenge.

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 had lost their job across all sectors. On 20 March, OCHA stated that in the last quarter of 2013, the unemployment rate hit a three-year high of 41.5%. The unemployment rate, normally around 30%, has risen as construction and tunnel-trade employment has stagnated. Shortages of electricity, fuel, and building materials have further undermined people’s livelihoods, particularly those employed in construction, agriculture, and fishing.

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 one million litres per day until June 2013.

Security Context

Israeli military operations in the OPT and settler-related violence in the West Bank continue to undermine the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians. 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.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that in February three Palestinian civilians were killed in direct conflict. Another 221 Palestinian civilians were injured in direct conflict. 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.

In early March, an increase in Israeli raids, Palestinian rocket attacks, and border incidents built up tensions between Israel and Hamas, leading to a significant escalation of attacks between 11 and 14 March in the Gaza Strip.

Armed Violence in the Gaza Strip

On 10 April, local authorities reported that Israeli soldiers shot and wounded three Palestinians near Beit Hanoun, in the northern Gaza Strip. Witnesses reported they were labourers collecting gravel for construction. Israeli military gave soldiers fired warning shots to disperse some 140 Palestinians who had gathered near the Erez personnel crossing.

The latest confrontation between the Israeli Military Forces and Palestinian armed groups began on 11 March, when an Israeli air raid killed three fighters of Islamic Jihad who had fired a mortar shell at Israeli troops allegedly trying to enter southern Gaza. The following day, the Al-Quds Brigades, the Islamic Jihad’s armed wing, reportedly launched a coordinated barrage of over 100 rockets at southern Israel in response to the killings. Israel retaliated by hitting over 35 targets across Gaza, including Islamic Jihad bases and facilities of the Hamas military wing. On 13 March, another eight rockets reportedly hit Israel soil. While no one has claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, Gaza security
sources indicated that one failed rocket attempt was linked to a Salafist splinter group.

Although there were no reports of casualties on either side, medical sources in Gaza reported that at least three people were injured in the Israeli bombardments. These attacks represent the worst confrontation since the eight-day fighting in November 2012.

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 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. On 9 February, an Israeli airstrike reportedly targeted and wounded a key militant figure considered responsible for cross-border rocket fire. This strike was 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.

In January, Israeli air strikes, tank shelling and use of live ammunition reportedly caused over 23 civilian injuries, along with significant damage to civilian homes, public services and agriculture property. The military operations were allegedly conducted in response to rockets shot by Palestinian factions toward southern Israel, or in reaction to demonstrators approaching the fence separating Gaza and Israel.

In a separate dynamic 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.

**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; annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013 injuring over 17,000 Palestinians, 342 settlers, and 37 soldiers have been injured, and killing ten Palestinians and 29 settlers.

OCHA reported that between 28 January and 3 February, seven settler-related incidents occurred 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.

**Armed Violence in the West Bank**

On 22 March, Israeli forces reportedly killed three Palestinian civilians and a member of the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, and allegedly wounded fourteen civilians in the area of the Jenin refugee camp.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that over 70 Palestinians, including 27 children, were injured by Israeli forces across the West Bank within a week. This figure represents twice the weekly average so far this year.

On 19 March, Israeli troops reportedly shot dead a Palestinian teenager southwest of Hebron, on the ground that he was part of a group trying to damage a security fence, an accusation denied by witnesses.

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.

OCHA reported that Israeli forces injured 42 Palestinian civilians, including eight children, in clashes which took place between 4-10 February at Al Jalazun refugee camp in Ramallah, Al Far’a refugee camp in Tubas, and in Ya’bad village in Jenin.

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.

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.

Additionally in January, clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in the West Bank caused 129 civilian injuries notably in Abu Dis in Jerusalem governorate, Kafr Qaddum in Qalqiliya governorate, and Wadi Qana in Salfit governorate.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to OCHA, 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in OPT, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement the highest priorities. Longstanding protection threats affecting the Palestinian population, including movement and access restrictions, generate high levels of humanitarian need.

**Access**

As of mid-March, local sources reported that recent escalation of violence caused crossings between Gaza and Israel to remain almost completely closed.

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 is 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 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.

**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. Over 770,000 people are estimated to be food insecure in the West Bank alone, according to the UN. 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, normally around 30%, is expected to rise as construction and tunnel-trade employment stagnates. 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) already receive food aid.

**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. According to WHO on 26 March, 30% of essential drugs and 52% of medical disposables are at zero stock (141 types of medication and 469 types of medical disposables).

WHO further reported that the number of applications for health access through Erez checkpoint was slightly less in February than the previous month, but the demands in the past two months were 76% higher than in the same period in 2013, and represent the highest demand since 2005, when WHO started monitoring.

**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.

As of late March, Palestinians in annexed east Jerusalem reportedly have petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court over alleged negligence that has cut water supplies to tens of thousands of people. Currently, there is a three-week water shortage in the Palestinian areas, and in Shuafat refugee camp people have no water at all, or the water pressure is so weak that it stops periodically. The water infrastructure in those Palestinian areas can support 15,000 people, but the population is estimated at between 60,000 and 80,000.

On 20 March, OCHA reported that the Gaza Power Plant was forced to shut down between 15 and 16 March after depleting all its fuel reserves, increasing electricity blackouts from 12 to as many as 18 hours per day, across the Gaza Strip. There is an acute shortage of fuel to power standby generators at 291 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: 11/04/2014**

**PAKISTAN**  **CONFLICT, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT, EARTHQUAKE**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

10 April: The 40-day ceasefire between the Government and Pakistani Taliban (TTP) expired; it remained unclear if it would be renewed. A few days before, the Taliban had...
announced they would extend the truce and potentially free high-profile detainees in return for the Government’s release of 30 non-combatant prisoners on 7 April.

9 April: A bomb exploded in a market in the area of Islamabad, killing at least 22 people and injuring another 96. A TTP spokesperson said the group was not responsible. Since the start of the talks between the Government and TTP intermediaries in February, local authorities reported that more than 160 people have been killed in incidents of violence perpetrated by the TTP and associate factions.

8 April: A bomb exploded on a train in southwestern Balochistan province. At least 14 people died and another 40 were injured. Responsibility was claimed by the United Baloch Army (UBA), one of several armed separatist groups in the province. UBA warned that similar attacks were planned in response to a major military operation against militants that began on 7 April and reportedly caused the death of 40 combatants from the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) and the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA).

Early April: Security sources reported that fresh Taliban infighting has erupted in South Waziristan over whether to participate in talks with the Government. Between 6–14 April, over 50 fighters died along the Afghan border, with clashes allegedly pitting supporters of senior TTP commander Khan Said Sajna against followers of Hakimullah Mehsud, the TTP commander killed by a US drone in November.

Early April: The health authorities declared eight districts of Punjab highly sensitive for polio, including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Mianwali, Multan, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh. An anti-polio drive targeting over 4 million children in the area is expected to start on 14 April.

KEY CONCERNS
- Military operations against the Taliban in the northwestern tribal areas and militant attacks in urban centres continue despite the resumption of peace talks between TTP and the authorities.
- An estimated one million people were internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas as of mid-December. Though numbers are difficult to confirm, there are an estimated 2.5 million documented and undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan (UNHCR).
- As of February, priority humanitarian needs in Pakistan 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 need 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 Balochistan province (OCHA).

The security situation remains volatile due to militant attacks in urban centres and recent military operations against the Taliban in the tribal areas. As of February, Pakistan’s relations with neighbouring countries, and with the US, remain tense.

National Political Context

On 18 February, Pakistan’s former ruler Pervez Musharraf arrived in court to face treason charges that may result in the death penalty. 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. 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 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 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

On 10 April, the 40-day ceasefire between the Government and Pakistani Taliban (TTP) expired; it remained unclear if it would be renewed. A few days before, the Taliban had announced they would extend the truce and potentially free high-profile detainees in return for the Government’s release of 30 non-combatant prisoners on 7 April. This move by the authorities was originally designed to boost reconciliation with the TTP. A first group of 16 prisoners was released on 3 April. The detainees reportedly belong to the Mehsood tribe, a Pashtun tribe living in South Waziristan. Overall, over 100 prisoners are expected to be freed in the coming weeks.

The parties began direct talks in North Waziristan on 26 March. The Taliban initially indicated they would not extend the truce to April if the Government did not meet their demands, which include the release of 800 prisoners described by the rebels as non-combatant family members, and the withdrawal of army troops from parts of the semi-autonomous tribal areas along the border with Afghanistan. The second round of peace talks hangs in the balance, and the Taliban announced early April that attacks would begin again if the Pakistani authorities refused to comply.

The peace talks had stalled after Taliban-linked militants killed 23 kidnapped Pakistani soldiers, which led to multiple targeted airstrikes by the military against suspected militant hideouts in North Waziristan in February. This in turn prompted the Taliban to declare a one-month ceasefire in early March. Although tensions remain high, the truce has reportedly been reciprocated by the Government.
On 6 March, the Government announced it was setting up a new committee to accelerate the negotiation process, despite renewed attacks across the country. TTP denied involvement in the string of attacks that followed the truce announcement, which were claimed by two dissident factions opposed to talks, Ansar-ul-Mujahideen and Ahhrar-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.

In a rare admission of casualties, Pakistan’s army indicated as of late February 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. On 22 February, TTP declared there was no chance of peace in Pakistan unless authorities agree to change the political system and establish Islamic law.

Pakistan’s Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP)

In late March, militants and security sources indicated that the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have secretly agreed to focus on operations in Afghanistan, with Pakistani militants announcing a ceasefire with Islamabad in order to preserve militant bases used to stage cross-border attacks.

In a separate dynamic in early April, security sources reported that infighting has erupted between rival TTP factions in South Waziristan over whether to participate in talks with the Government. Between 6 and 14 April, over 50 fighters have died along the Afghan border, with clashes allegedly pitting supporters of senior TTP commander Khan Said Sajna against followers of Hakimullah Mehsud, the TTP commander killed by a US drone in November. Militant sources initially suggested that the violence ignited after Khan Said Sajna was rejected for leadership of the TTP umbrella group, but latest reports seemed to indicate that the violence is fuelled Sajna’s support for peace talks with the Government, while his rival Shehryar Mehsud is against the tentative dialogue and has commanded his fighters to continue attacks on the Government regardless of negotiations between the Pakistani authorities and part of the TTP.

Sajna was initially seen as a strong candidate to become TTP chief following the death of Hakimullah Mehsud in November, but the movement’s ruling council finally promoted Mullah Fazlullah, a commander from the Swat Valley. Before Fazlullah, Asmatullah Shaheen held interim command of the TTP, and was considered to be a proponent of peace talks. In late February, security sources reported that Shaheen was killed by unidentified gunmen in North Waziristan, an indication of the increasing fragmentation of the Taliban movement in Pakistan since the death of Mehsud.

According to observers, the violence also has roots in a conflict between Hakimullah Mehsud and his deputy, who were killed in separate attacks by US drone in 2013.

The TTP is a fragmented movement comprising several factions that pursue different agendas. The promotion of Fazlullah is a significant change, which may shift the movement’s centre of gravity from the traditional North Waziristan area to the Swat Valley. According to local sources, the promotion of Fazlullah rapidly triggered a rift in the TTP despite the reported endorsement of Fazlullah by Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar.

Security Context

Pakistan is mostly affected by Taliban militant violence across the country and military operations targeting Taliban factions. However, the security situation is also chronically undermined by the low-level separatist insurgency in Balochistan.

According to an independent count by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), nearly 6,000 people were killed and 5,500 injured in militant, sectarian, terrorist, and politically motivated attacks across the country in 2013, making it one of the deadliest years in the last decade.

Attacks by TTP and Splinter Factions

According to CRSS, more than 850 incidents of violence perpetrated by the TTP and its associate factions killed over 1,400 people between June 2013 and January 2014. Since the start of the talks between the Government and TTP intermediaries in February, local authorities have reported that more than 160 people killed in TTP-related violence.

On 9 April, a bomb exploded in a market in the area of Islamabad, killing at least 22 people and injuring another 96. A TTP spokesperson said the group was not responsible for the attack. The blast came over a month after two attacks in Islamabad killed 11 people, in which TTP also denied involvement, and which was claimed by the increasingly active TTP splinter group Ahhrar-ul-Hind. According to UK-based charity Action on Armed Violence, 40 attacks with improvised explosive devices were recorded in Pakistan in the first three months of 2014, and at least 700 people were killed or injured in these incidents.

On 3 April, Pakistan’s former military ruler Pervez Musharraf escaped a fourth assassination attempt as a bomb targeted his convoy on the outskirts of the capital Islamabad. No casualties were reported.

On 14 March, at least 19 people were killed and over 80 injured in two separate incidents in the capitals of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The attacks were claimed by Ahhrar-ul-Hind. On 12 March, gunmen killed four people including three militants in Miranshah, a tribal district of North Waziristan, close to the Afghan border. While circumstances remain unclear, local officials said the attack may have been triggered by rivalry between militant groups. On the same day in Karachi, at least 12 people were killed and over 40 injured in a violent clash between two gangs in Lyari.

In the first week of March 2014, militant attacks killed 19 people in the capital and in the northwest. On 5 March, a roadside bomb killed six soldiers near Hangu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. On 4 March, two people were killed in the Jamrud area of Khyber Agency in the FATA, in an attack targeting vehicles carrying NATO supplies for Afghanistan. On 3 March, 11 people were killed and 30 others injured in a suicide attack on a court in the centre of Islamabad. Ahhrar-ul-Hind claimed the attack. Although Taliban representatives have tried to distance themselves from recent attacks, latest events suggest they are not fully in control of the various factions.

In February, militants’ attacks targeting mostly the Shi’ite minority, local officials and security forces killed 52 people and wounded dozens in the northwest of the country. Also, on 17 February the Taliban said they had executed 23 soldiers in revenge for military
operations in FATA. Additionally, a high profile attack on the Iranian consulate in the
northwestern city of Peshawar killed two security guards, injured more than a dozen
people, and 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.

Shi'ite Muslims comprise a fifth of the country’s 180 million population. According to
observers, the violence against Shi'ite targets is worst in Balochistan, and attacks 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 against the Taliban in North Waziristan**

Despite the resumption of negotiations on 5 March, the Government warned that it could
launch a full-scale operation against 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 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. Helicopter attacks took place in Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to security sources, attacks against militant hideouts were launched on 20
February, when Prime Minister Sharif personally authorised military operations. 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 control 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.

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. 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 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. At the end of January,
local sources reported that up to 70,000 people may have left their homes as a
consequence, although reports indicate that most had returned home in early February as
military operations were discontinued. The military operation followed two high-profile TTP
attacks on 19–20 January, targeting Pakistani troops in the north western city of Bannu
and a market next to Pakistan’s military headquarters in Rawalpindi, respectively.

**The Separatist Insurgency in Balochistan**

On 8 April, a bomb exploded on a train in southwestern Balochistan province. At least 13
people died, and another 40 were injured. The United Baloch Army (UBA) claimed
responsibility, warning that similar attacks were planned in the coming days.

UBA, one of several armed separatist groups, said the attack was in response to a major
offensive by Pakistan Army’s Frontier Corps, which had been launched in Kalat district on
7 April and reportedly killed 40 combatants from the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) and
the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). Security sources reported the seizure of a large
quantity of weapons.

The Frontier Corps offensive represents the biggest clash in months in the gas-rich
province, despite the announcement on 2 April by an army commander that the process to
resolve the Balochistan issue through dialogue was under way.

According to local sources, two people were killed and six wounded in another incident on
31 March, when a train was attacked by militants positioned on a mountain top in Bolan
district.

On 29 March, an armed attack in the port city of Gwadar left one person dead; militants
destroyed equipment and planted a bomb at an air traffic control post. No one claimed
responsibility, but officials indicated that Baloch militants in the area were suspected to be
behind the attack. Authorities reported that separatist rebels blew up three gas pipelines in
February, cutting supplies to Punjab, Pakistan’s most populous and wealthy province. The
attack was claimed by the banned Baloch Republican Army (BRA).

On 27 March, citizens and activists in Balochistan commemorated what they say was an
annexation of the province in 1948 by Pakistan’s armed forces. Many districts observed
strikes as security forces increased their presence. The Baloch National Front (BNF) – an
alliance of political parties that campaigns for an independent Balochistan – called for
protests against the Pakistan Government.

The long-running separatist conflict in Balochistan was revived in 2004. A number of
nationalist armed groups aim to stop what they consider the exploitation of the region's
natural resources, neglect of the population by the Pakistani authorities, and alleged
human rights abuses. In recent years, militant sources have suggested that many people
suspected of links to separatist groups have disappeared, allegedly at the hands of
intelligence agencies.

**International and Regional Context**

**Afghanistan–Pakistan**

On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume
stalled peace talks between 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.

Prime Minister Sharif met with Afghan President Karzai in Kabul on 30 November, as part of
renewed efforts to revive Afghanistan's peace process before the NATO troop
withdrawal. This was his first visit to Afghanistan. Sharif 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. In September, Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not handed over directly to Afghan authorities. The release of influential Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan is seen by the Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

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 temporarily to 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.

Prime Minister Sharif has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes against militants. Nevertheless, an increase has been reported in FATA, with at least a dozen occurring since Sharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by Pakistani authorities in late August 2013, 399 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 criticising the recourse to drone strikes and detailing the deaths of dozens of civilians in such attacks. In January 2014, news reports, field investigations and research by INGOs indicated that the number of civilian casualties in 2013 in Pakistan was much lower than Pakistani estimates.

India–Pakistan

On 8 October 2013, 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-administered 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 ongoing violence and heightened tensions over the Kashmir border. During the meeting, both leaders announced intentions to restore calm as an initial step towards reconciliation. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for incidents that killed 44 members of the security forces from the beginning of 2013 until early September 2013, 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 new strategy.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 4.2 million people were in need of humanitarian support in November 2013. 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 were reported in Pakistan, 11 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 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 27 March, local sources reported that one police officer was killed when suspected militant attacked a polio team in the area of Nasarabad, Balochistan. 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 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 September 2013 Balochistan earthquakes was complicated by the remoteness of the region and the presence of separatist insurgents who feared that the
army, which was overseeing aid operations, would 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, 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 OCHA as of 20 March, over 160 people, including 100 children have died in Tharparkar since the beginning of 2014 due to drought-related causes and a lack of access to health services, most of them in the town of Mithi, one of the least developed and most remote districts. As hundreds of thousands migrate from the area where poverty is endemic and rates of acute malnutrition can be as high as 20%, 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 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 towards irrigated areas, and questioned the attribution of the deaths reported 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 20 March, families displaced by the large scale military offensive conducted by Government troops against militants in North Waziristan in FATA on 20-23 February have started to return home following the lull in violence in the area. Aerial strikes had displaced 25,000 people into districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Afghanistan. According to local authorities, an estimated 5,000 displaced have returned to their villages so far.

In late January, up to 70,000 people had 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 internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA and in need of assistance. In November 2013, local sources suggested that up to 1.6 million IDPs from FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were located in the Peshawar area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The UN reported on 15 February that almost 110,000 people returned to 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 140,000 people were displaced across Pakistan, the majority in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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.

IDP Returnees

In early April, local sources reported that the authorities have started repatriating thousands of Ali Sherzai tribe members to their native area in Kurram Agency, in FATA. In 2010, an estimated 55,000 people were displaced following a military operation targeting militant hideouts. To date, 7,500 people have been sent back, on a reported voluntary basis, and the repatriation process is expected to be completed by late April. While the authorities have reportedly facilitated the move, local sources indicated that high levels of vulnerability among the newly returned.

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 undocumented migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, in Pakistan. Most Afghan refugees, the majority of whom were located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, require 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 a 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 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 were confirmed across various regions: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 9,402; Sindh 5,765; Punjab 2,676; and Balochistan 42. The disease is 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**

As of early April, the health authorities declared eight districts of Punjab highly sensitive for polio, including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Mianwali, Multan, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh. An anti-polio drive targeting over 4 million children in the area is expected to start on 14 April.

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 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh provinces. As of 15 February, the number of new polio cases reported in 2014 is 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.

In mid-January 2014, health officials in FATA hailed the success of a three-day anti-polio drive. This success however comes against the persistent threat of militant attacks on polio workers. A number of polio vaccination workers had previously refused to operate in the area because of security concerns before being persuaded otherwise.

Children are especially at risk of polio, 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% suffer from stunted growth.

In late January, local media quoted a December 2013 WFP survey expressing concern about malnutrition in the 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 need NFIs, such as blankets, quilts, shawls, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, and solar lamps to cope with the harsh winter. 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 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.

Updated: 15/04/2014

**BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, EPIDEMIC, CYCLONE**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new developments this week. Last update: 26/03/2014.

**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

Although the political situation seemed to have relatively stabilized after the now-ruling Bangladesh Awami League (AL) assumed power in late 2008, intermittent violence during protests erupted amidst ongoing tensions between Islamic groups and secular activists over competing political agendas ahead of the January 2014 elections. In January 2013, demonstrations started over the trial and sentencing of senior political leaders from the main opposition party – the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) – and its Islamic allies for offenses and crimes committed during the 1971 independence war from Pakistan. Several leaders are still officially on trial. By the end of the year, the protests – or hartals – evolved into an open showdown between hundreds of thousands of supporters of the AL and the BNP.

National Political Context – Aftermath of the January Elections

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 staged across the country by the BNP. Local monitoring organizations have indicated that the death toll might be as high as 180 people.

On 12 January, the country’s new government was sworn in and Sheikh Hasina began a third term as Prime Minister. Meanwhile 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.

In 2011, the ruling Awami League 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 argued that the AL was trying to stay in power up to the elections to influence their outcome. The move set the stage for a political crisis that ended with the opposition boycotting the elections. So far, no agreement on how to bring an end to the protests was reached between the authorities and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP).

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's 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.

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
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 facing a political deadlock. The decisions 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, 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

Bangladesh, a low-lying country with the world's highest population density, is also one of the world’s most hazard-prone states with seasonal floods leading each year to important humanitarian caseloads. Disasters, cyclones and heavy rains mainly, are frequent in the country. The frequency of natural hazards in the impoverished nation often leads to stocking needs from one year to the other after affected people had their livelihoods lastingly disrupted. Eventually, needs in Bangladesh remain sometimes difficult to assess while the humanitarian impact of low-profile events is chronically underreported.

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 are officially registered and live formal camps where the Government only allows UNHCR and humanitarian organisations to assist refugees. On 24 March, the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) indicated that the government has restricted aid to registered refugees living in official camps. As stated, a further 300,000 Rohingya refugees – or even more according to local media – are in unofficial camps or with host communities where they receive little or no humanitarian assistance. On 24 March, GSDRC indicated that conditions are dire in unofficial camps, including overcrowding, disease resulting from a lack of clean water and sanitation, poor health and nutrition, shelter, livelihood conditions, and human rights abuses. New refugees cannot register with the Government or UNHCR and cannot enter the official camps.

Disasters

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.

According to observers, economic growth is expected to slow to less than 6% until June 2014, following the current unrest. To date, higher prices have been registered for both food and non-food items in what may be seen as the first indication of the impact of the ongoing civil unrest on the country’s economy.

**Livelihoods and Food Security**

The World Bank on 6 February stated that each year during the monsoon season, about 20-30% of the country is inundated, flooding over six million hectares to depths ranging from 30cm to 2m. Hence, farming and fishing systems are at risk of deep flooding, erosion and drainage. In the post-monsoon period, soil-moisture content declines rapidly and the water deficit needs to be compensated by irrigation. Agriculture gets the largest share of available water and this in turn affects navigation, drinking water supply, environment, rural health and sanitation. Salinity intrusion, water logging and the contamination of the groundwater aquifer by arsenic further exacerbate this problem.

**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.

According to GSDRC on 24 March, acute malnutrition rates in unregistered refugee children <5 were 18% in 2010. Refugees International established in 2013 that the global rates of malnutrition in one unofficial camp were twice the emergency threshold.

**Protection**

On 24 March, GSDRC reported that their unregistered status means that refugees who have been victims of violence have no legal recourse. Incidents of domestic and sexual violence have been on the increase around Rohingya settlements. Unregistered female refugees are especially vulnerable to sexual and physical attacks. Many female refugees are forced into illegal activities as a survival mechanism or sell their children into domestic labour putting them at risk of abuse and arrest.

*Reviewed: 11/04/2014*

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**March:** The number of forced returns of Palestinian refugees from Syria has increased significantly in early 2014. Since 2013, Jordanian authorities have deported more than 100 people to Syria. There has been a 40% increase in new arrivals crossing the Jordan-Syria border in February and March compared to January. The increase is attributed to the intensification of the conflict in southern Syria, particularly in Dar’a and Quneitra governorates.

**31 March:** A re-verification exercise for registered refugees in Za’atari has revealed that about 20,000 people are no longer living in the camp. In addition, Jordanese Government authorities have misplaced 35% of registered refugees’ identity documents, which had been confiscated upon their arrival until the end of 2013.

**30 March:** 589,000 Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

**11 March:** Following months of delay, the Government announced that the new Azraq camp will be opened to accept Syrian refugees on 30 April.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Jordan remains affected by the crisis in neighbouring Syria, with the regular flow of Syrian refugees swelling Jordan’s population size by almost 10%. The influx of refugees has placed enormous pressure on scarce water resources and public services, which has increased tensions between host communities and refugees.

- 589,000 Syrian refugees are registered with UNHCR in Jordan.

- Humanitarian operations and resources are disproportionately focused on the Syrian refugee camps, which house less than 20% of Syrian refugees in Jordan.

**Politics and Security**

While northern Jordan in particular has been overwhelmed by the influx of Syrian refugees, the country has remained politically stable and the economy appears to be recovering from the negative consequences resulting from the Arab Spring. However, this balance remains fragile as Syrian refugees have overwhelmed public services, particularly health and education, and placed major stress on scarce water supplies. Tension between refugees and host communities have manifested in localised protests, particularly in Mafrac governorate, and negative media portrayals of Syrians, as well as regular reports of discrimination and harassment of refugees.

The Jordanian military has tightly controlled cross-border movements of refugees, commodities, fighters, and weapons on the Syrian border to limit spillover of the conflict into the Kingdom. However, hundreds of Jordanians are reportedly fighting with opposition groups with links to Al Qaeda, particularly Jabhat al Nusra, and 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
Syrian Refugees

Jordan is hosting the third largest number of Syrian refugees after Lebanon and Turkey. At 10 March, over 589,000 Syrian refugees had registered with UNHCR in Jordan. Around 19% of Syrian refugees live in camps, the rest in local communities. The influx peaked in early 2013 with an average of 1,700 daily arrivals between January and April but has since drastically reduced. While the Government has stated that the decrease in arrivals is due to obstacles for those trying to reach the border, human rights groups have documented incidents where Syrians were denied entry by Jordanian authorities. In early 2014, the average number of daily arrivals was under 400.

Refugees in Host Communities

Over 80% of Syrian refugees living outside of the camps are located in Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa. Assessments by aid agencies consistently find that the priority need among refugees in host communities is for cash in order to pay for rental costs. Work permits are cost prohibitive to obtain for refugees, although many Syrians, including children, work in agriculture and construction, despite the protection risks, including arrest and detention. In the northern governorates, about 20% of Syrians live in sub-standard accommodation, including garages, basements, chicken houses, and tents. Housing has become increasingly overcrowded as they deplete their resources. In particular, Mafraq is one of the poorest governorates and there are now more refugees than local residents present, causing rental costs to quadruple.

Camps

Originally slated to open in mid-2013, Azraq camp in Zarqa governorate is scheduled to open for new arrivals on 30 April. At full capacity, Azraq camp can accommodate 130,000 refugees. However, many aid workers are concerned about Azraq’s harsh weather, which is very hot and windy, making the use of tents untenable. Shelters in Azraq will be temporary housing structures made of more durable materials.

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. However, authorities have cracked down on unofficial departures from the camp in 2014. The lack of security in certain parts of Za’atari camp impedes access to services, particularly for women and girls. Security incidents and protests in Za’atari camp are frequent.

Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS)

About 13,500 Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) have been recorded by UNRWA, which provides cash assistance for vulnerable PRS, the vast majority of the PRS population. About 190 PRS are in the Cyber City facility, movement from which is restricted. Since late 2012, the Government has explicitly stated that it would not allow PRS to enter Jordan. Those who do enter the country are subject to a number of protection issues, including refoulement and the confiscation of documents. There has been a significant increase in the number of forced returns of Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS) in early 2014. Since 2013, over 100 PRS have been deported by the Jordanian authorities.

Non-Syrian Refugees

Due to the conflict in Anbar province in Iraq, the number of Iraqis seeking asylum through UNHCR increased fivefold to 1,300 in December 2013, with demand persisting into 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.

Protection

While only a small proportion of refugees live in informal tented settlements compared to Lebanon, it is believed that they number in the thousands. In December 2013, authorities in Mafraq evicted several hundred households living on public land with no notice and told refugees that they had to enter Za’atari camp immediate. The evictions have since stopped, but it is expected to increase after the end of the winter season in April and likely spread to other governorates, particularly Amman and Balqa.

Updated: 01/04/2014

LEBANON CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2 April: Rockets hit the Lebanese border town of Labwe, killing a Syrian worker. The town’s residents blocked the road to the neighbouring town of Aarsal, which is sympathetic to the Syrian opposition, blaming it for the attack.
1 April: Lebanese police and army began the operation of a security plan aimed at demilitarising the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, following recently renewed violence between rival neighbourhoods, in which at least 30 people have been killed. Related to the war in Syria, the clashes have killed hundreds over the past three years. The military arrested 75 individuals, including 27 Palestinians and Syrians, under suspicion of involvement in clashes between the predominantly-Sunni Bab al Tabbaneh, which supports Syrian opposition, and nearby Jabal Mohsen, an Alawite district that backs the Syrian Government.

29 March: Three Lebanese soldiers were killed in a car bomb attack near an army post in northeast Lebanon.

KEY CONCERNS

- The conflict in 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. There have been nine bombings in southern Beirut since July 2013, killing more than 70 people, almost all civilians, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

- As of 2 April, there are 948,575 Syrians registered as refugees with UNHCR in Lebanon and nearly 48,000 awaiting registration. An unknown number of Syrians reside in Lebanon who are not registered with UNHCR. If the rate of roughly 12,000 refugees per week into Lebanon continues, there will be over 1.6 million registered refugees by the end of 2014, according to the UN. At the end of February 2014, over half of registered refugees were children, and 40% children under 12 years of age.

- The arrival 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.

- 85% of registered refugees are in locations where 67% of the Lebanese host population is living below the poverty line.

- The population of the 42 Palestinian gatherings in Lebanon has now swelled to 135,000 due to an additional 35,000 refugees from Syria.

Politics and Security

International Context

On 9 February, the Hezbollah leadership publicly renewed its vow to continue fighting in Syria alongside President Assad’s forces. Hezbollah’s involvement in the offensive against the opposition-held stronghold Qusayr had already prompted the Free Syrian Army and al Nusra Front to independently warn that their members could start fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon. On 10 July 2013, 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 2013. 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 deaths. Shelling from Syria on the border regions frequently results in casualties.

Lebanon–Israel

On 14 March, the Israeli army announced it shelled a Hezbollah position in retaliation for a bomb that targeted their military unit on the border with Lebanon. The Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIL) claimed responsibility via Twitter for the bomb attack against Israel, though not on the group’s official page.

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 shells into southern Lebanon, in response to rockets that 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 shooting took place between the Lebanese military and the Israel Defence Forces in the vicinity of the Blue Line border demarcation at Naqoura.

National Political Context

On 25 March, the two-month period to elect a new president began. Current President Michel Sleiman’s term will expire on 25 May. The president is always elected from the Maronite Christian community and not by the people, but the parliament.

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 Hezbollah movement and its allies and the 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

There have been nine bombings in southern Beirut since July 2013, killing more than 70 people, almost all civilians, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Health.

On 23 March, clashes flared between supporters and opponents of the Syrian Government in southwest Beirut near Sports City, and lasted more than five hours. The fighting pitted supporters of the pro-Syrian Government Arab Movement Party against pro-opposition Salafis. The rival Sunni fighters exchanged gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades for several hours. One person was killed and 10 were wounded.

Repeated inter-sectarian strife has occurred in the northern city of Tripoli over the last months, raising fears that the Syrian conflict may become a regional one between Shi’ite
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 Greater Syria (ISIL), the most active Islamic militant group in Iraq, which has also seized large swathes of opposition-held territory in neighbouring Syria from more moderate opposition groups. 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 claim appeared to come from the northern city of Tripoli, which has seen frequent battles pitting Sunni militants against Alawites. While Lebanon’s Hezbollah movement has reportedly sent troops to Syria to back Damascus’s Government, Lebanese Sunni Islamists are said to mostly support the Syrian opposition.

Al Qaeda’s general command officially broke all links with ISIL on 3 February, in a move that can be seen as a clear attempt by al Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria by bolstering the al Qaeda affiliated al Nusra Front. 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 February, 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, a bomb attack killed four people and injured 35 in the Shia-dominated Haret Hreik area of Beirut. This is the sixth attack targeting areas considered to be Hezbollah strongholds since the group announced on 30 April 2013 that it was sending fighters to support President 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.

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 overwhelmed 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 at 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

Increasing levels of insecurity in some areas is hindering food assistance. Security in Tripoli, Wadi Khaled, and north of the Bekaa Valley remains problematic, with rockets 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 2 April, there are 948,575 Syrians registered as refugees with UNHCR in Lebanon and nearly 48,000 awaiting registration.

The priority need is shelter and 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. Vulnerable Syrian families are settling in public spaces including highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.; 69% of refugees are in rented accommodation that includes 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, or medical care. There are increasing reports of evictions of Syrians, either due to a failure to pay the rent or due to tensions with the community.

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 Syrians are granted access, according to UNHCR, there is a reported increase in arrests and detentions of Syrians for illegal entry and stay. Humanitarian partners also report that refugees arriving through unofficial crossings raise concerns of landmines and unexploded ordnance 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 current rate continue, 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 primary health centres, overstretched their capacity to provide healthcare. Physical access to health 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 rising demand. The prevention of disease control and outbreaks presents a challenge in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation.

Lack of financial resources is increasingly obstructing access to healthcare. Sahel Akkar is close to the Syrian border and more than 60% of its population of 35,000 Lebanese and 15,000 Syrians now live in poverty. Most people in Sahel Akkar cannot afford to go to a doctor. Even so, the local health centre is overwhelmed and cannot meet demand.

Child malnutrition

So far in 2014, nearly 18,000 children under the age of five have been screened for malnutrition. 14 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) with complications have been referred to hospital for treatment. A recent nutrition assessment showed GAM of refugee children was 5.9% in 2013, classified by WHO as poor. SAM was less than 1%. However, SAM in the Bekaa Valley was at 1.7%. This is thought to be due to lack of access to WASH and health services by the poorest Syrians, the longer-term impact of protracted displacement, and the increasing numbers of low birth-weight infants born to inexperienced and unsupported young mothers. Malnutrition treatment was uncommon in Lebanon prior to the crisis and some hospitals continue to face difficulties in malnutrition treatment protocol.

According to an inter-agency nutrition assessment released in February, nutrition status among children under five has deteriorated, with significant differences existing regionally. The lowest rates were found in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, with 4.3%, GAM, 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 2013 to vaccinate all children under five against polio, following a confirmed outbreak in Deir-ez-Zor governorate in Syria. Due to poor immunisation rates in some parts of Syria and the continuous arrival of displaced from Syria, the recent outbreak represents a serious risk for Lebanon. Lebanon has been polio-free for 12 years. The November campaign reached nearly 590,000 children – a 98% coverage rate. The Ministry of Public Health and UNICEF have launched the first of two planned campaigns in March and April 2014, targeting 600,000 children under the age of five living in tented settlements and collective shelters.

Shelter

With no formal sites to accommodate new refugees in Aarsal, several independent agencies have rented land and set up their own sites. These sites lack minimum standards to assure protection and good health of the refugees. The number of informal settlements in and around Aarsal has now reached 38, sheltering over 15,000 refugees.

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 settlements lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are located in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease. The scattered distribution of people requiring WASH assistance creates a challenging logistical situation. Currently, refugees reside in over 1,600 locations, of which some 700 are informal settlements. Informal settlements will increase, as the number of new arrivals increases. Many new arrivals require assistance with sanitation and access to safe water. The needs of affected people will vary depending on the capacity of existing water and sanitation services and the local authority infrastructure.

This winter in Lebanon has been unusually dry, with January 2014 the driest recorded in 100 years. Several highly strategic water reservoirs that were emptied for dredging maintenance last year remain empty. Unless the next 2-3 months see above-average rainfall, there will likely be a severe deterioration in both quantity and quality of water available, which is likely to have a direct impact on communities in affected locations, particularly in Bekaa and along the coast.

Solid waste disposal is problematic in many areas, as poor waste management practices are deteriorating the quality of ground and surface water in heavily populated areas, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases in children and adults. Also, the rise in population there has led to an increase in demand on public waste services, which has led to municipalities raising their fees.

Protection

The renewal of legal stay documentation for refugees remains unaffordable for many refugee families. Although this does not exclude refugees from registration and access to humanitarian services, analysis shows that the lack of legal documentation continues to limit freedom of movement, especially in areas with a high security presence.

According to UNHCR, humanitarian actors in all regions are reporting increasing incidents of violence, physical abuse, and discrimination directed towards refugee children in schools. This is reportedly resulting in parents stopping their children from attending classes or in children dropping out from school.

Education

According to UNHCR, based on registration data at the end of February there are nearly 454,500 children in need of support for enrolment in learning opportunities; 386,500 Syrians, 21,000 Palestinians from Syria, 7,000 Lebanese returnees and 40,000 vulnerable Lebanese children. Barriers to education include transport costs and tuition fees, which can be excessive for refugee families with limited resources. Language barriers and safety concerns of Syrian parents contribute to a high drop-out rate among refugee children. Just 90,000 refugee children have enrolled in the public school system. Last academic year, 43,000 of 250,000 Syrian refugee children were schooled within the public school system.

Social Tensions

Refugee women, children and youth continue to report instances of physical violence,
aggression and harassment by local community members, especially in Mount Lebanon and the north. Refugees considered this to be the result of competition over jobs and a lack of understanding of refugee issues. A recent study by Search for Common Ground confirmed that the main cause of tension is the lack of employment opportunities for both communities as well as housing shortages and increases in rent. Economic pressures, coupled with polarised political views, are key triggers of friction.

Wages and work opportunities have been reduced for many Lebanese as Syrians are often willing to work for lower wages. Many social services cannot cope with the increasing demand. A perception that Syrian refugees get preferential treatment, perhaps due to humanitarian assistance directly targeting them, is adding to the friction. Host communities also fear infectious disease outbreaks as the number of insanitary informal refugee settlements grows. This contributes to a vicious circle of prejudice and stigmatisation.

Syrian refugees are mainly residing among the poorest communities of Lebanon, sharing scarce resources: 85% of refugees are spread across 182 locations where two-thirds of the host population live below the poverty line, according to preliminary UNICEF data.

Prior to the crisis, the Akkar region had the highest rate of poverty in Lebanon. Since 2012, Akkar has received a significant influx of refugees from Syria, increasing the region’s population by around 40%, and exerting extreme pressure on already limited infrastructure and services. Refugees compete for day labour – a major source of income for vulnerable groups in the host community. This undermines fragile income patterns, already damaged by decreased opportunities for trade with Syria and other regional countries. Vulnerable Lebanese families, who used to rely on charitable assistance from neighbours and religious groups, have seen a reduction in such support since the arrival of the refugee population, with the vast majority of humanitarian assistance directed at Syrian refugees, leaving vulnerable Lebanese without aid, creating further tensions between host and refugee communities.

Updated: 02/04/2014

**DEVELOPMENTR PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**FLOODS, FOOD**

**INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new development this week. Last update: 27/03/2014.

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. Humanitarian access remains extremely limited (UN).

- Information on the food security situation remains limited. As of August, an estimated 16 million people (almost 65% of DPRK’s population) are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance (OCHA).

- As of August, malnutrition rates, particularly in the northwest, were extremely high with Global Chronic Malnutrition (stunting) standing at almost 28% and Global Acute Malnutrition (wasting) at 4% among children <5 (OCHA).

**Politics and Security**

**Human Rights’ Situation**

On 18 February, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged world powers to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court after a UN report documenting crimes against humanity. The UN team conducting the report recommended targeted UN sanctions against DPRK civil officials and military commanders suspected of the worst crimes. The report provides evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations. On 17 March, China dismissed the UN report on the ground that it made unfounded accusations, raising fears among human rights activists that it will shield Pyongyang from international prosecution.

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 human rights violations. The inquiry, based on testimonies from DPRK 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 South Korea and the US prepared for military exercises that have infuriated DPRK. 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. 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 tension 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.

**National Political Context**

On 10 March, North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un reportedly won every ballot cast by voters in his district, where he ran uncontested during the first elections to the Supreme People’s Assembly legislature under his rule. This vote grants Kim the title of Member of Parliament, on top of being Supreme Commander of the armed forces and chairman of the powerful National Defence Commission.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

Humanitarian access is extremely limited. In June, WFP approved a new two-year operation 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 affected 800,000 people, including 56,000 children <5 and 14,800 pregnant women, and left almost 49,000 homeless. Farmland was 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 needed 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. In early August, authorities estimated the death toll at 33 dead with 18 people still missing. An estimated 59,000 people were displaced. This comes after flooding and a subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012, which affected 700,000 people, damaging health facilities and reducing access to primary and secondary health care.

**Food Security**

Information on food security remains limited. According to an August OCHA report, an estimated 16 million people, or 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 since 2013, the structural causes of vulnerability persist and external assistance is needed, notably targeting the most affected north eastern provinces.

On 26 March, FAO reported that DPRK could, in the right conditions, become self-sufficient in cereals by the end of the year, as a sizable increase in harvests has enabled a decrease in cereal imports by more than half from five years ago.

However, in November 2013, the results from a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission indicated that, despite a slight increase in cereal production, most households have borderline or poor food consumption, with consumption limited 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.

Food production for 2013/2014 is estimated to increase by 5% compared to 2012/2013, according to WFP/FAO, resulting in the smallest cereal deficit since at least the early 2000s. As reported by WFP/FAO, the food system is 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, 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 reportedly spread 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 foot-and-mouth that led to the culling of more than three million livestock in the South alone.

**Health and Nutrition**

Rates of child under-nutrition, measured through stunting, wasting and underweight, has declined over the past decade. However, the rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children <5 was almost 28%, alarming by international standards, according to WFP/FAO as of late November. Stunting is also cited as a major underlying cause of maternal and child mortality. The prevalence of wasting (4%) is now within the normal range according to international thresholds.

Reviewed: 11/04/2014
HAITI FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, HURRICANE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 April: A state of emergency has been declared in Nord-Ouest department, where drought is worsening chronic food insecurity, directly affecting 143,000 people. About 43% of households in the department suffer from food insecurity, compared to a national average of about 30%, according to the Government. WFP has recently distributed 1.5 metric tons of food to approximately 164,000 people, mainly women and children, and the Ministry of Agriculture provided 6,000 seed kits.

Late March: IOM estimated that over 137,500 IDPs are still living in 243 camps, a decrease of almost 9,400 (6%) since December 2013. Relocation and rental support programmes have resulted in the closure of 27 camps. This is a 91% decrease in the number of IDPs and 84% in the number of camps compared to the peak of July 2010, when 1.5 million IDPs were living in 1,555 camps.

Early March: 1,392 suspected cases of cholera were reported by the Ministry of Public Health for the month of February, compared to 1,429 for January. This is the lowest number of suspected cases since the start of the epidemic, and a 75% decrease in reported cases and deaths compared to the same period in 2013. However, response efforts need to be maintained as Haiti enters the rainy season, which is likely to result in an increase in cases.

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 earthquake, an estimated 137,500 IDPs are still living in 243 camps scattered throughout metropolitan Port-au-Prince and surrounding areas (IOM, March 2014).

- Half the world’s suspected cholera cases are in Haiti: 58,608 suspected cases and 601 deaths were reported in 2013 and a further 45,000 are predicted for 2014. As of 10 March, WHO had recorded 3,850 cholera cases, including 18 deaths in 2014 (OCHA, January 2014 and WHO, March 2014).

- Three million Haitians are food insecure: 600,000 face severe food insecurity and an additional 2.4 million were moderately food insecure at the end of 2013 (Haitian National Coordination for Food Security, October 2013). Nearly a quarter of Haitian children under five suffer chronic malnutrition (UNICEF 2013).

Politics and Security

In November 2013, the UN Stabilization 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 Haïtien.

Late November, thousands of young Haitians demonstrated in several cities demanding the resignation of President 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 to the embassy. No incidents were reported, but tear gas was fired to prevent the demonstrators from reaching the building. Demonstrations took place in other cities as well, such as Cap Haïtien in the north.

Haiti was to have held legislative and local elections in 2011, but infighting among various government branches has delayed the vote.

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 have both chronic and acute needs, facing displacement, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Of these, an estimated 817,000 people in 35 of 140 communes are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Disasters

Haiti has an extremely high 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 5,500 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 2014, local media reported that a drought is affecting southern Nord-Ouest department, damaging crops and leading to food shortages, weakening an already fragile food situation. On 3 April, WFP and MINUSTAH confirmed that arid conditions in the department are worsening chronic food insecurity. A state of emergency has been declared across the department.

Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 led to severe flooding that affected 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grand’Anse, and Sud departments were the most severely. In early April 2013, 72,000 people affected by Hurricane Sandy still needed humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA: 119 of Haiti’s 140 municipalities were severely affected by drought, tropical storm Isaac or hurricane Sandy in 2012, displacing at least 58,000 people.

Displacement

IDPs

At end March 2014, IOM estimated that over 137,500 IDPs are still living in 243 camps, representing a decrease of almost 9,400 (6%) since December 2013. Relocation and rental support programmes have resulted in the closure of 27 camps. This is a 91% decrease in the number of IDPs, 84% in the number of IDP camps, compared to the July 2010 peak of 1.5 million IDPs in 1,555 camps.
In December 2013, the majority of IDPs were living in the three communes of Delmas, Port-au-Prince, and Carrefour. Delmas hosted almost 57,000 IDPs, or 39% of the total; Carrefour and Port-au-Prince hosted approximately 16,000 and 27,000, respectively. The three communes together accounted for 68.3% of the remaining IDPs in Haiti. According to OCHA in December 2013, an estimated 80,000 people in 67 camps were considered to be at particularly high risk of flooding.

Most people who have been relocated from camps have not moved into permanent housing and continue to live in dire conditions, 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 Amnesty International, forced evictions are another reason why camp numbers have fallen. In February 2014, IOM said that about a third of the total number of IDPs (58,000 people) are at risk of forcible eviction from 102 camps, including 25,600 people at high risk.

Refugees/Migrants

Haitian children could be affected by the September 2013 ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic 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 is upheld, 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. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights denounced the decision, arguing that it is discriminatory, depriving Dominican-born Haitians of nationality. Despite international pressure, the Dominican Government has maintained it is not willing to revisit the ruling, which cannot be appealed.

Food Security

Haiti's huge structural challenges increase exposure to recurrent food insecurity. Poverty, the high degradation of the environment, and limited government capacity to monitor, prevent and respond to crises all contributing to national fragility.

According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security, three million Haitians were food insecure as of October 2013. Of these, 2.4 million were moderately food insecure and 600,000 severely food insecure. Some 13 communes are in a food crisis situation and 106 communes in food stress.

These figures indicate a significant improvement in the food security situation – 1.5 million were considered severely food insecure earlier in 2013, and 44 communes were put at high risk of food insecurity because of a long period of drought in 2012, tropical storm Isaac and hurricane Sandy.

According to FEWSNET as of mid-February, food availability has improved significantly since August 2013 due to the good spring agricultural production in the most productive areas and relatively well distributed rains. However, stocks from this production remain below the five-year average, especially in deficit areas, and started to be depleted in February, two months early for the lean season. Spring harvests (June–August) are expected to reduce food insecurity throughout the country.

Although food availability has improved and prices of local products appear to have declined, weak demand for labour reduces the purchasing power of many poor rural households. Some are experiencing Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1), while others are facing Stressed conditions (IPC Phase 2) due to lack of income.

In Nord-Ouest, poor households are likely to face Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) between March and June. According to the National Coordination for Food Security in early April, drought is directly affecting 143,000 people in Nord-Ouest, prompting a major emergency operation. Government statistics showed that about 43% of households in Nord-Ouest suffer from food insecurity, compared to a national average of about 30%. Well below average rainfall from November to March has resulted in crop losses of mainly sorghum, beans and maize in high-altitude areas and prohibited farmers from planting in low-lying parts, causing an extended lean season. To stave off hunger, increasing numbers of poor families living in drought-affected areas are pushed to negative coping mechanisms, including the reduction of meals per day, selling immature livestock and cutting down trees for the sale of charcoal, which affects Haiti's fragile environment.

Health and Nutrition

Cholera

Despite a significant decrease in the overall number of cholera-related deaths, half the world's suspected cholera cases can still be found in Haiti. Cholera remains an epidemic and humanitarian crisis in Haiti. Cholera is a waterborne disease and 42% of the population does not have access to clean water.

For the month of February, 1,392 suspected cases of cholera were reported by the Ministry of Public Health, compared to 1,429 for January. This is the lowest number since the start of the epidemic and a 75% decrease in reported cases and deaths compared to the same period in 2013, even with all departments continuing to record new cases. However, response efforts need to be maintained as Haiti enters the rainy season, which, based on trends of previous years, is likely to see an increase in cases.

As of 10 March, WHO had recorded 3,850 cholera cases, including 18 deaths, in 2014. The weekly average of 385 cases and two deaths is lower than in 2013 (average 1,106 cases and nine deaths per week), 2012 (4,429 cases and 77 deaths), and 2011 (29,167 cases and 243 deaths).

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 almost 700,541 as of 10 March 2014, with 8,546 reported deaths. The cumulative case-fatality rate remains 1.2%, with variations ranging from 4.4% in the department of Sud-Est to 0.6% in Port-au-Prince.

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 2013’s registered cases.
Human rights lawyers reported that they sought compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on UN peacekeepers. The decisions to file suit in New York came after the UN said in 2013 that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti. The legal action is built on the mounting evidence that UN peacekeepers from Nepal carried with them the Asian strain of cholera when they arrived in Haiti after the January 2010 earthquake. The outbreak, which began in October of 2010, was the first instance of cholera in Haiti for at least 150 years.

**Malnutrition**

In Haiti, nearly a quarter of children under five suffer from chronic malnutrition, according to UNICEF. According to OCHA as of 12 December, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) among children under five increased from 5.1% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2013. According to UNICEF in November 2013, 100,000 children under five are affected by GAM, of whom 20,000 have severe acute malnutrition. Rural children are especially affected.

Updated: 10/04/2014

**GUATEMALA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**Late March:** The national Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Security (SESAN) registered approximately 800,000 people (160,000 households) affected by the impacts of coffee leaf rust in 2013/2014.

**1 March:** Guatemalan Health authorities reported 1,883 cases of acute malnutrition, of which 42% were children under one year of age. The five most affected departments are Escuintla, Guatemala, Petén, Quiché, and Huehuetenango, reporting 887 cases (47% of the total).

**KEY CONCERNS**

- An estimated 305,000 people (61,000 households) suffer from severe or moderate food insecurity and are in need of assistance (WFP, March 2014).

- Some 1,883 people suffer from acute malnutrition, of which 42% were children under one year of age (Government, March 2014).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

Food insecurity is concentrated in the Western Highlands and the Eastern dry areas, which are also Guatemala’s poorest territories. The situation is exacerbated by recurrent disasters. There is a significant risk of hurricane, earthquake, flood, landslide, or drought in particular areas.

Guatemala remains under a state of emergency declared in February 2013 for food insecurity caused by coffee rust and drought. The International Coffee Organization considers the current coffee leaf rust, which is affecting the entire Central America region, one of the worst epidemics ever. Some 70% of the total Guatemalan plantation has been affected, corresponding to a loss of USD 101 million and 75,000 jobs during the 2012/2013 harvest cycle. The effect of climatic factors (erratic rainfall and a prolonged dry spell over previous years) on the production and stock of staple grains have made the food security situation even more worrying.

The national Secretariat for Food and Nutritional Security (SESAN) recorded 800,000 people (160,000 households) impacted by coffee leaf rust, with effects including unemployment and harvest losses of staple grains. WFP has calculated that at least 305,000 people (61,000 families) are suffering from severe and moderate food insecurity and are in need of assistance. According to the Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in September 2013, the most affected departments were Chiquimula, San Marcos, Alta Verapaz, Jalapa, Jutiapa, El Quiché, Huehuetenango, Zacapa, Baja Verapaz, and Sololá. The Humanitarian Country Team is considering applying for emergency funds from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.

With an early end to the coffee harvest and low food reserves, the lean season for very poor households in the east and the western highlands is beginning two months ahead of schedule. Lower incomes from the coffee harvest and a growing dependence on market purchase for food supplies will likely result in Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2) between April and June.

In addition, the possibility of a shift to El Niño-like conditions in the second quarter of the year is close to 45%. If this were to occur, the resulting erratic rainfall would affect the growth and development of staple grain crops for the Primera season and could potentially jeopardise crop yields.

The present emergency is happening in a context with an extremely worrying nutritional situation since half of children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition in Guatemala, the highest rate in the region and the fourth in the world.

**Health**

**Malnutrition**

At 1 March, Guatemalan Health authorities reported 1,883 cases of acute malnutrition, of which 42% were children under one year of age. The five most affected departments are Escuintla, Guatemala, Petén, Quiché, and Huehuetenango, reporting 887 cases (47% of the total).

Updated: 11/04/2014
13 April: A 7.6 magnitude quake and a series of aftershocks hit the area of Makira, in the southeast of the archipelago, prompting two tsunami alerts, which were swiftly cancelled. According to local authorities, the tremor provoked panic in evacuation centres housing victims of the earlier floods, but caused no serious damage.

Early April: OCHA reported that Tropical Cyclone Ita caused heavy rain and triggered severe flooding across the archipelago. As of 14 April, an estimated 52,000 people – 10% of the population – are considered affected, and the Government had reported 21 people dead. Most pressing needs include WASH, health, and NFIs, and UNICEF indicated that half of the affected population are children.

Most of the affected population are in Guadalcanal province, particularly the capital Honiara, where the Mataniko River burst its banks. So far, 9,000 people in Honiara have taken refuge in 24 evacuation centres in and around the city. Damage was also reported in the provinces of Makira-Ulawa, Malaita and Isabel.

The flooding comes after thousands of people were displaced by a tsunami in February 2013.

Access

According to humanitarian partners, most assessments and aid operations are taking place in Honiara because damaged infrastructure and insecurity are limiting access to other areas of Guadalcanal.

WASH

Local authorities reported that people in Honiara are facing water disruptions or rationing, as only 60% of the water supply is working. Outside the capital, people have very restricted access to clean water. They are relying on coconut milk and water drawn from contaminated wells, raising fears of disease outbreaks. Several cases of diarrhoea and malaria have already been reported in evacuation centres in and around Honiara.

Health and Nutrition

According to health authorities, preventing an outbreak of dengue fever is a priority, as an epidemic was beginning before the floods. The concern is that the caseload will rise when the affected areas start to dry out.

Updated: 14/04/2014

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7 April: Water levels continue to rise in the northern municipality of Guayaramerín, Beni department, along Mamore River, which forms part of the border with Brazil. More than
14,600 people have been affected so far, local media report. A 400-tent camp has been set up in Guayaramerín.

2 April: Bolivian President Evo Morales said an in-depth investigation is needed to assess whether the Brazilian hydropower plants have played a role in recent flooding. Environmental organisations are also discussing the possibility of filing an international legal complaint. An estimated 337,200 people have been affected by unprecedented flooding in the country’s Amazon valleys, lowlands, and plains since the beginning of the rainy season last October.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 337,200 people have been affected by heavy rainfall and flooding across most of Bolivia. Evacuation and delivery of food and non-food items is underway by government and UN agencies. On 10 February, a State of Emergency was declared in the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosí, and Pando. Dengue and malaria outbreaks are of growing concern as the rains continue (Government, WFP and OCHA).

- Bolivia is prone to natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, and droughts. The impact of the 2013 drought and 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

Water levels continue to rise in the northern municipality of Guayaramerín, Beni department, along the Mamore River, which forms part of the border with Brazil. More than 14,600 people have been affected so far, local media reported on 7 April. A camp with 400 tents has been set up in Guayaramerín.

Bolivian President Evo Morales said an in-depth investigation is needed to assess whether the Brazilian hydropower plants have played a role in the floods. Environmental organisations are discussing the possibility of filing an international legal complaint against the Jirau and Santo Antônio hydroelectric dams built by Brazil, which they blame for the disaster.

According to WFP, as of 4 April an estimated 337,200 people have been affected by unprecedented flooding in the country’s Amazon valleys, lowlands and plains since the beginning of the rainy season last October. Over 145 municipalities have been affected across all nine departments of Bolivia. At least 64 people have died. Bolivian authorities reported that floods have caused the collapse of around 1,600 homes, the destruction of 63,000 hectares of arable land, and the death of 110,000 livestock. Officials estimate that agriculture is the primary income-generating activity of 40% of affected families.

As of 20 March, the populations most affected by flooding were in Cochabamba (88,300 people), Beni (75,430), Chuquisaca (55,540), La Paz (39,200), Santa Cruz (28,900), Potosí (16,250), and to a lesser extent Pando, Tarija and Ouro.

Heavy rains during January and the first half of February 2014 caused rivers to overflow, resulting in flooding in low-lying areas of Beni department and its southern borders with the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, where landslides occurred. According to ECHO on 13 March, the flood situation remained critical, with heavy rainfall continuing in the most affected department of Beni. Satellite data indicate that extended flooding persists between the Beni, Mamore, and San Miguel Rivers. The UN resident coordinator reported that the municipalities of San Joaquín, San Ramon and Puerto Siles in Beni are in a critical situation.

Local media reported that river overflows in Pando and Beni departments are affecting the neighbouring Brazilian states of Acre and Rondonia. An emergency has been declared in the entire Amazon zone, shared by both countries.

On 28 January, the Government declared a state of emergency, but said that internal resources were sufficient. However, the situation worsened, and on 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosí, and Pando were placed on red alert. 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.

Frost

On 3 December, local authorities reported that an estimated 21,720 people (4,345 families) from four regions of Cochabamba in central Bolivia were affected by two months of frost and hailstorms. The adverse weather damaged crops in eight municipalities of Cochabamba, affecting 664 hectares. Sacabamba in the high valley was among the worst hit, with 2,500 people (500 families) having lost food stocks. Local authorities declared a state of emergency.

Drought

Following the drought in the first quarter of 2013, the Government declared a national emergency in June. The affected population are mainly indigenous subsistence farmers. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people were affected, according to Government sources, mostly in Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija, and Santa Cruz departments.

Food Security

According to FAO on 27 February, a detailed assessment of the agriculture losses from heavy rain and flooding is still not available, but livestock is expected to be the most affected sector. Estimates indicate that close to 43,000 hectares of crops, including rice, maize, and cassava have been negatively impacted. At the time of the flooding, the 2014 main de verano season maize crop was in an advanced state and rice harvesting had just
begun. Despite losses in the department of Beni, prospects for 2014’s de verano season are 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 some places.

In mid-December, FAO reported that the aggregate maize production (main and secondary seasons) for 2013 was estimated at 875,000 metric tons, 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 damaged potato crops and affected a large number of rural households.

Drought in the first quarter of 2013 continues to negatively impact crop production, especially severe in the regions of the Chaco and the South Cone of Cochabamba. As of 15 October 2013, an estimated 87,000 hectares of crops had sustained damage. Tarija department is worst hit, with 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%).

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 had significantly reduced the frequency and quantity of food consumed, and many workers had migrated from their communities in search of casual labour. Affected households are not expected to recover until the harvest in April/May 2014.

Health

Dengue

On 21 March, the Bolivian Health Ministry reported over 1,150 confirmed cases of dengue countrywide as a result of the current rainy season, mostly in the departments of Beni, Santa Cruz, and northern La Paz. National authorities issued an alert for dengue and malaria in flood-affected regions at the beginning of 2014.

Updated: 11/04/2014
Introduction to the Global Emergency Overview Update

The Global Emergency Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global Emergency Overview collates information from a wide range of sources, including Reliefweb and media sources, and displays this information in a manner that allows for quick comparison of different humanitarian crises. The primary objective of the Global Emergency Overview is to rapidly inform humanitarian decision makers by presenting a summary of major humanitarian crises, both recent and protracted. It is designed to provide answers to four questions:

1. Which humanitarian crises currently exist? (World map)
2. What has happened in the last seven days? (Highlights and Snapshot)
3. What is the situation in the country affected by a crisis? (Highlights Box and Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Emergency Overview consists of three main sections:

First, the world map provides an overview of how the countries are prioritised, indicated by different shades of blue. The countries are subdivided by four priority levels: “on watch”, “situation of concern”, “humanitarian crisis”, and “severe humanitarian crisis”.

The priority levels are assigned on the basis of:
- the number of people affected by recent disasters
- the level of access to the affected population
- the <5 mortality rate
- the level of development of the country
- the number of protracted IDPs and refugees.

If a country experienced a disaster in the seven days prior to an update or witnessed an escalation of an ongoing crisis, a country is highlighted by a yellow dot on the map.

Second, the snapshot briefly describes what has happened in the last seven days from the date of publication, by outlining the crises that have occurred in the different highlighted countries.

Third, narratives for each country included in the Global Emergency Overview reflect major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country over the last months. Narratives are written based on secondary data. For each country, a specific highlights box is also added to put emphasis on the major developments that happened over the past 10 days.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones click here.

To download the mobile application for iOS phones click here.

Update

The Global Emergency Overview will be updated once a week and the results will be available every Monday before midday (Central European Time/Central European Summer Time). In case of major new humanitarian events or an escalation of an on-going crisis which triggers a change of prioritisation, the Global Overview will be updated on an ad-hoc basis.

Disclaimer

While ACAPS has defined a methodology striving to ensure accuracy, the information provided is indicative and should not be used in isolation from alternate sources of information for any decision making. ACAPS is not responsible for any damage or loss resulting from the use of the information presented on this website.