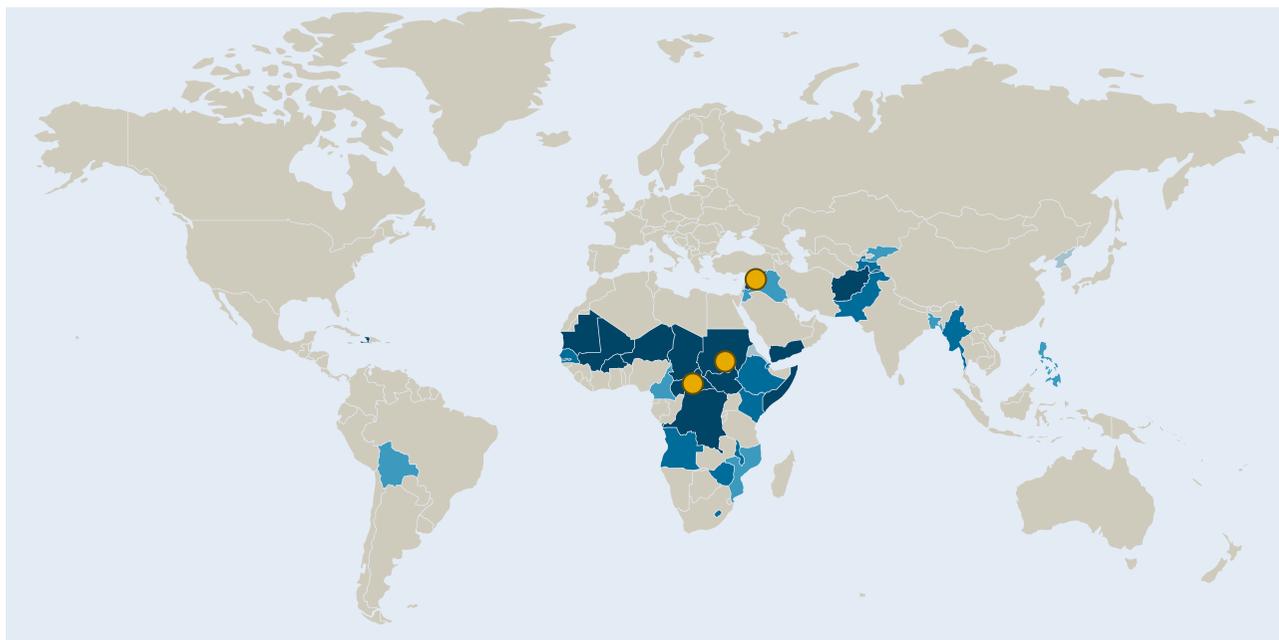




GLOBAL OVERVIEW

May 2013



Snapshot 29 April – 06 May

In **Syria**, fighting between the Government and opposition groups continued in all governorates apart from Tartous and As-Sweida. Following a large scale offensive by the Government initiated on 26 April, heavy fighting has been reported in and around Damascus. Clashes in Eastern Ghouta forced the closure of Damascus international airport. Approximately 6.8 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the country while some 4.25 million people are displaced and over 1.4 million people have fled into neighbouring countries.

The humanitarian crisis spawned by the power struggle currently unfolding in the **Central African Republic** is now affecting the entire population of the country, some 4.6 million people of which 2.3 million are children. Throughout the country and in the capital Bangui, clashes between armed factions and lootings is increasing insecurity that is significantly hampering humanitarian access. As of 3 May, an estimated 49,000 people have fled CAR to seek refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Cameroon.

Military operations between warring parties have intensified in **Sudan's** Darfur and South Kordofan. In Southern Darfur, renewed tribal fighting between the Gimir and Beni Halba tribes over land ownership and military operations of the Government forces against rebel groups have led to the displacement of thousands of people over the past few weeks. In South Kordofan, although ceasefire negotiations between the SPLM-N rebel group

Severe humanitarian crisis

Afghanistan	Mauritania
Burkina Faso	Niger
● CAR	Somalia
Chad	South Sudan
DRC	● Sudan
Gambia	● Syria
Haiti	Yemen
Mali	

Humanitarian crisis

Angola	Myanmar
Djibouti	oPt
Ethiopia	Pakistan
Kenya	Senegal
Lesotho	Tajikistan
Malawi	Zimbabwe

Situation of concern

Bangladesh	Jordan
Bolivia	Kyrgyzstan
Cameroon	Mozambique
Iraq	Philippines

Watch list

DPRK	Eritrea
------	---------



AFRICA

BURKINA FASO FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

Burkina Faso has been affected by insecurity and the on-going military intervention in Mali. As of 22 April, some 49,975 refugees were registered with UNHCR in Burkina Faso. The refugees are residing at seven sites (Mentao, Damba, Fereiro, Goudebo, Gandafabou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Ouagadougou, the majority situated in the northern region of Sahel) which are recognized as refugee camps by the Government, as well as at several spontaneous settlements. A March assessment (jointly undertaken by WFP with partners), indicates an elevated prevalence of food insecurity in Malian refugee camps as well as Burkinian host communities. An estimated 52% of the refugees and 58% of the host populations are affected by food insecurity, according to the report.

According to FEWSNet, Minimal/None (IPC Phase 1) food insecurity persists across the country. In general, limited household recourses to the market to purchase food have kept cereal prices stable since January 2013 and at levels close to or slightly above (but no more than 12%) compared to the five-year average. These prices are helping to maintain good household food access.

Overall, the food supply situation has significantly improved in 2012-13 across the country. According to official production figures of last season's cereal production, from November to January, the total was close to 4.9 million metric tons, marking a 26.9% increase compared to the five-year average. Likewise, production of cash crops was up 16.5% and production of other food crops (cowpeas, yams, and sweet potatoes) was up 29.9% compared to the five-year average, according to FEWSNet.

Despite these improvements, the situation remains critical due to prolonged localized drought, high food prices, displacement, chronic poverty and the lingering effect of last year's food crisis. The Government of Burkina Faso declared a national emergency on 1 March 2012 due to food insecurity and malnutrition. According to a March report by the FAO food insecurity is affecting some 2 million people (15% of the population). The report states that the food insecure people are located mostly in the Sahel, North and East regions. Over the last months, civil strife in northern Mali has also contributed to increased food supply issues in parts of the country, notably in the Oudalan and Soum provinces of the northern Sahel regions, which face a high influx of refugees from Mali.

In 2012, the national Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate was 10.9%, compared to 10.3% in 2011, with the highest GAM rates in the regions of Centre North, East, North, Centre and Boucle de Mouhoun. According to UNICEF, more than 120,000 children <5 suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

Updated: 06/05/2013

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY

The new leadership of the Central African Republic agreed to a regional plan to hold elections within 18 months on 4 April, accepting the roadmap set out by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) at a meeting in Chad the previous day. Michael Djotodia, leader of the Seleka rebel coalition that seized the capital Bangui and other parts of the country in a coup last month, issued an order to set up a transition council to lead the country until parliamentary and presidential elections are held. On 13 April, the transition council elected him, the only candidate, President of the country by acclamation, a title he had actually already claimed in the immediate aftermath of the coup. As part of the roadmap, Michael Djotodia has, however, promised to not seek re-election at the end of the transition.

At a meeting in Chad on 18 April, the ECCAS confirmed its support of the transition process agreeing also to the election of Michael Djotodia. After voicing its strong opposition to the military coup in late March, the international community, in the wake of the decision by ECCAS, is coming to terms with the country's takeover by the Seleka rebel coalition as long as they respect the roadmap. However, on 23 April, the EU restated its decision of December 2012 that it will not restore its aid program to CAR before it is certain of the credibility of the new Government and of its willingness to address the security situation.

Following a request from Bangui, the ECCAS has also agreed to deploy a 2,000 strong military force, under the Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) framework, to help the Central African Republic's authorities in establishing security in the country. Following a summit in Brazzaville on 4 May, the representatives of the Central African States have also pledged to create a special fund to finance the transition process in CAR, as well as the deployment of the FOMAC force. Meanwhile, the transitional Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye, has also extended an official request to Paris asking the French leadership to increase its present 500 man strong military force dispatched to the country to participate in order enforcement operations.

The current political alignments are the result of the deterioration of the situation in CAR that occurred after the Seleka rebel coalition, fighting against the Government, seized control of Bangui in March. After the offensive forced President Francois Bozizé to flee to Cameroon, Michel Djotodia, leader of the Seleka, assumed power. He confirmed Nicolas Tiangaye as Head of the Government, a position to which he had been appointed following the tentative January peace agreement.

Following the siege of the capital, the atmosphere remained tense in Bangui where hundreds of people were reported to be roaming the streets, many in search of food, while medical facilities were reportedly overloaded because of the large influx of injured soldiers.

On 9 April, a WHO report indicated that health needs in Bangui were still critical and the security situation remained precarious. In the month following the takeover of the capital, various sources thus reported ongoing lootings of houses, businesses, international organizations' offices and healthcare facilities while skirmishes between different factions occurred in several parts of the country. On 14 April, an estimated 20 people were killed in Bangui when fighting erupted between forces of the new authorities and armed youth still loyal to the former President. In separate incident on the same day, a rocket explosion killed 7 people and injured 11 others in one of the capital's churches. Over the following week, fighting between members of the rebel coalition and men loyal to the ousted President continued. In other parts of the country, information in local media indicates ongoing skirmishes and clashes between different factions. On 22 April, clashes between the inhabitants of Mbres city, northeast of Bangui, and Seleka forces left some 27 people dead and 50 others injured. 480 houses were also reportedly burnt down. While information remains limited, reports indicate that the situation is far from having stabilized in CAR.

Initially, violence had erupted in CAR, when Seleka rebels took up arms against the Government in early December 2012, claiming that the authorities had failed to honour the 2001 and 2007 peace deals under which fighters who laid down their arms were to receive compensation. In January 2013, a tentative peace agreement was not able to put a lasting end to violence between the two parties. Throughout March, the Seleka rebels continued their advance and took control of Gambo and Bangassou, two southern towns on the border with the DRC, as well as of the towns of Batangavo and Bouca, north of Bangui. Addressing President Bozizé an ultimatum, the Seleka rebels demanded the release of political prisoners and the withdrawal of foreign troops, brought into the country to support the Government military against the uprising. Considering the concessions made by the authorities to be insufficient, the rebel movement resumed its advance and seized Bangui.

According to UNICEF, the humanitarian crisis is now affecting the entire population of the Central African Republic, an estimated 4.6 million people of whom some 2.3 million are children. Some 1 million children in the country are also still not attending school one month after the coup. Almost 1.2 million people have now been cut from access to basic services for almost four months and 3.2 million are reported to be living without health care. The security situation is volatile in large areas and attacks on civilians have been reported in the Mboki, Zemio and Obo regions. According to UNHCR, the whole Seleka offensive has left 173,000 people internally displaced some 49,000 others seeking refuge in Chad, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo since December. The latter country hosts over 37,000 CAR refugees as of 3 May. On 11 April, a UN report indicated that renewed displacement was occurring in and around Bangui, as well as in the northwest of the capital, as the Seleka has expanded its presence throughout the country. This triggered a currently ongoing reassessment of the number of people displaced amidst difficulties of access for humanitarian actors. To date, it has only been confirmed that an additional 1,200 CAR refugees crossed into DRC on 15-16 April. On 25 April, UNHCR issued a warning advising governments worldwide against possible forced returns of refugees to CAR in light of the prevailing insecurity in the country.

In addition to this, there are an estimated 17,000 mostly Congolese and Sudanese refugees in CAR. As a result of the tribal clashes that occurred in Sudan's western Darfur during the first weeks of April, some 4,000 new Sudanese refugees crossed into northern CAR.

Since the beginning of December, humanitarian access has been limited to a third of the Seleka controlled areas. The Seleka's advance on the southern town of Bangassou cut off humanitarian actors' access to the southeast, affecting 300,000 people. Several UN offices and warehouses were looted during the rebel offensive in December and violence prompted temporary evacuations of humanitarian staff out of affected areas. Since mid-March, humanitarian access has further been hampered with the departure of many INGOs according to UNICEF. On 11 April, MSF reported that it was forced to evacuate the towns of Batangafo and Kabo due to widespread insecurity and uncontrolled armed groups spreading chaos in the area. The organization further noted that significant affected areas remain completely out of its reach because of the rampant insecurity. As of 3 May, OCHA reported that information on the needs in the many areas outside of Bangui remains limited. For humanitarian actors, access is likely to become even more challenging with the onset of the rainy season starting from May.

In addition to conflict, CAR faces a food and nutrition crisis. In December 2012, OCHA reported an estimated 664,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance, primarily in Vakaga, Haut-Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi and Mbomou. A recent IPC seasonal analysis classified the entire country in either Phase 3 (Stressed) or Phase 2 (Crisis). In 9 out of 16 prefectures, the prevalence of severe acute malnutrition in children <5 is above the emergency threshold of 2%. Chronic poverty was identified as the general cause of food and nutrition insecurity with civil insecurity exacerbating conditions in the north and north-east. In Bangui, WFP reports that food prices have risen by 29% in January possibly due to stores and markets closing for fear of looting and food becoming scarce with the main source of staples in Kaga Bandoro Dekoa, Grimari and Bambari seized by the rebels.

Cereal prices are about 30% above the five-year average due to low market supplies according to FEWSNET. Already the annual consumer price inflation had surged from 1.5% in 2011 to 7% in 2012. According to OCHA, more than 80,000 people are estimated to be at risk of severe food shortages during the upcoming lean season, while 13,500 children under the age of 5 are at risk of Severe Acute Malnutrition.

Updated: 06/05/2013

CHAD FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Chad has seen an escalating influx of migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries over the past weeks. On Chad's eastern border, intertribal violence in the Darfur region continues to cause displacement spilling over into Chad, and in particular to the remote border town of Tissi. According to IOM, more than 25,000 Chadian Migrants are stranded in and around Tissi as of 30 April. In total, unconfirmed reports suggest that more than 74,000 refugees and Chadian returnees have arrived in Tissi since January this year. According to OCHA, 25,000 refugees and some 19,000 returnees have arrived in Tissi as of 22 April.

The recent refugee influx marks the largest from Sudan to Chad since 2005. Refugees are fleeing fresh tribal clashes in the Sudanese town of Um Dukhun, 10 kilometres from the Chadian border. Most of the latest arrivals are reportedly women and children.

On Chad's southern border, recent political turmoil in the Central African Republic (CAR)

has led to a rising number of refugees crossing the border into the country. An estimated 5,700 people have crossed the border since January, adding on to the estimated total number of Central African refugees at 58,000, according to OCHA.

In Chad, two years of continued climatic shocks, including erratic rainfall in 2011, have caused significant food security concerns in 2012 continuing into 2013. According to a March report by the FAO, 3.6 million people (32% of the population) are food insecure in Chad. The nutritional situation in Chad's Sahel belt is at critical levels with a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate surpassing the emergency threshold of 15% in 9 out of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The areas most affected are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22%), Salamat (22%), Beg (21%), and Kanem (21%).

Despite this, good 2012-13 harvests have allowed very poor and poor households to replenish their food reserves while market prices across the country remained mostly stable and were even occasionally trending downwards. According to FEWSNet, food security conditions will steadily improve with the rebuilding of the production capacity and the replenishment of livelihood assets. Nevertheless, structurally deficient regions will continue to face a shortage of grain.

According to UNICEF, despite the good harvest, an estimated 126,000 children will still suffer from severe acute malnutrition in 2013. Across the country, many households have accumulated large debts during the lean period in 2012 and poor families will be forced to sell much of their produce immediately after harvest. In 2012, 149,963 children were admitted for severe acute malnutrition (SAM), well above the 127,300 forecast.

On 18 February a yellow fever outbreak was confirmed by WHO in the town of Goz Beida. There were 139 suspected yellow fever cases and 9 deaths reported. A vaccination campaign against the disease was launched in Djabal camp for Sudanese refugees in the east of the country. Neighbouring Sudan is also experiencing a yellow fever outbreak in 35 localities in Darfur with 849 suspected cases and 171 deaths (case-fatality rate of 20.1%) as of 6 January 2013.

Insecurity, particularly in eastern Chad and in certain areas in southern Chad, continues to limit humanitarian access.

Updated: 06/05/2013

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

On 28 March, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the creation of a brigade of more than 3,000 troops with a mandate to conduct "targeted offensive operations" against rebels in eastern DRC. According to a statement by a military spokesman on 7 April, South Africa is thus preparing to send troops to the DRC as part of the UN mission. However, on 12 April, a spokesman for the M23 (March 23 Movement – a rebel military group based in eastern areas of the DRC) stated that the rebel group would retaliate if attacked by the peacekeeping brigade. The leader of the rebel group accused the UN of promoting war while peace talks are ongoing.

In March, violence in the Katanga province was marked when nearly 250 rebels from the separatist militia group Mai-Mai Kata Katanga attacked a military camp and the Provincial

Governor's office in the country's southern mining hub of Lubumbashi. At least 35 people were killed and 16 injured in the fighting, before the rebels forced their way into a UN compound and surrendered on 24 March, according to the UN. Some 87 fighters, including foreign fighters from Rwanda, of the M23 have surrendered to the UN peacekeeping force in April with 13 doing so last week.

Kata Katanga is one of several local militias, or Mai Mai groups, operating in the province. While the insecurity is most extreme within an area between the towns of Manono, Pweto and Mitwaba, the humanitarian effects have spread to half of Katanga's 22 territories, according to OCHA. Over the last week, clashes between Mai-Mai groups and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) have led to new population displacement in the Katanga province, according to OCHA. Since January 2013, more than 17,000 people were displaced in the district of Kahlenguele in Katanga province due to protracted conflict. Overall, an estimated 353,000 people are currently displaced in Katanga province.

Internal clashes between two factions of the rebel group M23 routed out the faction led by Bosco Ntaganda to Rwanda, with its fighters disarmed and its leaders arrested. The former DRC General Ntaganda, indicted by the ICC for war crimes, turned himself in and requested to be extradited to The Hague. The defeat of the Ntaganda-affiliated faction of M23 came after weeks of infighting and could open the way for rival rebel leader Sultani Makenga to sign a peace deal with Kinshasa, bringing an end to a year-long rebellion in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Makenga reportedly seized control of the town of Kibumba, 30 km (19 miles) north of Goma, capital of North Kivu province on 16 March. Talks between the M23 rebels and the Government are scheduled to restart in April after they stalled in early February following dissensions in M23's top leadership.

The dissension within M23 followed the ousting of the group's political chief. Old rivalries within the rebel faction have deepened since 11 countries signed an UN-brokered framework accord for peace in the east of DR Congo on 24 February, following talks in Addis Ababa.

In North Kivu Province, the conflict between the FARDC and the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) has displaced an estimated 75,000 people, according to IOM. After violence broke out on the 24-25 February, heavy fighting was reported in Kitchanga on February 27. As of 7 March, at least 85 people had been killed. On the 29 March, renewed clashes between national forces and an armed group occurred near Kitchanga killing 11 APCLS combatants and forcing the UN peacekeepers to provide protection to 1,500 civilians. In late January, the Kitchanga area hosted 80,000 internally displaced persons, more than half in camps and spontaneous settlements.

As of 25 March, the UN estimates that 920,784 people have been displaced by violence in North Kivu, an increase from 500,000 in April 2012.

In South Kivu, 52,500 new displacements were registered due to conflict since January. However, according to OCHA some IDPs began to return to their homes in early February leading to a decrease of the overall number of displaced in the area. On 21 March, widespread looting in Mambasa (Province Orientale) has led to the displacement of an estimated 3,000 people according to local sources.

As of 2 April OCHA reported an estimated 2.6 million people are displaced as a result of fighting between the Congolese army and various rebel groups in the Kivus, Maniema and Katanga provinces in the east of the country. Over 920,000 people are displaced in the North Kivu Province alone. Although the number of displaced countrywide has decreased by some 40,000 people over the last two months, protracted conflict has led to more displacements in several parts of the country during April. Approximately 200,000 people have been recently displaced in Katanga province because of renewed fighting and deteriorating humanitarian conditions according to WFP. In addition, an estimated 450,000 Congolese refugees are residing in neighbouring countries.

DRC is facing increasing numbers of refugees from the Central African Republic. Between February 7 and 11 March more than 22,000 refugees fled Mobaye in CAR for the DRC for fear of attacks by Seleka rebels. Mobaye is a Central African border town close to positions held by the rebel Seleka coalition. According to several sources, there are currently more than 15,000 Central African refugees in parts of North Ubang needing food and health assistance. As of 2 May, an estimated 37,000 CAR refugees have been registered in DRC according to UNHCR. The number of CAR refugees in DRC is likely to further increase while the Seleka continues to consolidate its control of the country.

The renewed conflict in eastern DRC has significantly contributed to the deterioration of the food security and nutrition situation, according to WFP. The December 2012 IPC analysis reports that 6.4 million people are in acute food insecurity and livelihood crisis (IPC phases 3 and 4). With 70% of the rural population without access to clean drinking water, there is an increased risk of cholera. A cholera outbreak continues to affect 9 of 11 provinces, with around 32,000 cases during 2012. As of 26 March, a cholera outbreak is suspected in Pweto where more than 300 cases have been registered over the last two weeks, resulting in 25 deaths, according to the UN. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, the lack of social infrastructure and effects of several aggravating economic shocks.

Over the second week of April, heavy rains have affected an estimated 2,500 people in Zongo, Province Orientale, according to OCHA.

Humanitarian access has been limited due to mountainous and volcanic terrain, coupled with widespread and shifting insecurity. Tensions between the local population and international aid workers have escalated. Throughout the country, humanitarian access is also hindered by ongoing protracted localized conflict, especially in the South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema and Katanga provinces.

Updated: 06/05/2013

GAMBIA FOOD INSECURITY

Despite good agricultural production in 2012 and good conditions for pastoralists, the situation in the Sahel remains critical, mostly due to the impact of the preceding crises such as food insecurity, floods and the Mali conflict. The Gambia continues to be affected by the Sahel food crisis after crop failure, resulting from poor rains.

According to a report by the FAO published 12 March, some 241,000 people are affected in the Gambia by the food crisis, accounting therefore for approximately 18% of the

population of the country.

In November 2012, the Gambia declared an outbreak of the contagious bovine pleuropneumonia threatening livestock in the country and neighbouring countries. Some 500 animal deaths were reported by the Ministry of agriculture.

There is a lack of data to exactly assess the situation with food supply in the Gambia.

Updated: 06/05/2012

MALI CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

On 25 April, the UN Security Council unanimously approved the creation of a 12,640-strong peacekeeping force in Mali starting 1 July. The force - to be known as MINUSMA - will take over the authority from the current UN backed African force, AFISMA, although most of the AFISMA force is likely to become part of the peacekeeping operation. The peacekeeping force will be able to request support from French troops when they are under imminent and serious threat and upon the request of the secretary-general.

French forces have initiated their planned phase-out, leaving Timbuktu on 28 April and relocating to Gao. The continued volatile security situation raises concerns of the impact of the announced withdrawal of French troops from Mali, which is planned to be downsized to 2,000 from 4,500 by July this year. France has proposed to maintain a permanent force of 1,000 troops in Mali to continue fighting armed Islamist militants, according to diplomatic sources. The Chadian President, Déby, has announced that the country will begin to withdraw its troops, only keeping some of its 2,000 soldiers.

Since the start of military operations on 11 January, French and Malian troops, supported by ECOWAS and the AU, have removed Islamist militants from the major northern towns. Attacks from militant groups are increasingly infrequent. Despite this the Islamist militants remain capable of carrying out attacks from peripheral areas. Over the last month, militants have carried out several attacks, using landmines, IED's, suicide bombings, and various guerrilla methods.

According to the UN, there has been a significant escalation in retaliatory violence carried out by Malian soldiers against members of different ethnic minorities who are perceived as backed by armed groups. There are reports of Malians, in particular ethnic Tuaregs being detained by the Malian army without due right to lawyers and explanations of their deprivation of liberty.

Humanitarian access continues to improve in central regions and parts of the north and aid is increasing in the accessible parts, according to OCHA. Aid activities in other parts of the north, are limited due to insecurity and banditry.

An estimated 467,000 people are estimated to have been displaced by the current conflict. According to OCHA as of 10 April there are an estimated 292,648 IDPs in Mali compared to 261,000 as of late January. UNHCR reports that, as of 29 April, some 174,045 Malians are registered as refugees in neighbouring countries, with 74, 024 in Mauritania, some 50,000 in Niger and 49,975 refugees in Burkina Faso.

As larger areas of central and northern Mali are secured, UNHCR estimates that a significant number of displaced people will return to their homes, although considerable challenges and poor conditions remain for a large share of those returning.

Access to basic social services (water, education, health) remains limited in the north largely because of the low return of civil servants, the destruction of infrastructure and the lack of material to support basic services according to OCHA. The education of some 700,000 Malian children has been disrupted during the crisis, but recently schools have gradually started to reopen in Gao and Timbuktu regions, with 321 of 1,030 schools in the regions working to date.

Recent assessments warn of a looming food security crisis in northern Mali. There has been a significant deterioration of household food consumption in Timbuktu and Gao, according to WFP. The depletion of household food stocks, a decline in livestock sales (due to low demand), and the lack of income-generating opportunities for most residents of conflict-affected areas in northern Mali are severely curtailing household food access. According to FEWSNet, food security will decline in the first quarter of 2013, with Crisis levels (IPC Level 3) in large areas of the north by April. Shut down of key markets, restrictions on movements of people and food, and the beginning of the lean season are drivers behind this trend. The region of Kidal is particularly affected, with at least one in five households facing extreme food shortages, according to WFP. As the lean season, from April to June approaches, conditions are expected to deteriorate further in large parts of the country.

In total, an estimated 4.6 million people (32% of the population) in Mali are food insecure as of March reported the FAO. According to FEWSNet, food security has declined in the first quarter of 2013, reaching crisis levels (IPC Level 3) in large swathes of the north in April. An estimated 660,000 children <5 suffer from acute malnutrition in 2013, including 210,000 from severe acute malnutrition.

Updated: 06/05/2013

MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY

According to FAO, close to 1 million people (30% of the overall population) are affected by food insecurity in Mauritania as of March 2013, and more than 105,000 children <5 suffer from Global Acute Malnutrition, compared to 90,000 in 2011. The Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate for children <5 has been around 12% since 2008. The highest malnutrition rates have been recorded in the Hodh Ech Chargui (16% GAM), Assaba (16.4%), Brakna (17%) and Tagant (18.2%) regions in the south-east of the country.

As of late April, FEWSNET reported that the food security situation should remain stable and most of the poor households throughout the country would remain in IPC Phase 1 until September. However, poor agro-dominant households in north-western agro-pastoral areas and south-eastern rainfed agriculture zones are expected to move into Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2) between March/April and June, along with northern households impacted by the protracted drought in that area since last year. According to FEWSNET, as of 27 February an estimated 5,000 farm households (25,000 people) were already experiencing Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2). Potential threats to

food security include high prices for millet, an essential dietary staple. However, sorghum prices in December 2012 were 17 % below their levels of a year earlier.

The number of Malian refugees has levelled off over the past weeks. As of 21 March, the latest figures remain at 75,019, according to the UNHCR. Some 13,359 new arrivals were registered between 11 January and 22 February. 90% of Malian refugees are women and children. Hodh Ech Chargui hosts the majority of the Malian refugees fleeing armed conflict in northern Mali. According to Médecins Sans Frontières, the living conditions of Malian refugees in Mauritania remain “deplorable” while humanitarian actors have been slow to respond.

Updated: 06/04/2013

NIGER FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

Niger is coping with four concurrent disasters: the Sahel food crisis, the Malian refugee crisis, flooding and a cholera outbreak. According to a March report from FAO, 6.4 million people were affected by food insecurity (42% of the population), due to consecutive poor harvests, drought and rising food prices. There are currently some 3 million people food insecure nationwide and severe malnutrition rates already surpass emergency thresholds in several regions of the country. According to ECHO, more than one million children will require care for either severe or moderate acute malnutrition in 2013. Although the number of food insecure in Niger is expected to decrease to 2.5 million in 2013, as a result of a surplus cereal harvest, recent estimations from FEWSNet suggest that certain areas have experienced below-average harvests. The departments of Ayorou, Tillabéri, and Torodi are most severely affected, where it is expected that 700,000 people will be unable to meet their food needs without assistance, compared with the seasonal norm of 300,000 to 400,000 people in these areas.

Compared to the five-year average, the prices of dry cereals are rising on most markets, with millet (17% to 41%), sorghum (5% to 39%) and maize (2% to 21%) displaying the largest increases. Although prices followed a similar dynamic last year, the scale of the increase was smaller. As a result, many Nigeriens who are yet to recover from previous crises are unable to afford market prices.

The number of Malian refugees residing in Niger has decreased from 62,000 at the end of November to around 53,841 as of 15 March. However, UNHCR reports that some 5,600 new Malian refugees crossed into Niger during the first week of April. The refugees continue to place a large strain on the country with the large majority settling in the regions hardest hit by the nutrition and food security crisis.

As of 7 April, 1,470 suspected cases of measles have been reported by UNICEF, the large majority being in the region of Tillabéri (50%) and in the district of Filingué (30%) where refugee camps are located. The levels of measles mark a significant increase compared the same period in 2012.

Updated: 06/05/2013

SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), an estimated 1.05 million people in Somalia are in humanitarian emergency and crisis as of March. This marks a 50% decrease from 2.1 million in August 2012. Another 1.68 million people remain in stressed food security conditions as malnutrition rates in Somalia remain among the highest in the world according to FSNAU. The food security situation in all livelihood zones of Somalia is likely to remain unchanged through June 2013.

According to FEWSNET, food security has recently reduced to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through most parts of Somalia thanks to ongoing humanitarian assistance, the very good Deyr harvest, estimated to be the largest cereal harvest in the past ten years, higher than average livestock prices, and improved milk availability following overall good October to December Deyr rains. However, according to FSNAU, several parts of the country are continuing to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4), notably the areas that have so far received only light rains during the March to May rainy season. According to FSNAU, the principal groups affected by higher levels of food insecurity are the pastoralists in the northwest, the sheep pastoralists in the coastal areas of the centre, the people living in the agropastoral areas of Jamame District in Lower Juba region, the destitute pastoralists throughout the country, and most of the IDP settlements.

According to FSNAU, in January 2013, an estimated 215,000 children <5 were acutely malnourished, from which at least 45,000 were severely malnourished. This is attributed to the lack of adequate health infrastructure and to poor feeding practices. During the April to June rainy season, possible outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea and measles may lead to a deterioration of the situation. To date, a steady increase in cases of acute watery diarrhoea in Banadir and Lower Shabelle regions has been registered with 565 cases in February alone according to OCHA.

Conflict remains widespread in Somalia. Military operations by Somali forces, supported by African Union peacekeepers, against militants forced a large number of al-Shabaab rebels from their strongholds in the southern and central regions. However, tensions exist between the different military forces involved and the local authorities to the extent that, on 22 April, Ethiopia officially announced its wish to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Meanwhile, attacks by severely al-Shabaab fighters continue to plague Somali urban centres and transport axes.

On 5 May, a suicide car bomb attack against a convoy carrying Qatari officials in Mogadishu killed eight Somalis. Al-Shabaab claimed it was behind the assault and threatened further strikes against Somalia's government. On 14 April, at least 34 people were killed when two car bombs successively exploded outside the law courts in Mogadishu and a 9-man suicide commando attacked the building before fighting with security forces besieging the compound erupted. In the aftermath, the attack, one the deadliest in recent months, was also claimed by al-Shabaab militants affiliated to al Qaeda. It came less than a month after a car bomb exploded near the Presidential palace, killing at least 10 people in a blast that appeared to target senior Government officials, according to the Somali police. Although security in Mogadishu has improved, since its lowest point in August 2011, bombings and assassinations occur often. As suggested by UNHCR in April, the revival of al-Shabaab activity in Mogadishu and nearby regions is likely to continue.

As a result of the food crisis and conflict, an estimated 1.1 million people are currently internally displaced according to UNHCR estimates. Another 1 million Somalis are living as refugees outside of the country, mostly Kenya (507, 800), Ethiopia (239,000) and Yemen (229,000) as of April. According to UNHCR, at least 4,553 people were displaced between the 15th and 22nd of March, from different areas in Puntland and South Central, mainly due to insecurity, IDP evictions in Mogadishu, lack of livelihood opportunities, drought and IDP returns. Following the Ethiopian Defence Force's withdrawal from Xudur town, Bakool region in southwestern Somalia, Al-Shabaab militants seized control of the town. As of 21 March, approximately 2,500 people were displaced to Ceel Barde.

Somali Government troops and African Union forces seized the formerly Islamist-held town of Burhakaba from the Al-Qaeda linked Shabaab fighters on 27 February. The capture of Burhakaba marked a key stage in efforts to open up the main highway from the capital Mogadishu running northwest to Baidoa. On 2 April the AU and Somali Government forces cleared the final 60 kilometres (40 miles) from Burhakaba and with it opened the key route after months of fighting, reaching the former Islamic stronghold of Baidoa by road for the first time. This will not only allow for free movement of the population, but also open up this key supply route for the provision of humanitarian aid.

In southern and central Somalia, humanitarian access has remained challenging. According to OCHA, four incidents against humanitarian personnel, or their assets, and three cases of interference of aid delivery were recorded over the past month. The Lower Shabelle region has been more volatile than the Middle Shabelle region, though access in both regions remains extremely complicated. The withdrawal of al-Shabaab from key towns in southern Somalia has permitted an increase in the international presence in some areas.

On 6 March, the UN Security Council decided to maintain the deployment of the African Union Mission until 28 February 2014, reshape the UN presence there, and partially lift its 20-year weapons ban for one year to boost the Government's capacity to protect areas recovered from Al-Shabaab and stave off fresh attempts by such groups to destabilize the country. On April 8, President Barack Obama determined that Somalia was now again eligible to receive defense articles and defense services under US arms export and foreign aids laws. This may be seen as a tangible illustration of the improving relations between Washington and Mogadishu and of the help the U.S. is ready to extend to a country struggling to contain armed groups linked to al-Qaeda.

Updated: 06/05/2013

SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

Ethnic clashes, unrest and violence continue to affect large parts of the troubled Jonglei state. The precarious security situation derives from an insurgency by armed groups as well as inter-tribal violence. The conflict between the Yau Yau rebel group, one of the major insurgency groups in the region, and the South Sudanese Army (SPLA) has escalated since the beginning of March 2013, following a military operation by the SPLA against the insurgents, which was initiated on 5 March. The operation was part of a wider disarmament campaign in the region ahead of the upcoming rainy season. According to OCHA, clashes between the SPLA and Yau Yau rebels were still ongoing in Jonglei State as of April.

Fighting was primarily reported from the Kalbat area of Pibor County and in Kelo in Pochalla County.

Reports suggest that some 3,000 rebel fighters from the largest active rebel group in South Sudan, the South Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SSLM/A), began surrendering their weapons on 26 April following President Kiir's amnesty offer. According to OCHA, a result of the recent lull in hostile activities between the South Sudan army and non-state armed actors displaced communities have started to return to Pibor town in Jonglei State. In the past, South Sudan has struggled to assert control over Jonglei State, awash with weapons after the 1983-2005 war with the north and characterized by ethnic rivalries. According to the UN, more than 1,500 people have been killed in Jonglei since the country's independence.

Cattle raiding is a recurrent issue that continues to affect people in several regions of South Sudan. Some 23,350 people have been affected by cattle raiding and linked violence in Akobo East, Akobo West in Jonglei State and Ulang in Upper Nile since 8 February, according to inter-agency assessments and OCHA. Local media reports claim that at least seven people were killed and eleven others wounded in two separate cattle raids in Gogrial East County of Warrap State on 23 April. Also in Warrap State, in Tonj East county, cattle raiding incidents were reported on 8 April.

In Eastern Equatoria State, at least eight people, including government soldiers were killed when security forces clashed with cattle raiders on 23 April. The resulting gun battle may escalate an already fragile security situation. The clashes occurred as the state government attempted to contain reprisals following an attack on Bira community in which more than 75 head of cattle were stolen by raiders earlier in April.

Tensions between Sudan and South Sudan are reportedly easing following the agreements reached on border security and oil exports in March. Sudan and South Sudan have withdrawn their troops from the border and are finalising the activation of the demilitarised zone. On 23 April, Sudan and South Sudan agreed to open 10 crossings along their joint border to boost travel and trade. Earlier in April, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir visited South Sudan for the first time since the split in 2011, pledging his commitment to peace and to normal relations with the neighbouring country once again. In early April, South Sudan resumed oil production.

The recent progress between the countries follows the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 9 March and a meeting on 19 March, where Sudan and South Sudan agreed to form a new mechanism to deal with accusations of supporting or harbouring of rebel groups in the two countries. The countries signed the technical agreement establishing a safe demilitarized border zone, the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the activation of all agreed security-related mechanisms. The two states also agreed on an overall implementation plan with timelines.

The influx of Sudanese refugees from North Kordofan and Blue Nile state continues with the refugees primarily residing in Upper Nile and Unity state. According to UNHCR, there are 116,236 refugees in Upper Nile State, and 73,823 refugees in Unity as of 28 April 2013. As the influx of refugees continue, UNHCR estimates that the total number of refugees in the country will amount to 263,000 by the end of 2013.

The Hepatitis E outbreak in refugee camps in Unity and Upper Nile states which started in mid-2012 and peaked in February 2013 is under control. The number of cases decreased by the end of the first quarter of 2013, according to OCHA. WHO has reported that there have been 9,671 cases of Hepatitis E in refugee camps since mid-2012, with around 170 related deaths as of 28 April.

Although favourable rains have improved the food security situation in the western, central and eastern regions of the country, 4.6 million people will remain in need of food or livelihoods support in 2013, according to the UN. Food insecurity is caused by a series of factors including diminished cross border trade with Sudan, inter-communal clashes, increasing numbers of IDPs, returnees and refugees, fuel scarcity and high food prices. Inflation rates have nearly doubled, from 22% in October to 41% in November 2012, according to the South Sudan Bureau of Statistics. The cost of food increased by 43% in 2012 compared to 2011. Planted area has increased in all states, except in Jonglei where more than 315,000 people have been displaced either by floods or by conflict with negative impact on crop production.

Initial results from an inter-agency assessment undertaken in April indicate that while there is currently no spike in malnutrition among children under five years in main population centres, the situation could be worse in rural areas. Results show that the population of Panyijjar county in Unity State generally has very limited access to food and livelihoods, which is likely to worsen during the lean season between May and August. This food insecurity was aggravated by extensive flooding in the area in 2012, and cattle-raiding incidents in December 2012.

Jonglei State is also particularly affected by food insecurity. In parts of the state households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity, driven by insecurity, high prices, restricted access to wild foods and income sources such as collection and sale of firewood, charcoal and grass. In Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity is expanding to areas previously Stressed (IPC Phase 2) due to fighting and insecurity. In Abyei area, it is likely that food consumption gaps will be extensive going into the lean season. Currently, most of the poor households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity outcomes, according to FEWSNet.

Insecurity, poor infrastructure and seasonal rains continue to severely hamper humanitarian access nationwide. In Jonglei state, there have been repeated attacks against humanitarian workers. On 21 April three WFP-contracted trucks were ambushed by armed men, resulting in the death of two drivers and a driver's assistant. On 9 April, five Indian peacekeepers and at least seven UN civilian workers were killed in an attack by gunmen in Jonglei State, while nine others were injured. Several humanitarian organizations have reportedly restricted their operations in the area in March.

In general, over the course of 2012, there was a 48% increase in incidents over humanitarian access compared to 2011. The spike in humanitarian access constraints is largely attributed to increased interference in humanitarian operations, hostilities and the physical environment. Inhospitable terrain also remains extremely challenging in South Sudan, with more than 60% of the country cut off during the rainy season.

Updated: 06/05/2013

SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

On April 12, Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir visited South Sudan for the first time since the split in 2011 pledging again his commitment to peace and to normal relations with the neighbouring country.

The countries had signed a new technical agreement on the establishment of a safe demilitarized border zone, the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and the activation of all agreed security-related mechanisms. The two states also agreed on an overall implementation plan with timelines for the coordinated implementation of all elements of the 27 September 2012 agreements. This includes the resumption of oil production by 24 March and the withdrawal of troops from the border areas to be completed by 5 April. Monitors are to verify the withdrawal of Sudanese and South Sudanese forces from the buffer zone, 10 kilometres (6.2 miles) on each side of the 1956 border. In early April, South Sudan re-launched crude oil production and the first oil cargo is expected to reach Sudan's Red Sea export terminal at Port Sudan by the end of May.

On 4 April, Sudan released seven political prisoners, a day after President Omar Hassan al-Bashir ordered the release of all such detainees. The amnesty came under the framework agreement signed between South Sudan and Sudan in March. On 26 April, accepting to join the ongoing peace process, several thousands of South Sudanese rebels reportedly surrendered to Juba and returned home from alleged rear bases in Sudan. Since its independence, South Sudan has been struggling to contain insurgents that it claimed were supported by Sudan. The same day Khartoum and Juba agreed to open 10 crossings along their joint border to boost travel and trade between the two countries.

Nationwide, the Global Acute malnutrition (GAM) levels for children under-five stands at 16.4%, above the emergency threshold of 15%. The national inflation rate in March was 47.9 %, a 0.9 % increase since February. The food price inflation rate has increased from 43.6 to 45 from January to February and non-food inflation has increased by about 12% (57% in February). It has further slightly increased in March. The rising cereal prices are likely to reduce access to food for low-income households, but are not expected to bring significant changes to food security in relatively secure areas of Sudan.

As of 15 March, an estimated 4.3 million people are facing Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity in Sudan, according to OCHA. 3.7 million people face Stressed and Crisis (IPC Phase 2 and 3) levels of food insecurity and 560,000 people are experiencing Emergency (IPC 4) levels of food insecurity, compared to 4.6 million people in July 2012. Some 80% of the food insecure population is in the conflict-affected areas of Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Abyei. The slight decrease is mostly attributed to a good harvest this year. The total area planted during the 2012-13 season is more than double the previous year's figure, and yields are expected to be significantly higher than last year due to favourable rainfall and decreased pest infestations. A surplus of 1.4 million MT of sorghum and millet is expected. In spite of the good harvest, Stressed and Crisis levels of food insecurity persist in South Kordofan, Blue Nile, Darfur, and Abyei due to the impacts of conflict on production, market access, and livelihood options. The current escalation of insecurity is particularly affecting the food security situation in South Darfur.

In Abyei, a contested border area between South Sudan and Sudan where a self-determination referendum is to take place in October 2013, most of the households are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity according to FEWSNET. Due to high food prices because of restricted cross-border trade with South Sudan and the decrease of the cultivation areas, local communities in Abyei have already expanded their livelihoods strategies, switching to coping mechanisms employed in times of severe food insecurity. As more and more people are returning to the area where tensions eased in the wake of the signing of the agreement between Juba and Khartoum, it is likely that the humanitarian assistance will have to increase to keep up with rising needs as the returnees are expected to heavily rely on the host community for food.

On 29 October 2012, Sudan's Federal Ministry of Health declared a yellow fever outbreak in seven localities in Central and South Darfur. As of 6 January, the total number of suspected cases had reached 849, including 171 deaths (CFR 20.1%). The majority of cases are reported from Central Darfur, North Darfur and West Darfur. An emergency mass vaccination campaign targeting 3.4 million people is currently being implemented. In addition, on 12 December, the Ministry of Health of West Darfur announced the outbreak of Hepatitis D in the state.

Nationwide, an estimated 2.5 million people are currently displaced due to food insecurity and conflict.

Darfur

Clashes between the rebel group, Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are ongoing in different parts of Darfur. After fighting between the two groups had already claimed casualties and caused displacement in Southern Darfur in March, renewed clashes were reported in parts of Eastern Darfur on 6 April. According to OCHA, the ongoing military operations are putting civilians at great risk with an estimated 40,000 people having been displaced in the vicinity of the towns of Muhajeria and Labado in April. To a large extent, the populations that fled the area are currently sheltering near the UNAMID Team sites located near the two cities. As of 18 April, the humanitarian organizations do not have access to these areas where an estimated 18,000 people remain concentrated. On 19 April, one peacekeeper was killed and two others injured in attack at the UNAMID Team site in Muhajeria.

In the region, armed fighting between SAF and SLM-MM is still ongoing with both groups reporting casualties. On 17 April, after heavy infighting and airstrikes, the Government forces managed to retake control of the towns of Muhajeria and Labado while the SLM-MM confirmed its withdrawal from the area. According to reports from local sources, pro-Government militia killed some 18 civilians following the recapture of the two towns while grave human rights infringements were also reported. In mid-April, heavy clashes between SAF and SLM-MM were also reported in parts of Southern Darfur. Separately, the Government forces area also facing attacks from the dissident faction of the SLM led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur in Northern Darfur.

The Government forces are currently conducting military operations in other parts of Darfur against groups affiliated to the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF), the umbrella organization regrouping various rebel groups including the two main factions of the SLM. Although information remains extremely scarce due to limited access of international

media to the area, local reports indicated that SAF has conducted airstrikes in Southern Darfur allegedly completely burning down a village south of Nyala on 29 April. According to local sources, this area was a relocation place for people displaced from Muhajeria and Labado. Reports in local media indicated that at least 9,000 additional people were displaced from the Nyala region over the past week. According to official sources, more people are likely to flee the regions as military operations are intensifying. In East Darfur, pro-Government forces have engaged into clashes with a group led by a former security services commander who defected and founded his one rebel movement.

In Central Darfur, near the city of Umm Dukhun, violence resumed between the Misseriya and Salamat tribes despite the signing of ceasefire agreement, on 11 April. The fighting between the two tribes has further spread to Southern and Northern Darfur when members of the Salamat tribe attacked the town of Rehaid El Birdi that is inhabited by members of the Taisha tribe, a traditional ally of the Misseriya tribe. After an estimated 10,000 people were displaced at the beginning of April, these tribal clashes led to the displacement of another 50,000, mostly women and children, to the town of Tissi in neighbouring Chad, in the following week according to the UNHCR.

Since early March, violence in Central Darfur has displaced an estimated 74,000 people into Chad including Sudanese and Chadians – who lived as refugees in the conflict zone. The UNHCR is currently concerned that the number of refugees will increase as clashes continue in Central Darfur. It is already the largest influx of refugees from Sudan into Chad since 2005.

In Southern Darfur, disputes over land ownership and tribal fighting remain. On 26 April, conflict between the Gimir and Beni Halba tribes resumed after a relatively stable period since February. Several deadly clashes are being reported with an entire village of the Gimir tribe in Katayala locality being burnt by militias of the Beni Halba tribe on 1 May. Local media sources have reported that over 110 people have died as a result of renewed fighting over the past week. As of 1 May, according to the UN, some 2,000 people from Gimir and Assignor tribes were also reported to have been displaced from Edd El Fursan to Al Safia because of the conflict. In addition, some 37,500 reported Umbararo nomads in South Darfur are unable to cross into South Sudan because the border between the two countries is closed. These nomads have settled in 13 locations in Tullus and Dimso localities.

In Northern Darfur, the situation in the Jebel Amir Gold Mining area has stabilised after tribal fighting was curtailed. On 2 March, the Beni Hussein and Northern Rezeigat tribes reportedly agreed to end fighting following a reconciliation meeting in Saraf Omra. In addition, leaders of the two tribes have agreed to open all roads to El Sireaf in the Jebel Amir Gold Mining area. The parties have also agreed that the mining area should be under Government control and all mining activities should be suspended pending the outcome of a peace conference. Following the reconciliation, access for humanitarian agencies has improved and, as of 29 March, assistance to over 100,000 conflict displaced people in Serief Saraf Omra and Kebkabiya localities has been delivered. However, as of 4 April, 34,000 people are still in need of humanitarian assistance in Saraf Omra according to the ICRC.

According to OCHA as of 31 March, there are currently an estimated 1.43 million IDPs in

camps in Darfur.

Blue Nile and South Kordofan States

After almost two years of insurgency in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, the rebel group SPLM-North (SPLM-N) has eventually agreed to conduct talks on a possible ceasefire with Khartoum to try to find a political solution to the conflict. On 24 April, negotiation teams from both groups held separate meetings with the African Union mediation to prepare the agenda for the negotiations. On 27 April, according to reports from both sides, the talks stalled over the issue of the opening of humanitarian access corridors to the area. An agreement on this particular issue had in fact already been reached last year by the two parties, but it has never been implemented. According to SPLM-N, the adjournment of the negotiations until next month is linked to the fact that Khartoum insists at linking the humanitarian issue to the political one – a condition that the rebel group strongly rejects. Meanwhile, the situation in the area remains highly volatile while clashes between both sides are reported. Humanitarian access to the area remains very limited.

On 27 April, an armed group, believed to be possibly part of the SPLM-N, attacked and seized the Abukershola village town in the area of Rashad in Southern Kordofan State. In the aftermath, the armed group managed to briefly besiege and loot the town of Umm Ruwaba, a strategic stronghold linking Southern Kordofan State to Northern Kordofan State killing three civilians and nine police officers in process. After this unprecedented move that appeared as a bold challenge to the authorities, the group retreated back in the direction of Abbassiya in Southern Kordofan. In early April, several clashes between the SPLM-N and the Government forces had already been reported in the area despite the preparations for the talks. On 16 April, the SPLM-N had allegedly managed to seize a military garrison, located at Ghandur next to the South Kordofan capital Kadugli.

Fighting between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and SPLM-N forces in parts of Blue Nile and South Kordofan has been ongoing since June 2011 and has affected an estimated 908,000 people since it started. There is no humanitarian access to 420,000 people affected in rebel held areas in the two states. According to UNHCR, an estimated 300 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan cross the border to South Sudan daily.

An estimated 158,000 IDPs remain in Blue Nile, according to OCHA as of 31 March. In South Kordofan, an estimated 907,000 IDPs are also in need of humanitarian assistance as of 31 March. On 4 April, the UN WFP reported a breakthrough as it managed to deliver food aid to the state for the first time since conflict began there 18 months ago. According to reports, the malnutrition rates among children under five in the region are 30 %, double the emergency threshold. According to FEWNET, the majority of internally displaced people are likely to face crisis levels of food security by the time the rainy season starts in the next few weeks.

Updated: 06/05/2013

ANGOLA FOOD INSECURITY

At the beginning of November 2012, OCHA reported that more than 1.8 million people in Angola are in a food security crisis, caused by prolonged drought. Meanwhile, the Ministry

of Agriculture reported a 60% decrease of average rainfall during the planting season which resulted in a 30% drop in crop production. Ten coastal and central highland provinces have been affected. In some areas, families are sharing limited water sources with livestock, leading to contamination of these sources. The risk of outbreak of water related diseases is heightened. There have been media reports of a cholera outbreak in the south, but these have been refuted by WHO. In addition, an estimated 533,000 children suffer from varying levels of malnutrition in a country that is still recovering from decades of civil war that lasted until 2002.

Some 75 people have died of malaria in eastern Lunda Sul province in the first quarter of 2013, and more than 15,000 cases have been registered, according to Angolan official sources.

Updated: 06/05/2013

DJIBOUTI FOOD INSECURITY

Several consecutive years of drought have led to a critical food security situation in Djibouti. Currently, some 70,000 vulnerable people are at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. The northwest, southwest and south-eastern Pastoral Border livelihood zones are the worst affected. Rainfall levels in coastal areas as at the end of the Heys-Dadaa rainy season (October through March) were 50% to 75% below-normal. The rural areas near Obock town in the northeast, situated in the Central Pastoral Lowland livelihood zone, are experiencing severe water shortages and critical malnutrition levels. In the southeast, water access is expected to become increasingly limited, particularly in the areas of Sankal and Kabah-Kabah. With the usual lean season starting in May, households in south-eastern pastoral border areas will continue to face Crisis food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) through June, according to FEWSNet. According to the April WFP report, food insecurity in Djibouti has increased since November 2012 while households' own food production has decreased from 14.6% to 5.1% due principally to delayed rainfall and persisting cold.

Conditions for urban poor households are expected to remain critical during the coming months due to on-going increases in food prices. High unemployment rates (48%) and high staple prices are causing urban to peri-urban migration to areas such as Balbala. Wholesale prices of wheat flour, which had been stable at low levels since the beginning of 2012, increased from November to December 2012 by 17%. However, prices are still about 25% below the high levels recorded in 2011. Prices of rice (Belem), mainly consumed in urban areas, were stable during the second semester of 2012. These prices depend heavily on the availability of food aid on markets of the interior regions.

Successive years of poor rains have also eroded the coping mechanisms of pastoralists in Djibouti's rural regions as high food prices and unemployment rates afflict the country's urban areas.

The continued influx of refugees from Somalia is leading to an increase in humanitarian needs in both rural and urban areas. As of 17 April, there are some 18,725 Somali refugees in all areas of Djibouti.

Updated: 06/05/2013

ETHIOPIA FOOD INSECURITY

Recent reports indicate that East and West Hararghe zones in eastern Ethiopia have deteriorated into food insecurity Crisis (IPC Phase 3) following two consecutive, poorly-distributed rainy seasons and a below average Meher harvest in October-November 2012. According to FEWSNET, food security outcomes are unlikely to significantly improve until June 2013 when consumption of green Belg crops begins. In the sweet potato-producing areas of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), the sweet potato harvest is already below normal. Sweet potatoes are an important bridge crop from March to June. Households without sweet potatoes will be facing food consumption gaps during the April to June lean season because of late Belg planting, keeping these areas in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through June.

According to OCHA, the delayed Belg (mid-February to May) rains in most belg-receiving parts of the country, including SNNP, north eastern Amhara, eastern and southern Tigray and central and eastern Oromia Regions, have thus led to late planting of Belg crops. According to FEWSNET, poor households in affected areas will not be able to meet their food needs through the next harvest without depleting their livelihoods asset. Most households have already turned to the market to access food (as early as January), as their food stock from the 2012 Belg and meher harvest is already exhausted.

The Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) released on February 28, stated that about 2.5 million people are food insecure and need humanitarian assistance until June. However, estimates of the number of people affected by food insecurity in 2013 vary between 3.5 and 2.4 million people.

Households requiring assistance are concentrated in Afar, Oromia, and Somali Regions. Poor rains in pastoral areas means that pasture availability will remain lower than usual and water sources will not fully refill, leading most pastoral areas to be classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from April to June. Following two consecutive, poorly distributed rainy seasons and a well below average Meher harvest in October/November 2012, the East and West Hararghe Zones have deteriorated into Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Increasing water shortages are reported across the country. In Somali, immediate water trucking needs were identified. Some 720,500 people require water trucking as of 11 March.

The number of Somali refugees in Ethiopia as of late April stood at 239,000 according to UNHCR. Overall, Ethiopia is hosting over 394,000 refugees. Apart from Somalia, refugees primarily originate from Eritrea and Sudan. The rate of refugee arrivals slowed down in March with only 1,987 new refugees registered compared to 4,726 in February and 3,654 in January according to OCHA. New arrivals are expected to place additional pressure on the already limited refugee food pipeline.

UNHCR is preparing to relocate thousands of South Sudanese refugees currently settled in the border Wanthowa district to the existing Pugnido camp in Ethiopia's Gambella region. Although 16,000 South Sudanese are estimated to currently reside at the border with host communities, their exact figures are unknown as refugees in the area remain unregistered.

Updated: 06/05/2013

KENYA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY

At the end of March, several parts of the country were affected by floods following heavy downpours countrywide. The coastal and Western Kenya regions were the most affected, where a combination of heavy rains and inadequate flood mitigation measures have destroyed homes, infrastructure and educational facilities. The Kenya Red Cross Society reported that as of 2 May, some 99,043 people have been affected cumulatively since the onset of the rains in March. To date, 62 deaths have been reported.

The food insecure population declined to 1.1 million in February 2013 from 2.1 million in August 2012 according to the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) 2013 short rains assessment. This was attributed to near average short rains crop production and improved grazing conditions compared to the 2012 August to September lean season.

However, there is a remaining risk that the number of food insecure could increase from the current level due to the poor performance of the October-to-December Short Rains in parts of the south-eastern and coastal marginal mixed farming zones.

The influx of Somali refugees into Kenya continues, with 277 new arrivals since the beginning of January as of 11 April. According to the UNHCR, the total number of Somali refugees in the country amounts to 507,540. A large part of these – 425,000 – reside in Dadaab camps and have limited access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, water and sanitation. Moreover, since the beginning of December, heavy rains have caused floods in the camps. According to the UNHCR, eleven epidemic outbreaks were reported in 2012. The situation is expected to deteriorate due to an influx of new arrivals following the Government's decision to transfer Somali refugees from urban areas to camps around Dadaab.

Updated: 06/05/2013

LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY

Lesotho's food security deteriorated significantly for the second year in a row. As a result of the impact of consecutive droughts and late rains in the cropping season 2011-12, around 725,500 people are food insecure (40% of the population) in Lesotho as of the beginning of March 2013. Last year, the agricultural production dropped 70%, resulting in Lesotho's worst harvest in ten years. This situation is compounded by maize prices increasing 60% since the beginning of the year. On 9 August 2012, the Government declared a food crisis situation and called on development partners to assist.

The 2012-13 harvest is also likely to be below average, though better than last year. In early January 2013, the area planted was 40% below the five-year average. Poor rainfall performance in December delayed planting. Other reasons that have negatively impacted on production include the late start of the season, the early frost in the mountains, a mid-season dry spell and severe armyworm infestations that have affected 25% of the estimated cropped area. Many poor households experienced Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security levels until the delayed green harvest starts in April. According to FEWSNET,

Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity outcomes are projected during the April to June period because many households are expected to harvest enough food to take them through the first three months of the 2013-14 consumption period, and some poor households plagued by food insecurity will be receiving humanitarian assistance during this period.

Lesotho's population is extremely vulnerable – the country has the world's third highest prevalence of HIV (23.5%) and 39% of children <5 are stunted. Lesotho suffers from widespread poverty with the proportion of households living below the poverty line exceeding 55%, out of which about 40% are extremely poor.

Updated: 06/05/2013

MALAWI FOOD INSECURITY

An estimated 2 million people are classified as food insecure in Malawi, marking a significant increase since June 2012. Some areas have experienced four consecutive poor harvests, indicating a deteriorating situation. As many as 15 out of 28 districts are affected by the food crisis, with the southern (Mulanje and Chikwawa Districts) and central parts (Balaka District) of the country being the most severely affected. Even before the current crisis, 40% of the population was living below the poverty line.

The situation is compounded by the devaluation of the local currency and the increasing price of maize, the staple food, which already far exceeds the purchasing power of most rural households. In March, the average national retail price for maize was 253% higher than the average retail price in the corresponding period during 2012. As harvests begin countrywide in April, prices are expected to stabilize and decrease, but are likely to remain above last year's levels, according to FEWSNet.

OCHA reported that as of 15 February flooding in southern Malawi had displaced some 33,000 people. In total, 86,000 people have been affected by flooding and storms since the onset of the rainy season. The hardest-hit areas are Mangochi, Phalombe and Nsanje districts, all in the south of the country and in the same region that was previously suffering from rain shortages and drought.

In addition, according to the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA), armyworm outbreaks infesting maize crops and pasture have been reported in Ntcheu, Dedza, Kasungu and Mchinji districts of Kasungu and Rumphu district of Muzuzu. This could further affect maize prices and availability.

Updated: 06/05/2013

SENEGAL FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Nationwide, an estimated 739,000 people (6% of the population) are affected by food insecurity, according to FAO. Results from a joint mission (Government/ActionAid/Senegalese Red Cross/FAO/WFP) carried out in late December 2012 showed critical levels of food insecurity in areas of Bakel (65%), Matam (64%), Medina Yoro Foula (63%) and Linguere (55%). Food insecurity is low in all areas of the

regions of Fatick and Kaffrine where it is less than 15%, while it is moderate in the departments of Dagana and Podor. The results indicate that food insecurity currently affects more than 230,000 people in some villages and rural communities in St. Louis, Louga, Matam, Kolda and Sedhiou, and in the regions of Fatick, Kaolack and Kaffrine. According to UNICEF, in 2013, four out of fourteen regions are estimated to surpass the emergency threshold of 10% of Global Acute Malnutrition: Tambacounda, Kaffrine, Matam, Saint Louis.

UNICEF has reported that the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) caseload for children under five more than doubled the expectations of 2012. For 2013, the SAM burden is estimated at 63,323 children under five, and the Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is estimated at 255,675 cases.

Although the 2012 harvest was generally good, the agricultural production was affected by the floods in August and September 2012 in the Senegal River Valley and western regions of the country. As a result, it is likely that a food crisis in 2013 will persist among vulnerable families which have depleted their livelihoods and do not have the means to restore them.

According to WFP, as of 3 April, the prices of cereals remained high in Senegal, demonstrating, depending on the region and local speculation, up to a 30% increase when compared to the five-year average.

Updated: 06/05/2013

ZIMBABWE FOOD INSECURITY, UNREST

The food security situation in Zimbabwe has temporarily improved, after reaching a peak period during the lean season with an estimated 1.6 million people in need of food assistance in the period leading up to the April 2013 harvest, according to the UN. According to FEWSNET, food insecurity in most of the country is Minimal (IPC Phase 1) because of the steady food imports and of the continued distribution of humanitarian assistance. This level is expected to persist as poor households start to consume green foods and harvests between April and June. Significant problems with food supplies remain, however, in the southern areas of the country, notably in the Matabeleland South and Masvingo Provinces, where dry spells have resulted in moisture deficits which have compromised crop yields, further diminishing harvest expectations in affected districts.

The acute food crisis in Zimbabwe up until April occurred after late and erratic rains, poor agricultural practices, limited access to agricultural inputs, and a reduction in planted area contributed to a 33% decrease in last year's harvest if compared to 2011. In the most affected areas, maize prices were reported to be between 12% and 47% higher compared to prices in maize surplus areas. In the remaining affected parts of the country, prices of cereal and flour are likely to remain high making food accessibility difficult for poor households.

Ongoing drought in the southern part of the country has increased food security needs. Large numbers of labour-constrained individuals and decreased purchasing power have significantly contributed to the number of people who require seasonal targeted food assistance. A large percentage of vulnerable rural farmers depend on NGO and

Government-subsidized agricultural inputs. In light of this, food insecurity in Zimbabwe in 2013 is still projected to be comparably worse than any period over the past three years. Almost one in five people living in rural areas will be unable to meet basic food requirements on their own.

In Zimbabwe 3.7 million (29% of the population) people are chronically food insecure. Chronic and acute child malnutrition stands at 32% and 3%, respectively. Masvingo, Matabeleland North and South, and parts of Mashonaland, Midlands and Manicaland provinces are the worst affected areas.

The food security crisis is also aggravated by the high HIV-prevalence rate, which is 14% compared to 5% for the rest of the southern Africa region. In addition, some 200,000 malaria cases with 111 deaths were reported in the country from January to March. This represents almost the double of malaria cases reported over the same period in 2012 according to OCHA.

On 16 March, Zimbabweans voted on a new constitution, which would introduce presidential term limits, abolish presidential immunity after leaving office, bolster the power of the courts, strengthen parliament's powers and set elections to decide whether President Mugabe will remain in power. Almost 95% of Zimbabweans voted in favour of the new constitution. Zimbabwe is expected to hold elections, which will be funded by South Africa, by October of this year.

Although the run-up to the referendum remained peaceful, the UN Special Rapporteurs on human rights have received an increasing number of reports about acts of intimidation and harassment, physical violence and arrests against civil society actors, mostly working on human rights issues. In April, reports also indicated that the police have been confiscating radios that pick up foreign stations to limit Zimbabweans' access to alternative information while the local state-run media generally support Mugabe.

In recent weeks, the police have also reportedly conducted a crackdown on NGOs and human rights groups, raiding offices, confiscating files and arresting employees. Although President Mugabe has called for peaceful conduct during and after the referendum and national elections, violence continues to be reported across the country.

Heavy rains in January caused extensive flooding affecting some 8,490 people as of 15 February, according to OCHA. The worst affected provinces were Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Masvingo and Midlands. During the first week of April, an additional 900 people have been affected by heavy rains in the Midlands province.

Updated: 06/05/2013

CAMEROON FOOD INSECURITY

According to the Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) and FAO – although official production estimates are not yet available as of mid-April – the countrywide cereal output in 2012 is tentatively put at average levels. However, some parts of the country, notably in the north, will still remain food insecure due to localized poor harvests.

Following the findings of a joint Government/FAO/WFP Food Security Assessment Mission visiting Northern Cameroon in January-February 2013, the 2012 cereal output in the North province was estimated to be 16% lower than the previous year, while in the Far North region, despite an increase in cereal production, localized production shortfalls occurred for the second consecutive year.

The Logone and Chari department (Far North region) has reportedly suffered in 2012 from the lingering effects of a severe cereal production shortfall caused by the drought conditions which prevailed in 2011. In addition, both Far North and North regions were struck by flooding in September 2012, which affected 60,000 individuals, causing damage to crops and population displacement.

According to GIEWS and FAO, the Food Security Assessment Mission also established that cereal stocks were already depleted as early as March 2013 in 21 districts out of a total of 47 in the Far North region, where 1.78 million people (about 46% of the region's total population) reside. Furthermore, based on preliminary data from the 2012 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, jointly carried out by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health, in northern Cameroon the chronic malnutrition rates (44.8% in the Far North Region, 43.3% in the North region) exceed the "critical" threshold of 40% set by the World Health Organization. Similarly, the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates of 6.3% in the Far North and 5.5% in the North are higher than the "precarious" threshold of 5 percent.

In addition, as of 23 April, a total of 1,889 refugees from the Central African Republic crossed into the country according to the UNHCR.

Updated: 06/05/2013

MOZAMBIQUE FLOODS, EPIDEMIC

An outbreak of violence in mid-April, suggests a worrying possibility that the country may face sustained political violence before next year's elections. On 4 April, the Mozambique police raided the headquarters of the opposition Renamo party, arresting at least 12 people and fuelling tensions. The following day, opposition militiamen from the Renamo party carried out an attack on a provincial police station to try to free the people arrested during the raid on their headquarters, killing four policemen in the process. On 6 April, armed men attacked a bus and a truck in central Mozambique, near the opposition stronghold of Muxungue, killing three people in the process. Renamo denied being behind the assault that was the first such attack on a civilian vehicle in Mozambique in a decade. Following on, Mozambique's President Armando Guebuza stated that he would respond firmly to the deadly attacks against civilian vehicles blamed on armed members of the former rebel group Renamo. The latter opposition group has seats in the country's parliament, but is effectively excluded from power.

Despite flooding at the beginning of March this season's national crop production prospects are reported to be good, with substantial contributions expected from the central and northern regions and the food security of most rural households across the country and outside the flood affected areas is expected to be favourable through June. According to FEWSNET, the food situation has recently improved and the current food insecurity outcomes are Minimal (IPC Phase 1) for the majority of the rural households since food is

more readily available through harvests and targeted food assistance in mid-April.

The floods in Mozambique displaced 186,238 people and cumulatively affected some 420,000 people as of late April, according to OCHA. An estimated 119 people died in the floods, including cases due to secondary causes such as electrocution. Thousands of households have been damaged; road infrastructure, electricity, and drainage systems have been interrupted. The southern Gaza Province was the worst hit with around 175,700 people affected and 172,600 temporarily displaced followed by Inhambane and Maputo provinces, and the central province of Zambezia where 33,956 people were affected and 10,522 temporarily displaced.

A cumulative total of 1,352 cholera cases and 5 deaths were reported between 28 January and 10 March, of which 482 cases and 2 deaths were reported in Nampula City, the most recently affected province. As of 21 February, 413 cases and two deaths were reported in Cabo Delgado Province, northern Mozambique.

An UN-led assessment of the agriculture sector at the end of March indicated that an estimated 267,000 ha of agricultural land were affected by floods of which approximately 211,000 ha with diverse cultures (maize, rice, beans and vegetables) were lost, representing about 4% of the total area sown in the country. The Gaza province was the worst affected with 30% of crop area lost, followed by Inhambane (9%) and Maputo (4%). It is estimated that some 128,000 producers were affected in the 10 provinces (39 districts), according to OCHA.

However, despite this, limited access to food due to 2011-12 production shortfalls of almost 19%, high food prices and the restricted movement of goods due to heavy rainfall and flooding has Stressed (IPC phase 2) the food security situation for households in areas including parts of Cahora Bassa, Mutarara, Macossa, Machanga districts in the central zone, and Chigubo, Chókwe and Funhalouro in the south.

Overall, the country suffers from high chronic food insecurity, affecting nine million people (39% of the population).

Updated: 06/05/2013

ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY

On 21 January, dissident Eritrean soldiers with tanks laid siege to the Information Ministry and forced state media to call for the release of high-profile political prisoners and demanded the implementation of the constitution which was never enacted by Parliament. However, calm reportedly returned to the capital Asmara on 22 January. No further information is available on the events.

Between 5,000 and 10,000 political prisoners are being held in the country of about 6 million people. The United Nations Human Rights chief has accused Eritrea of torture and summary executions.

An estimated six million people in Eritrea are food insecure (98% of the population). Local food and fuel prices are likely to remain high, putting severe pressure on vulnerable groups' coping mechanisms. The Government of Eritrea officially denies any food

shortages within its borders and refuses food aid. There is a lack of updated and reliable data on the humanitarian situation due to the limited humanitarian access and a ban on humanitarian organisations assessing needs. No confirmed data on the food security situation or food price levels is available. Therefore, Eritrea is not included within the Global Overview prioritisation.

Updated: 06/05/2013



ASIA

AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

As the impact of the cold winter recedes, Afghanistan is now witnessing a surge in violence with the arrival of spring and the start of the so-called “fighting season”. Humanitarian access has therefore been increasingly compromised due to ongoing hostilities in the majority of provinces. The issue is particularly acute in Badakhshan province where a protracted ground offensive of the Government forces, supported by international air power, against the insurgents is hampering humanitarian access. The offensive, started in late March, has already led to the displacement of some 1,500 people.

In parallel, local sources quoted by OCHA have also registered during the first three months of 2013 a substantial increase of 62% in attacks on aid workers, excluding UN staff, over the same period in 2012. Against this background, the ICRC reported that a mobile health unit of the Afghan Red Crescent Society was attacked in northern Afghanistan on 16 April. As a result of the assault, two staff members were killed and two others wounded.

Meanwhile, military operations are ongoing throughout the country. On 12 April, 13 Afghan soldiers from the Army’s Third Battalion were killed when 200 Taliban combatants assaulted an outpost in the eastern province of Kunar. This particular Taliban attack had a strong symbolic significance since the Third Battalion is one of only a small number of Afghan units rated as fully self-sufficient by the US military. The attack stressed again the difficulty for local forces, which are suffering disproportionately high casualties compared to international troops, to face the insurgents without international backing. In Maidan Wardak Province, in central-eastern Afghanistan, military operations have led to the displacement of an estimated 4,500 people in April. On 22 April, Taliban fighters seized a group of 10 foreigner and one Afghan crew members that were on board a helicopter that

came down in Logar province in eastern Afghanistan. Official sources within the international military confirmed the incident. To date, the fate of the captured people, most of whom are allegedly civilians, remains unknown.

On 27 April, the Taliban vowed to start a new campaign of mass suicide attacks on foreign military bases and diplomatic areas, as well as foster their “insider attacks” this spring. The following week, marked by multiple attacks and three air crashes, proved to be one of the bloodiest for international troops this year. On 5 May, a member of Germany’s special forces was killed in the province of Baghlan in northeastern Afghanistan. The previous day, five U.S. soldiers were killed by an improvised bomb in the southern province of Kandahar and two more died when an Afghan soldier – an “infiltrated mujahid” according to the Taliban – turned his gun on them in the western province of Farah. On 30 April, three British soldiers and nine Afghans were also killed by a roadside bomb in the Southern province of Helmand in an incident that injured another six British military personnel.

Although the insurgents seem to be now primarily focusing their assaults on foreign military, a series of attacks has hit several civilian targets over the last weeks. On 17 April, seven civilians were killed and four others injured in a roadside bomb blast in Zabul province. On 8 April, another roadside bomb exploded under a bus in the Wardak Province, southwest of Kabul, killing nine people and injuring 22 others. On 3 April an attack against a Government compound in the southwestern province of Farah resulted in 44 deaths and 100 injuries. Most of the victims were civilian Government workers. The attack was the deadliest for Afghan civilians since December 2011. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the assault, stating that they intended to target civilian Government employees, in particular workers in the courts and prosecutors’ offices.

On 1 May, a senior official of Afghanistan’s peace council, a body established in 2010 by the authorities to explore the possibility of a peace settlement with the insurgents, was killed by Taliban fighters in the province of Helmand. On the same day, tensions escalated between Kabul and Karachi alongside Afghanistan’s contested eastern border in Nangarhar province where a fire exchange resulted in the death of one Afghan border policeman and two Pakistani soldiers being wounded. While official sources within the Afghan military announced Kabul’s intention to reinforce its military presence in the disputed areas, this last incident is likely to further unsettle the relations between the two neighbours. For Afghanistan, the stakes are high since Kabul will likely need Pakistan’s support to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table ahead of the withdrawal of the international troops.

Around 85,000 international troops are currently supporting the Government in its fight against the Taliban. All international combat troops are scheduled to withdraw by the end of 2014 and over 75% of the country expected to be under national security control by July 2013. Relations between Kabul and its international backers are strained, notably after military operations conducted by international troops have led to multiple civilians deaths over the years. In a recent incident, on 7 April, eleven children and a woman were killed in an airstrike during a NATO operation targeting Taliban commanders in eastern Afghanistan.

Overall, 5.4 million people are affected by the on-going conflict and an estimated 450,000 people are currently internally displaced in Afghanistan. Since 2001, UNHCR has supported the return of 4.7 million Afghan refugees from neighbouring countries. However,

nearly three million registered Afghan refugees remain in exile in Pakistan and Iran.

According to FAO, more than nine million people (34% of the total population) are food insecure in Afghanistan, of whom 2.1 million people are severely food insecure. Although most households entered the lean season more food secure than last year, those in northern Badakhshan and the Wakhan corridor are currently in Stressed food security conditions (IPC Phase 2). As reported by the WFP, the prices of wheat flour and rice continued to increase last month after having already been at higher than average levels in February. In March, the wheat flour prices were thus 35% higher in comparison to the same month last year and 32% higher if compared to the same month average over the last 5 years. Similarly, the average prices for low quality rice were higher by 47% in comparison to the same month last year and by 50% if compared to the same month average over the last five years.

Households in the extreme northeast, central highlands and low income households across the country remain vulnerable to food insecurity due to inflation, loss of livestock and reduced remittances from Iran. Some 18% of children <5 nationwide suffer from malnutrition, while acute malnutrition rates in the south are as high as 29.5% for children <5.

A powerful 5.6 magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan, near the Pakistani border on 24 April. The epicentre was located some 24 kilometres northwest of the city of Jalalabad, the capital of the Nangarhar Province. According to local reports, some 27 people were killed and 150 others injured while the earthquake also damaged an estimated 350 houses. Meanwhile, in the northern province of Balkh, an estimated 20 people were killed because of ongoing flash floods that also damaged at least 2,500 houses.

Updated: 06/05/2013

SYRIA CIVIL WAR

Unconfirmed reports indicate that fighters loyal to President Bashar al-Assad killed over 60 people in the town of Baniyas in Lattakia governorate, two days after pro-Assad militia allegedly killed over 50 people in the nearby village of Baida. Fearing further violence, hundreds of families have fled the area.

Fighting between the Government and opposition groups continues in all governorates apart from Tartous and As-Sweida. On 26 of April, the Government started a large scale offensive to remove opposition forces from their strongholds in and around the capital of Damascus and have reasserted control of several areas previously held by the opposition groups. Conflict in Eastern Ghouta forced the closure of Damascus international airport this week. In a series of attacks on Government officials, an explosion in the centre of Damascus city targeted the prime minister Wa'el Al-Halki on 29 April. The city of Damascus has seen a wave of major bombings in recent weeks, including on April 9, when a massive blast in the centre of the city killed at least 15 people.

The spill over from the conflict to neighbouring countries becomes more apparent. Israel has carried out a second air strike on Syria in three days, hitting targets in and close to Damascus, reportedly in an attempt to halt shipments of advanced weapons heading to Hezbollah in Lebanon. While Israel refrained from commenting on the attack, the Israeli

President Netanyahu has repeatedly warned in recent weeks that Israel would be prepared to take military action if chemical weapons or other arms that would upset the balance of power were to reach Hezbollah. On 30 April, Syrian regime jets bombed the Bab al-Hawa area on the Syrian side of the border crossing to Turkey. The IDP camp in Bab Al Hawa has reportedly been hit by ordinance on the outskirts of the camp, wounding 52 people.

The UN estimates that over 6.8 million people are in need of humanitarian aid as a result of the heavy fighting and subsequent lack of access to livelihoods and services. 4.25 million people are internally displaced. In addition, UNRWA estimates that approximately 235,000 Palestine refugees have been displaced inside Syria. Over 1.4 million Syrian have been registered by UNHCR or are awaiting registration in neighbouring countries, with over 448,000 Syrians registered or awaiting registration in Jordan (Government estimates 470,000 Syrians in total), 455,000 in Lebanon (Government estimates 1 million Syrians in total, including a large number of Syrian migrants), over 322,000 in Turkey (Government estimates 400,000), around 140,000 in Iraq and more than 72,000 in Egypt and other countries in North Africa.

The needs across the country far outweigh the support provided. The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, recently urged the UN Security Council to grant aid agencies cross-border access to Syria without permission from the Syrian Government. Accessibility into and around Damascus is becoming increasingly difficult and reaching certain areas of Rural Damascus, Quneitra, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Idlib remains particularly challenging. In the past few weeks, several UN agencies have separately warned that their resources are running low, and added that without additional funds they will be forced to scale back relief efforts across the region.

Updated 06/05/2013

YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

Unrest in Yemen's south continued on 8 April as seven people were killed in clashes between army deserters and tribesmen. In a separate incident, two Yemeni Government soldiers were killed and two others injured in fighting with tribesmen who had blown up the main Maarib oil pipeline in south Yemen only two weeks after it was repaired, according to reports from Government sources. On 6 April clashes between the army and southern separatists in the town of al-Hawat, in al-Lahej Province, resulted in one Yemeni soldier killed and four people wounded after separatists tried to close the marketplace. Yemen remains a strategic spot for the U.S. and its Gulf allies who need to contain threats from al-Qaeda affiliated militants and separatist tribes to Saudi Arabia and to nearby sea lanes where oil tankers pass. On 17 April, 4 al-Qaeda militants were killed in a US drone strike southern of the capital Sana'a.

On 23 March, gunmen in the capital killed three guards of a leader of the Huthi Shiite rebels. The violence was reportedly linked to the country's troubled national dialogue, in which the leader was participating. Related clashes between Yemeni police and southern separatists killed two civilians and wounded six people on 13 March. The clashes erupted in Aden's Mansura district, a stronghold of the pro-independence movement. Police opened fire on Southern Movement activists who had blocked roads with rocks and burning tyres as part of a campaign of civil disobedience they began in February.

National Dialogue sessions started on 18 March, after numerous delays since November 2012, in order to start drafting a new Yemeni constitution, agreeing on other reforms, and pave the way for elections. The constitution is expected to set out the groundwork for presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2014.

An estimated 13 million people (55% of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, according to OCHA. Violence and insecurity continues with inter-tribal fighting in the north, fighting between the Government and armed groups in the southern governorates and civil unrest in urban centres of the west and central governorates. As a result, some 385,000 people remain internally displaced. In the meantime, in the south, more than 100,000 internally displaced people have returned to their areas of origin in Abyan governorate and further returns are on-going, according to UNHCR.

Yemen currently hosts more than 242,000 refugees, virtually all of Somali and Ethiopian origin, according to UNHCR. The number increased significantly during 2012, which saw record high levels of new arrivals, amounting to 107,500 people in 2012. In January, 7,518 new arrivals were reported, the majority (6,231 people) of whom were Ethiopian. In February, another 10,145 people crossed into Yemen while the flow slowed with 1,806 new refugees arriving to the country in March.

Approximately 10.5 million people in Yemen are food insecure, according to OCHA. 970,000 people suffer from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). The emergency threshold for GAM >15% is exceeded in six Governorates: Hajjah, Al-Jawf, Al Hudaydah, Taiz, Aden and Lahj. The situation is serious (GAM 10-14%) in six other Governorates (Raymah, Ibb, Abyan, Amran, Al-Mahwit, and Al Dhale'e). According to OCHA, 255,000 children <5 are severely acutely malnourished.

According to WFP, the food security outlook for 2013 is slightly worse than in 2012, when an estimated 10.5 million people were considered food insecure. The causes of food insecurity will likely persist and be aggravated by poor prospects for the local agricultural production, estimated to be roughly 8% lower than in 2012.

A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 has severely disrupted access to health services, clean water and basic sanitation. As of January 28, an estimated 13.1 million people lack access to safe water and sanitation. Epidemics are re-occurring, with 170 children having died from measles in 2012.

Information about humanitarian needs throughout the country remains difficult to ascertain due to insecurity. Humanitarian access in Yemen is hampered by insecurity across the country. Kidnappings and attacks against humanitarian actors persist.

Updated: 06/05/2013

MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS

A new violent incident between Muslim and Buddhist communities occurred when a crowd attacked a Mosque and shops in the small town of Oakkan, 100 km north of the commercial capital Yangon on 30 April. In the aftermath of this outbreak of sectarian violence unrest spread to nearby villages and the police and military intervened to restore

order. As a result of the clashes, one person was killed and 10 more injured.

On 20 March, three days of violent riots and clashes between Muslims and Buddhists had already erupted in the town of Meikhtile in central Myanmar. As a result, an estimated 12,846 people were displaced, according to a rapid interagency assessment. 10,834 people still remain displaced in 11 locations as of the beginning of April. According to the Government, as of 2 April, the death toll stood at 43 people with 61 more being injured. The Government declared a state of emergency and deployed military to the riot-hit town on March 22, and calm was reportedly restored on 23 March.

According to Government officials, the violence had also spread to other townships in the region by the end of March, in particular to the Yamethin Township where 40 houses and the mosque were destroyed. Sporadic acts of arson also spread from Meikhtila to Okpho and Gyobingauk in Bago Region and minor disturbances were reported in Yangon. According to the UN, attacks on religious buildings and shops in the townships of Nattalin, Thegon, and Zigon were reported on 27-29 March.

The violence between Buddhists and Muslims marks the deadliest inter-communal unrest since the violence between the ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and Muslim Rohingya shook western Rakhine state last year, killing hundreds of people and displacing more than 100,000 people. As of late December, between 115,000-138,000 people were still displaced, mostly across eight Rakhine townships (Kyaukpyu, Kyauktaw, Minbya, Mrauk-U, Myebon, Pauktaw, Ramree and Rathedaung). According to UNHCR, several IDPs settlements, especially the ones in Sittwe, Myebon and Pauktaw, are seriously at risk of flooding during the monsoon season from May to September. This represents an estimated 69,000 people potentially affected.

A second round of peace negotiations between Myanmar's Government and the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) and its armed wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), started on Monday 11 March in Ruili, China. On 12 March, the Government of Myanmar and Kachin rebels opened discussions on establishing a new frontline between their armies. Kachin leaders rejected calls from the Government for an immediate ceasefire during the negotiations saying they needed more assurances from the Government. Although the next round of talks between the KIO and the Myanmar Government was planned for mid-April, several attempts to set an official date have failed. According to last information, the two parties may now try to meet by mid-May.

Fighting between the Government and KIA had re-ignited in June 2011, when a 17-year ceasefire with the KIA rebels broke down. KIA is seeking greater autonomy for the one million Kachin people residing in Myanmar. As a result of the fighting, an estimated 100,000 people have been displaced. Around 20,000 residents and 15,000 displaced people are thought to be in Laiza. According to the UN, nearly 2,000 people were newly displaced from Northern Shan State, as a result of the latest fighting.

Access has improved as major highways in Kachin state – closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the Government army and KIA in 2011 – were reopened on 17 March, following the renewal of talks between the two sides. However, access to the affected population in Rakhine state remains difficult as campaigns have taken place based on claims of favouritism by international aid agencies towards the non-Rakhine Muslim minorities. According to OCHA, as of mid-April, access to IDPs is still seriously hampered

by ongoing intimidation of aid workers.

The rice harvest in 2013 is expected to be significantly affected by heavy flooding at the beginning of September 2012 as the rains inundated around 250,000 hectares of crops. In addition, according to WFP, rainfall deficiencies in the early and late monsoon seasons have impacted key crop harvests and resulted in water shortages in various parts of the Dry Zone in central Myanmar. The food security situation in the area is already of serious concern and will further deteriorate as the summer progresses.

On 3 May, heavy rains hit southern Shan State in eastern Myanmar killing at least 11 people and flooding some 170 buildings according to the country's Red Cross.

Updated: 06/05/2013

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX

According to OCHA, some 1.8 million people are in need of 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 as highest priorities.

On 9 April, UNRWA reopened their relief and distribution centres in Gaza, which provide food to around 25,000 people a day. The centres were closed on 4 April, after demonstrators stormed one of its compounds in an allegedly preplanned action. The incident was a further escalation in a series of demonstrations and protests that have occurred since the end of March.

On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly voted to grant Palestine a non-member observer State status at the United Nations, while expressing the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians moving towards a permanent two-State solution. Direct negotiations between the two sides have been on hold since September 2010, with the Palestinians insisting on a settlement freeze before returning to the negotiating table and the Israelis insisting on no preconditions.

Updated: 06/05/2013

PAKISTAN CONFLICT, FLOODS

On 1 May, tensions escalated between Kabul and Karachi alongside Afghanistan's contested eastern border in Nangarhar province where a fire exchange resulted in the death of one Afghan border policeman and in two Pakistani soldiers being wounded. While official sources within the Afghan military announced Kabul's intention to reinforce its military presence in the disputed areas, this last incident is likely to further unsettle the relations between the two neighbours.

Meanwhile, government operations against non-state armed groups, as well as sectarian violence, have caused significant population movement in Pakistan since July 2008. According to OCHA, as of mid-April, an estimated 992,562 people remain displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) due to protracted conflict. Since mid-March, intensifying Government military operations against

the Taliban and clashes between militants groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency (FATA) have led to additional massive population movements. As of early May, UNHCR reported an estimated 76,000 people were displaced from Khyber Agency to safer grounds in Peshawar, Kohat, and towards the camps of New Durrani in Kurram Agency and Jalozaï in Nowshera District. According to local officials, this number may rise to up to 120,000 people in the upcoming weeks due to the ongoing fighting in the area.

Meanwhile, continued attacks by insurgency groups are fostering an increasing trend of violence in Pakistan since December 2012. The continuing series of attacks emphasizes the enduring security concerns in Pakistan and the rising sectarian violence. As the elections scheduled for the 11 May approach, more attacks against politicians and officials are expected.

On 2 May, bombers blew up two schools designated as polling stations for the upcoming elections in the southwestern province of Baluchistan. Three days earlier, a suicide bomber attack targeting a senior official in the city administration killed at least 8 people and injured 45 others in Peshawar in northwestern Pakistan. On 23 April, a suicide attack in Quetta targeted a prominent leader of Pakistan's ethnic Hazara minority killed six people, but leaved the politician unharmed. The attack stressed once again the rising threat posed by sectarian strife to secular candidates participating in the polls. On 16 April, at least 9 people were killed and 50 others wounded when a suicide bomber attacked an election rally for the Awami National Party in Peshawar. In a separate incident on the same day, a roadside bomb struck an election convoy of the Pakistan Muslim League-N and killed four people in southwestern Baluchistan province. Meanwhile, the former Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf, who returned from exile last month and managed to register as a candidate for the upcoming elections, was eventually barred from running for the national assembly and placed under house arrest by the authorities. Officially, Musharraf was prevented in participating in the elections because of court cases pending against him according to a local source.

Dozens of suspected militants attacked an electricity plant on 2 April near Peshawar, killing seven people in the process. The high profile assault destroyed the biggest power station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, suspending electricity supply to at least 100,000 people overnight. The city is especially vulnerable to bomb blasts and Taliban attacks as it runs into the semi-autonomous tribal belt, considered a safe haven for Taliban, Al-Qaeda and other insurgents fighting both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Some 17 soldiers were killed and dozens wounded when, a car packed with explosives exploded next to a pair of fuel tankers at an army check post in northwestern Pakistan on 23 March. A car bomb also hit Jalozaï refugee camp, killing 15 people and wounding another 40 on 21 March. Jalozaï is home to tens of thousands of people displaced from violence in the tribal belt on the Afghan border.

A major 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southeast Iran, near the border with Pakistan, on 16 April. Tremors were felt as far away as India and the Gulf Arab states. The epicentre was in an area of mountains and desert, some 86 kilometres from the Iranian city of Khash and 78 kilometres from the border with Pakistan. In Pakistan, according to OCHA, at least 13 people were killed and 53 others injured, mostly in the town of Mashkeel in the southwestern province of Baluchistan which borders Iran. Overall, in Pakistan the earthquake affected an estimated 30,000 people while 2,200 houses were also damaged.

Flash floods triggered by heavy rains in September 2012 caused destruction across Pakistan. According to the Government, around 1.5 million people were still in need for critical services in Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh provinces as of late April according to OCHA. Many of the affected districts, particularly in Baluchistan and Sindh, were already struggling to recover from the 2010 and 2011 flooding. Areas still inundated may remain under water for several more months due to lack of drainage and slower evaporation during the winter months.

Malnutrition rates in some flood-affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the recurrent floods in 2012 and were predicted to worsen. In addition, 60% of the population in Pakistan is food insecure and inflation, with rising fuel prices and stagnating domestic productivity, pushing up food prices. Seven districts are classified as facing IPC phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency). In Pakistan, prices of wheat and wheat flour have been steadily increasing since June 2012 reaching record levels in most markets in February 2013, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

Measles cases in 2012 surged by almost five times compared to 2011, leading to the deaths of more than 485 children, up from 64 deaths in 2011. Some 175 deaths have been reported since the beginning of 2013 alone. Sindh province, the area hardest hit by the measles outbreak, is also most affected by the flash flooding occurring in September 2012. The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported 141 measles outbreaks throughout the country since the beginning of the year. The HO has described the situation in Pakistan as alarming due to a steady increase in measles cases and deaths.

In the country, assessments and humanitarian operations are hampered by difficult access due to insecurity, standing floodwaters, and visa delays. Attacks against aid workers also continue to threaten the provision of life-saving assistance. According to OCHA in January alone, 20 aid workers were attacked, which is nearly 50% of last year's total figure of 42. More than 15 polio vaccinators were killed in targeted attacks in December and January.

Update: 06/05/2013

TAJIKISTAN FOOD INSECURITY

Since the beginning of January 2013, over 3 million people (32% of the population) in Tajikistan are estimated by WFP to be at risk of food insecurity due to a prolonged lean season and depleted winter stocks. According to WFP, around 870,300 people in 12 livelihood zones are classified as being in Crisis food security conditions (IPC Phase 3). Another 2.4 million people are classified as being in Stressed conditions (IPC Phase 2). Overall however, the food security status of the analysed zones has relatively improved in the reporting months compared to the previous year thanks to increased remittances received, good rainfall and good cereal production reaching 1.2 million tons at the end of 2012, 12% higher than during the last season. Spring rainfall in March has been temporally well distributed and it is expected to continue at its current regular pace.

In Tajikistan, which heavily depends on imports, the price of wheat flour prices remain at or close to historic highs in the main and regional markets of the country. High prices are likely to continue and place pressure on vulnerable families to meet food needs. During 2012, an increase in food prices was recorded on other staple food products such as

potatoes (by 19 %), beef (by 15%), and bread. Transportation and fuel prices have contributed to the surge of food prices. However, when accounting for exchange rates, the current prices are not at as high the 2008 peak prices.

High prices are likely to continue and place pressure on vulnerable families to meet food needs due to high and increasing prices in Kazakhstan and as households deplete their own stocks and rely more on market purchases.

Updated: 06/05/2013

BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE

Violent riots erupted in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka, on 5 May, as Islamist protesters demanding laws against blasphemy battled police. As of 6 May, unconfirmed reports suggest that the clashes have left more than 28 people dead, while hundreds have been injured.

The protesters, who are demanding an anti-blasphemy law with provision for the death penalty, had announced their determination to shut down Bangladesh's main business hub Motijheel until the government accepts their demands. Tens of thousands of supporters of the Hefazat-e-Islam movement blocked nearly all the roads leading into the capital. Clashes escalated when activists from the group Hefazat activists tried to break a police cordon.

The turmoil comes as the Government is still struggling to deal with the outrage over the collapsed garment factory on 24 April. The collapse of the eight-story garment factory in Savar, 25 kilometres northeast of the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka, left at least 646 people dead according to official reports as of 6 May. Some 2,000 people have been rescued from the collapsed structure but an unspecified number of people remain missing with very little chance of further survivors being rescued. As of 6 May, 462 admitted persons are receiving treatment in different health facilities, and 1885 people have been released after receiving treatment.

The collapse of the building sparked widespread and violent protests in and around Dhaka. Reports indicate clashes between protestors and police, with tear gas and rubber bullets being fired to disperse the protesters. The strong reaction from garment workers followed reports of ignored warnings a day before the accident about cracks developing in the walls of the collapsed factory building.. Protestors accuse the factory management for ignoring the risks and causing the death of the some 500 workers. Nine people deemed responsible for the accident have been arrested and as a result the violent protests have decreased over the past week.

The series of protests, or hartals, continued with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) carrying out a new countrywide two-day hartal 22-23 April. Although stray incidents of violence were reported across the country, no major incidents have been reported from the latest hartal to date. On 9 April, protestors supporting the 18-party alliance led by the BNP enforced a nationwide hartal during 36 hours, resulting in clashes with police in several locations across the country. The clashes reportedly left one dead and dozens injured. The strike came only a day after some 20 people were injured in south-western Bangladesh as another general strike was enforced. The demonstrations followed a long series of protests

and counter-protests that have occurred in the country since the beginning of 2013.

The recent wave of demonstrations started in January over the trial and sentencing of senior political leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party, the country's largest Islamic party, including the party's leader and deputy leader over their role in the 1971 independence war. The clashes that broke out following the sentencing to death of a senior Islamist leader on 28 February marked the bloodiest period of violence since the country's independence four decades ago. The Islamic Alliance is also protesting to pressure the Government to restore a constitutional provision that requires a neutral caretaker administration to supervise the next general election expected in early 2014. To date, at least 96 people have died during protests, although local media reports suggest a higher number of at least 150 killed.

In addition, violent attacks against Bangladesh's minority Hindu community have continued since the sentencing of the Islamist leader. Around 50 Hindu temples and at least 700 Hindu houses have been attacked since late February.

The recurrent *hartals* called by the JI or the main opposition political party BNP are reportedly causing significant disruption to business and commerce and the current losses to the economy are vast.

On 22 March, a tornado swept through 15 villages in the Brahmanbaria Naogaon, and Natore districts, more than 100 km southeast of the capital, Dhaka, affecting an estimated 31,600 people, according to the Government. At least 38 people were killed and another 414 injured. The tornado caused material damages, tearing roofs off houses and uprooting trees and power pylons.

Some 40% of the population is food insecure and this is aggravated by rising food prices and disasters destroying infrastructure and inundating land. Bangladesh is considered one of the world's most hazard prone countries and is often subject to floods. In 2012, the affected north-western region was hit by floods three times.

Updated: 06/05/2013

IRAQ DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY

Casualty figures released by UNAMID in early May indicated that the month of April was the deadliest month in Iraq since June 2008. A total of 712 people (595 civilians) were killed and 1,633 others (1,428 civilians) wounded in terrorist attacks and acts of violence throughout the country. Baghdad was the worst affected governorate, followed by Diyala, Salahuddin, Ninewa and Anbar. In contrast during March UNAMID reported 229 civilians had been killed and 853 injured in Iraq.

The current unrest is largely linked to the country's long-running political dispute with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki facing hardening opposition against his rule from religious and ethnic groups opposing the allegedly sectarian policies of his Shia-led Government. Following the last wave of violence in Iraq, tensions are now reportedly at their highest since the U.S. troops left the country two years ago. In parallel, the civil war in neighbouring Syria also participates in straining the fragile relations between Sunni and Shi'ite communities and making the Iraqi context increasingly volatile.

On 3 May, a Sunni cleric and five worshippers were killed by a roadside bomb that also wounded 31 other people next to a Mosque in Baghdad. On 1 May, 22 people were killed in sectarian attacks across Iraq with a suicide bomber killing six government-backed Sunni "Sahwa" fighters who were collecting their salaries in the western province of Anbar. On 29 April, at least 23 people were killed in a series of car bomb attacks in three Shi'ite Muslim areas throughout the country. Two of the attacks occurred in the city of Amara southeast of Baghdad.

The attacks on 29 April concluded a deadly week that saw over 200 people being killed in different parts of the country. The surge in violence unfolded after Iraqi troops stormed a Sunni protest camp in the town of Hawija near Kirkuk, north of Baghdad, on 23 April. The clashes spread to other areas and left some 50 people dead. The next day, ongoing confrontation between Sunni militants and Iraqi forces left another 30 people dead, in the fiercest clashes in more than a year.

On 20 April, Iraq held its first provincial elections since the departure of U.S. troops. Although only 50% of eligible Iraqi voters participated in the polls, they were still considered to be an important test of the country's political stability ahead of next year's parliamentary elections. In early May, the results showed that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition came top in the elections but failed to win a majority in any district. The lack of a majority means the State of Law coalition will need to find allies to keep senior provincial posts. Iraqi politics remain deeply split along sectarian and ethnic lines with Maliki's government, grappling with the crisis over how to share power between Shi'ites, Sunnis and ethnic Kurds. The three oil-rich Kurdish provinces in Northern Iraq are scheduled to vote at a later date in September 2013. The ongoing violence also forced the authorities to postpone the elections in the two Sunni dominated provinces of Anbar and Nineveh.

Election Day also witnessed several violent incidents with a dozen of small bombs exploding near polling centres throughout the country and wounding at least 4 people. Further illustrating the trend of escalating violence, multiple attacks hit the country in the week prior to the polls. On 19 April, seven Sunni worshippers were killed and a dozen more injured in a mortar attack against a mosque in Dyala province. The previous day a suicide bomber attack killed at least 27 people while wounding dozens more in a youth Internet café in Baghdad. Multiple bomb attacks across the country had already killed four people and injured 18 more on 17 April. Two days prior, successive car bombs and attacks in several Iraqi cities resulted in 33 people being killed and some 200 others wounded. The previous day two moderate Sunni Muslim candidates had been killed.

As of 2 May, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Iraq reached 141,702, with the autonomous region of Kurdistan hosting 90% of the refugees where daily arrivals have reached 800-900 people – double the rate of just three months ago. The situation at Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq's Dohuk Governorate, is especially worrying. The Domiz camp is currently housing more than 35,000 Syrian refugees and is critically overcrowded. Thousands of families are sharing tents with newly arrived refugees as almost 3,500 families do not have their own shelter.

The overcrowding is in turn having an impact on sanitation, which is already below humanitarian standards. Congestion and warmer temperatures are increasing vulnerability

to outbreaks of diseases as well as to tension between camp residents.

Measles cases have been reported amongst new arrivals in Domiz refugee camp. In addition, a large number of Iraqis residing in Syria have returned to Iraq. As of 22 January, the total number of Iraqi returnees from Syria since mid-July 2012 was 68,122, according to UNHCR. Baghdad continues to receive the largest number of Iraqi returnees, followed by Anbar and Ninewa.

On 3 March, Iraq shut a border crossing with Syria after Syrian rebels seized the other side of the frontier post from the Syrian army. On 11 March, Al-Qaida's branch in Iraq claimed responsibility for the killing of 48 Syrian soldiers and nine Iraqi guards in western Anbar province, who sought refuge in Iraq after the attack on the border post. The attack suggests possible coordination between the terror network's Iraq affiliate and its ideological allies in Syria who are fighting on the side of the rebels against President Bashar Assad's regime.

An estimated 1.2 million were displaced inside Iraq by 11 June 2012; updated displacement figures remain lacking. Although humanitarian access has become less restricted, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, north/central governorates and the Disputed Territories.

Updated: 06/05/2012

JORDAN DISPLACEMENT

The number of Syrian refugees crossing the border to Jordan continues to increase. As of 25 April, 393,370 Syrian refugees have been registered by UNHCR in Jordan, and an additional 55,000 await registration.

These figures do not include Syrians that have not registered or await registration, and the Government of Jordan estimates that there are, in total, some 500,000 Syrian refugees in the country. As a result of the refugee influx, Jordan's economy, water and energy resources remain strained. The prices of commodities are higher in Jordan if compared to Syria and the purchasing power of the refugees to cover basic needs continues to decrease. Furthermore, food prices in Jordan have increased by nearly 50% due to the reduction of food imports and increased demand from new arrivals from Syria. In addition, recent reports warn of signs of rising tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees, in particular those regions that host large number of displaced Syrians.

Updated: 06/05/2013

KYRGYZSTAN FOOD INSECURITY

In September 2012, an estimated 25% of the population of Kyrgyzstan – about 1.3 million people – were considered food insecure according to WFP's Household Food Security Assessment.

The highest levels of food insecurity were found in Jalalabad (48%), Osh (38%) and Batken (38%) regions. The situation of currently food-insecure and vulnerable households is likely to further deteriorate during spring when stocks of food from the previous harvest

will be depleted and additional inputs are required for the spring planting campaign. The WFP assessment also revealed that another 13% of households – some 547,000 people – are at risk of becoming food insecure should they be affected by an additional shock, such as further rises in food prices.

In March 2013, the retail price of wheat flour did not change on a month-on-month basis and remained at high levels. Since June 2012, the price has increased by 56% in rural and 47% in urban areas, and by an average of 52% across the country. The domestic retail price of wheat flour in March was 42% higher than in the same month of last year and only 4% lower than the peak level of early 2011.

The 2012 wheat production was affected by delayed planting due to a long cold winter, followed by a hot summer. The latest estimate puts cereal production at about 1.3 million tonnes, which is some 19% lower than last year's level.

In 2010, 34% of the population was living below the national poverty line.

Updated: 06/05/2013

PHILIPPINES CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOON

The Philippines frequently experiences natural disasters, particularly tropical storms and cyclones. Typhoon Bopha (Pablo) struck the Philippines on 4 December 2012, causing extensive damage across the island of Mindanao. As of 17 April, 6.2 million people are still affected by Bopha, 918,298 people are displaced outside evacuation centres and a further 15,064 are residing in evacuation centres. A total of 158,741 households are totally or partially damaged.

Continuous rains caused floods in Agusan del Sur in the Province of Pampanga in late February. Some 49,073 people were affected as of 27 February, according to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office. The Municipality of San Luis has the highest number of affected, amounting to 19,577 across 11 barangays (villages), followed by the municipality of Veruela with 12,125 persons affected across 12 barangays. Several municipalities have suffered damages on large agricultural stretches.

Previously, on 19 February, Tropical Depression "Crising" made landfall on the southern tip of Davao del Sur and moved northwest towards southern Palawan before moving away from the country on 21 February. According to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Control (NDRRMC), some 52,325 households, or 262,880 persons, were affected in 137 barangays of seven regions. 39,406 of these were previously affected by Typhoon Bopha. As of 25 February, 223,134 receive assistance inside and outside of evacuation centres.

Four consecutive days of rain combined with the tail-end of a cold front led to rising water levels in Mindanao in January. As of 26 January, there were more than 507,700 people affected, the majority of them, 369,000, in Davao Region.

According to the Department of Health, 1,528 dengue cases have been reported in the first quarter of 2013 in the Soccsksargen region. Some 669 or 41% of the victims are children 10 years old and below.

Updated: 06/05/2013

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA **FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

According to a recent report by FAO, the acute malnutrition rates have improved this year due to better food rations and a consistent food assistance pipeline. However, according to the report, some 2.8 million people are still estimated to face severe food insecurity in the northeast provinces of the country.

The chronic under-nutrition remains a public health problem. Some 57% of households have 'borderline' food consumption. Chronic food insecurity in DPRK continues to affect two-thirds of the country's 24 million people. According to the UN, the main 2012 harvests and 2013 early season crops will see a 10% increase compared to a year earlier and the production is expected to reach 5.8 million metric tons.

DPRK still requires international humanitarian assistance. Flooding and a subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012 affected an estimated 700,000 people, damaged health facilities and reduced access to primary and secondary health care. The floods further aggravated the impact of a severe dry spell in southwest and central provinces: a 30% decline in soybean production due to the dry spells in the first half of 2012 has been reported.

Humanitarian access is limited. No current data on child mortality, the food security situation, food price levels and general magnitude of humanitarian needs is available. Therefore, DPRK is not included within the Global Overview prioritisation.

Updated: 06/05/2013



NORTH AMERICA

HAITI **FLOODS, EPIDEMIC, HURRICANE**

Some 2.1 million people in Haiti are severely food insecure and risk a nutritional crisis, according to OCHA as of the beginning of April. An estimated 82,000 children <5 suffer from acute malnutrition, of which 20,400 have Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Rural populations are especially affected. Large parts of the country face Stressed levels of food

security (IPC Phase 2). Reports on the food security situation indicate that the poor and very poor in some municipalities in the Sud-est, Ouest and Nord-est departments are already in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) despite the implementation of irreversible survival strategies, according to FEWSNET. In addition, sowing of the 2013 spring season cereal crops, mainly maize, which normally starts in February/March, was delayed in the main valleys due to below average rains during January and first half of February. Poor seed availability is also threatening the success of this year's crops.

Since the start of the cholera outbreak in October 2010, the cumulative number of cases amounts to 645,964, with 118,000 potential new cholera cases in 2013. As of 19 February, 8,020 deaths have been reported. According to the Ministry of Public Health and Population, approximately 8,643 new cholera cases and 126 deaths were reported between 15 December 2012 and 15 January 2013. This represents a 40% decrease over the previous month but still represents a 65% increase over the same period last year. Artibonite department is the most affected area with 817 new cases of cholera (compared to 619 new cases for the same period in December) recorded during the first two weeks of January, due to contamination of rivers, unhygienic conditions and inadequate sanitation.

Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy led to massive flooding, affecting 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grande-Anse and Sud were the most affected. As of beginning of April, 71,400 victims of Hurricane Sandy still need humanitarian assistance according to OCHA. Recent surveys show that 119 of 140 municipalities were severely affected by drought, Tropical Storm Isaac and/or Hurricane Sandy in 2012, displacing at least 58,000 people in total.

Almost three years after the earthquake, there remain some 320,050 IDPs in Haiti according to the IOM as of mid-April. Since the beginning of the year, the number has decreased by 27,230 people.

Updated: 06/05/2013



SOUTH AMERICA

BOLIVIA **FLOODS**

Torrential rain and floods caused damage across Bolivia. According to OCHA Five of Bolivia's nine departments are under a state of emergency for flooding and close to 145,000 people are affected in nearly 25% of Bolivia's municipalities. The southern

departments are the most affected, especially Chuquisaca, Potosi, Tarija and Cochabamba. In the department of Cochabamba, some 40,000 (8,000 families) were affected between 18 and 25 March.

According to the Ministry of Rural Lands and Development, at least 15,000 hectares of crops have been damaged but the Ministry discounts the possibility of food security risks. However, according to a WFP report, at least 25,000 people may need immediate food assistance. According to Civil Defense reports, the rainy season has caused 24 casualties to date.

Bolivia experiences floods every year during the January-March rainy season. Heavy rains typically flood major rivers and cause mudslides and devastation of roads and infrastructure in the Andean region, and the Amazon lowland plains consistently suffer from floods every year during the rainy season.

Updated: 06/05/2013

Introduction to the Global Overview Update

The Global Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global 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 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? (Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Overview consists of three main sections:

Firstly, the **world map** provides an overview of how the countries are prioritised, indicated by different shades of blue. The countries are subdivided by four **priority levels**: "on watch", "situation of concern", "humanitarian crisis", and "severe humanitarian crisis".

The priority levels are assigned on the basis of:

- the number of people affected by recent disasters
- the level of access to the affected population
- the <5 mortality rate
- the level of development of the country
- the number of protracted IDPs and refugees.

If a country experienced a disaster in the seven days prior to an update, or witnessed an escalation of an on-going crisis, a country is **highlighted** by a yellow dot on the map.

Secondly, 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.

Thirdly, **narratives** for each country included in the Global Overview reflect recent major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country. Narratives are written based on secondary data.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones [click here](#).

Or go here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.acaps.acaps>

Update

The Global 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.

More information on the Global Overview Methodology can be found in the [Global Overview Methodology Brief](#) and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).