Snapshot 22 – 29 October

In **Syria**, fighting has intensified in October with the Government gaining control of strategic areas around Damascus and south of Aleppo. Meanwhile, while the number of Syrian refugees has reached almost 2.2 million people, parties to the conflict and international actors are increasingly focused on the Geneva II conference scheduled to take place in November after having been postponed several times. Although the Syrian National Council has not yet made a decision on its participation to the peace talks, several armed groups fighting the Government have already publicly rejected the idea of travelling to Geneva. Meanwhile in mid-October, WHO confirmed 10 cases of wild poliovirus out of 22 suspected cases detected since the beginning of the month in Deir-ez-Zor governorate. This is the first outbreak of polio in the country since 1999.

In **Nigeria**, heavy fighting continues between the Government troops and Boko Haram Islamist insurgents, focusing on the northeastern border states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. According to an interagency assessment conducted in September, an estimated 5.9 million people, including 3 million women and children, were severely affected by the conflict across seven states. Borno state is reportedly the most affected area with over 4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

A major political crisis is growing in **Bangladesh** with violent protests escalating since 25 October. Throughout
the country, street battles have left at least 16 dead and over 500 people injured. Thousands of supporters of the authorities clashed with the opposition, which is demanding the resignation of the prime minister and the establishment of a caretaker government until the general elections in January 2014.

_Last Updated: 29/10/2013 Next Update: 05/11/2013_
Highlights

As of late September, FEWSNET reported that food insecurity is Minimal (IPC Phase 1) in all livelihood zones, due to several measures mitigating the impact of the lean season and increasing the access to food for poor households.

Political and security context

Burkina Faso has been politically stable for over two decades but has been suffering from the political and military crisis in neighbouring Mali, and is located at the centre of a troubled region, with Niger and Côte d’Ivoire both quite vulnerable to shocks.

Presidential elections are set for 2015, raising fears of unrest if the current president fails to implement a smooth democratic succession after years of restrictions on political space. In this context, the country is threatened by social unrest, with an increase of local conflicts over land, traditional leadership and growing inequalities in 2012. Already in 2011, several violent protests erupted in various cities due to public distrust toward the power in place. The current administration has two years to prepare a smooth mandate transition and prevent a succession battle or a new social uprising.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Burkina Faso has been affected by insecurity and the on-going military intervention in Mali.

Displacement: As of 30 September, UNHCR noted that the current number of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso (unchanged since April) stands at 49,975, including 27,146 children. Refugees are located in seven formally recognised camps and informal settlement sites: Mentao, Damba, Fereiro, Goudebo, Gandafabou, Bobo Dioulasso, and Ouagadougou. Most camps are in the northern region of Sahel, in the provinces of Soun, Oudalan and Seno, where almost 90% of Malian refugees are settled. The presence of Malian refugees and their cattle in this arid area exacerbates the scarcity of natural resources and poses a risk of increased tensions between local communities and refugees.

Disaster: As reported by OCHA on 11 September, heavy rainfalls in mid-August affected 6,712 people, damaged 600 houses, and impacted livestock and infrastructure in the east (district of Est) and the west (districts of Boucle du Mouhoun Sahel and Hauts Bassins) of the country. ECHO reported on 13 September that the population is in urgent need of food assistance and shelter, while wells and water points need to be rehabilitated.

To date, severe flooding has affected over 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel region in Africa.

Food Security: WFP reported that cereal production from the 2012/2013 agricultural season was over 30% higher than the 2011/2012 production. According to FEWSNET in late September, food insecurity is Minimal (IPC Phase 1) in all livelihood zones, due to several measures mitigating the impact of the lean season and increasing the access to food for poor households. However, the country has undergone several shocks over the past five years, including the 2011/2012 drought, and the population has not yet recovered from the last food crisis, mainly because many households still suffer from the effects of negative coping strategies, such as the sale of assets, implemented during the 2012 crisis. A March FAO report found that the food insecure are predominantly in the Sahel, north and east regions.

In the Sahelian area of Burkina Faso, an estimated 90% of people depend on agriculture and livestock for their livelihoods. Civil strife in northern Mali has contributed to increased food supply issues in parts of the country. OCHA reported early July that the arrival of Malian refugees and their cattle had further increased pressure on scarce resources leading to tensions with local communities. A May WFP and UNHCR joint assessment showed that 15% of the Malian refugee households have poor or borderline food consumption, against 13% in the host population. A February FAO/WFP joint assessment indicated an elevated prevalence of food insecurity in Malian refugee camps and in Burkinabe host communities with an estimated 52% of refugees and 58% of host populations affected by food insecurity.

Health and Malnutrition: In late August, 2,576 suspected cases of measles were reported, 35% in the Sahel Region. Of the 35% Sahel cases, 40% were from the refugee camps.

According to UNICEF, the incidence of meningitis was at 1,679 cases as of early May 2013, in comparison to 2012, which saw 4,814 officially registered cases for the same period. The incidence rate this year is 66% lower, indicating that the country is emerging from the high-transmission meningitis period and will most likely not experience an outbreak in 2013.

The 2013 total annual caseload of children <5 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), as reported by UNICEF in late August, remains at January levels with an estimated 120,000. The number of children affected by Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is estimated at 400,000, marking a decrease from January levels, bringing the <5 General Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate to 10.9%. According to 2012 assessments, the highest GAM rates were recorded in the regions of Centre North, East, North, Centre and Boucle de Mouhoun. In May, UNHCR and WFP reported that malnutrition is alarming among certain Malian
Central African Republic: Conflict, Food Insecurity, Insecurity

Highlights

26-27 October: 12 people were killed in the western town of Bouar, during fierce clashes between vigilante groups and former rebels.

As of 25 October, 64,717 new refugees have fled from CAR since the current crisis erupted last December, OCHA reports. DR Congo alone has received an estimated 42,600 refugees, while Chad has witnessed the arrival of 13,087 people, including 4,125 in the Moissala area. An additional 4,841 people were displaced to Republic of Congo and 4,286 to Cameroon. Cumulatively, there are over 220,000 refugees from CAR in neighbouring countries.

Political and Security Context

On 10 October, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2121, which provides the basis for a peaceful resolution to the crisis in CAR, in a clear indication that international concerns are rising over the situation currently unfold in the country. It demanded the swift implementation of transitional arrangements leading to transparent presidential and legislative elections 18 months after the start of the transition. Against that backdrop, the Council updated the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office (BINUCA), reinforcing its role in five areas: support for implementation of the transition process; support for conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance; support for stabilisation of the security situation; promotion and protection of human rights; and coordination of international actors. The Council also urged elements of the ex-Seleka and other armed groups to participate in disarmament and demobilisation programmes.

On 13 September, the transitional President of CAR, Michel Djotodia, officially announced dissolution of the Seleka movement, the armed force he led which allowed him to seize power in late March. According to different estimates, the Seleka coalition numbered 25,000 fighters, some of whom had been recruited as the group advanced toward the capital Bangui between December 2012 and March 2013, and after the seizure of the capital. At present, the main issue that remains is the disarmament of part of the Seleka armed movement that will not be integrated in the regular armed forces. After a period of voluntary disarmament that ended on 14 September, coercive disarmament of parts of the Seleka-affiliated fighters is to start in Bangui while the new authorities struggle to establish order throughout the country. To date, tensions are reported as the second phase of disarmament has not yet started.

As of mid-September, the situation in CAR remained highly volatile with widespread insecurity and clashes between elements of the only in-name defunct Seleka coalition and the population. Various rebel leaders, de facto new warlords, some originating from neighbouring countries, are reportedly dominating the country outside of the capital Bangui. Looting and destruction is virtually unchecked, with an increasing number of unpaid Seleka members roaming the streets and setting up checkpoints to collect money. Increasingly, the local population is responding by organising vigilante groups. Fighting is also reported between Seleka member and groups loyal to the former authorities ousted in the coup.

According to a senior UN official who visited the country in early August, security is virtually non-existent beyond the capital, while state institutions are close to collapse. Bangui remains fairly calm, with weapons and military equipment collected and submitted to government authorities by the committee in charge of voluntary disarmament. Elsewhere in the country, human rights infringements, arrests, and executions are reported. In mid-August, another UN official commented that CAR is on the brink of collapse and the crisis is threatening to spread beyond CAR’s borders. The new authorities are still unable to restore order or even deploy official representatives outside of Bangui. Over 700 people were killed in 2013; the three regions most affected by violence are Ouham, Bouar, Bangui and surrounds.

According to WFP, an estimated 100 people were killed in violence in October, with clashes reported in rural areas, mostly in the provinces of Ombella Mpoko, Lobaye, and Ouham Pende. In the first week of October, 14 people were killed in violent clashes between Christians and Muslims in Bangassou, and armed attacks in the village of Bangui-Bouchia in the Lobaye province in early October resulted in casualties among Muslim citizens. On 26-27 October, 12 people were killed in the western town of Bouar, during fierce clashes between vigilante groups and former rebels. This last series of violent incidents is a worrying indication of the rise of interreligious fighting in CAR, while witnesses reported that the clashes broke out beginning of October after local Christians organised a march to protest against abuses by Seleka’s predominantly Muslim fighters.

On 8-9 October, at least 50 people were killed and dozens wounded in clashes between the elements of the ex-Seleka and auto-defence groups in Garga, northwest of the country. The two days of fighting caused the local population to flee to the bush and the neighbouring town of Yaloke. In late September, heavy fighting was reported ongoing in the volatile northwest, around Bossangoa and Bossembele, 150 k.ms and 300 kms north-west of Bangui respectively, with little information available. Renewed fighting has triggered new massive displacement with up to 170,000 people uprooted in September; the number of casualties remains difficult to ascertain.

Clashes began on 7 September in Bossangoa and later spread throughout the province. On 9 September, up to 100 people were killed and at least 50 wounded when troops of the new regime battled fighters claiming loyalty to toppled President Francois Bozize in Bossangoa and Bouca, in Ouham district. Although defence and security forces were said to control Bossangoa, men claiming to serve the ex-president were still holding villages around the town. On 8 September, forces, possibly loyal to former President Bozize, infiltrated these villages, destroying bridges, and other infrastructure, and reportedly taking revenge against the Muslim population. The retake of the village by the Seleka resulted in attacks against the Christian population. According to UNHCR, the clashes triggered significant displacement, and at least eight villages were razed to the ground.

A string of violent incidents between local residents and Seleka military occurred at the end of August in the villages of Ngaoundaye, Makele, Bo, and Beboura, about 500 km

refugee communities, especially in Goudebou, where rates are beyond critical thresholds (SAM: 5.3%, MAM: 19.1%).

Updated: 29/10/2013
northwest of the capital. They came after insecurity resurfaced in Bangui between 20-27 August. Reports indicated that at least 13 people were killed and over 30 injured during an alleged disarmament operation of supporters of the ousted President Bozize by the new authorities. The operation mainly targeted the Boy-Rabe, Boeing, and Combatant neighbourhoods, believed to be strongholds of supporters of the former regime. According to international observers, the manoeuvre was marked by arbitrary arrests, detention, torture, extortion, armed robberies, physical violence, restriction of movement, and lootings and led to an estimated 5,000-6,000 people fleeing the Boeing quarter to take refuge in the nearby Bangui International airport.

Earlier in August, President Djotodia had allegedly barred fighters from the Seleka coalition from further participating in policing operations in Bangui and had declared that the task had to be left to the AU-led International Support Mission to Central Africa (MISCA). In mid-April, a first disarmament operation in Boy-Rabe was criticised by foreign observers, including Human Rights Watch, as it resulted in widespread lootings of houses amid indiscriminate shootings of civilians by members of the Seleka coalition.

On 1 August, the Multinational Force of Central African States (FOMAC), which had been operating in CAR since before the coup and was dispatched to help in improving security, became the AU-led MISCA, with the main mandate of helping restore control by the authorities over the whole territory. As reported by local sources in mid-September, reinforcements have begun arriving for an African peacekeeping mission, but the planned 3,600-strong force will not be fully deployed before January 2014. An estimated 450 French military force, which may be increased to 750 soldiers, are also posted in CAR, with a restricted mandate of securing the international airport and protecting French interests and citizens in the country. Paris has stated that it is ready to provide operational support to the MISCA forces.

On 18 August, the former rebel leader Michel Djotodia, head of the Seleka coalition that took control of CAR following a coup in late March, was formally sworn in as the country’s new president. The inauguration of Djotodia officially marks the beginning of his interim administration’s 18-month deadline to restore order and organise elections. Initially, violence erupted in CAR in December 2012, when the Seleka coalition, a group of five rebel movements, took up arms against the Government, claiming that it had failed to honour 2001 and 2007 peace deals declaring amnesty for fighters who laid down their arms. Throughout March, Seleka rebels took control of various towns and continued their advance until they seized Bangui on 24 March and toppled President Bozizé who fled to Cameroon.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

More than six months after Seleka rebels seized power in CAR, the country is still struggling with a humanitarian emergency. Humanitarian agencies have warned that the national situation is worsening, advocating for security, access, and protection of civilians. Ongoing lawlessness is considerable, and administrative offices, hospitals, health centres, and schools have been pillaged, depriving vulnerable communities of basic services. UNICEF reported in early July that the current humanitarian crisis is affecting an estimated 4.6 million people (the entire population of CAR), including 2.3 million children. As of mid-August, OCHA noted that 1.6 million people were in acute need of assistance.

Displacement: Levels of internal displacement in CAR are difficult to ascertain. As of 30 September, there were reportedly 394,979 IDPs in CAR. The latest IDP numbers mark a significant increase compared to estimates published at the beginning of September. As of 24 September, UNHCR indicated that over 170,000 people, half of them children, had fled over the previous two weeks in Ouham province in northwest CAR following increased fighting. An inter-agency mission in the area estimated that 70,000 people were in dire need of assistance following these events.

As of 25 October, OCHA reported that 64,717 new refugees have fled from CAR since the current crisis erupted last December. DRC alone has received an estimated 42,600 refugees, while Chad has witnessed the arrival of 13,087 people, including 4,125 who have arrived in the Moïssala area since mid-July. An additional 4,841 people were displaced to Republic of Congo and 4,286 to Cameroon respectively. Cumulatively, there are over 220,000 refugees from CAR in neighbouring countries.

There are an estimated 17,000 refugees in CAR, mostly Congolese and Sudanese. In April and May, the UN reported that an estimated 5,000 people were displaced from Sudan’s Darfur into CAR following tribal clashes. According to local media, the 2,200 Sudanese refugees from camp Bambari demanded to be moved from the camp due to the deteriorating security and the humanitarian and health situation in the camp.

According to OCHA, in June 2013, the number of displaced in Lord’s Resistance Army affected areas remains at 21,000, but requires verification when the situation stabilises; 3,815 DRC refugees remain hosted in Haut-Mbomou with a majority (3,225) in Zemio camp.

Disaster: As reported by IFRC, on 3-4 September, heavy rains caused flooding in several areas of the 3rd district of Bangui. Of a population of 90,000 people, over a third (33,000) were affected, with 337 families having their houses damaged or destroyed. An estimated 30% of those who had their homes affected found refuge with host families, the rest are living out in the open. Almost all the wells and latrines in these areas were reportedly damaged by flood waters.

Access: On 25 October, OHCA reported that a critical bridge has been damaged, blocking the access from Bangui to Paoua by road. On 17 October, WFP reported that the delivery of aid is increasingly challenging due to transport companies being reluctant to travel without armed escort. Security incidents are reported in Bangui and across the country. The humanitarian community is increasingly the target of looting and attacks by armed groups. In Bangui, lootings of vehicles, notably off-road vehicles, operated by international organisations continue to occur.

On 9 September, two aid workers were killed in clashes between troops of the new regime and fighters claiming loyalty to toppled president Bozize in Ouham district. In Bangui, a local UN staff member was reportedly attacked by rogue Seleka elements on 12 August. This incident followed one a week earlier when a local UN staff member was seriously wounded and his wife killed. UNHCR reported that it remains extremely concerned with limits to humanitarian access, though access to refugee camps at Bambari, Batalimo, and Zemio that host mainly Congolese and Sudanese refugees in central and southern CAR, has improved.
As reported by UNICEF on 2 September, a truck drivers’ strike in Cameroon over deteriorating security conditions in CAR was stopping humanitarian aid from reaching thousands of children. On 21 August, Cameroonian authorities temporarily shut down the border after claiming Seleka rebels had shot a police officer. Despite the border reopening, truckers remain cautious about crossing into CAR.

OCHA reported on 17 July that the restriction of humanitarian space due to insecurity is limiting the delivery of aid to people in need. However, almost all NGOs have now returned to their previous locations and are deploying teams and resuming activities. The Humanitarian Country Team is facilitating access with Seleka authorities in regions outside Bangui to enable humanitarian actors to assist people affected by the crisis. UNDSS has approved the gradual return of critical international UN staff on 18 June, indicating an improvement in security-related constraints.

Despite these improvements, the use of secondary roads is inadvisable due to physical and infrastructural constraints, exacerbated by the impending rainy season. Access is largely limited to towns and populations along main roads.

Food Security: As reported by FAO in late August, an estimated 978,000 individuals were experiencing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels while 309,000 individuals were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) as of July. The total number of people in need of food assistance adds up to about 1.29 million people (about 40% of the total population), nearly double the estimated level in February 2013. The exact number of food insecure people in CAR remains difficult to establish. In June, OCHA and the Food Security/Nutrition Working Group reported that 2 million people in CAR faced Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity. On 8 August, WFP announced that it was scaling-up operations in CAR, amid increasing concerns that ongoing insecurity is fuelling hunger among people who have fled their homes and farms.

The majority of families in CAR live on subsistence farming, but the armed conflict during the March harvest season prevented people from accessing their farmland and disrupted livelihoods. This was compounded by the looting of cattle, seeds, tools and food reserves.

According to FEWSNET in late September, risks involved in transporting goods and limited purchasing power resulted in below-average market supply at the end of the lean season, especially in northern and central areas. As of end of September, harvests are expected to be below-average due to the conflict (lack of agricultural inputs and difficulties of households to access their fields). Food security is expected to improve with the October harvest, but poor households will remain at Stressed levels of food insecurity between October and December due to low production levels.

FAO reported in late August that market supplies are tight across the country and food prices are at high levels following severe and widespread market disruptions due to increased insecurity. The average inflation rate, which surged from 1.3% in 2011 to 5% in 2012, is forecast to rise further to 8% in 2013.

Health and Nutrition: According to OCHA, outbreaks of measles have been reported almost everywhere in CAR, with at least 600 confirmed cases of measles as of 25 October. The health cluster reports cholera outbreaks in 15 of 22 health districts.

OCHA reported on 25 October that 60% of health facilities have been vandalized, looted or destroyed, and over 80% of the country’s medical doctors have moved to Bangui from provinces.

As reported by Merlin in early June, 3.2 million people are living without health care. In August, OCHA reported that less than 20% of the country’s medical facilities are operational. In July, MSF stated that even before the coup, the country was in a state of crisis with mortality rates well above the emergency threshold in several regions.

Malnutrition and preventable diseases are reportedly rife. Malaria is the leading cause of death. The number of cases of malaria in northwest CAR has almost doubled, partly because of insecurity caused by armed groups operating in the rural north, according to MSF. MSF treated 36,910 cases of malaria in Boguila, a region 50 km from the Chadian border, between January and June this year, compared with 19,498 cases in the same period last year. Officially, malaria is estimated to be the cause of 54% of the deaths of children < 5 in CAR.

According to UNICEF, a measles epidemic in Bangui county was confirmed and the organisation coordinated a vaccination campaign in late May. While the epidemic was initially diagnosed in the western region, it later spread to large parts of the county, including the towns of Ngaoundaye, Abba and Carnot, Begoua, and Mbaiki, and the suburbs of Bangui.

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

According to UNICEF, malnutrition rates remain high with an estimated 13,500 children <5 suffering from SAM, and 44,000 affected by MAM. A recent exploratory mission in southwest CAR, in Nola, Boda, Berberati, Gamboula and Gadzi revealed increased levels of GAM, ranging from 6%-10.9%. In May, as reported by an IPC seasonal analysis, the prevalence of SAM in children <5 was above the emergency threshold of 2% in nine of 16 prefectures.

Protection: On 29 October, Amnesty International published a report expressing deep concern over serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the internal armed conflict in CAR. Violations included attacks on civilians, executing and torturing civilians, indiscriminately shelling communities, raping women, and forcefully recruiting children. INGOs have reported a sharp rise in the same types of human rights abuses across the country.

Several INGOs have indicated that children, notably those displaced by the conflict, remain particularly vulnerable. Several organisations, including UNICEF, have reported the re-recruitment of children <18, some of whom had been recently demobilised, into Seleka forces. According to OCHA, as of late October, at least 3,500 children have been recruited into armed groups, an increase from the 2,000 prior to the conflict.

In late July, the International Federation for Human Rights reported that Seleka rebels have killed 400 people, carried out dozens of rapes, and intentionally destroyed 34 villages/towns since February this year.
Education: According to UNICEF, seven of ten primary school students have not returned to school since the start of the conflict in December 2012. 65% of the 165 schools visited by UNICEF have been looted, occupied, or damaged by bullets or shells. OCHA reports that as a result of instability, many schools which had recently re-opened, have had to close again, particularly in the provinces of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé and Ouaka.

Updated: 29/10/2013

CHAD FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 22/10/13

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: Chad has witnessed an escalating influx of migrants and refugees from neighbouring countries since March. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on 29 July, instability in CAR, northern Nigeria and the Darfur region of Sudan has led many Chadians to return home with an estimated 1,000 returnees from CAR, 1,500 from Nigeria and 22,000 fleeing Sudanese Darfur to the border town of Tissi.

By early July, 20,640 Chadian returnees and 30,448 Sudanese refugees had arrived in Tissi. This marked the largest influx of Sudanese refugees into Chad since 2005. According to UNHCR on 18 August, the total number of Sudanese refugees in Chad is now 330,000 people. The displaced fled a conflict over gold mines in eastern Darfur between Maaliya and Rizeigat ethnic groups. Another wave later crossed into Chad fleeing inter-communal violence between Salamat and Misseriya ethnic groups in Um Dukhun, Central Darfur.

Ongoing political turmoil in CAR has led to 13,087 CAR refugees crossing into Chad since December (including 4,125 refugees who arrived mid-July in Moissala, southern Chad), bringing the number of CAR refugees in Chad to over 70,000, UNHCR reported on 13 August.

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

People fleeing violence in northern Nigeria have crossed into Western Chad around Lake Chad. Returnees from Nigeria are primarily unaccompanied minors from fishing villages in Bagakawa, notes UNICEF. As of 15 October, OCHA reported an estimated 2,200 returnees dispersed mainly across three locations: Bol, Ngouboua and Mao.

Disaster: On 21 August, local media reported that heavy rains struck eastern Chad and led to the destruction of more than 2,000 houses in the Sudanese refugee camp Mile. The number of affected people is unknown. The rainy season has yet to end, and flooding is causing significant access constraints and deterioration of sanitary conditions.

Access: OCHA reported on 17 September that humanitarian organisations in the areas of Tissi (southeast) are confronted with restrained access due to the proximity of two unstable borders, heavy rains, and insecurity.

Food Security: Two consecutive years of continued climatic shocks, including poor rainfall in 2011, caused significant food security concerns in Chad in 2012 that are continuing into 2013. According to WFP and the Chadian Government, 13% of households (around 1.2 million people) face severe food insecurity and another 9% face moderate food insecurity in 18 regions across Chad. In total, 2.1 million people are reportedly food insecure.

According to FEWSNET in September, food insecurity is gradually improving for poor households in Logone Occidental, Logone Oriental, Tandjile and Mayo Kebbi Ouest. However, stocks remain low due to the 2012 floods, causing above-average prices and reducing access to cereals for poor households, which will remain at Stressed levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 2).

The Chadian Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation reports that the final cereal production figures for the 2012/2013 agricultural season stand at 3.1 million tonnes of cereals. This marks an increase of 91% compared to the previous season and 54% compared to the five-year production average. The good 2012/2013 harvests have allowed very poor and poor households to replenish food reserves, while market prices across Chad have remained stable and 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.

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

In mid-July, local media reported that Sudanese refugees located in camps in eastern Chad faced food shortages. A joint assessment by WFP and UNHCR in May showed that the food security situation is alarming for 22,131 Central African refugees in the Belom camp in Maro (southern Chad). The most affected are refugees who arrived in Chad from January to March 2013 (compared to earlier refugees from 2002 to 2009), with 71.2% of them food insecure. This is mainly due to the lack of access to agricultural lands, poverty, lack of diversified livelihoods, and unsustainable income generating activities. Local media reported on 13 August that Sudanese refugees in camp Djabal (eastern Chad) suffer from an acute lack of drinking water, putting the lives of 19,500 people at risk.

Health and Malnutrition: MSF reported in mid-September that the main causes of morbidity in the Tissi area are malaria, acute watery diarrhoea, and respiratory infections. The malaria caseload for 2013 is a cause of concern, with some of the hardest hit regions seeing a tenfold rise from 2012, following an unpredictable rainy season and the shortage of bed nets across the country. MSF reported that the number of malaria cases increased alarmingly in Am Timan, Salamat region, with 14,021 cases reported in August alone.
Since July, local media have regularly reported the dire conditions in which Sudanese refugees live in camps located in eastern Chad. On 12 September, it was reported that the refugees of camp Djabal have complained about the high incidence of malaria and diarrhoea, especially affecting the youngest and older persons, while camp authorities reported 22 deaths during August. Earlier in July, Sudanese refugees of camp Treguine had reported similar problems, indicating that there was an acute lack of medical staff and medicines in the camps.

The nutritional situation in Chad’s Sahel belt is at critical levels with a GAM rate surpassing the emergency threshold of 15% in nine of 22 regions, according to OCHA. The most affected areas are Batha (25% GAM), Wadi Fira (22% GAM), Salamat (22% GAM), Beg (21% GAM), and Kanem (21% GAM). UNICEF forecasts that an estimated 126,000 children will suffer from SAM in 2013.

**Highlights**

**25-28 October:** Renewed fighting was reported in North-Kivu less than a week after DRC government and M23 representatives announced the suspension of the peace talks. Despite international calls for restraint, government forces (FARDC) carried out several attacks on the axis Kwilu – Rutshuru in the most serious outbreak of violence since the ceasefire set early September. The military operations targeted several rebel-held cities which had been under M23 control for almost a year, and the rebels threatened to completely withdraw from the Kambala talks if hostilities continue. The operation yielded strategic gains of territory commanding access to other rebel positions further north. The three days of violence caused the displacement of several thousands of civilians.

**27 October:** New clashes, and cases of cattle raiding and looting, were reported between the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura and self-defence militia Raia Mutomboki (RM) around Masisi. The previous week, 20 people were reportedly abducted in the area by suspected members of Nyatura, following a clash between the same two militias which killed an unknown number of people and triggered significant displacement toward the bush and South-Kivu.

**25 October:** Rwanda accused the Congolese army of firing shells over the border on 25 October and threatened to take retaliation measures.

As of 25 October, infighting between armed groups caused the displacement of over 10,000 people within two weeks in Shabunda territory (South-Kivu).

As of 23 October, 5,931 measles cases and 90 deaths have been reported in Katanga since the beginning of the epidemic in March 2013.

**October:** UNICEF reported that malnutrition rates in Kasongo territory (Maniema) are beyond emergency thresholds, with 12% GAM and 3% SAM.

**Political and Security Context**

**International Context:** On 7 October, according to reports, the presidents of Rwanda and Uganda told UN Security Council envoys that their countries were not responsible for bringing peace to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo’s (DRC) volatile east, which has been plagued by endemic conflict for years. The two countries have long been accused of supporting rebel groups in DRC, including the M23, which allegedly benefited from Rwanda’s support, a charge Kigali rejects. For observers, both countries are seen to foster instability in DRC. In a worrying development corollary to renewed fighting in North-Kivu last week, Rwanda accused the Congolese army of firing shells over the border on 25 October and threatened to take retaliation measures. The UN Security Council met on 28 October to discuss the resurgence of violence in the east of the country.

**National Context:** On 23 October, President Kabila pledged to build a national unity government and implement policies reflecting the recommendations formulated during the three-week national dialogue aiming at tackling the country’s lingering social, institutional, and economic problems. In October, recommendations by thematic groups working under the framework of the National Dialogue Forum (NDF) were validated in Kinshasa. The recommendations included restructuring of FARDC, the police, and security forces, and the gradual establishment of new provinces. Opposition groups have reportedly included specific reforms to the national electoral commission ahead of 2016 presidential elections, while suspicions run high that the current President may seek a third term though the constitution prevents this.

The NDF opened on 7 September, with the agenda tackling the current political, social, and military crisis. Leaders are meeting in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi in Katanga province, and Kisangani in Orientale province to discuss the governance, economy, and decentralisation processes, as well as disarmament of insurgent groups and inter-communal strife. The main opposition force, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), is not present because reportedly their wish to review the agenda was disregarded by President Kabila and his government. The UDPS allegedly wanted to address such issues as human rights violation, children’s enrolment in armed groups, the sell-off of natural resources, corruption, and the legitimacy of institutions. While the discussions were meant to last up to 20 days, consultations were delayed because of profound disagreements between participating parties.

DRC is struggling with a proliferation of armed groups; North Kivu, Katanga, and Orientale are currently the most volatile with ongoing heavy fighting. Across DRC, sustained combat operations and infighting between armed groups, non-state actors and government military are causing massive displacement. According to local reports, various human rights infringements have been reported, and several humanitarian organisations have been forced to evacuate their staff from the area because of insecurity.

In parts of Maniema and South Kivu provinces, armed groups were reportedly present between July and October, with significant activism of the self-defence militia Raia Mutomboki (RM) in Shabunda territory. From 6-9 October, local media reported that two rival factions of RM clashed over mining resources, forcing the local population to flee in the bush. In late September, fighting between RM and FARDC was also reported in Shabunda, where it triggered new displacement. Peace talks reportedly started on 10
October between local authorities and RM representatives to end the spate of violence, which started in Baliga area at the start of September. The Rwandan rebel group Democratic forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) is also suspected of clashing with government forces and abducted over 20 people in the area between 17 and 20 October.

North-Kivu Province: According to local sources, North Kivu currently harbours over 20 different armed groups, including the ethnic Tutsi-dominated M23 insurgency group, which has plagued the province with indiscriminate attacks on civilians and fighting with government troops for years. The conflict in the mining region also drags regional powers into the fighting, with neighbouring countries such as Rwanda and Uganda regularly accused by the authorities of backing militias.

Renewed fighting was reported in North-Kivu between 25-28 October, less than a week after DRC government and M23 representatives announced the suspension of peace talks which had resumed mid-September in Kampala (Uganda) under pressure from regional leaders. Despite international calls for restraint and the request for resumption of dialogue by UN envoys, FARDC carried out several attacks on the axis Kiwanja - Rutshuru (north of Goma) in the most serious outbreak of violence since the ceasefire set early September. MONUSCO reported that one UN peacekeeper was killed in the clashes, but the overall number of casualties is unknown. The military operations targeted several rebel-held cities which had been under M23 control for almost a year. The insurgents reportedly opposed little resistance and several cases of rebel fighters surrendering to MONUSCO were recorded, but M23 threatened to completely withdraw from the Kampala talks if hostilities were to continue. The three days of violence caused the displacement of several thousands of civilians, including an estimated 3,000 people who crossed into Rwanda, according to the Rwandan authorities on 25 October. From the perspective of DRC’s government, the operation yielded strategic gains of territory commanding access to other rebel positions further north, but the international community stressed that the situation cannot be considered sustainable as long as a political solution is not agreed by both parties.

On 21 October, the belligerents had promised to reconvene in Kampala to conclude the talks, after reaching consensus on the majority of the draft agreement under discussion. However, firm opposition remained around topics such as the amnesty, disarmament, and reintegration of M23 fighters. As the process seemed to be heading towards failure, alarming military reinforcements were reported around Goma, along with several incidents between M23 fighters and official forces in parts of the province.

Peace talks started in early 2013, but were interrupted in May when violence escalated in North Kivu where the M23 had earlier fought an 18-month uprising. In mid-July, renewed hostilities between FARDC and M23 occurred in the vicinity of Goma leading to the deadliest clashes since the beginning of the rebellion in April 2012. In late August, ongoing fighting between the M23 and FARDC caused heavy casualties on both sides and led to the involvement of the UN intervention brigade for the first time since the beginning of its unprecedented mandate to launch military operations against the insurgents. In early September, 80 people were killed in another outbreak of violence, with an additional 30 civilians killed as residential areas of Goma were shelled.

As reported by OCHA in mid-September, the northern area of Kamango, near the Ugandan border, was still considered unsafe for people to return, three months after clashes between FARDC and the Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) forced 66,000 refugees to cross into Uganda. While WFP reported in August that 70% of the refugees had returned to DRC, ongoing attacks by armed groups made the returnees reluctant to go back to areas of origin. According to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), ADF carried out over 20 attacks on schools and hospitals in the Kamango area from November 2012 to July 2013. There are urgent needs in terms of protection and food security in the area. New attacks and kidnapping by ADF were reported by local sources throughout September, and more recently on 23 October.

In southern North-Kivu, armed groups are reported active, especially along the Masisi-Walikale axis. On 27 October, local media reported new clashes between the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura with the militia RM around Masisi, along with cases of looting and cattle-raiding. The previous week, 20 people were reportedly abducted in the area by suspected members of Nyatura, following a clash between the same two militias which killed an unknown number of people and triggered significant displacement toward the bush and South-Kivu. The area has been repeatedly plagued by ethnic infighting between Nyatura, the Nyanga-dominated Nduna Defense of Congo (NDC) militia and the Hunde-dominated Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS). On 20 October, NDC took control of Pinga after one day of fighting against the coalition Nyatura/APCLS, causing people to flee their homes.

Throughout August and September, the NDC militia repeatedly clashed with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (DFLR), a Rwandan Hutu ethnic rebel group, the APCLS, and government military in Walikale territory, causing multiple population displacements. As of early October, the deployment of MONUSCO troops to Walikale has allegedly allowed for an easing of tensions, but the axis Masisi-Walikale remains under control of rebel groups.

Orientale Province: In mid-September, clashes between FARDC and the Patriotic Resistance Force of Ituri (FRPI) in Walendu Bindi, in Ituri territory, displaced an estimated 120,000 people. In August, four days of fighting in Walendu-Bindi, Bavi and Olongba between the same belligerents had reportedly displaced over 80,000 people and affected 120,000.

In late August, clashes between unidentified armed groups were reported from Kakwa and Kaliko in Ituri territory forcing FARDC to intervene. In a separate incident, clashes between FARDC and a rebel group based in the Mambasa region were reported in mid-August. In late August, renewed tension between FARDC and the Ugandan army were reported in Mahagi, north of Lake Albert and close to the Ugandan border. Little information is available to date.

Oriente province has been largely affected by the activism of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan militant movement operating in DRC since 2005, which is responsible for 122 incidents from January to September 2013, mostly on the borders with CAR and South Sudan, notes OCHA.

Katanga Province: On 25 September, incidents continued to be reported in Manono, Pweto, and Mitwaba where increasing activism of the militia Bakata Katanga has caused
renewed population movements. The separatist militia group Bakata Katanga has been carrying out continuous attacks in Katanga, notably in Nganie, where it has caused large displacement since June. However, since August, over 350 members of Bakata Katanga have reportedly surrendered to government forces.

In August, other armed groups, including the Popular Self-Defence Forces (FAP), and local militias have reportedly been active in Katanga province and have clashed with FARDC.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

**Displacement: As of 30 September.** DRC hosted over 185,000 refugees among whom 127,000 are from Rwanda and the rest from CAR, Burundi, Sudan, Uganda, and the Republic of Congo. Since December 2012, UNHCR reported that 42,612 refugees have arrived in DRC from CAR. As of 30 September, OCHA estimated that 2.7 million people are displaced in DRC due to fighting between FARDC and various rebel groups, mostly in the Kivus, Province Orientale, and Katanga.

As of 25 September, over 225,000 Congolese refugees are in Uganda and Rwanda with 140,000 in Uganda, including 112,000 from North Kivu, and 85,000 in Rwanda, including over 63,000 from North Kivu, according to UNHCR. Since April 2012, over 30,000 new refugees had been registered in Rwanda.

**North-Kivu Province:** In August and early September, extensive fighting between armed non-state actors and FARDC, as well as infighting, has led to massive displacement in North Kivu. While early October showed a short lull in violence, renewed fighting in the last two weeks caused additional people to flee their home, especially between 25–28 October, when FARDC launched an assault on several rebel-held towns north of Goma.

As of 25 September, OCHA reported that North Kivu currently hosts over 1.032 million IDPs, some displaced since January 2009. In August, over half the displaced were in Masisi (30%) and Walikale (23.5%) territories. In the whole province, 63% of IDPs were living with host families, against 22% in public buildings, and 15% in camps. To date, population movements remain ongoing due to the presence of multiple armed groups and repeated clashes between insurgents and government forces.

In early September, OCHA reported that clashes between the rebel groups APCLS and the Congolese Army Movement (MAC) in the zone of Habula displaced most of the town’s population toward Kashebere and Nyabibod in northwestern Masisi territory.

In August, several thousand people were forced to flee their homes because of clashes between armed groups, mainly NDC, the DFLR, and the APCLS in Walikale territory. In mid-August, local sources reported that 16,000 people from Munzanga, Kisone, Munzanga, Busakara, and Pinga were displaced to the villages of Rusambamba, Buleusa, Kateku, Kilambo, and Bukumbirwa. As reported by NRC in late August, 15,000 people who fled from Kituna in July were still displaced in Nyanzale, Kihonde, and Kasoko.

In July, large displacements from Kishimba and Ikobo toward Bulewusa, Miriki, and Kanyabayonga, and from Rutshuru territory to the south of Lubero territory were reported. On 11 July, an attack by ADF-Nalu on the town of Kamango led to 66,000 people from North Kivu province fleeing into Uganda. While WFP reported in August that 70% of the refugees had returned to DRC, ongoing attacks by armed groups made the returnees reluctant to go back to their areas of origin.

**South Kivu Province:** According to OCHA as of 30 September, there are 591,000 IDPs in South Kivu, 76% of whom fled their places of origin because of insecurity caused by armed groups. This number marks a decrease of IDPs compared to August, due to updated figures for returnees in the province.

On 25 October, local media reported that fighting between armed groups displaced over 10,000 people in the last two weeks in Shabunda territory. In late September, small-scale new displacement occurred following fighting between RM and government military in the area.

In August-September, according to OCHA, displacement was seen in South Kivu with over 10,000 people fleeing Mubulule and Uvira in Rusisi Plain to neighbouring areas, up to 8,000 people fleeing the town of Luberizi Bwergera, Luvungi, Sange, and in Rusisi Plain with 9,800 people displaced. These displacements have been triggered by renewed activism of armed groups in the area.

In August, authorities reported that since the beginning of 2013, large groups of displaced have returned to South Kivu with up to 81,000 returnees, 80% of all returnees, settling in Shabunda territory.

**Mangiema Province:** On 26 August, OCHA reported that Maniema province was hosting an estimated 250,000 IDPs as a result of ongoing conflict in the Kivus. According to OCHA on 22 October, 68,060 new displaced were registered between July and September 2013. The IDPs are mainly located between Punja and Pangi, where they have limited access to humanitarian aid. As a result of fighting between the militia RM and FARDC in South Kivu in late September, over 22,000 people arrived in Maniema province beginning of October and currently reside in Pangi territory.

**Oriente Province:** As of late August, OCHA reported that 351,617 people, including 51,262 since January 2013, remained displaced in Oriente province.

In mid-September, an additional 120,000 people were displaced following clashes between FARDC and FRPI in Walendu Bindi in Ituri territory. According to local sources, the IDPs are without shelter and in dire conditions. Ongoing fighting is hindering humanitarian access to these populations. The latest wave of displacement is believed to be a continuation of fighting in Bavi, Walendu-Bindi, and Olongba, which displaced 80,000 people in August. The August-September displacements in Oriente province are the biggest wave of population movement in the province since 2008.

As reported by local sources, an estimated 50,000 IDPS, displaced following recent fighting, live without access to humanitarian assistance in Soke locality in Ituri district.

**Katanga Province:** OCHA reported on 9 October that the number of IDPs in the province has decreased from 389,700 to 358,400 from August to September. Over the same period, the number of returns has increased significantly due to a lull in violence in Kasenga, Manono and Mitwaba. However, the situation remains volatile in Malemba Nkulu and Pweto, where repeated clashes between government forces and local militias continue to
cause displacement. Pweto is considered to be the territory most affected by these events and records up to 40% of the IDPs of the province.

According to OCHA, new attacks by armed groups on 17 and 18 October caused people to flee their villages in the area of Mitwaba. In late September, OCHA reported that activism of the militia Bakata Katanga has led to new population displacements from Nganie to Mwanza, straining Mwanza resources, mostly with heightened food insecurity. Since early June, attacks by Bakata Katanga resulted in the displacement of 23,000 people according to authorities.

In early September, OCHA indicated that up to 9,000 people have been displaced from Mwebe and Mikwa toward the Lufira River following fighting between unidentified militias and government forces. The displaced were reportedly in need of NFI, food, and medicine.

As of July, the UN reported that there were an estimated 43,800 IDPs in Pweto with population movements occurring mainly along the Pweto/Mutabi/Lwantete and Pweto/Lukonzolwa/Nzwiba axes. In mid-August, an attack of the armed group FAP on the spontaneous IDP camp of Mwasi in the Pweto area was recorded. It was the second such incident in August.

**Disaster:** In Orientale province, heavy rains in Bas-Uele and Haut-Uele districts made roughly 6,000 people homeless on 4 September, according to OCHA. Ensuing floods destroyed houses, roads, and crops across six territories, Bangadi and Niangara were among the worst affected. In late August, local sources reported that over 500 people had been affected in Dungu with floods also damaging crops.

**Access:** Access is limited across large parts of DRC. Physical and infrastructural impediments to delivering aid are significant due to mountainous and volcanic terrain, and a lack of asphalted roads in some areas, especially in Maniema province.

Tensions between aid workers and the local population, with incidents of hostilities against aid workers and interference in delivering aid have been reported. OCHA notes 177 security incidents against aid workers recorded across DRC from January to September 2013.

In North Kivu in early August, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced it would cease activities in Pinga because of increased insecurity and threats to its staff. MSF’s suspension of activities is likely to worsen the already dire health and humanitarian situation in the Pinga area.

Following increased fighting around Goma in North Kivu, ERWs, including mines, are being removed around Kibati, Karambi, Mugerwa, and Kanyaruchinya.

**Food Security:** A June report by FSNWG estimated that 6.4 million people are at Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity. The figure represents an increase of about 75,000 people compared to October 2012. Two-third of food insecure people, an estimated 4.2 million, are considered severely food insecure and concentrated in the east of North Kivu province and the south of Katanga province, where conflict has escalated since March.

Extreme poverty with few livelihood options are the main reasons for food insecurity. In eastern DRC, renewed conflict has significantly contributed to the deterioration of food security and the nutrition situation, according to WFP. The west of DRC, although relatively stable compared to the east, faces chronic food insecurity due to isolation, lack of social infrastructure, and the effect of several aggravating economic shocks.

In the northern provinces of Equateur and Orientale, the planting of the main season maize crops, to be harvested from October, has been completed under average rainfall conditions. Satellite analysis indicate that good rains benefited crops in northern and southern regions, while poor rains may have affected crops in central provinces of Bandundu, Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental.

In Maniema, OCHA reported on 10 September that the cities of Matete and Salambambe (Kabambare territory) are particularly at risk of food insecurity, following the recent exclusion of the population from the Namoyo mining area which caused 5,000 miners to lose their livelihoods. From 11-18 July, an inter-cluster assessment conducted in Punja territory showed that over 130,000 IDPs and returnees are living in dire conditions, eating only two to four times per week. The conflict between FARDC and the RM in Punja (December 2012 – April 2013) caused the population to miss two agricultural seasons and lose most, if not all, assets during displacement.

**Health and Nutrition:** On 7 October, in North Kivu, MSF reported that at least ten people have died of rabies. The outbreak has reportedly infected 154 people. Reports about new cases have come from remote areas as the organisation is set to donate vaccines and post exposure treatment to the Ministry of Health.

Across DRC, over 20,000 cholera cases have been registered for 2013 as of 30 September, OCHA reports; 337 deaths have been reported for a fatality rate of 2%. Over 60% of cases (more than 11,600) are registered in Katanga Province. During 2012, DRC had 30,753 registered cholera cases with 709 deaths, compared to 21,700 cases in 2011. The surge in cholera cases is largely the result of limited access to safe drinking water, poor hygiene conditions, and poor sanitation. In South Kivu, local media noted on 11 September that seven cases of cholera have been reported in the previous two weeks in Minova and surrounds. On 27 August, MSF reported that ten people died of rabies, mostly in the Lemera health zone, triggering a rabies intervention in the east of DRC.

Over four million cases of malaria have been reported since the beginning of 2013 as of 17 June. 8,500 deaths have been registered due to malaria during the same period (21,000 deaths in 2012). In Maniema, OCHA reported on 10 September that 97 displaced and returnee children died of malaria during August in Punja territory.

In October, OCHA reported 63,400 cases of measles between January and August 2013. In Kasai Occidental, local media reported on 15 August an outbreak of measles in the area of Kamonia. Forty children have died of the disease in Kamako (including 28 deaths on 6 and 7 August) due to unsanitary conditions following massive population displacement and overcrowding in settlements.

In Katanga, OCHA reported on 23 October 5,931 measles cases and 90 deaths in the province since the beginning of the epidemic in March 2013. Local media reported on 11 September that 60 cases of measles (including two deaths) were recorded in Kasumbalesa in the last 40 days. According to OCHA on 26 August,
more than 1,500 deaths due to malaria were recorded within the last eight months in the province.

An inter-cluster mission conducted in Punja and Kasese from 11-18 July reported several deaths among children from both measles and severe anaemia. The health zone of Punja records high levels of infant mortality due to anaemia, mostly because of access and provision issues of medication stocks in health centres. At least 29 deaths of children <5 were reported in June. According to UNICEF in October, malnutrition rates in Kasongo territory are beyond emergency thresholds, with 12% GAM and 3% SAM.

In North Kivu, local sources reported that following violent clashes between Congolese forces and Ugandan rebels ADF/NALU in early July, health centres and shops lack medicines and basic items in an area where 80,000 people are exposed to waterborne diseases, including cholera and dysentery.

In Kasai Oriental, OCHA reports that since mid-June, an epidemic of yellow fever is spreading in Kamana, Lubao, and Lubindi-Lukula, with six confirmed cases.

**WASH:** On 12 August, ICRC reported that less than 50% of the population of South Kivu has access to safe drinking water.

**Protection:** At end July, UNHCR reported that ongoing violence in North-Kivu, involving FARDC, the M23, and the ADF/NALU, is increasingly exposing women and girls to violence, particularly rape. From January to July 2013, 619 cases of rape were reported, compared to 108 cases during the same period in 2012. According to UNHCR, 70% of the cases of sexual violence are perpetrated by armed men. On 26 August, UNICEF indicated that a growing number of children are being killed or injured in renewed fighting and as many as 2,000 are being used as child soldiers in the current conflict.

**Updated:** 29/10/2013

**MALI** **CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**Highlights**

**29 October:** Mali’s government announced it lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion, in the name of “national reconciliation”. While President Keita created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region to seek solutions to the Tuareg issue, the central government remains unwilling to discuss autonomy for northern Mali or the release of prisoner separatist fighters. Simultaneously to the clashes in the north, in the southern garrison town of Kati, close to the capital Bamako, officers who participated in the March 2012 military coup fired into the air in protest at not receiving promotions they said had been promised, underscoring the dual challenge facing the new government. On 2 October, Mali’s new president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, dissolved an army reform committee dominated by former members of a military junta, following protests at the military base.

**23 October:** Armed Islamist militants attacked military positions in Tessalit, reportedly killing several UN peacekeepers and civilians.

**Political and Security Context**

On 29 October, Mali’s government announced it lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion, in the name of “national reconciliation”. A week before, a conference dedicated to the issue of the country’s minorities took place in Bamako. This event gathering mainly central and regional officials was part of a plan to broker peace with the restive north of Mali after it was occupied by Tuareg separatists following the military coup last year. On 5 October, the Tuareg rebel group National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) announced that they are resuming peace talks with the government, nine days after they declared their suspension from the process. The announcement to pull out of the peace talks on 26 September cited the government’s failure to keep its commitment to start prisoner releases as reason. On October 2, the government decided to free 23 prisoners arrested in clashes in the north, putting into practice the Ouagadougou accord reached between MNLA and the government in June. The freeing was followed by the announcement to resume peace talks by the rebels three days later. Less than ten days before the disruption of talks, the MNLA had committed to the national dialogue, and these declarations had raised hope for a political solution to the 18-month crisis triggered by the Tuareg uprising.

While President Keita created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region to seek solutions to the Tuareg issue, the central government remains unwilling to discuss autonomy for northern Mali or the release of prisoner separatist fighters. This latest failure of the two parties to engage in peace talks triggered a renewed upsurge in violence in the northern towns of Kidal and Timbuktu in late September. On 8 October, the militant group Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) blew up a bridge in Gao, and on 23 October, armed Islamist militants attacked military positions in Tessalit, reportedly killing several UN peacekeepers and civilians.

On 8 July, Mali’s army accused Tuareg rebels of violating the ceasefire signed on 18 June by attacking civilians and the military just days after troops entered the flashpoint northeastern town of Kidal to secure it for national elections. The ceasefire agreement aimed to prepare for a second phase of negotiations. This allowed Malian troops to enter Kidal on 5 July, when Mali lifted a nearly six-month state of emergency.

In a separate development, attacks by Islamic extremists in northern Mali have increased during the past weeks. On 7 October, Malian military sources reported that Islamic extremists fired shells on Gao, the main town in the desert north of Mali, in what marked the first attack on the city in months. The militants reportedly also destroyed a bridge near Mali’s northern town of Gao, which is on the only route between Gao and neighbouring Niger. It remains unclear whether the attack led to any casualties. The shots came nine days after a suicide attack in Timbuktu, the other main town in the north of Mali, which killed at least two civilians, wounded seven soldiers and killed the four bombers, according to the government. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the attack, which underlines the group’s continued capacity to carry out attacks in northern Mali and has raised fears of similar attacks in coming weeks.
On 6 September, newly-sworn President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta announced that the first parliamentary elections would take place on 24 November. This followed the August presidential election process, which was an important step on the path to recovery for the country, 18 months after the military coup and the seizure of its northern territory (Azawad) by radical Islamists.

On 18 July, Nigeria announced plans to withdraw some of its 1,200 soldiers from the UN peacekeeping force in Mali and Sudan’s Darfur region, saying the troops are needed for security at home. The Nigerians are part of a force of 12,640 African troops who took over from a French-led mission on 1 July.

On 1 July, authority for the stabilisation of Mali was transferred from the forces of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The creation of the peacekeeping force was approved unanimously by the UN Security Council on 25 April and the transfer was agreed by the UN Security Council on 25 June. As of 1 July, most of the 6,100 soldiers of AFISMA have become part of the peacekeeping operation.

French forces still present in Mali have formally handed over security duties to MINUSMA. A separate and reduced contingent of at least 1,000 French soldiers will remain in Mali to conduct counter-terrorism operations.

France’s involvement in the conflict came after Islamist fighters moved to within 20 km of Mopti, a strategically important town on the border between rebel and Government held territories, taking control of the strategic town Konna on 10 December 2012. With support from France’s armed forces, the Mali Government started a counter-offensive on 11 January.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: According to UNHCR as of 30 September, 483,000 people are displaced inside and outside Mali as a result of the crisis. According to the Commission ‘Mouvement de Populations’, there are 311,300 IDPs in the country as of 25 September, including 73,000 in the capital Bamako, 57,000 in the Gao region, 54,000 in the Timbuktu region, and 37,000 in the Kidal region.

A total of 171,405 refugees reside outside Mali, of 75,261 in Mauritania, 50,000 in Niger, 49,975 in Burkina Faso and 1,500 in Algeria.

As larger areas of central and northern Mali are secured, an increasing number of IDPs have started to return home. According to IOM, 137,422 people returned to the north between January and May 2013, and between 29 September and 19 October, nearly 4,000 IDPs returned to the north, mostly toward the region of Timbuktu and Gao. On 1 August, OCHA reported that between 25 June and 12 July, 8,148 Malian refugees who previously fled to neighboring countries returned to Mali and were registered in Gao, Mopti, and Timbuktu. A joint assessment by OCHA and UNHCR reported that 226 refugees returned to Douékire, namely to Inalkary, Dongwe-Haussa, Adjoual, and Takambaoutou, while an unknown number of refugees returned from Mauritania to Goundam Circle at the end of July.

IOM reported at end July that reasons cited for return by refugees and IDPs are: return to relative stability in the north following recent attempts to restore order; the desire to participate in the country’s elections; and the desire to survey what was left of homes and possessions. The gradual return of IDPs to the north is likely to strain limited social services.

Disaster: On 28 August, 34 people were killed and more injured by heavy rains, which provoked flash floods in almost all the neighbourhoods of the capital Bamako. Over 100 homes were destroyed and thousands of people were made homeless after the Niger River burst its banks. IOM reported on 12 September that 20,000 people were affected. Potentially contaminated underground and surface water is a concern. ECHO reported on 12 September that an increase in the number of malaria cases and water borne diseases could already be observed.

Earlier in August, OCHA reported that heavy rains caused flooding in the Kidal and Segou regions, destroying fields, houses and latrines, and affecting 11,300 people. To date, severe flooding affected more than 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel region in Africa.

Access: 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 continued insecurity and banditry. Access to basic social services (water, education, and health) remains limited in the north largely because of the low return of civil servants, the destruction of infrastructure, and a lack of materials to support basic services.

Food Security: In late September, WFP reported that the regions of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao are the worst affected in terms of food insecurity with prevalence rates comprised between 32% and 36% for severe food insecurity, and up to 90% of the population affected by severe to moderate food insecurity and relying heavily on food assistance. As IDPs and refugees begin to return to the north, limited resources will be further strained and the number of people requiring assistance is likely to increase in the coming months. According to previous assessments finalised in May, people affected by food insecurity are estimated at about 3.5 million, including 1.4 million in need of immediate assistance.

FEWSNET notes that as of late September, the availability of green-harvested maize, tubers, and rice marks the end of the lean season in southern and northern growing areas, where poor households are seeing improved access to food products thanks to continued humanitarian aid, the availability of milk and gathered foods, and especially favourable terms of trade. Agricultural zones in the southern part of the country are experiencing Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1).

Health and Malnutrition: On 5 August, OCHA reported that in the areas that were occupied by armed groups, 65% of health structures are reported partially, or non-functional compared to 17% nationally.

According to OCHA on 19 July, the nutritional situation is serious across Gao with a General Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 13.5%. An estimated 660,000 children <5 suffer from acute malnutrition in 2013, including 210,000 from severe acute malnutrition.
MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 08/10/2013.

Political and Security Context

On 22 August, Mauritania announced a six-week postponement of elections planned for 12 October, after the Coordination of Democratic Opposition (COD), a coalition of opposition parties, said they would boycott the vote. The current president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz seized power in a 2008 coup and was elected a year later, but the COD has never accepted his presidency as legitimate.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: UNHCR has stated that the number of Malian refugees in Mauritania has levelled off since March 2013 standing at 75,261 people as of 30 June. Almost all refugees (over 74,000) live in the Mbéra camp, 60% are women and children, according to UNICEF, and have lived in the camp for over a year.

Disaster: As of early October, the several weeks of consecutive rainfall since mid-August have caused flooding in much of the capital, Nouakchott, and the six surrounding regions of Brakna, Tagant, Hodh Ech Chargul, Assaba, Inchiri, and Adrar. According to the Department of Civil Protection, the damages caused by the flooding are unprecedented in the region. As reported by IFRC, more than 5,600 people have been affected by the flooding. 2,305 people have been displaced and at least eight people have died according to OCHA.

Food Security: WFP reported on 3 September that as of July, 23.7% of Mauritanian households are considered food insecure, representing a decrease compared to the same period last year (32.3%), but the rate is not as low as expected (estimation for July 2013 was 22%). Higher rates were recorded in the south of the country, in the Guidimaka (40%), Assaba (37%), Tangant (34%), and Gorgol (31%) regions. Food insecurity is higher in rural areas (28.5%) than in urban areas (17.4%), even though rural exodus and rising food prices are driving the urban food insecurity rates higher. 800,000 people are food insecure, which marks an increase from the estimated 560,000 food insecure people reported in January 2013. 190,000 people are classified as severely food insecure and 610,000 moderately food insecure.

Health and Nutrition: According to the SMART survey conducted in July, six regions of the country have reached or exceeded the emergency threshold of 15% for General Acute Malnutrition (GAM). The national Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) rate remains below (12.8%).

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

NIGER FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

28 October: According to local officials, dozens of Niger migrants, including women and children, heading towards Algeria died of thirst in the Sahara desert in mid-October. OCHA estimates that more than 30,000 economic migrants passed through Agadez from March to August 2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: According to the UN on 28 August, thousands of Nigerians were reported to be crossing into Niger, fleeing the ongoing military offensive against Islamist militants of the Boko Haram group. As of 15 August, UNICEF reported that an estimated 13,500 refugees from northern Nigeria had arrived in southeastern Niger (Diffa region). UNHCR also reported the arrival of 3,544 Nigerien returnees and 94 people of other nationalities (mainly Chadians). These refugees have been crossing into Niger since mid-May and have settled in Bosso, Diffa, Kablewa, Maine, Tam, Tcoudjoujani, and Garin Amadou. The majority live with host families; others live in rented houses, but lack the money to pay rent or have no shelter at all.

According to UNHCR as of end September, an estimated 49,600 Malian refugees are registered in Niger as a result of the military intervention in Mali. UNHCR also reported that 5,124 Nigerian returned to Niger, bringing the total number of displaced from the Malian conflict into Niger to over 54,000. Malian refugees continue to place significant stress on the country with most settling in regions hardest hit by the nutrition and food security crisis.

According to a government official, dozens of migrants crossing into Algeria from Niger have died of thirst in the Sahel desert. The death toll numbers are conflicting. The Mayor of the main northern town of Agadez claims that more than 40 people have died, including women and children. Travellers have reported seeing more than 35 bodies along the road, mostly of women and children, while a survivor claims more than 82 people have perished. OCHA estimates that more than 30,000 economic migrants passed through Agadez from March to August 2013.

Disaster: As of 25 September, OCHA reported that severe flooding in July and August killed 32 people, affected over 165,000 people, and damaged 13,000 hectares of crops. Tillabery, Maradi, Tahoua, and Dosso regions are among the most affected areas. In Tillabery region alone, 39,700 people are affected. Aid distribution has taken place in parts of Tillabery, Kolof, Ouallam, Say, and Filingué departments. But several locations affected by the floods including Banibangou, Damana, Firwa kola, Gotheye, and Imnan Taggazar remain unassisted. Interventions remain limited to areas where humanitarian actors were operational before the floods.

This year, severe flooding has affected over 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel region in Africa.

Food Security: According to OCHA on 19 July, 2.9 million people are food insecure in
Across Niger, household incomes are considered average to good this year and should allow households to purchase sufficient cereal to meet food needs. According to FEWSNET in late September, crop development improved significantly in September following regular rainfall in July and August, leading to expectations of nearly average national cereal production. However, harvests may be below average in Tillabery and Diffa regions due to planting delay. September harvests and institutional food aid are improving food access throughout Niger, with acute food insecurity remaining Minimal (IPC Phase 1), except in the Nguiymi department where poor households are still considered Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

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

Small-scale breeding of desert locust has been observed in Niger’s Tahoua, Agadez, and Zinder regions. As of 30 September, only 11,749 of a total of 44,555 hectares of infested crops were treated; the low rate of treatment (26%) is due to logistical constraints in the infested areas.

Cereal prices reached a five-year high in April, with the sharpest increases in Maradi and Diffa regions. Prices stabilised in May, but have remained higher than the seasonal norm. Compared to the five-year average, the prices of dry cereals are rising, with millet (17%), sorghum (20%) and maize (9%) displaying the largest increases. The high market prices are largely due to production shortfalls and market disruptions in neighbouring Nigeria, following the 2012 floods. Central Niger is especially dependent on Nigerian grain flows and is likely to see the highest impact on prices.

Health and Malnutrition: From 18-24 September, 31 new cholera cases were reported, bringing the cumulative number of cases to 513 including 11 deaths (case fatality rate of 2.14%) since the government officially declared the epidemic on 10 May. The majority of cases are registered in the Tillabery region in north-western Niger. There is a high risk that the disease will spread along the Niger River. In 2012, more than 5,785 cholera cases and 110 deaths were reported countrywide.

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

On 31 July, OCHA reported that malnutrition has slightly decreased, with a rate of 13.3% GAM for children <5, compared to 14.8% in 2012, except in Maradi district where the 16.3% GAM rate is a concern. As of September, a SMART survey indicated that children aged 6-23 months are the most affected with a GAM rate of 20.6% and a SAM rate of 4.9%. UNICEF reported mid-October that more than 2,500 children <5 died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

Updated: 29/10/2013

SOMALIA CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

28 October: An air strike in southern Somalia close to Barawe killed two senior commanders of Al-Shabaab.

As of 24 October, the total number of confirmed cases in Somalia stands at 174 cases. The first confirmed case of the wild poliovirus since 2007 was reported in Mogadishu on 9 May. The first vaccination campaign began on 14 May. However, recent fighting in Kismayo halted the polio vaccination campaign planned for July, targeting 24,000 people. Large insecure areas of south-central Somalia have not conducted immunisation campaigns since 2009, leaving 600,000 children vulnerable, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Two cases were confirmed from parts of Lower Shabelle region. The risk to populations across other areas of Somalia is high, due to substantial population immunity gaps.

Political and Security Context

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

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

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

But as threats from Al-Shabaab persist and attacks continue both in Somali and the region of the Horn of Africa, the AU’s Peace and Security Council endorsed the recommendation to boost AMISOM by 35% in the renewed effort to fight Al-Shabaab with an additional 6,235 soldiers, taking its total strength to around 24,000. The UN Secretary General urged member nations to provide AMISOM with financial and military support. Following the Westgate attacks in Kenya, the UN envoy for Somalia called for additional AU troops to counter the 5,000 Al-Shabaab fighters, which the UN said posed an international threat.
National political landscape: Conflict remains widespread, as Somalia struggles to curb an insurgency led by Al-Shabaab, an Islamist organisation allegedly tied strongly to al-Qaeda. According to sources, the movement has retained strongholds in parts of rural southern and central Somalia, with another faction present in the mountains in the northern, semi-autonomous Puntland region. Although security in the capital Mogadishu has improved since its lowest point in August 2011, attacks by Al-Shabaab in urban centres and along transport axes are common.

Safety and Security: Al-Shabaab has become increasingly isolated in southern Somalia and suffered significant territorial and reputational losses since Kenyan forces moved into Somalia in October 2011. Following the September attack in Nairobi, which is seen as introducing Al-Shabaab onto the global terrorism scene, the European Union has increased security for its military advisors in Somalia. Attacks on high level targets remain a credible threat.

On 3 September, Al-Shabaab ambushed President Mohamud’s military-escorted motorcade, firing rocket-propelled grenades at the convoy. The President reportedly escaped unhurt. In mid-June, Al-Shabaab militants launched a high-profile assault targeting the UN compound in Mogadishu. The attack killed 15 and caused all UN missions outside Mogadishu International Airport to be suspended for 24 hours.

Latest reports suggest that Al-Shabaab remains active through small-scale operations in various areas of Mogadishu. The situation is aggravated by infighting among the Somalia military and security forces.

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

Conflict patterns

Kismayo: Between June and September, both inter-communal and violence against AMISOM troops flared up in Kismayo in Jubaland on the border with Kenya and Ethiopia. In Kismayo, control has long been split between multiple forces including clan militias, Al-Shabaab, and Kenyan and Ethiopian soldiers. At end June, fighting of the rival Somali warlords over Kismayo had claimed 71 lives and injured more than 300. Fighters from the Ras Kamboni militia of Ahmed Madobe, who proclaims himself president of the Jubaland region in June, battled against forces loyal to Bare Hirale, a former Somali defence minister.

In early June, two days of heavy fighting between Madobe’s forces and gunmen loyal to Iftin Hassan Basto, another local warlord claiming the presidency, left 30 dead and 40 wounded; 1,604 people have been displaced by the violence. These were the heaviest clashes the city had seen in over four years and the first since several rival warlords claimed control of the lucrative port and fertile hinterlands in May. OCHA data indicated that 60,000 people needed humanitarian assistance in Kismayo in early July.

In the aftermath of the June clashes, the central government called for the withdrawal of Kenya Defense Force troops from Kismayo believing that they sided with Madobe. Following the announcement, there have been a series of elders’ meetings in Dhourley to discuss the way forward. In retaliation for the involvement of Kenyan troops, Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack on a shopping centre in Kenya’s capital from 21-25 September, killing at least 68 people and wounding 175.

Puntland: Tensions persist between the central authorities and the semi-autonomous Puntland region. On 29 August, the president of Somalia’s Puntland region said the central government was undermining plans to create a federal system, and that he would develop potential oil resources in his area even without a revenue-sharing deal with Mogadishu. The statement underlined deep national divisions. On 5 August, Puntland cut all ties with the central government in a clear sign of distrust toward Mogadishu. Puntland accused central authorities of refusing to share power and foreign aid with the region in line with the country’s federal structure, and taking its eye off the fight against al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist militiants.

Puntland is grappling to uproot Al-Shabaab from the region and has scaled up operations in the Galgala area, from where Al-Shabaab launches its attacks. On 29 September, the defense forces of Puntland raided Al-Shabaab positions in the Galgala Mountains, reportedly inflicting casualties. The attack and potential defeat of Al-Shabaab could improve the operating environment for humanitarian activities in the area. Similar operations planned by Puntland authorities in the Bossasso airport, Galkacyo, Garowe, and Gardo airstrips will potentially have a positive impact on humanitarian access and operations.

In July, clashes were recorded between residents and security forces in Qardho (Karkaar region). Following the clashes, Puntland President Farole announced suspension of the 2013 Local Council elections planned for 15 July due to instability and election violence. However, elections are planned for early 2014. Community leaders and clan elders will soon begin the process of nominating 66 new MPs to the Puntland Parliament. Once in session, the MPs will elect a president of Puntland for a new term to start in January 2014.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Displacement: An estimated 1.1 million Somalis are IDPs, according to UNHCR, mainly in the South-Central region. In March-April, thousands of new IDPs were reported in the vicinity of Xudur after the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. Flooding also displaced an additional 50,000 people, notably in the Jowhar and Baidoa areas.

Amnesty International reported on 12 September that the government is pressing ahead with plans to clean up Mogadishu, forcing thousands of people out of makeshift camps. In January 2013, the authorities announced their plan to relocate IDPs from the capital to camps outside the city. These measures will directly impact more than 300,000 people living in Mogadishu where they are sheltering from cyclical drought, famine, and armed conflict.
conflict. The relocation of IDPs has been put on hold as security and basic services in the chosen relocation site, Daynille (north of the capital), could not be guaranteed. However, eviction of IDPs by private land-owners has recently increased. According to OCHA, 6,600 families were evicted in August and September from settlements in central Mogadishu.

As of October, UNHCR reported that more than one million Somalis are registered refugees in neighbouring countries, mostly in Kenya (around 475,000), Ethiopia (246,000) and Yemen (240,000). However, Somali refugees continue to return home, with over 26,500 people having returned since the beginning of 2013.

As reported by HRW in August, IDPs in Somalia suffer from widespread abuses with rape and sexual violence posing a constant threat to women and children living in camps.

**Disaster:** OCHA reports that following the early beginning of the main rainy season (the gu) in mid-March, an estimated 50,000 people were displaced and 6,400 hectare of crops damaged by floods.

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

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

**Food Security:** As indicated in a joint FSNAU and FEWSNET report in late August, an estimated 870,000 people, among whom 72% are believed to be IDPs, will remain in Crisis and Emergency food security status from August to December 2013. The recent figures represent a continued improvement since January when an estimated 1,050,000 people were in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) food security status, and an even more significant since the country was plagued by a deadly famine. From October 2010 to April 2012, famine in Somalia led to the deaths of 258,000 people, according to May OCHA estimates. Nearly 2.3 million additional people beyond those requiring more urgent assistance, one-third of Somalia’s population, are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

According to FEWSNET, recent improvements are attributed to a near average July/August 2013 gu harvest, increased livestock prices and herd sizes, improved milk availability, low prices of both local and imported staple food commodities, higher purchasing power from income from labour and livestock sales, and sustained humanitarian interventions over the last six months. However, according to FAO, cereal production is expected to be below average, with particularly low yields in Gedo, Huduur and Hiran regions bordering Kenya and Ethiopia that received below average rainfall.

FEWSNET and FSNAU reported that some areas, in addition to IDPs, people who live in very poor conditions are severely affected by food insecurity. For agro-pastoral households in Hiraan, central Somalia, an early end to the March to June gu rains, along with poor distribution, resulted in a low harvest. Poor households are expected to fall into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) status during the October to December lean season. Poor pastoral households in Coastal Deeh, in central Somalia are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through at least the end of 2013. Low livestock ownership will further limit income. On the Sool Plateau pastoral livelihood zone in northeastern Somalia, poor households are likely to divert funds to purchase water during the remainder of the hagaa dry season through October. Most poor households in Somalia are likely to remain in Stress (IPC Phase 2) conditions until December.

FAO reported in August that maize and sorghum prices were well below their levels of 12 months earlier (up to 50% less) and about 75% below their peak high in June 2011, when famine was declared.

**Health and Nutrition:** The first confirmed case of the wild poliovirus since 2007 was reported in Mogadishu on 9 May. The total number of confirmed cases in Somalia stands at 174 cases as of 24 October. The polio epidemic has spread to neighbouring countries with 14 in Kenya, six in Ethiopia, and three cases reported in South Sudan. The first vaccination campaign began on 14 May. However, recent fighting in Kismayo halted the polio vaccination campaign planned for July, targeting 24,000 people. Large insecure areas of south-central Somalia have not conducted immunisation campaigns since 2009, leaving 600,000 children vulnerable, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Two cases were confirmed from parts of Lower Shabelle region. The risk to populations across other areas of Somalia is high, due to substantial population immunity gaps.

Nutrition indicators in Somalia have improved since the 2011 famine. However, the prevalence of malnutrition remains above WHO’s emergency threshold of 15%, especially among IDPs. More than 206,000 children <5 are acutely malnourished, a slight decrease since January 2013, when FSNAU estimated 215,000 children <5 to be acutely malnourished of whom at least 45,000 were severely malnourished. Two-thirds of these children are in Southern Somalia, where high rates of malnutrition persist and are attributed to an inadequate health infrastructure and poor feeding practices.

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

As reported by FSNAU, the nutrition status of IDPs in the central and northern regions of Somalia has deteriorated. Sustained malnutrition levels were seen among IDPs in Bossaso, Gaalkacyo, Garowe, Dhusamaareb, Kismayo, Dhobley, and Mogadishu.

*Updated: 29/10/2013*
SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

27-29 October: Residents of the contested oil region of Abyei voted in an unofficial referendum to determine if the border area should remain with Sudan’s South Kordofan region or join the Bahr el-Ghazal region in South Sudan. Both Khartoum and Juba criticised the vote, questioning what its outcome would achieve if the results are not recognised by either country. Last year saw repeated clashes along the undemarcated border, until the two sides signed a series of agreements under international pressure.

As of 23 October, OCHA reported that seasonal flooding in South Sudan has affected nearly 156,000 people, mostly in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (45,700 affected), Jonglei (28,500), Warrap (24,700), and Upper Nile (15,000).

As of 20 October, UNHCR reported that 225,355 refugees, mostly from neighbouring Sudan are in South Sudan.

As of 15 October, OCHA reported that 269 violent incidents have been recorded since January 2013.

Political and Security Context

On 27-29 October, residents of the contested oil region of Abyei voted in an unofficial referendum to determine if the border area should remain with Sudan’s South Kordofan region or join the Bahr el-Ghazal region in South Sudan. The African Union (AU) condemned the move as a threat to peace, and Khartoum and Juba criticised the vote, questioning what its outcome would achieve if the results are not recognised by either country. The future of the oil-producing zone remains one of the most sensitive issues since South Sudan became independent in 2011, and harbours the Ngok Dinka tribe, closely connected to South Sudan, and the semi-nomadic Arab Misseriya, who traditionally move back and forth from Sudan. 2012 saw repeated clashes along the undemarcated border, until the two sides signed a series of agreements under international pressure.

On 3 September, South Sudan’s President Kiir visited Sudan for talks with President al-Bashir about the oil conflict. This was only his second visit to Khartoum since 2011. During the summit, the two leaders pledged to end their conflict. In a joint statement, Bashir and Kiir reaffirmed their commitment to all bilateral cooperation agreements including on oil export. The crude stoppage threat that has jeopardised their bilateral relations since June was not mentioned.

On 1 August, in a joint communiqué, the two sides officially agreed to immediately cease the support or harbouring of rebel groups from either side and prevent rebels from crossing the common border. This was in an attempt to end a quarrel that started in early June over alleged support by Juba to rebels in Sudan and accusations that Khartoum backed rebels fighting in Jonglei state, South Sudan. If implemented, the oil stoppage would cut off the main source of foreign income.

Renewed tensions between Khartoum and Juba since June were a stark contrast to the gradual improvement of the relations witnessed in previous months, which had led to the signature in March of a technical agreement to establish a demilitarised border zone, the deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and the activation of all agreed security-related mechanisms.

The two states had also agreed on a plan for the coordinated implementation of all elements of the 27 September 2012 agreements, including the re-launch of crude oil exports from South Sudan. On 7 May, Sudan announced that cross-border oil flows had resumed and the first cross-border shipment was received at Heglig.

On 24 July, South Sudanese President Kiir dismissed his entire cabinet, including main political rival Riek Machar who had announced his intention to run in the 2015 elections. While the AU urged President Kiir to form a new government and respect the country’s diversity in doing so, the sacking of the government highlighted increasing tensions in the South Sudanese ruling Sudan People Liberation Movement (SPLM) party. Kiir and Machar were on opposing sides of a split in the SPLM during much of the civil war with Khartoum that led to the independence of South Sudan.

Ethnic clashes and violence continue across South Sudan with an increasing number of human rights abuses reported, notably by government forces, according to a Human Rights Watch report released in July. Violence is concentrated in Jonglei state and the tri-state area of Lakes, Unity, and Warrap, with incidents also reported in Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal. In Jonglei state, the precarious security situation stems from the protracted conflict between armed groups and official troops, and from ongoing inter-tribal fighting. In Boma, Pibor and other population centres, almost all civilians have fled to the bush amid increasing tensions between state and non-state armed actors.

In Rumbek, the Lakes state capital, a forceful disarmament campaign by local authorities continued, leaving two dead and four seriously injured on 17 September, according to local reports. Rumbek has struggled to curb recent inter-communal violence and proliferation of arms in the region. Five people were shot as clashes erupted between cattle herding groups on 7 September in Rumbek North county, according to local official sources. On 1 September, seven people were killed in separate inter-communal clashes between Rup and Kuie communities in Rumbek Central county in Lakes state. The following day, six people were killed in a retaliatory attack.

In July, widespread fighting between ethnic groups, state and non-state actors affected large parts of Jonglei state, mostly Pibor and, to a lesser extent, Pochalla counties, forcing tens of thousands of civilians to flee. Initially, local authorities reported that groups of heavily armed South Sudanese gunmen, belonging to the Lou Nuer and Dinka tribes, were fighting their way toward a rival community, the Murle people, in eastern Jonglei state. As of mid-August, information, including numbers of casualties, remains unverified, although according to the authorities, over 300 people were killed during the clashes and at least 4,000 injured.

Violence in Jonglei came after a fierce round of fighting in early July between government troops and various non-state actors. Against this background, HRW reported an increasing number of abuses against civilians committed by South Sudanese authorities during the anti-insurgency campaign in Jonglei state. Earlier, the UN Security Council and the US had called for Juba to better protect civilians in Jonglei state amidst reports of killings,
lootings, and beatings, including by government troops.

On 19 June, the rebel leader of a Jonglei-based rebel group, David Yau Yau, a member of the Murle group, officially agreed to begin peace talks with government representatives. The conflict between the Yau Yau rebel group, who calls itself South Sudan Democratic Army (SSDA), and the South Sudan Army (SPLA) had escalated since early March, after Juba conducted a major operation against the SSDA. South Sudan issued an ultimatum to David Yau Yau on 5 June asking him to cease hostilities unconditionally or risking being pursued by State military forces.

800 rebels belonging to a group blamed for attacks in Upper Nile state over the past two years accepted an amnesty offer from the South Sudanese government and handed over their weapons on 5 June. The surrender came two months after 5,000 fighters from the South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM), led by Brigadier General Napiry Monyuel, took up the amnesty offer from South Sudanese President Salva Kiir. On 5 August, talks officially started with the former rebels of the SSLM. The rebel groups South Sudan Democratic Army and South Sudan Defence Forces also declared peace with the government of South Sudan and entered the negotiations.

On 20 October, a rebel attack on two cattle camps in Twic East county (Jonglei State) killed 78 people and wounded 88 others. Local authorities reported that 20 children were abducted and thousands of cattle were stolen in the raid. Subsequent attacks were reported in several other locations. At the beginning of August, nine people were killed in two other cattle-raiding incidents recorded in Twic East and Bor counties, which authorities blamed on the Murle and David Yau Yau groups. Cattle-raiding, which mirrors local ethnic tensions, is a recurrent issue throughout South Sudan, with recent incidents in Jonglei and Unity states.

OCHA reported that violence in Pibor county in July was followed by an increasing number of cattle-raids and clashes in other parts of Jonglei.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement:** As of 15 October, OCHA reported that at least 159,130 people have been internally displaced by violence since January 2013. This figure reflects only those who have been accessed and assisted. Because of access constraints, it is a marked underestimation of the number of people displaced by violence in South Sudan. In 2013, 71,000 returnees have come to South Sudan from Sudan, totalling 1.9 million returnees from Sudan since 2007.

Following increased inter-communal violence in Jonglei, international organisations have reported new IDPs. In July, ECHO reported that there were 148,000 conflict affected people: most were displaced within Pibor county or fled to Juba or neighbouring countries following fighting. As reported by MSF, up to 120,000 civilians, mostly from the Murle group, fled their homes as a result of recent spikes in the ongoing violence. According to WHO, the increasing numbers of IDPs and returnees in Pibor, Gumuruk, Akobo, and Boma is of high concern to humanitarian partners.

As reported by OCHA in early September, about 75,000 people identified as affected in Pibor county, Central and Eastern Equatoria, were reached with humanitarian assistance. An inter-agency assessment conducted in Pibor county on 7-8 September indicated that most IDPs and returnees report heavy losses of livestock and personal assets. The majority said they have been displaced at least four times because of violence since the start of 2012. The six main population centres in Pibor county (Boma, Gumuruk, Likuangole, Manyabol, Maruwa Hills, and Pibor) are either partially or completely abandoned and many civilians remain in the bush, cut off from assistance. In Gumuruk, IOM registered 23,000 IDPs as of 9 September, and people move in and out to receive assistance.

Vulnerable populations in Pibor county are living outside protected communities and with inconsistent access to food, safe drinking water, shelter, and health care. Most IDPs have resorted to extreme coping strategies, with some eating wild fruits and leaves. Following cattle-raids, reportedly in the tens of thousands of cattle, the population is slaughtering female cattle for meat, even if this means that they cannot replenish stocks. According to the UN, 100,000 people have been cut off from vital aid in Jonglei state.

OCHA observes that since January, 17,000 people have fled Jonglei state to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. UNHCR stated that recent estimates of numbers of South Sudanese arrivals in Ethiopia are smaller than suggested by earlier reports. UNHCR noted the arrival of 2,178 refugees from 7 May-7 June. More refugees are expected to arrive in Ethiopia from Nyalongoro, Kaiwa and Niate areas of South Sudan.

In the first five months of 2013, over 5,390 South Sudanese from Jonglei were registered at the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. These numbers approach the total number of people that arrived in Kakuma from South Sudan in 2012. In Uganda, 2,700 refugees from Jonglei have arrived since the beginning of the year, averaging about 527 per month.

As of 20 October, UNHCR reported that 225,355 refugees, mostly from neighbouring Sudan, are in South Sudan. According to OCHA as of 31 August, there are over 119,000 South Sudanese refugees in Upper Nile state and 74,700 in Unity state who need humanitarian assistance. An estimated 71,000 South Sudanese have returned from Sudan since January 2013; up to 350,000 South Sudanese remain in Sudan.

Local authorities in Fashoda county, Upper Nile state, reported that 2,500 refugees crossed into the area from South Kordofan early October. UNHCR reported that 2,100 refugees from South Kordofan have arrived in Upper Nile since mid-July. Local authorities stated that 70% of the refugees are women and children and fled their homes because of aerial bombardments, ground clashes, or food shortages. Many refugees showed signs of malnutrition. In mid-June, according to OCHA, an estimated 3,000 new IDPs arrived in Northern Bahr El Ghazal state, fleeing increased insecurity and armed attacks in areas around River Kiir, South Darfur, and South Kordofan. 26,000 people were reportedly displaced as of 21 July. According to MSF, the remote area is practically inaccessible and IDPs have little access to aid. Their food situation is already dire and may further worsen as the rainy season gets underway.

Some 11,900 returnees were registered in four transit sites in Renk county in Upper Nile during a biometric registration in July and August. The figure marks a major drop from the previous estimate of 17,500 people, according to OCHA. About 4,400 individuals of those registered are willing to be transported to their final destinations; 7,500 individuals prefer to stay in Renk town.

**Disaster:** As of 23 October, OCHA reported that seasonal flooding in South Sudan has
affected nearly 156,000 people, mostly in Northern Bahr el Ghazal (45,700 affected), Jonglei (28,500), Warrap (24,700) and Upper Nile (15,000). The recent escalation of floods is limiting access to affected areas, and local authorities reported on 20 October that continuous rain could affect up to 300,000 in the coming days. At the beginning of the floods in August, OCHA reported that 65% of the country was already inaccessible by roads to the disaster.

In mid-September, Government figures suggested an even higher number of affected. The National Relief and Rehabilitation Commission said it was supporting more than 200,000 flood affected people across the country. Assessments are planned in parts of Jonglei, Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. In Unity state, logistical constraints have hindered access to flooded areas and needs assessments, meaning that the total number of people in need could be significantly higher.

As reported by OCHA, affected populations need household items, clean water, emergency drugs, and short-term food assistance. Information on damage remains limited, though hundreds of houses have reportedly been destroyed across the five states.

In late August, an estimated 18,000 people were affected and partly displaced in Maiwut county, Upper Nile state, following floods. According to a 21 August WHO assessment, the health situation in Maiwut is deteriorating as malaria and waterborne diseases spread through the area.

According to local sources, floods have cut off the main road to Uganda, leaving busses, trucks, and passenger vehicles stranded at the Ugandan side of the border as of 28 August. The disruption is between the towns of Atiak in Uganda and Elegu in South Sudan.

Access: Insecurity, poor infrastructure, and lack of logistics capacity continue to severely hamper humanitarian access nationwide. The recent floods have exacerbated the challenges of humanitarian access in certain areas of South Sudan, with Unity state having been particularly difficult to access due to infrastructural constraints.

OCHA reported as of 15 October that 269 violent incidents have been recorded since January 2013. As of 12 September, Upper Nile and Jonglei states are the worst affected in terms of access incidents, with repeated violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, active hostilities, and interference in the implementation of relief programmes. Humanitarian actors have for the second time in August halted distributions of food assistance due to insecurity. Following widespread violence in July that affected over 140,000 people, aid workers had reached close to 21,000 people with food distributions as of 18 August, but had to stop operations to review operational constraints, including guarantees of safety for civilians receiving assistance and for aid workers supporting them.

On 14 July, and for the first time in 2013, OCHA stated that aid agencies reached parts of Pibor county, where thousands of civilians have been hiding in the bush. Permanent insecurity in Pibor county makes it complicated for humanitarian actors to operate in the area. In July and August, aid agencies reached IDPs in Dorein, Labrab, and Pibor town. As of 5 August, many areas remain cut off from assistance due to insecurity.

The rainy season is affecting roads across South Sudan, notes OCHA, making them inaccessible and hindering humanitarian access, notably in Jonglei, Lake, Unity, and Northern Bahr El Ghazal states. Up to 60% of the country is inaccessible by road from May to October, with only 10% of Jonglei accessible during the rains. Limited air assets mean that responding to flooding over the coming months will be restricted.

Food Security: As reported by WFP in mid-August, the food security situation has improved compared to the same period in 2012 even if an estimated 8% (over 850,000 people) and 34% (over 3.5 million people) respectively remain severely and moderately food insecure in South Sudan. In 2012, an estimated 4.7 million people were food insecure across the country.

In June, FAO estimated that 4.1 million people were food insecure in South Sudan and would remain so until the harvest in September. In early August, FEWSNET highlighted that ongoing insecurity had negatively impacted food security in Pibor county, and in Unity, Warrap, and Lakes states. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity was also expected and was expanding to other areas previously considered to be in Stress (IPC Phase 2) conditions. An estimated 1.2 million people were considered to be at Crisis and Emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and 4) with parts of Jonglei (especially Pibor county), Unity, Lakes, Warrap states and the Abyei area, disputed between Sudan and South Sudan, of particular concern.

WFP reported that the food security situation has deteriorated in some areas – Unity state, eastern parts of Eastern Equatoria and Lakes – that are experiencing drier-than-normal conditions characterised by erratic rainfall coupled with prolonged dry spell. The food security situation, because of problematic access to food due to limited and unreliable income and poor purchasing power, is grim in south eastern Jonglei state following prolonged insecurity in Pibor county. The food security situation across the country is projected to remain precarious in the coming months. IDPs and the returnees from Sudan remain especially vulnerable.

According to WFP, there is an ongoing rise in prices, albeit on a smaller scale than a year ago, that is coherent with seasonal patterns in South Sudan. As indicated by FAO, prices of locally produced cereal crops are increasing in most markets as the lean season progresses, household food stocks are beginning to dwindle, and most roads, especially in remote areas, are impassable during the rainy season, disrupting market supplies.

Health and Nutrition: A measles outbreak was officially announced in Upper Nile state in early October. Since August, at least 44 cases were registered in Malakal county according to the South Sudanese authorities and WHO. South Sudan had already declared an outbreak of meningitis in that same county in late May.

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

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

Updated: 29/10/2013

SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

28-29 October: Tens of thousands residents in the border Abyei region voted in a unilateral referendum on whether to join Sudan or South Sudan, despite fears it could trigger violence. The result, expected on 31 October, is non-binding and both Sudan and South Sudan have made clear that they will not recognise it. The referendum is officially open to all residents of the area, however, only the pro-South Sudan Ngok Dinka group have voted. The recent development has sparked fears of heightened tension in the area.

Late October: In East Darfur, an estimated 135,000 people displaced as a result of the Rizeigat-Ma’alia tribal clashes need humanitarian assistance. These IDPs were primarily from villages in Adila and Abu Karinka localities following inter-tribal fighting that began in August 2013. The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reports that fighting has displaced an estimated 84,910 people in Abu Karinka and 50,000 in Adila. However, government restrictions have prevented humanitarian organisations from assessing the needs of these people or verifying their number.

22 October: Sudanese President al-Bashir made a rare visit to South Sudan to meet his counterpart. The Abyei referendum reportedly dominated the discussion as part of ongoing efforts to consolidate normalization of relations between the two countries and prevent any violent development. Other outstanding issues that were discussed pertained to revitalizing the cooperation agreement, inter alia regarding the border access, visa issues, security arrangements, and other economic matters.

Political and Security Context

Sudan – South Sudan: On 22 October, Sudanese President al-Bashir made a rare visit to South Sudan to meet his counterpart. The Abyei referendum reportedly dominated the discussion as part of ongoing efforts to consolidate normalization of relations between the two countries and prevent any violent development. Other outstanding issues that were discussed pertained to revitalizing the cooperation agreement, inter alia regarding the border access, visa issues, security arrangements, and other economic matters.

Sudan and South Sudan security officials agreed on 26 September to expel rebel groups from the demilitarised zone on the border between the two countries as part of efforts to normalise relations and open crossing points. The joint statement followed a meeting held by the Joint Security Committee, chaired by heads of Sudanese and South Sudanese military intelligences from 24-26 September and is the most recent step to establish a demilitarised border zone, mutually agreed in March 2013.

Civil Unrest: Violent clashes between protesters, police, and military broke out in Khartoum and central Sudan on 23 September. The violence is reportedly the worst unrest in central Sudan in decades. The death toll as of 15 October remains uncertain, with figures ranging from 60 to more than 210 deaths. According to human rights groups in Khartoum, protesters were killed by bullets fired by military and police into dissenting crowds, and many were reportedly injured by tear gas and rubber bullets employed to disperse the crowds. The government has disputed allegations from human rights groups, witnesses, and activists that the Sudanese police fired live rounds at protestors. As of 15 October, 800 people have been detained, suspected of violent riots, and vandalism.

The protests erupted following a decision by the Sudanese government to cut fuel subsidies, causing a sharp rise in fuel prices. Petrol stations in Khartoum almost doubled fuel prices overnight. The subsidy cuts have been driven by a severe financial crunch since the secession of oil-producing South Sudan in 2011, which deprived Sudan of 75% of the crude oil output, its main source of revenue for food imports.

Insurgent Groups: Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups reunited under the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) banner in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile.

On 24 July, in an indication of increasing levels of coordination between various armed movements, fighters of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), part of the SRF from the Darfur region, attacked an army position in al-Rachat, a city stormed in a coordinated attack by the SRF in April, in central North Kordofan, with deaths reported on both sides.

Abyei Contested Area: Starting on 28 October, tens of thousands residents in the border Abyei region voted in a unilateral referendum on whether to join Sudan or South Sudan, despite fears of violence. The result, expected on 31 October is non-binding and both Sudan and South Sudan have made clear that they will not recognise it. The referendum is officially open to all residents of the area, but only the pro-South Sudan Ngok Dinka group have voted, according to local media. The Ngok Dinka’s rivals in the area, the Misseriya, have said they will not recognise the results of any unilateral poll. The recent development has sparked fears of heightened tensions. The Ngok Dinka leadership announced its intention to unilaterally conduct a community-based referendum in spite of a call from the international community for both Sudan and South Sudan to avoid taking unilateral action to hold a referendum.

Sudan and South Sudan failed to reach a solution for Abyei in bilateral meetings on 22 October, despite fruitful discussions. The ownership of Abyei was left undecided when South Sudan declared independence from Sudan in 2011. A long-promised official referendum on its status has been stalled by arguments over who is entitled to vote. The Khartoum government has demanded the minority Misseriya group vote alongside the majority Ngok Dinka, while Juba wants polling limited to its Ngok Dinka allies. Until last week, South Sudan expressed intent to to press on with the referendum in October, despite Sudan’s reluctance. Following last week’s meetings and the recent shift by South Sudan to not press through, no new date as been set for a legally binding referendum.

On 21 September 2012, the African Union High Implementation Panel for Sudan (AUHIP) proposed to hold the referendum in October 2013, in accordance with the endorsement from the African Union Peace and Security Council. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2046 on 2 May, deciding that Sudan and South Sudan should reach agreement
on the final status of the Abyei area.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: An estimated 2.8 million Sudanese are currently internally displaced due to food insecurity and conflict. As of late October, there are roughly 229,000 Sudanese refugees in South Sudan and Ethiopia, and another 346,000 in Chad, according to UNHCR.

By mid-September, an estimated 71,000 South Sudanese have returned from Sudan since January 2013. According to IOM, over two million people of South Sudanese origin have returned to South Sudan from Sudan since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. Estimates on the number of South Sudanese in Sudan vary from 220,000 people (Sudan Government estimate) to 350,000 people (UNHCR estimate). UNHCR reports that 153,000 refugees originating from other countries were in Sudan as of mid-July.

Humanitarian organisations estimate that since early September 2013, 2,500 people have arrived in Abyei from South Sudan. These population movements are allegedly linked to the referendum on the final status of the area proposed for October 2013. Previous information indicates that 60% of the 100,000 people displaced from Abyei in May 2011 have returned. According to the Warrap State Government following a visit to Abyei to assess living conditions in the area, the situation is critical for many returnees with shortages of shelter, health, and water.

Eastern Sudan has received an average 500 Eritrean refugees per month in 2013, down from 2,000 a month in 2012. Sudan reportedly hosts at least 114,500 Eritrean refugees. According to UNHCR in June 2013, there are an estimated 86,900 registered refugees across the eastern states, mostly from Eritrea, with smaller numbers of people from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Chad.

Disaster: According to OCHA, heavy rains and floods have affected 341,000 people in 16 states across Sudan and Abyei since 1 August. In mid-September, the government Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) revised the number of people affected by floods in Sudan to an estimated 500,000 people. The increase in numbers is due to more rainfall in Khartoum, West Kordofan, and Blue Nile states.

Khartoum state remains worst affected by flooding with over 184,410 people affected, followed by El Gezira with over 52,975 people affected, and Blue Nile with 50,000 affected. OCHA states that immediate needs include emergency shelter, health, water, and sanitation support. This year’s floods are the worst since the historic 1988 floods. In 2012, 270,000 people were affected by floods nationally.

WHO has expressed concern that heavy rains and floods may aggravate outbreaks of communicable diseases, especially acute watery diarrhoea, malaria, dengue fever, and Rift Valley fever. Inconsistent chlorination, population movements, flooded and destroyed toilets, and poor community hygiene practices are risk factors for the potential outbreak and spread of water borne diseases.

The recent floods have further destroyed large stretches of cropland. According to the State Ministry of Agriculture, an estimated 55,000 acres (53,000 feddans) of sorghum, sesame, beans, groundnuts, tomatoes, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, okra, eggplant, and banana plantations have been destroyed by floods in Blue Nile state alone.

Access: On 4 October, the Rapporteur of the joint Sudan and South Sudan Security Committee announced that Sudan and South Sudan agreed to re-open five border crossings between the two countries. These crossings include the Kosti – Renk road, the Rabak – Renk road, the Babanusa-Aweil-Wau railway crossing, the Kosti – Juba river transport, and the Heglig – Fariang road. The Committee recommended that both countries agree on facilitation of delivery of humanitarian aid and the transport of citizens stranded at the borders, the relocation of refugees from the demilitarised zone, and the repatriation of prisoners of war.

On 21 August, as reported by local media, the Sudanese Interior Minister announced that the government will introduce new rules governing the work of foreign relief organisations. Authorities will now only allow national organisations to work for humanitarian purposes, excluding foreign humanitarian groups and UN agencies. The proportion of additional restrictions on foreign actors underlines Khartoum’s lasting discomfort with international organisations that it has repeatedly accused of exaggerating the magnitude of conflicts in the country, disseminating false information, and spying. To date, the Sudanese government still refuses to grant international humanitarian groups access to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

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

Food Security: As of October, according to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification jointly undertaken by humanitarian actors, 4,236,035 people face Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) levels of food insecurity. The figure is an increase from the July FEWSNET estimate suggesting that 3.7-4 million people in the country face Stressed and Crisis (IPC Phase 2 and 3) levels of food insecurity. In July 2012, 4.6 million people were food insecure in Sudan. The current decrease in numbers of registered food insecure is attributed to a good 2013 harvest. The total area planted during the 2012-13 season is over double 2012’s figure, and yields are expected to be significantly higher due to favourable rainfalls and decreased pest infestations.

Despite the overall positive trend, high levels of food insecurity persist (80%) in conflict-affected areas of North and South Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei States due to the impact of conflict on production, market access, and livelihood options.

FEWSNET reported the highest level of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) among IDPs in Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) controlled areas of South Kordofan State: levels are projected to remain at crisis level (IPC Phase 3) until December. The general situation for IDPs and poor households is expected to improve in October with the green harvest and income from seasonal agricultural labour and cash crop sales.

In Eastern Sudan, a late start of the rainy season has led to an overall rainfall deficit as of
the end of the season in September. As a result, lower yielding varieties were planted, and planted area as drastically reduced from last year, FEWSNET reports.

In Abyei, most households face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) level food insecurity according to FEWSNET. High food prices, restricted cross-border trade with South Sudan, and the decrease of the cultivation areas, have led local communities in Abyei to expand livelihoods strategies, switching to coping mechanisms employed in times of severe food insecurity. As more and more people return 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 be challenged to keep up with rising needs.

**Health and Nutrition:** OCHA reports that the Government of Sudan agreed to a two week cessation of hostilities in non-Government controlled areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile in the first two weeks of November to facilitate a debated vaccination campaign for children <5. The UNICEF and WHO-led campaign, originally planned for October, will target 147,000 children <5 in areas controlled by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in South Kordofan and 7,000 children in Blue Nile who have not been vaccinated since the ongoing armed conflict began in 2011. Concerns have been raised by SPLM-N that two weeks is insufficient time to bring children from remote areas in the Nuba Mountains to vaccination points and then safely return home. If the vaccination campaign is implemented, it will be the first cross-line access into SPLM-N areas from within Sudan since 2011.

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

**Darfur**

**Political and Security Context**

On 9 September in Khartoum, Darfuri leaders took part in a conference to discuss the root causes of the recent tribal conflicts and seek solutions for peaceful coexistence amongst tribes. Participants recommended both disarmament and the establishment of laws regulating relations between farmers and pastoralists, as well as the settlement of disputes over land resources. This was the first event organised by UNAMID (the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in the western Sudanese region), after the UN Security Council renewed its mandate late July 2013 until 31 August 2014, to address the causes of the escalating violence across Darfur.

**Insurgent Groups:** Clashes between the rebel group Sudan Liberation Movement led by Minni Minawi (SLM-MM), part of the Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) umbrella movement, and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have been ongoing in Southern and Eastern Darfur since April. A lack of up to date information makes it difficult to evaluate the intensity of the fighting. According to local sources, the SRF attacked a military convoy east of Kass in South Darfur on 19 August that resulted in 21 dead. Fighting between the SAF and allied militias and SLM-MM was reported in Onganja, south of Nyala, then Labado and Muhajria to the east, and later in Donkey Darisa, leaving hundreds of thousands of civilians displaced and without shelter in May. Government forces face attacks from dissident faction of the SLM led by Abdul Wahid al-Nur (SLM-AW) in Northern Darfur. Fighting has displaced civilians north and northwest of Nyala.

On 20 August, a consultation with Darfur’s three rebel groups (SLM-MM, SLM-AW, and JEM) was organised by UNAMID in Arusha, Tanzania after a first meeting in May. Though representatives of the rebel movements allegedly welcomed such initiatives, spokesmen for the groups reiterated their goal to negotiate with Khartoum on a national agenda, and not on separate regional issues, through the SRF. The SRF is an alliance including the SPLM-N, fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and has ties with opposition political groups in Khartoum.

Since the beginning of August, SAF has continued regular air raids targeting East Jebel Marra in South Darfur, and Kadja and Dady areas of North Darfur. According to local media reports, intensive air raids on 23 October killed one and injured at least 12 people, destroyed 30 houses and a school in East Jebel Marra, affecting the villages of Tangara, Hillat el Dum, and Arashu. On 11 September, people who fled from the villages Makarib A and Makarib B (south of El Fasher) and the area of Tabet, (East Jebel Marra) reported casualties due to intense shelling by heavy artillery, allegedly by the SAF. On 5 September, at least seven people, including four children, were reportedly killed in renewed air strikes against Darfur’s East Jebel Marra in the vicinity of Kined, Silo, Shangil Tobaya, with the villages of Kunjara, Sharaf, Turbo and Vanaga being hit. The next day, the explosion of an earlier unexploded bomb in the Dubbo Al Omda area killed four children. On 18 August, heavy bombing reportedly destroyed an entire village in East Jebel Marra, killing four. Air raids in North Darfur on 11 August killed nine and wounded dozens. A European international organisation, the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), condemned what it described as indiscriminate air raids on civilians in the Jebel Marra Mountains that forced thousands of people to flee the area.

**East Darfur:** Since mid-July, tensions over land ownership and cattle have increased between Rezeigat and Maaia tribes in Kulyakili Abu Salama in Adila locality. Local media reports that three people from the Ma’alia tribe were killed in an attack by members of the Rezeigat tribe in Bakhit, Abu Karinka locality in East Darfur on 23 October. Armed clashes during 16-22 September resulted in the deaths of 21 tribesmen and injury of 55 people, reported OCHA. Local sources indicate that clashes took place on 18 September in the Bakhit region, 70 km east of East Darfur capital Ed Daein, leaving 20 dead and as many injured. The recent violence erupted despite a peace deal signed on 22 August by representatives of the two Arab tribes to end several weeks of deadly clashes and prepare for a reconciliation conference in Al-Tawisha, North Darfur.

On 17 August, the abduction of 42 Maaliya tribespeople by Rezeigat tribesmen jeopardised an earlier attempt to convey a conflict resolution meeting. As reported by STP on 14 August, over 300 people were killed in four days of clashes between the two nomadic pastoralist groups that started on 9 August. OCHA noted that an estimated 170 people...
were killed in the clashes, and as of 12 September, HAC reported that these clashes had displaced an estimated 144,000 people.

**Central Darfur:** Fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central Darfur State continues despite the signing of a third reconciliation agreement on 10 September in Um Dukhun town. According to OCHA, 45 people from the two tribes were killed from 23-29 September. Local media reports cite clashes on 3 October between the tribes at Bennett, resulting in an unknown number of dead and injured. The clashes supposedly spread into neighbourhoods of Bennett city and surrounding villages.

According to local authorities in Central Darfur, armed Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen have been mobilising in Um Dukhun, Bennett and Mukjar in preparation for conflict. The reconciliation agreement signed in Zalingei early July was yet another unsuccessful attempt at a lasting peace, followed by 230 people killed in two weeks of fighting. Violence between the two tribes has flared since April, causing large-scale displacement and numerous casualties. Between April and June this year, fighting between the two tribes forced over 55,000 people to flee their homes, including an estimated 22,000 IDPs and 30,000 displaced to Chad and 3,300 people to Central African Republic (CAR), according to UNHCR.

On 3 September, violent clashes erupted between police and pro-government militiamen at Tululu market in Nierteti locality. According to local sources, the clashes sparked over conflict over who is entitled to levy taxes and duties on the market. The number of casualties is unknown. On 29 August, infighting between militiamen and SAF troops was reported from the same area, which is growing increasingly insecure. On 26 August, an ICRC convoy travelling from Zalingei to Nertiti was hijacked and four staff abducted. ICRC staff was released the next day, but the vehicles and other looted materials were not returned.

**South Darfur:** South Darfur has seen various different conflicts recently, including fighting between SAF and SLA-AW forces, between militias and Government security, and inter-tribal fighting. The state also faces problems of banditry and criminality.

On 8 September, OCHA stated that increased criminality throughout Darfur is affecting humanitarian and commercial traffic, especially South Darfur. On 4 September on the axis between Zalingei and Nyala, armed men attacked a convoy of ten trucks carrying food commodities. On 6 September, a private vehicle was carjacked by gunmen. On 26 August, guesthouses used by ICRC and their warehouses in Nyala were attacked and looted by armed men. ICRC staff were beaten and personal property confiscated. In early July, fighting in the area resulted in the looting of offices and premises of several international organisations resulting in the deaths of two aid workers, and the injuring of three, from World Vision. UNDSS has advised international humanitarian staff to minimise unnecessary movement in Nyala and surrounds.

At least five people were killed and 48 wounded as violent protests erupted in South Darfur capital Nyala on 19 September, according to local media. Thousands of angry demonstrators clashed with police as they protested against the incapacity of local government to uphold security in the town. The demonstrations were sparked by the killing of Ismail Wadi, a prominent businessman from the Zaghawa tribe, by an alleged Janjaweed militia on 18 September. Riot police tried to disperse the crowd, reportedly firing bullets and using tear gas. Order was restored on 20 September, but the situation in Nyala remains tense with markets only partially open and minimal movements in town, OCHA reports.

**North Darfur:** Sudanese government forces and rebels reportedly clashed on 26 October around the key town of Mellit in North Darfur state. According to SAF sources, five insurgents were killed; the SLA estimate that 15 SAF soldiers were killed along with two insurgents.

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

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

On 10 September, the Liberation and Justice Movement faction (LJM), a rebel group gathering ten smaller Darfur rebel organisations since February 2010, claimed liberation of the military region of Um Hashaba located west of the North Darfur city of El Fasher. The rebels allegedly ousted army troops and militias from the area in an attack which killed 26 army staff and militiamen.

**Insecurity and Attacks on Internally Displaced People (IDPs):** In September, there were reports of increased violence from SAF and affiliated militias against IDPs in camps in Darfur. IDPs across Darfur continue to face attacks from various armed non-state actors. According to the Association of Displaced Persons and Refugees of Darfur, North, Central, and West Darfur are the hardest hit. On 18 September, 30 militiamen stormed into Kalma Camp in South Darfur, allegedly beating and harassing IDPs before police could intervene. In early September, attacks against IDPS were reported in Kerenik in West Darfur, while attacks against civilians occurred in Manawashi in South Darfur on 2 September. On 3 September, new assaults were reported from Marshang in South Darfur. In August, attacks occurred in Hila Beeda near Zalingei, capital of Central Darfur, at Hamidiyah camp in Central Darfur, and near Dankoj IDP camp in Saraf Omra in North Darfur. Since late June, similar incidents have been reported from Zalingei in Central Darfur, and El Salam, Dumma and Toum Kittir camps in South Darfur, Murnei camp in West Darfur, Dreige camp in South Darfur, Um Haleeb camp and Nertiti camp in Central Darfur.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

OCHA reported in mid-August that 3.2 million people, over a third of Darfur’s population, are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of the decade-long conflict and insecurity.

**Displacement:** According to UNHCR as of mid-August, there are 2.4 million IDPs in Darfur; an estimated 1.4 million live in camps. OCHA stated on 30 June that roughly...
287,000 people have been displaced or severely affected by inter-tribal fighting and conflict between armed groups and the Government from January to June. According to UNHCR in August, there are almost 300,000 new IDPs since the beginning of 2013.

UNHCR observes that around 36,200 Sudanese refugees from Darfur have arrived in Chad since January 2013. There are currently an estimated 330,000 Sudanese refugees in Chad. As instability persists across Darfur, this number may increase. Since January 2013, roughly, 3,400 new Sudanese refugees have arrived in CAR (mainly from Central Darfur). Roughly, 5,000 people were displaced from Sudan to CAR in March, reports the UN.

Up to 200,000 people, according to local sources, were displaced in the Nyala area in South Darfur. At present, people continue to arrive at camps, notably Al-Salam camp where living conditions are dire.

In South Darfur on 21 May, renewed violence between Al-Gimir and Beni Halba tribes displaced 20,000 residents of Katela town to the southern neighboring Tulus area. IOM reported fighting between Salamat and Taisha tribes that caused 1,800 people to flee their homes in East and South Darfur and take refuge in South Darfur’s Kalma IDP camp. An estimated 60,000 people also took refuge in El Sereif and Saraf Omra in North Darfur.

In East Darfur according to HAC, an estimated 135,000 people displaced as a result of the Rizeigat-Ma’aliya tribal clashes need humanitarian assistance. These people were displaced primarily from villages in Adila and Abu Karinka localities following inter-tribal fighting that began in August 2013. HAC reports that this fighting has displaced an estimated 84,910 people in Abu Karinka and 50,000 in Adila. However, government restrictions have prevented humanitarian organisations from assessing the needs of these people or verifying their number.

In East Darfur, according to HAC, an estimated 144,000 people have been displaced following clashes between Reizegat and Maaliya tribes which started on 9 August in Adila and Abu Karinka. ECHO reported on 12 September that the most urgent needs of these IDPs are food, non-food relief supplies, emergency shelter, WASH, and health assistance. Because of Government restrictions, access to these two areas is reportedly limited. According to UNAMID, 10,000 people in Labado town continue to seek refuge near the UNAMID site, with the town remaining empty. In Kulaykili Abu Salama in Assalaya locality, East Darfur, tribal tensions forced about 500 people to flee the area in mid-July.

An estimated 11,600 people displaced from around Muhajeria are taking refuge in Abu Dangal village and Shaeria town in East Darfur. According to HAC, these IDPs were displaced from Muhajeria town in Yassin locality in April following fighting between SAF and the Sudan Liberation Army – Minni Minawi faction (SLA-MM). HAC states that the 9,000 displaced people in Abu Dangal have yet to receive any non-food relief assistance. There has been a sharp deterioration in the health coverage in Shaeria since MSF-Belgium suspended operations following a decision from the National Intelligence and Security Services. This has negatively affected an estimated 16,000 people in Shaeria town and nearby villages.

In Central Darfur, HAC notes that an estimated 15,300 people have fled their homes and sought shelter in Um Dukhun town since April 2013, when fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes over resources started. The new IDPs in Um Dukhun were displaced mainly from Magan, Kabar, and Salaelee administrative units and parts of Mukjar locality. Over 22,000 people were internally displaced due to the Misseriya-Salamat conflict in Central Darfur. Most of these IDPs have not received food assistance, though some have benefited from NFI distributions, and water and sanitation assistance.

As reported by the STP in mid-August, ongoing bombing by SAF of the Jebel Marra Mountains in North and South Darfur has displaced 17,000 people from the area. According to the UN, there are about 100,000 people in the Jebel Marra area either displaced or severely affected by conflict.

**Disaster:** OCHA reports that heavy rains since mid-August have impacted 29,135 people and destroyed 2,562 houses in North Darfur. In South Darfur 18,440 people are affected, and in West Darfur 960 people are affected. Local sources reported heavy rains in El Salam IDP camp in South Darfur destroying over 1,000 homes. In early September, heavy rains were reported in central Darfur, with at least 95 houses destroyed north and south of Nierteti, and in North Darfur with over 100 homes destroyed at camp Dankuj in Saraf Omra. In West Darfur, rains and floods caused a number of injuries among IDPs in the Abu Suruj camp.

In early August, heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding was recorded across North Darfur, affecting El Fasher, Melit, El Kuma, and El Malha as well as in South Darfur, in Nyala and surrounding IDP camps, killing seven people and destroying 400 houses. Rains also affected the districts of Al Wadi, Jebel, Al Jeeer, Taiba, and Texas.

**Access:** According to OCHA as of late October, armed groups in Abu Hamra in South Darfur have threatened to steal fuel, ammunition, food, and money from vehicles traveling in the area. Armed groups have reportedly established checkpoints to target humanitarian vehicles. If this situation is not resolved an estimated 34,000 displaced people in Mershing, Manawashi, and Khor Abeche areas will not receive humanitarian assistance, OCHA reports.

Two separate attacks on UN peacekeepers in West and North Darfur on 11-13 October witnessed a deteriorating security trend in the region. On 13 October, three Senegalese peacekeepers were killed and one injured after being ambushed by members of an unidentified armed group in West Darfur. According to UNAMID, the police unit came under attack while escorting a water convoy from El Geneina to the UNAMID regional headquarters in West Darfur. On 11 October, a UNAMID military observer from Zambia was killed and one injured after being ambushed by unidentified armed group in East Darfur. According to UNAMID, the police unit came under attack while escorting a water convoy from El Geneina to the UNAMID regional headquarters in West Darfur.
On 6 August, UNHCR stated it had increasing difficulties negotiating the renewal of work permits for international staff in Darfur, resulting in a temporary scale down of operations in Darfur. Agencies such as WFP and UNICEF have not experienced problems with the renewal of work permits.

According to WHO, inaccessibility due to insecurity is a major concern in North Darfur, particularly in conflict-affected areas of Jebel Amir, namely ElseraiF town, Kebakba and Saraf Omra. In South and East Darfur, particularly in Jebel Marra, access has been a concern for operational organisations.

As reported by the UK-based Sudan Social Development Organisation on 19 August, an estimated 80,000 people in Abu Karinka, Adila, Bakhet and Abu Jabara towns in East Darfur have been cut off from life-saving assistance due to the ongoing strife between Maaliya and Rizeigt Arab tribes. These people are living without access to water, shelter, or medical assistance.

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

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

Almost 275 cases of food poisoning from contaminated grain were reported from Murnei camp in West Darfur on 25-26 August, resulting in 13 deaths. Large numbers of livestock have also reportedly died.

According to WHO, cases of acute jaundice syndrome and measles were reported in ElseraiF area, North Darfur, but emergency response was not immediately carried out due to insecurity. Local media reported on 23 July that four children died of measles in El Salam IDP camp near Nyala. There are concerns that the camp might have to be dismantled.

Blue Nile and South Kordofan states

Political and Security Context

Security Context: Armed clashes between SAF and the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and Blue Nile continue to result in death and displacement of civilians, as per reports from humanitarian organisations. According to unconfirmed reports, in a most recent expression on 22 October, SAF planes attacked South Kordofan’s Umdorain county, causing civilian casualties and destroying homes and farmland. Hostilities continued in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States throughout September 2013, despite the unilateral cessation of hostilities declared by the SPLM-N on 31 August 2013, according to the South Kordofan and Blue Nile Coordination Unit (SKBN-CU). On 30 September, SPLM-N announced the end of a unilateral cessation of hostilities agreed last month, stressing they would work to support the current popular uprising.

SKBN-CU reports that the Sudanese Air Force aerial bombardments in September resulted in civilian casualties and displacement in El Buram, Dalami, Delling, Heiban, Kadugli, Rashad, and Um Durein localities in South Kordofan and Bau, Geissan, and Kurmuks localities in Blue Nile.

SKBN-CU previously reported that July and August saw intensive ground fighting in insurgent-controlled areas in Bau, Geissan, and Kurmuks counties, Blue Nile leading to civilian displacement. In SPLM-N-controlled areas of South Kordofan, aerial bombardment and ground fighting resulted in civilian casualties and displacement. An August report by Sudan Consortium (a coalition of 50 Africa-based and Africa-focused NGOs) reported at least 23 civilians killed and another 81 civilians injured by aerial bombardments since January 2013.

In Blue Nile, heavy fighting was reported in the Tamado Mountain area in Geissan locality on 16 September, and fighting and aerial bombardments on 17 September near Dindiro in Bau locality, 90 km from the Blue Nile State capital, El Damazine. OCHA said that an estimated 300 people from Wigo and Madum areas in Bau locality (about 35 km southwest of Ed Damazine town) fled their homes because of fighting between SAF and SPLM-N forces.

On 24 July, in an indication of increasing levels of coordination achieved between armed movements, elements of the SRF, an alliance of armed opposition movements comprising SPLM-N and the JEM, attacked an army position in al-Rachad in central North Kordofan, with people reportedly killed on both sides. Rachad is near the state capital El Obeid and Um Ruwaba, a city stormed in a coordinated attack of the SRF in April. On 27 July, elements of the SRF staged an attack on an SAF patrol in Al Deleima village, 18 km north of Delling town and 150 km from Kadugli on the main Kadugli-El Obeid highway linking South and North Kordofan. The fighting came as the AU was trying to mediate the oil crisis that has led to the worsening of the relations between Juba and Khartoum over the past weeks.

On 27 April, talks about a possible ceasefire between the rebel SPLM-N and the Sudanese Government stalled over the issue of humanitarian access corridors. According to SPLM-N, the adjournment of the negotiations is linked to Khartoum’s insistence on linking the humanitarian issue to the political one, a condition the rebel group strongly rejects. Humanitarian access to the area remains limited. As of June, no announcement regarding the date for the next round of talks had been made public.

At the end of April, after seizing Abu Karshola town, an SPLM-N armed group briefly besieged and looted the town of Um Ruwaba, a strategic stronghold linking Southern Kordofan to Northern Kordofan. This unprecedented attack and the fighting that ensued in the aftermath triggered regional resonance, leading Khartoum to overtly accuse Juba of supporting the rebels.

Humanitarian Context and Needs
On 26 June, in a controversial statement, Khartoum asserted that the humanitarian situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states is witnessing no problems, except in limited areas under rebel control.

Displacement: During September, more refugees arrived in Upper Nile State, South Sudan from Talodi and Abu Jubaiah areas of South Kordofan due to aerial bombardments and acute food insecurity, according to SKBN-CU. Official numbers of the new refugee population from Talodi and Abu Jubaiah are unavailable, but OCHA reports that over 2,800 refugees were located in Fashoda, Malakal, and Melut counties in Upper Nile State as of 3 October 2013. NGOs reported that refugees from Talodi exhibited emergency levels of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). According to UNHCR, more than 196,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile have sought shelter in South Sudan.

Following ground fighting in Baw, Geissan, and Kurmuk counties inside Blue Nile, an influx of 3,000 refugees reportedly crossed into Ethiopia from Geissan county at Ashimbu and at a smaller crossing south of Kashankaro. The SKBN-CU reported that as of late September, numbers of IDPs remain high in Baw and Geissan areas, with Sudanese refugees from Geissan continuing to arrive in Ethiopia. SKBN-CU reported the arrival of 1,436 newly displaced people to Gambarda and Doglog areas in Kurmuk locality in late September. These people arrived from Kalatu Shamall area in Kurmuk following fighting between the SAF and SPLM-N forces in the area. As of early October, 32,000 refugees from Blue Nile have arrived in Ethiopia since 2011.

On 17 August, local authorities in Fashoda county, Upper Nile State in South Sudan said that a significant number of refugees crossed into the area from South Kordofan in previous days. The refugees were reportedly severely food insecure, with four persons dying after their arrival; 4,000-5,000 people were already in the area with urgent need for food, shelter, and other humanitarian assistance.

According to UNHCR, people from South Kordofan (Warni, Kaw Nyaro, and Talodi areas) continued to arrive in South Sudan’s Upper Nile state from 23-29 September, most are from Warni reportedly fleeing insecurity. More than 550 people arrived from South Kordofan in to South Sudan’s Upper Nile State (Malakal and Fashoda counties) in September. People from Kaw Nyaro and Talodi areas say they left because of food insecurity and lack of prospect for future harvest.

As of 30 June, OCHA stated that 231,000 people in South Kordofan and 95,000 people in Blue Nile were displaced or severely affected by conflict in government-controlled areas. In SPLM-N areas, 700,000 people in South Kordofan and 90,000 in Blue Nile are displaced or severely affected by conflict according to local estimates. The UN reports that it has no presence in SPLM-N controlled areas and is unable to independently verify these figures.

Access: According to a 6th June UN report, access remains limited in rebel-held areas, but has improved in government-controlled areas since January. As of mid-August, there is no humanitarian access from Sudan to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan.

On 25 June, the Sudanese ruling NCP warned foreign aid groups expelled from the country against entering Blue Nile and South Kordofan states without Khartoum’s permission. The NCP secretary stated that some organisations previously working in Sudan who had been expelled due to violating government policies were trying to sneak back in. He claimed that these groups sought entrance through political bodies and people with connections to rebels to collect information on the humanitarian situation in Sudan and fabricate reports with the help of organisations such as Amnesty International and Transparency International. The NCP official revealed a new strategy for civil society organisations in line with the government’s policies regarding human rights work in Sudan and underscores permanently banning groups that support rebels from entering the country. The authorities currently ban access of foreign groups to rebel-held areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

On 4 April, WFP reported a breakthrough in delivering food aid to the Blue Nile state for the first time since conflict began 18 months ago. WFP reported delivering aid to 33,000 IDPs in North Kordofan from Abu Karshola in South Kordofan in April and May.

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

FEWSNET reports that the highest level of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 4) is projected among IDPs in SPLM-N controlled areas of South Kordofan until December 2013. Poor households in these areas are projected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). In Government-held areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, food security is relatively better due to ongoing humanitarian assistance, according to FEWSNET, although stressed levels (IPC Phase 2) are likely to persist through end December.

The effects of the deteriorating food security will be exacerbated by the continued lack of access to humanitarian assistance, the near-abscence of income sources from agricultural production and labour, and progressive stripping of assets over an extended period since June 2011.

Health and Malnutrition: According to unofficial reports, malnutrition rates among children <5 in the conflict-plagued regions is 30%, double the emergency threshold according to WHO.

Updated: 29/10/2013

ANGOLA FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new developments. Last update was: 22/10/2013

Political and Security Context

A unit of Angolan troops crossed into neighbouring Congo Republic on 13 October, taking position in several locations in Kimongo district and detaining 40 Congolese soldiers, according to local sources.

Angola’s ambassador in Brazzaville said he was unaware of Angolan troop movements inside the Congo Republic and denied that his country’s army was detaining Congolese
Congo deployed soldiers to the area after learning of the incursion, but they were quickly subdued by the Angolan forces. The soldiers were released on 17 October.

The incident highlights tensions around Angola’s oil-rich Cabinda enclave, which is separated from the rest of Angola and surrounded by Congo Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo. Cabinda is home to the FLEC rebellion, which has been fighting a low-intensity guerrilla war against Angola’s Government for decades.

Angola, which possesses one of the region’s most capable militaries, has in the past pursued FLEC separatists beyond its borders, notably inside Democratic Republic of Congo. FLEC signed a cease-fire in 2006; which was rejected by the Paris-based president of the group’s armed wing.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Food Security: Since November 2012, Angola has been affected by a prolonged drought leaving 1.8 million people affected, out whom 700,000 are reported to be at risk of food insecurity by OCHA in late September. In August, 1.5 million were reported to be food insecure. Crop and livestock productions have been adversely impacted on account of the prolonged dry conditions and the resultant poor pastures. The five southern provinces of Namibe, Cunene, Kuando Kubango, Huila, and Benguela are the most severely hit. In Cunene, the hardest hit province, the GAM rate has reached 24%. Crop losses in Cunene are expected to reach up to 80%, adversely impacting farmers including semi-nomadic communities and children <5. This represents 50% of Cunene’s population of whom 130,000 are children <5.

In Namibe province, a June joint assessment found that 250,000 people were affected by the drought and 70% of crops destroyed. CARE estimated that remaining household food stocks would not last until September. After food insecurity, the greatest reported problem is lack of access to water. Half of all water points are no longer working or have dried up, according to UNICEF. People are reportedly migrating in search of water and pasture for their cattle.

As a result of the drought, and despite an anticipated improvement of food security nationally compared to 2012, southern provinces are expecting a poor cereal harvest for the second consecutive year, negatively impacting food security. The government has established an emergency plan to provide assistance in the southern province of Cunene, where roughly 640,000 people are affected by the drought.

Health and Nutrition: As a result of the use of untreated stagnant water, levels of waterborne diseases are increasing. An estimated 1,571 cases of cholera have been reported in the provinces of Huila, Cunene, and Benguela, with 62 deaths. The Ministry of Health has reported an epidemic of dengue fever (over 900 cases and ten deaths) and an outbreak of measles in 60% of the municipalities, particularly affecting malnourished children. Malaria is affecting large numbers of Angolans, with 75 deaths in eastern Lunda Sul province in the first quarter of 2013 and 15,000 cases registered overall. An estimated 533,000 children suffer from varying levels of malnutrition in a country that is still recovering from decades of a civil war that lasted until 2002.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013
average rainfall in August and September may have negatively impacted planting activities of second season crops, for harvest in December/January, and rainfall amounts and distribution in the coming months will be crucial for crop development and performance.

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

According to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, one wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case has been confirmed in Cameroon. This is the first WPV in the country since 2009. Genetic sequencing is on-going to determine origin of the isolated virus.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

ETHIOPIA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

As of 28 October, two additional polio cases were reported, bringing the national polio caseload to six. All cases were reported in Woredas which share borders with Somalia where the polio outbreak in the region started in May.

As of 28 October in East Hararge zone (Oromia region), admission of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) to therapeutic feeding programs (TFPs) has decreased to 2,403, consistently with the downward trend seen in the zone since February. However, September’s rate is still 7% higher compared to the SAM caseload in September 2012.

As of 21 October, 536 cases of measles and eight deaths were reported in SNNPR since the beginning of the outbreak in early September.

Food Security: As of October, FAO reports that about 2.7 million people are estimated to be in need of food assistance due to consecutively below average belg and sugum rains. Similarly, the Ministry of Agriculture reported that as of September, due to recurrent droughts in past seasons leading to low crop production, deterioration of livestock, and asset depletion, more than 2.6 million people will be in need of emergency food assistance.

Regarding national security, Al Shabaab has been repeatedly threatening Ethiopia since 2011, and Addis Ababa recently pledged that it will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is maintained. So far, no attacks have materialised, and the Ethiopian army managed to ensure the security of the state. It has also been able to put down protests and contain armed insurgencies in the Ogaden and Oromo regions, but the government has yet to address the root causes of the violence.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

On 12 September, ECHO reported that 50,433 IDPs in East Harargue are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Displacement: According to ECHO on 12 September, inter-communal clashes in Kenya (Moyara area) have caused an estimated 25,000 to cross into Ethiopia since mid-July. Most of the IDPs have camped in schools with some hosted by relatives. Urgent needs include water, food, medicine, and cash assistance.

In addition to the newly arrived Kenyan refugees, UNHCR reported that Ethiopia is hosting 423,850 refugees, including 242,580 Somalis, 77,000 Eritreans, 68,000 South Sudanese and 32,000 Sudanese as of end of September.

Disaster: ECHO reported on 10 September that heavy rainfall causing floods in August affected an estimated 195,000 people (39,000 households) in 219 districts, killing up to 40. Flooding damaged livestock and over 30,000 ha of crops. Most affected areas are North Shoa, South Wollo, North Wollo, Oromiya (of Amhara region), North Gonder, and East and West Gojam. OCHA noted on 9 May that floods have affected an estimated 50,000 people across the country since April. Oromia and Somali regions were the most severely hit.

Over 8,300 hectares of belg cropland were destroyed by armyworms in Wolayita zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (SNNPR), an area that suffered from heavy rains which had already damaged belg crops. The damage caused by armyworms was deemed to further reduce the expected July to September harvest. The infestation spread to Boricha, Bona Zuria, Dara, Dale, Hawassa Zuria and Loko Abaya woredas of Sidama zone, Loma and Mareke woredas of Dawro zone (SNNPR), and in drought prone areas of East and West Hararge zones of Oromia region. In Borica woreda, more than 655ha of belg cropland was destroyed in a week.

Political and Security Context

On 13 October, a bomb blast killed two people in the capital Addis Ababa. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the government has thwarted plots of attacks blamed on rebel groups based in the south and southeast of the country, as well as the Somali Islamist movement Al Shabaab which Ethiopia has been fighting alongside African Union forces since 2011.

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

According to observers, the country is most likely to remain stable in the coming decade, due to a steady suppression of any political opposition, the perspective of a new peace process between the government and separatist groups, and Addis Ababa’s determination to accelerate economic growth in a context of sustainable peace. However, the recent shift in national leadership (following the death of the longstanding Prime Minister in August 2012) is raising fears of unrest if new constituencies start voicing their grievance against the lack of political freedom and the economic situation characterised by high inflation rates and food insecurity.
in the second half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia (897,000 people in need), Somali (690,970), Amhara (548,000), Tigray (321,400) and Afar (152,600).

Other estimates suggest that the total number of people affected by food insecurity might be as high as 3.5 million. Recent reports indicated that East and West Hararghe zones in eastern Ethiopia have deteriorated into food insecurity Crisis (IPC Phase 3) following two consecutive, poorly-distributed rainy seasons and a below average meher harvest in October-November 2012.

Crops in most agropastoral areas in Afar, northern Somali, and the lowlands of Bale, Guji, and Borena zones in Oromia region are reported to be performing well. Most crops are currently at the seed setting stage as of early October.

According to OCHA, delayed belg rains in most belg-receiving parts of the country, including SNNPR, north eastern Amhara, eastern and southern Tigray, and central and eastern Oromia regions, have led to late planting of belg crops. FEWSNET asserts that poor households in affected areas will not be able to meet food needs through the next harvest without depleting livelihoods assets. Most households have turned to the market to access food as early as January as their food stock from the 2012 belg and meher harvest was exhausted.

According to FAO, prices of the main cereals continued in recent months to follow the upward seasonable trend that started at the beginning of the year, with prices of maize increasing by between 6 and 20% from June to August. FAO reported on 10 September that in Addis Ababa, prices of maize and red sorghum were 24 and 35% higher, respectively, than 12 months earlier, while prices of wheat, white sorghum and teff were at around the same levels.

FEWSNET reports that the above normal precipitation in August and September in highland areas continued to cause weather hazards including waterlogging, flooding, and landslides that have damaged crops, primarily in SNNPR. Flooding in Shashego woreda in Hadiya, Humbo in Wolyaita, and Loka Abaya in Sidama temporarily damaged crops in more than 3,000 hectares (ha) of land in total. In addition, torrential rainfall along with hail and strong winds in Shebedino woreda in Sidama zone destroyed crops including maize, coffee, chat, haricot beans, and enset on around 4,000 ha. Reports from North Gondar zone in Amhara revealed snows and hail fell in Debark, Gondar Zuria, and Adiarkay woredas, damaging 5,700 ha of crops.

Health and Nutrition: Since the beginning of the outbreak in early September, 536 cases of measles and eight deaths were reported in SNNPR as of 21 October.

On 23 August, a polio outbreak in the Horn of Africa was reported to have spread in Ethiopia. According to WHO as of 28 October, two additional polio cases were reported, bringing the national polio caseload to six. All cases were reported in Woredas which share borders with Somalia where the polio outbreak in the region started in May.

The Yellow Fever outbreak declared in mid-May by the authorities continues in South Omo, Segen and Arbaminch zones, SNNPR with 141 cases reported and 55 suspected deaths (still to be confirmed) in North Ari, South Ari, Benatsemay, and Selmago woredas, as reported by OCHA. Past weeks saw a decrease in reported cases in parallel with the spread of the outbreak to neighbouring zones. Reported cases have gradually declined since mid-June.

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

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

Updated: 29/10/2013

KENYA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY

Highlights

25 October: Kenyan authorities have called for Somali refugees to be repatriated, claiming that refugee camps were being used as a safe haven for Islamist militants and are a threat to national security. The Society for Threatened People previously stated that the latest attack by Islamist extremists on Nairobi may have serious consequences for the Muslim population and for the Somali refugees in Kenya.

Political and Security Context

Even though Kenya is considered to be relatively stable, the eastern region of the country is regularly affected by the presence of the armed group Al-Shabaab, a Somali group of insurgents, which is active along the border, including the areas of Mandera, Bute, El Wak, Dif, Dabdaab, and Garissa. On 21 September, a group of heavily armed Al-Shabaab fighters attacked a shopping centre in the capital Nairobi and took dozens of hostages. Multiple firefighting followed during a four-day siege, killing 67 people and wounding over 180. On 29 September, the Kenya government announced that no hostages were left in the building. Al-Shabaab reportedly claimed the attack in retaliation for the involvement of Kenyan troops in Somalia.

On 26 September, two police officers were killed in an Al-Shabaab-claimed attack on a security post in Mandera (near the Somali border). Such attacks against police and other targets are frequent along Kenya’s porous border with Somalia. The incursion of Somali Islamists in Nairobi is a source of concern, as the insurgents are not usually active beyond the eastern border area.

On 24 September, the Society for Threatened People reported that this latest attack by Islamist extremists may have serious consequences for the Muslim population (which
Displacement: On 11 June, OCHA reported that inter-communal conflict has caused over 52,000 people to be displaced since January 2013. According to ECHO on 12 September, inter-clan clashes in the area of Moyale displaced over 25,000 people, mostly across the border of neighbouring Ethiopia. IDPs are currently staying with relatives in Moyale and in Marsabit and Wajir counties.

According to OCHA, rains had displaced 12,380 people as of 17 May 2013, with an additional 2,000 displaced in Marigat district after the waters of Lake Baringo rose, flooding farms and homesteads at end July.

According to UNHCR as of June, the influx of Somali refugees into Kenya continues, with a total number of 494,704. ECHO reported however on 9 September that the verification exercise conducted in Dadaab by UNHCR showed a reduction by almost 16% of the camps’ population, from approximately 475,000 to 402,455. The Kenyan Government estimated the number of Somali refugees in Kenya at 600,000 people as of late June 2013.

In July, Kenya and Somalia signed a deal for “voluntary repatriation”, though the actual modalities remain to be agreed.

Population displacement from Jonglei state in South Sudan to Kenya has been reported, with 5,000 refugees registered with UNHCR in Kenya since May 2013.

Disaster: At the end of July, local media reported that heavy rains increased water levels of Lake Baringo in western Kenya, forcing around 2,000 people in Marigat district to flee their homes for higher ground. More than 800 acres of food crops were destroyed and local leaders said many people were at risk of starvation. The western district of Pokot was affected with floods destroying maize crops, local media reported on 14 August.

Food Security: 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 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.

In the southeastern and coastal marginal mixed farming livelihood zones in Kenya, the average to above average rainfall in March and April 2013 was followed by a dry spell in May, which ceased during a critical stage of maize development. FEWSNET reported in August that poor households are likely to be able to meet minimum food requirements, and the prices of livestock generally increased compared to the dry season.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Health: In the Horn of Africa, the outbreak of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has reached 31 cases in total. According to OCHA on 16 August, ten cases were registered in Kenya,

In unrelated violence in western Kenya, tension is high along the West Pokot and Turkana county borders after two people were killed early October by raiders suspected to be Turkana. End of June, a raid killed three herders, and repeated incidents in August and September caused an unknown number of families to flee the area of Bargoi in Samburu county. Motives behind the attacks are unclear but are suspected to be in retaliation of the killing of a Turkana boy by Samburu raiders. The western province saw a surge in indiscriminate attacks by various armed groups and gangs in early May, affecting the cities of Bungoma and Busia. However, the two communities recently held talks where they agreed to peacefully resolve feuds between them.
all in Dadaab in the northeast. This is the first WPV outbreak in Kenya since 2011. To date, two rounds of outbreak response activities have been undertaken, targeting 1.35 million people, including all age groups in Dadaab.

According to 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.

Political and Security Context

On 25 October, the people in Madagascar voted in the country's first presidential election since the 2009 coup. The elections were hailed by international observers as free, transparent and peaceful, despite isolated incidents of violence as well as some organisational flaws that prevented some from casting their ballots. The results from the first run are still being counted as of 29 October. In the probable case that no candidate get more than 50% of the votes, a second run-off election between the top two candidates is scheduled for 20 December.

Following the army-backed coup by current President Andry Rajoelina, who ousted President Marc Ravalomanana in 2009, Madagascar has been mired in turmoil. The current elections are designed to end the deep political crisis. The new dates were reached following three earlier postponements this year, amid a lack of funding and controversy over the candidacies of three top contenders. After the presidential polls, a parliamentary election between the top two candidates is scheduled for 20 December.

As of early October, an estimated 223,000 persons require assistance due to constrained food access. The Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (Southern Africa) (FNSWG) reports that this number includes some 15% of the rural population.

The number of food insecure marks a decrease of 70% compared to the previous year, mainly due to strong production gains made in 2013 compared to the drought-affected harvest of last year. Production output has doubled compared to 2012.

Meanwhile, FEWSNET reports that generally stable or increasing incomes, stable food prices, and ongoing poverty reduction programs facilitate relatively average to good food access, sufficient to meet minimum food needs (IPC Phase 1: Minimal) in most parts of the country at least through December.

Rains in Lesotho begin around October/November or November/December and are strongest between January-March. The 2013/14 rains are forecast to be near average for Lesotho.

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.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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Food Insecurity: According to the crop and food security assessment undertaken by FAO and WFP, as many as 4 million people, or 28% of the households in rural areas, of Madagascar are food insecure following this year's reduced harvest. A further 9.6 million people are at risk of food insecurity. The south of the island, already a chronically food-insecure area, has been particularly affected, with severe food insecurity being significant in the regions of Androy, Atsimo Atsinanana and Atsimo Andrefana. The regions of the
The sharp decrease in harvest output is attributed to several factors including flooding caused by Cyclone Haruna earlier this year followed by a period of poor rains, uneven rainfall distribution and a persistent locust plague.

Damage caused by cyclone Haruna in February 2013, resulted in widespread crop losses in south-western parts.

Uneven rainfall distribution (both temporally and spatially), and a delayed start of the 2012/13 rainy season by one to two months, were observed in the rice producing regions in the north and center of the country. As a result significant reductions in the rice output were estimated in north-eastern regions, of up to 60%, relative to 2012’s harvest.

In addition, since April 2012, Madagascar has been facing a plague of the Malagasy Migratory Locust, which threatens the livelihood of 13 million people in the country according to FAO. Two thirds of the country was feared infested as of 25 September. Findings from a damage assessment conducted in May 2013 indicate that rice crop losses due to locusts in 2012/13 vary from 10-40% in 17 of Madagascar’s 22 regions. This has both damaged crops and discouraged farmers from planting.

The impact of the locust plague has been most severe in the southwest, which contributes on average about 7% to the national rice output. However, although the impact of the locust plague has been comparatively limited on the national rice production, it had a significant impact on the livelihoods of the households in affected areas. In addition, the locust plague, which has already reached some of the main rice producing regions in the north, is expected to have a serious impact on next season’s crop, if not controlled.

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

Updated: 29/10/2013

MALAWI FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights
No new updates. Last updated: 22/10/2013.

Political and Security Context

On 11 October Joyce Banda, the president of Malawi, dismissed her entire cabinet of 25 ministers amid a corruption scandal. Up to 10 government officials have been arrested. They have been charged with money laundering, misuse of public office and corruption.

Nine senior police officers were each jailed for 14 years last month for their roles in a $164,000 fraud.

On 15 October Paul Mphwiyo was appointed new finance minister. The government official, who was seen as an anti-corruption crusader, was shot and seriously injured last month in an apparent effort to silence him.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Food Security: Results from the 2013 Vulnerability Assessment Committee’s (MVAC) evaluation, released in July, indicate that some 1.46 million people in Malawi are food insecure, and will continue to be so until March 2014. The estimated affected population compose 9.5% of the national population, located in 21 of the 28 districts in Malawi, suggesting that areas of need are more widely spread than last year and include the traditional surplus areas of central and northern Malawi. While the overall figure represents a drop of about 26% from the 1.97 million people food insecure recorded in 2012, it is about 57% above the five-year average. The largest numbers of food insecure persons are located in Kasungu (Central Region) and Mzimba (Northern Region) districts, reflecting production declines in 2013.

The August 2013 IPC round concluded that emergency (IPC phase 4) situation exists in four districts in the south while a crisis (IPC phase 3) exists in central and northern areas, due to food production declines.

The number of people in need of assistance is likely to increase to up to 1.9 million people as people’s livelihoods have started to deteriorate, influenced by negative coping strategies. For example, asset bases are depleting as a result of recurrent food shortages.

The main driver of food insecurity this year has been the rising price of maize. Higher transportation and production costs, following the devaluation of the currency (kwacha) in 2012, and production decreases relative to the previous year have sustained high prices across the country.

The continuing high price of both food and non-food commodities has contributed to stressing food security conditions, with many households experiencing a severe contraction in their purchasing power, as reported by FAO. National staple maize prices started rising seasonally in June, with an average price increase of approximately 14% between June and July, which is higher than the average month-to-month increases during this period. In September 2013, the national average maize price was 114.47 Malawian Kwacha (MK) per kg compared to 56.18 MK per kg same time last year, showing an increase of 104%.

Maize availability is expected to be further decreasing as the lean season begins earlier than normal in October.

According to FAO, the 2013 cereal production in Malawi is estimated at 3.89 million tonnes representing a 5% increase over last year’s production of 3.84 million tonnes. The country has also recorded a 4.4% increase in the production of roots/tubers. Malawi is one of the few countries in the region that have recorded cereal surplus, estimated at about 305,000 tonnes. Malawi has recorded surpluses in maize (269,000 tonnes); rice (19,000 tonnes);
sorghum/millet (56,000 tonnes) and a deficit in wheat of 39,000 tonnes. However it will be insufficient to cover the domestic demand.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

NIGERIA INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

As of 26 October, UNICEF reported 49 cases of polio so far in 2013, representing a decrease compared to the 102 cases reported for the same period in 2012. 72% of the cases are recorded in Borno, Yobe, and Kano states, where insecurity is slowing the polio immunization campaign.

21 - 25 October: Nigeria’s military launched a series of ground and air assaults on Boko Haram camps in Borno State and reportedly killed 70 suspected insurgents. In a separate outbreak of violence, Islamists militants conducted coordinated raids in Yobe State, local authorities reported that 25 rebels died in these attacks.

As of 23 October, cholera has killed 50 people in the northwestern state of Zamfara over the last ten days, nine people in the central Plateau state in October and eight people in the southwestern Oyo State in September. The disease also infected several hundred people across the three states. The 2010 and 2011 rainy season epidemics killed nearly 2,000 people over two years. High population density combined with poor sanitation make Nigeria highly vulnerable to further outbreaks.

In September, an interagency assessment was conducted in seven northeast states affected by the violence between Boko Haram and the Nigerian army. The assessed areas included the three states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa where the State of Emergency (SOE) was declared by the government in May, but also surrounding states affected by the spill over of the conflict and population displacement. This assessment estimated that 5,975,700 people are impacted by the crisis in the SOE states, with over 4 million of them in Borno. Women and children represent 3 million of the population of concern, and most urgent needs include food, WASH and protection.

Political and Security Context

Despite the deployment of forces to the three north eastern border states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, recent attacks attributed to the Islamist insurgent group Boko Haram has created concern that violence will only escalate as 2015 elections draw closer. In mid-May, Nigerian President Jonathan declared a state of emergency (SOE). Fighting between government troops and the Boko Haram has intensified in the last three months, particularly in remote areas. Over the past few weeks, several hundred people have died in attacks, and observers report that the army offensive has only succeeded in pushing attacks away from large towns toward vulnerable rural areas.

Boko Haram is an Islamic militant group founded in Maiduguri, capital of Borno state, more than ten years ago, that has been leading an insurgency to create an Islamic state in Nigeria’s mostly Muslim north. Since 2009, the insurgency has cost more than 3,600 lives, including 400 since the beginning of 2013. In May, the group took control of part of Borno state, prompting authorities to deploy large numbers of troops. In the aftermath, the Islamist group dismissed the possibility of participating in a peace resolution committee set up in April to frame potential peace talks with authorities.

From 21-25 October, Nigeria’s military launched a series of ground and air assaults on Boko Haram camps in Borno State and reportedly killed 70 suspected insurgents. In a separate outbreak of violence, Islamists militants conducted coordinated raids in Damaturu (Yobe State), local authorities reported that 25 rebels died in these attacks. On 20 October, Boko Haram Islamists killed 19 people along the Nigerian border with Cameroon, in retaliation after their failed attempt to attack the border town of Gamboru Ngala two days earlier, when they were repelled by soldiers and local vigilante. On 5 October, rebel fighters claimed five lives in an attack on a mosque in Damboa town in Borno state, before being repulsed by soldiers who killed 15 of the insurgents, according to military sources.

On 29 September, heavily armed Boko Haram gunmen attacked an agricultural college in Guija, roughly 30 kms from Yobe's capital of Damaturu, killing 40 students as they slept. According to Amnesty, during 2013 alone, at least 70 teachers and scores of pupils have been killed and wounded. Fifty schools have been burned or seriously damaged and more than 60 others have been forced to close. Boko Haram has claimed responsibility for many, but not all, the attacks. On 25 and 26 September, suspected Boko Haram fighters conducted attacks in the states of Yobe and Borno, killing respectively six and 27 people.

On 17 September, suspected Boko Haram insurgents set up checkpoints in the Benisheik area (northeast), and allegedly gunned down travellers on a highway. As of 22 September, the death toll rose to at least 142. Local sources reported that residents from Borno were especially targeted, and while motivation behind the assault is unclear, Boko Haram members have repeatedly carried out revenge attacks against residents in retaliation for the emergence of vigilante groups among the population. On 8 September, clashes in Benisheik between Boko Haram members and a vigilante group caused the death of 13 vigilantes and five insurgents. The insurgents had been conducting repeated attacks on villages in the region following the creation of the auto-defence Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a local vigilante group formed by young civilians. On 31 August, 38 people were reportedly killed in attacks by militants, with another 34 missing. Gunmen allegedly conducted two attacks in Borno state, one in a village where they killed 14 herdsmen, and the other in the forest where they killed 24 members of a vigilante group.

On 10 and 12 September, government forces reported that two military strikes on Boko Haram camps killed over 150 insurgents in the Kunduga area of Borno state. On 20 September, Boko Haram fighters allegedly opened fire on security agents in the capital Abuja, starting a gunfight which caused at least seven deaths.

Since the SoE declaration, Boko Haram has allegedly committed at least 46 violent attacks across the three northern states. While the militants’ assaults focus mostly on security forces and government officials, the group has also targeted Christian and Muslim worshippers, as well as schools and markets, spreading instability across the north and to the capital Abuja.

On 19 August, authorities claimed that Abubakar Shekau, the leader of the Boko Haram
group, may have been killed in a clash with government troops. In mid-August, the cross-border Multi-National Joint Task force, a group fighting Boko Haram in Nigeria, Chad, and Niger, reported that Nigerian soldiers killed two top insurgent commanders during a battle in Adamawa state.

According to observers, Boko Haram may be taking advantage of the porosity of borders with Chad and Niger that allow criminal groups, including weapon dealers, to freely migrate between the countries. Nigeria’s authorities are also trying to curb the activity of the less operational Islamist group Ansaru that is linked to al-Qaeda.

In unrelated violence, armed men suspected to be cattle rustlers killed ten members of a family and engaged in a firefight with security forces in the central Plateau state. This central state, which lies between the Christian-dominated south and mainly-Muslim north of the country, is plagued by years of communal or ethnic-religious violence, which has caused hundreds of people to be killed.

### Humanitarian Context and Needs

The ongoing conflict in north eastern Nigeria has displaced a significant number of people, restricted population movements, disrupted food inflow, and limited agricultural activities. An interagency assessment was conducted in September in seven northeast states affected by the violence between Boko Haram and the Nigerian army. The assessed areas included the three states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa where the State of Emergency (SOE) was declared by the government in May, but also surrounding states affected by the spill over of the conflict and population displacement. This assessment estimated that 5,975,700 people are impacted by the crisis in the SOE states, with over 4 million of them in Borno. Women and children represent 3 million of the population of concern, and most urgent needs include food, WASH and protection.

**Displacement:** According to the UN on 28 August, thousands of Nigerians were crossing into Niger due to ongoing military offensives against Islamist militants. As of 9 September, UNHCR reported that an estimated 17,000 people (mainly women and children) had been forced to flee inside Nigeria or seek refuge in neighbouring countries (Niger, Cameroon, and Chad). The ongoing violence continues to trigger internal and international displacement, particularly in Borno and Yobe states. An inter-agency assessment conducted in mid-July indicated that IDPs are mostly living with host families, adding serious strain to already overstretched resources of local communities. IDPs reported no limitation of movements. Reasons for displacement include: increasing insecurity, limited access to social services; and the rising cost of commodities.

Though a large number of IDPs are reportedly present in Nigeria, reliable estimates are lacking. In April, OCHA stated that at least 22,000 new IDPs were displaced by inter-communal conflict, political crisis, disaster and insurgency, particularly in the northeast.

**Disaster:** As of 11 September, OCHA reported that floods, which occurred between 14 April and 17 August in Nigeria, affected an estimated 81,500 people. According to the National Emergency Management Agency, the worst affected states are Abia, Bauchi, Benue, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kano, Kogi, and Zamfara. ECHO reported on 12 September that heavy rainfall on 7-8 September caused floods in Plateau State, destroying 300 houses. To date, no information on the numbers of IDPs is available, but hundreds of people were reportedly displaced in Katsina state, namely in Kankia, Charanchi, Mashi, Daura, and Zango which were affected by the collapse of Kankia Dam.

To date, severe flooding has affected more than 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel region in Africa. The areas affected by heavy rains in August were still recovering from the 2012 floods, allegedly the worst experienced by Nigeria in 40 years.

**Access:** On 22 August, OCHA reported that humanitarian access is being granted to all three states where the SOE was declared in May. However, insecurity and limited communication have hampered humanitarian actors on the ground, with continued terrorist attacks leading to the interruption of all development activities.

**Food Security:**

On 22 August, OCHA reported that an estimated 8.3 million people in Adamawa, Borno, and Yobe states are threatened with limited access to markets and decreased household income due to ongoing insurgency and the SOE, which are disrupting farming activities in the region. Since the Boko Haram occupation in January, 20,000 farmers have reportedly abandoned their farms in the fertile New Marte District in northern Borno, along the Lake Chad Basin.

In September, FEWSNET reported that conflict in the northeast continued to impact food security for many Nigerians. Due to above average food prices and the residual impact of conflict on livelihoods, poor households in the northeast will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity through September and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity following the below average October harvest expected in areas experiencing conflict.

As of September, the recovery among poor households affected by flooding in 2012 remained slow, particularly along the floodplains of major rivers in the country, and affected households remained Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in September, FEWSNET reported.

Food access and availability are predicted to increase with the start of the main harvest in October, although production is expected to be below average in several areas impacted by flood. In parts of central and northern zones, rain deficits will likely result in an average to below average main harvest.

Households not impacted by the Boko Haram conflict are expected to meet food needs with their own stocks through at least December, resulting in a change to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity between October and December.

**Health and Nutrition:** Health officials reported on 23 October that cholera has killed 50 people in Zamfara state over the last ten days, nine people in the central Plateau state in October, and eight people in the southwestern Oyo State in September. The disease also infected several hundred people across the three states. The 2010 and 2011 rainy season epidemics killed nearly 2,000 people over two years. High population density combined with poor sanitation make Nigeria highly vulnerable to further outbreaks.

According to UNICEF in October, Nigeria has reported a total of 49 cases of polio so far in 2013, which represents a decrease compared to the 102 cases reported over the same period in 2012. 72% of the cases are recorded in Borno, Yobe, and Kano states, where insecurity is slowing the polio immunization campaign.
In mid-August, ECHO reported that 492,000 children in northern Nigeria are severely malnourished. According to UNICEF, GAM rates are the highest in Sokoto state, at 16.2% (international emergency threshold: 15%), while Kano state, at 9.2%, has the lowest.

Updated: 29/10/2013

ZIMBABWE FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new updates. Last updated was: 23/09/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Food Security: According to the results from the 2013 Annual Rural Livelihoods Assessment (ARLA) by the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZimVAC), released in July, 802,603 persons in rural areas are currently (July-September) food insecure in Zimbabwe. The current number marks a seasonal decline form the 1.67 million people assessed to be food insecure in the first quarter of 2013. According to WFP, the current food insecurity is due to various factors including adverse weather conditions, the unavailability and high cost of agricultural inputs such as seeds and fertilisers, and projected high cereal prices due to the poor maize harvest. The ARLA assessment reports that the number of food insecure is projected to rise to 2.2 million people (25% of the rural population) during the peak lean period January-March 2014, with numbers starting to rise in October. This would be the highest number of food insecure in Zimbabwe since early 2009. The projected increase is mainly due to the lower domestic harvest.

The provinces of the south and west of the country generally have the highest rates of food insecurity, reflecting those areas that experienced unfavourable weather conditions and consequently poor cereal harvests in 2013, according to FAO. Zimbabwe has five natural regions, each with varying suitability for growing crops. The drought-prone provinces of the south and west, such as Masvingo and the South and North Matabeleland provinces, are typically ranked as the most unsuitable areas for crop production. The highest proportions of food insecure households are currently estimated to be in Zvishavane (52%), followed by Binga (50%). These provinces have also experienced among the highest maize prices in the country in 2013.

The results of the July 2013 IPC round in Zimbabwe indicated that Crisis (IPC phase 3) conditions prevailed in three provinces and projected a Crisis (IPC phase 3) situation in seven provinces out of the nine provinces in the country.

Overall, the aggregate cereal harvest in 2013 is estimated at about 1 million tonnes, close to 150,000 tonnes below the 2012 output and about 27% below the five-year average. Maize production has been particularly low in 2013, estimated at about 799,000 tonnes, which is 17% lower than the below-average output in 2012. Poor rainfall during the main cropping season (November-June) in southern and western provinces, as well as an overall contraction in the area planted, contributed to this year’s production decline, FAO reports. By contrast, production of sorghum, which is generally more tolerant to water deficits, is estimated to have increased slightly by 6% to about 69,000 tonnes. The inter-

wheat crop, to be harvested in October, is expected at a similar level to last season’s output.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

BURUNDI DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 23/09/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: According to UNHCR at the end of August, Burundi is currently hosting over 46,000 refugees and 7,700 asylum seekers, marking an increase of 2.3% compared to July. Refugees are mainly located in the border regions of Ngozi (north, along Rwanda), Ruyigi (east, along Tanzania) and Bubanza (west, along DRC). Most (more than 40,000) are fleeing violence and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). UNHCR reported a significant increase in the number of arrivals from DRC over the last three months and indicated that over 6,000 new refugees arrived between January and August 2013, compared to 3,500 over the same period in 2012. Most of the newly displaced are hosted in two transits centres in the west (Cishemere in Cibitoke and Kajaga in Bujumbura) before their transfer to other refugee camps in the east of the country. As of 20 August, an average of 150 new arrivals per day was recorded at the western border; the number of refugees hosted by the local population was still under assessment.

On 12 September, UNHCR reported that at least 25,000 Burundian refugees living in Tanzania have been forcibly repatriated during August, and are now back in Burundi where they are living in dire conditions. The civil war, which followed the coup in 1993, displaced up to a million Burundians who fled to the more stable Tanzania. Most of these refugees returned after the conflict ended in 2006. Tanzanian authorities seem to be increasing their expulsions of refugees from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda.

IDMC reported that though there has been no new displacement recorded since 2008, there are still up to 79,000 IDPs in the country, mostly ethnic Tutsis displaced by inter-communal violence following the coup in 1993. They are mainly located in northern and central Burundi.

Food Security: As of August, the Food Security and Nutrition Working group reported that 76,450 people in Burundi are facing Emergency and Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and 4). In June, WFP indicated that 46% of households had poor to borderline food consumption, which represents a slight improvement compared to the 49% in April 2012. Market prices increased during the lean season, and the depreciation of the Burundian Franc (BIF), the Burundian currency, continues to limit food imports, but heavy rains during the first and second cropping seasons of 2013 have helped to improve food availability.

Prices of locally produced beans and cassava flour, the main staples, increased from June to August by 6 and 17%, respectively, due to a below average season harvest. Retail
prices of maize increased by 7% in June and remained at record level of about BIF 1,000 per kg in the following months.

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

Health: July marked the tenth consecutive month of a cholera epidemic, the longest seen in the country. As of 23 July, over a thousand people have been affected, and at least 17 died.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

DJIBOUTI FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 23/09/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Food Security and Malnutrition: As reported by FEWSNET, crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity is expected to persist through December, in Southeastern and Obock pastoral zones. Poor consecutive rainy seasons, coupled with anticipated poor livestock production and a decline in labour opportunities, are widening household food deficits. Significant improvement in the Karan/Karma rains has enhanced pasture and water availability in north-western pastoral areas.

Reportedly, continued Stressed acute food insecurity is expected for most poor households in Djibouti City’s urban areas of Balbala, Radiska, and Baulaoas and is anticipated to heighten through December. High unemployment rates of up to 48% and high staple prices are causing urban to peri-urban migration to areas such as Balbala. The food voucher programme for vulnerable households (from July through September covering Ramadan and Eid), in addition to humanitarian and food assistance programmes, should improve household access to food.

Several consecutive years of drought have led to a critical food security situation in Djibouti. Currently, 70,000 vulnerable people are at Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. Most households affected by severe and moderate food insecurity are concentrated in the rural areas of Ali Sabieh, Dikhil and Obock. Rainfall levels in coastal areas at the end of the Heys-Dadaa rainy season (October through March) were 50%-75% below normal. Rural areas near Obock town in the northeast and 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 Sankal and Kabah-Kabah. 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 persistent cold.

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

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

NAMIBIA DROUGHT

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 31/08/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Food Security: According to the Food and Nutrition Security Working Group for Southern Africa, the food security conditions are critical as the drought impacts continue to take its toll on vulnerable populations. The number of severely food insecure continues to increase, and as of August the figure has been revised from around 331,000 people to 463,600 people. Another 450,000 are moderately food insecure, according to an 8-20 April 2013 Emergency Food Security Assessment.

On 17 May, the President of Namibia declared a national drought emergency and called for assistance from the international community. Results of an Inter-Agency Emergency Food Security Assessment also indicated that agricultural production will be very poor due to the lowest seasonal rainfall for decades.

The Government forecast suggests that the prolonged dry period during the 2012-13 cropping season (November-June) will result in a decrease in the main cereal production for 2013 by an estimated 42% compared to 2012 production levels. Grazing pastures have also been severely affected in six regions where many households rely on livestock production: 4,000 livestock deaths have been recorded. The cumulative rains between January and March were approximately one-third of the average with the poor rains most pronounced in southern and western Namibia. The north western Omusait Region, which contributes approximately 14% to the national cereal output, was severely affected by below-average rains and an outbreak of armyworms. It is expected to record a sharp decline in cereal production, estimated at 50% below average. The most affected provinces are Omusati, Kunene, Erongo, Otjozondjupa, Khomas, and Kavango according to low resolution satellite images.

Water levels are decreasing, and 40-50% of water points no longer function. Many farmers are forced to sell cattle, due to lack of pasture, while cow-herds from Angola, which also
suffer from the drought, are reportedly crossing the border in search of food, fuelling tribal tensions as competition for scarce pastures intensifies. The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) has been activated in mid-September 2013. Its main role is the monitoring of the overall drought response. It is still unclear when the Emergency Response Plan, which is to be led by Government with support from humanitarian partners, will be adopted. The biggest challenge remains the issue of water stress for livestock and human consumption.

As reported by IFRC, the initial response of the government’s food aid only targeted rural communities. However, it has been reported that people in urban areas, especially those in informal settlements in Kunene, are equally affected by the drought. Local authorities in Kunene have appealed to the government to include people in urban areas on the beneficiary list of its food aid.

Droughts are recurrent in Namibia, impacting local economy and food security. The northern regions of the country have been historically most affected by droughts and are particularly vulnerable due to high population density. The situation is expected to worsen with the dry season and predicted to last until December.

Health and nutrition: IFRC noted that six cases of cholera were reported in Kunene region on the border with Angola at the end of July. These are now said to be under control. A screening centre was opened at the border of Namibia and Angola. At the end of 2011, Angola suffered a severe cholera outbreak.

The Namibia Red Cross Society reported in July that there are about 109,000 rural children <5 at risk of malnutrition because of lack of food and poor sanitation.

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

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

SENEGAL FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was: 15/10/2013.

Political and Security Context

Although Senegal enjoys a reputation for stability in a largely volatile region, the country has yet been unable to resolve the conflict in the Casamance area. Separatist movements are still opposing the authorities along Senegal’s southern border with Guinea-Bissau in a conflict that is however mostly dormant. In March, attempts to restart talks between the warring parties were undertaken, while rebels warned against demining the region.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster: On 13 September, ECHO reported that heavy rainfall caused flooding, which affected 163,212 people in the western regions of Fatick, Kaolack, and Thies, as well as in the capital Dakar, which registered the highest number of affected persons (88,466). To date, the floods caused three deaths and damaged a significant number of houses and infrastructure. Senegal’s rainy season lasts from July to September, with a peak in August, and this year’s floods particularly impacted urban areas, most notably in Grand Yoff (Dakar). Most urgent needs include shelter, food assistance and non-food items, and operations of disinfection of stagnant water in urban centres are a priority, to avoid a deterioration of the situation.

To date, severe flooding has affected more than 400,000 people across nine countries of the Sahel region in Africa.

Food Security: Nationally, 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 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.

While seasonally dry conditions prevailed until June in most parts of the country, abundant rainfall seen throughout August made up for the rain deficit recorded at the country’s central and northern gauging stations. Cumulative totals from May 1 to September 20 were normal to above-normal. This positive trend should continue until the end of October. Due to the stable price of main staple foods, normal income earning, availability from the near-average harvest, and terms of trade for goats/millet that favour pastoralists, households will continue to experience Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) until December according to FEWSNET.

Green harvesting of maize, cowpeas, and groundnuts has begun in Kaolack and Kolda, and spread throughout the country due to which cereal availability has been observed to have improved both in markets and in households. In 2012, harvesting of maize and millet, two major grains produced in Senegal, was completed in November, while the rice harvest was completed in late January. Aggregate 2012 cereal production was estimated at about 1.67 million tonnes, about 52% up on 2011 drought affected harvest, and a 15% increase relative to the five-year average. Domestic production covers only half the country’s cereal consumption, and the country still relies heavily on rice imports from the international market to meet its food requirements.

Health and Nutrition: According to UNICEF as of late September, four northern regions are estimated to surpass the emergency threshold of 15% of General Acute Malnutrition (GAM): Matam (20%), Kanel (18%), Podor (17%), and Ranerou (16%). UNICEF has reported that the Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) caseload for children <5 more than doubled the expectations of 2012. For 2013, the SAM burden is estimated at 63,323 children <5, and the Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) is estimated at 255,675 cases. UNICEF reported on 2 September that since the beginning of the response in 2012, 23,000 children have been admitted in treatment for SAM, including 1,559 new admissions...
reported in July (data from 36% of nutritional facilities). The 2012 SMART survey further identified 16 of 45 departments as critical. Based on this geographical breakdown, 11 of 14 regions were identified as in need of emergency support based on prevalence of malnutrition and aggravating factors such as diarrhoea and ARI: Diourbel, Fatick, Kaffrine, Kedougou, Kolda, Louga, Matam, Saint Louis, Sedhiou, Tambacounda, and Thies.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

**ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY**

**Highlights**

No new development this week. Last update was: 16/09/2013.

No confirmed data on the food security situation or food price levels is available. Therefore, Eritrea is not included within the Global Overview prioritisation.

**Political and Security Context**

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

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

On 21 January, dissident Eritrean soldiers with tanks laid siege to the Information Ministry, forced state media to call for the release of high-profile political prisoners, and demanded 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.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement:** According to UNHCR, Eritrean refugees crossing to neighbouring Ethiopia are on the rise, while the number entering Sudan has dropped compared to 2012. Since January, UNHCR and the Ethiopia government’s refugee agency, the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), have registered over 4,000 new Eritrean refugees. As of June, Ethiopia hosts nearly 72,000 Eritrean refugees, a record high, in four camps in the northern Tigray region and two others in the Afar region in north-eastern Ethiopia.

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

Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

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

**Disaster:** Although information remains limited, Eritrean authorities have indicated that heavy rains and the damaging of a major diversion canal in Hashenkit area have caused flooding on 5 August in Haikota sub-zone, resulting in the destruction of at least 20 houses. Heavy rains have been recorded in the area since mid-July.

Extensive floods that affected tens of thousands of people were recorded in nearby Sudan.

**Access:** There is a lack of updated and reliable data on the humanitarian situation due to limited humanitarian access and a ban on humanitarian organisations assessing needs.

**Food Security and Malnutrition:** 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.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

**AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT**

**Highlights**

27 October: A roadside bomb in eastern Ghazni province killed 18 civilians in an attack. No group has claimed responsibility to date.

26 October: A gunfight broke out between Afghan and foreign soldiers on the outskirts of the capital Kabul, killing one Afghan serviceman and injuring several others in an incident that may have been an insider attack. Not counting this last incident, ten insider attacks have been recorded this year for a death toll of 15 foreign personnel killed since the beginning of the year.

23 October: Several local and international observers have voiced concerns regarding the transparency of the elections’ campaign in Afghanistan after 16 presidential candidates were disqualified by the Independent Election Commission for contravening...
Political and Security Context

International and Regional Political Context: In late August, President Karzai visited Islamabad to attempt to mend bilateral relations while testing the ground for Pakistan’s involvement in peace talks with the Taliban. One of the visit’s aims was allegedly to press Islamabad into releasing a list of senior Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan who are seen as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table. In late September, Pakistan agreed to release Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command, who is in a safe house in Karachi. Baradar, a founder of the Taliban insurgency, is seen by Kabul as a respected figure who could use influence moderate Taliban commanders to negotiate with Afghan authorities. On 3 October, a meeting was cancelled after Taliban commanders refused to meet former chief Baradar in the city of Peshawar, allegedly because the latter was accompanied by Pakistani security agents. As stated by the Afghan Taliban on 9 October, Pakistan still has not freed their second-in-command, Mullah Baradar, as promised. In September, Pakistan released a group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not directly handed over to Afghan authorities. As of 26 October, mutual suspicions continue to run high while Kabul is intending to officially demand an explanation regarding the situation with Baradar during a meeting between the leaders of the two countries scheduled to take place in early November.

In mid-August, as reported by a senior Afghan peace negotiator and former Taliban diplomat now working with the Karzai government, the resumption of peace talks in Qatar with the Taliban is increasingly unlikely. Fresh talks in Turkey or Saudi Arabia appear to be a more realistic option by Kabul. No Western source has yet commented on the statement, though it is unlikely that negotiations with the Taliban would be conducted without the US.

In May, tensions sharply escalated between Kabul and Karachi following two border incidents, further straining the relations between the two countries. However, tensions seem to have at least partially diffused since.

International Military Presence: On 12 October, US Secretary of State John Kerry and Afghan President Hamid Karzai ended two days of talks on a bilateral security pact without a deal because they could not agree on the issue of legal immunity for US troops in Afghanistan. The talks, prompted by an unannounced visit by Kerry to Kabul, were meant to determine how many US troops would remain in Afghanistan after 2014 when most foreign combat troops are due to withdraw. Nevertheless, according to Karzai, the talks allowed for progress on another core disagreement: the US request to run independent counter-terrorism missions on Afghan territory. According to local reports, the future of US troops in Afghanistan after 2014 is likely to be decided by an assembly of tribal elders in late November.

A few months before the planned 2014 April presidential elections that will bring a new leadership to Kabul, the talks are crucial in determining the future of US-Afghanistan cooperation. US officials have openly stated that the zero option (a complete pull out of all US troops after 2014) remains on the table if no deal is reached with Kabul. This possibility is seen as an implicit warning to Afghanistan as most observers believe that the Afghan security forces would be unable to hold against the insurgents without international backing.

Most of the 86,000 international troops stationed in Afghanistan are scheduled to withdraw by end 2014. Over 75% of the country was expected to be under national security control by end-July 2013, following the formal handover of national security from the US-led NATO coalition to Afghan forces in June. Within the US-led NATO coalition, there is widespread concern regarding the capacity of the 352,000-strong Afghan security forces to cope with the insurgency. As reported by an Afghan official in early September, police deaths have nearly doubled as the NATO forces have started withdrawing and handing over security to local troops. An estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen died and over 2,700 have been wounded in the last six months.

National Political Context: On 16 September, candidate nominations opened for Afghanistan’s presidential election scheduled for 5 April 2014. As reported by Human Rights Watch on 9 October, 2014 presidential candidates include former military and militia commanders implicated in serious rights abuses, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Karzai, Afghan’s only leader since US intervention in 2001, is constitutionally barred from running for a third term. According to international observers, there are currently no favourites to succeed Karzai, as the country is growing increasingly turbulent. Several local and international observers have voiced concerns regarding election transparency after 16 presidential candidates were disqualified by the Independent Election Commission on 23 October for contravening to the election rules.

The Taliban movement officially announced on 6 August that it did not intend to participate in the 2014 presidential elections and would continue fighting until all foreign troops left the country. In June, the US leadership was forced to delay planned talks in Qatar, following the Afghan government’s anger over being bypassed in the negotiations, and the opening of a Taliban political office in Qatar. To date, Kabul is refusing to participate in peace talks that are not Afghan-led.

Security Context: Since they vowed to start a new campaign of attacks on 27 April, launching insider attacks as a key tactic against foreign and Afghan military forces targets, the Taliban have intensified offensives in Afghanistan. Since May, insurgents have largely targeted foreign military and humanitarian targets and deliberately target civilians who are seen to cooperate with the government. A Taliban spokesperson indicated in late June that the insurgents have no intention of changing their tactics in conflict-plagued Afghanistan despite possible peace talks and the scheduled presidential elections.

On 27 October, a roadside bomb in eastern Ghazni province killed 18 civilians in an attack not immediately claimed by insurgents. On 26 October, a gunfight broke out between Afghan and foreign soldiers on the outskirts of Kabul, killing one Afghan serviceman and injuring several others in an incident that may be an insider attack although it was not officially labelled as such. On 18 October, Taliban insurgents attacked a convoy of foreign vehicles in Kabul with gunfire and a suicide car bomb, the first major incident in the capital since July. At least two Afghan civilians were killed and another four wounded in the attack. On 15 October, a bomb killed the Afghan provincial governor of Logar as he made a speech at a mosque after Eid prayers. Eight people were wounded in the explosion for which no group has yet claimed responsibility. On 13 October, a man in an Afghan army
uniform shot dead a US soldier in Paktika province in another insider attack, according to NATO officials. The latest incident is the tenth such attack this year and the fourth in less than a month, bringing the death toll of foreign personnel killed in insider attacks to 15 since the start of 2013.

In September, several attacks were recorded across the country with two insider attacks in Pakhtia province, an ambush on a military Afghan convoy reported from Badakhshan province, and assaults and attacks occurring in Helmand, Ghazni, Wardak, Kunduz, Herat, and Nangarhar provinces. In August, militant attacks were recorded in Nangarhar, Kunduz, Ghazni, Helmand, Farah, Herat, and Paktia provinces with dozens of Afghan military and civilians killed. Over the past two months, attacks conducted by armed groups increasingly targeted foreign troops and bases with, for instance, a high-profile attack conducted against a military a base operated by Polish and Afghan forces in Ghazni province and one striking the Indian consulate in Jalalabad, Nangarhar province in August. In May, attacks against ICRC and IOM compounds in Afghanistan were recorded.

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

**Military Operations:** Against this background, military operations are ongoing. On 11 October, US forces reportedly captured senior Pakistani Taliban commander Latif Mehsud in a military operation in eastern Logar province. Other reports suggested that Mehsud was seized from an Afghan government convoy in the province as Afghan officials were trying to recruit him to launch peace talks several weeks ago, contributing to the current tensions between Washington and Kabul. The arrest of Mehsud could represent a blow to Tehreek-e-Taliban in Pakistan while the movement is reportedly facing dissention over Islamabad's attempts to launch peace talks. On 6 October, four NATO soldiers were killed in an operation in southern Afghanistan where the Taliban have been recovering ground, as forward operating bases were shut as part of the NATO disengagement plan. On 4 October, a retaliatory NATO airstrike in Nangarhar province after the insurgents shelled a joint NATO-Afghan base near Jalalabad resulted in the deaths of five civilians, according to authorities. The last incident came less than a month after another NATO air strike allegedly killed nine civilians in the Watapur district of Kunar province. Both incidents are currently under investigation. Casualties of Afghan civilians and military caused by air strikes conducted by NATO-led forces have been a major source of friction between Kabul and its international allies over the years.

Heavy military operations were reported in Faryab, Badakhshan, Maidan Wardak, and Pakhtia provinces between May and August, although reliable information remains scarce. According to Afghan military sources, insurgent numbers are up around 15% on last year’s summer fighting months.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

**Afghanistan south and southeastern provinces are particularly vulnerable, ranking high in numbers of security incidents, civilian casualties, and conflict displacement, and low in health and nutrition indicators. An estimated 7.7 million people in Afghanistan are in need of protection. The security situation cross the country is becoming increasingly volatile.**

**Displacement:** To date in 2013, conflict-induced displacement is the main cause of acute humanitarian need, with a marked increase in previously stable provinces in the north, particularly in Faryab and Badakhshan, noted OCHA. As of 30 September, there were 612,000 conflict-induced IDPs in Afghanistan.

According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 30 September, there were an estimated 2.4 million Afghan refugees in Iran, including 1.4 million undocumented Afghans. Over 2.9 million Afghan refugees, including one million undocumented refugees, reside in Pakistan. An estimated 200,000 Afghan refugees are registered in other countries, placing an increased humanitarian burden on neighbouring countries, triggering tensions as Iran and Pakistan push for their repatriation.

Pakistan recently agreed not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June; Kabul and Islamabad also agreed, at the UN-backed meeting, to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation. On 5 July, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a Pakistan province hosting roughly 60% of Afghan refugees, officially opposed extending Afghan refugees’ stay in the country and suggested that should the need arise, registered Afghans be equally distributed among the four Pakistani provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab, and Baluchistan.

**Disaster:** On 9 September, rainfall and consequent floods and landslides affected several villages in Zebak district, Badakhshan province. As of 10 September, local and international media reported 20 people dead and 20 missing in a landslide, while 34 houses were damaged, livestock killed, and roads destroyed.

**Access:** As reported by OCHA, 34 incidents against humanitarian personnel were recorded in 16 provinces in September. Active hostilities and threats of violence continued to impede humanitarian access. This is a significant increase compared to August when 25 violent incidents against aid workers were recorded. Security incidents involving aid workers have been on the rise in 2013 compared to 2012 with high-profile attacks against ICRC and IOM compounds happening last May.

September incidents included one death, twelve injured, the abduction of nine staff, as well as vehicle hijackings, robberies, small arms fire, intrusion and search of humanitarian facilities and health centres; detention and interrogation of personnel, threats, intimidation and collateral impacts; and an attack on a food relief convoy. The majority of incidents were in the eastern region where increased hostilities and scrutiny of aid agencies continued to lead to interferences with aid workers in rural Nurristan, Nangarhar, and Laghman. Conflict related hostilities in Badakhshan, Wardak, Kabul, Logar, Nangarhar, Kundar, Kandahar, and Helmand provinces continued to interfere with access. September saw the highest number of incidents against health facilities and personnel this year, with 11 incidents reported from Wardak, Helmand, Nurristan, and Kunar provinces.

Against this background, movement restrictions are increasingly applied on aid workers.
and relief organisations are reviewing security protocols. The humanitarian space in Afghanistan continues to shrink as security becomes increasingly precarious.

**Food Security:** OCHA reported in mid-June that 4.5 million people in Afghanistan are food insecure, with 2.25 million people severely food insecure and targeted with humanitarian aid. Households in the extreme northeast, especially in Badakhshan province, central highlands, low-income and disaster-affected households across the country, and IDPs are especially vulnerable to food insecurity.

As reported by OCHA in late September, vulnerable families are facing a tough winter after dryness in the growing season caused crop failures in Ghor, Daykundi and Bamyan provinces in the central highlands of Afghanistan. A WFP/ FEWSNET mission reported that 80% of rain-fed areas and 24% of irrigated areas were affected.

According to a mid-August WFP report, a preliminary forecast put the 2013 wheat production at 4.9 million tons, slightly below the 2012 harvest, which was the second highest on record for the last 35 years. However, large differences exist between provinces. Smaller wheat harvests were gathered in Faryab, Ghor Jawzjan, and Khost due to dry spills and early rains combined with wheat rust in some areas. Despite bumper harvests in 2012 and 2013, wheat and wheat flour prices in some provinces have been increasing since June 2012. Flour prices recorded higher increases reflecting limited availability of domestic flour.

Continuous depreciation of the Afghani over the last two years has amplified the price increases in local currency.

**Health and Malnutrition:** War-related hospital admissions increased by 42% from January to April 2013 compared to the same period in 2012. In Helmand province, there has been an almost 80% increase in hospitalised injuries caused by conflict this year. The Health Cluster reported a 40% increase in security incidents from January to April 2013 compared to 2012.

As reported by OCHA in mid-June, 125,692 children <5 suffer from GAM, including 28,650 suffering from SAM.

**Updated:** 29/10/2013

**SYRIA CIVIL WAR**

**Highlights**

**28 October:** The Syrian Government submitted a plan to destroy its chemical weapons arsenal, in line with a UN Security Council resolution according to which Syria's chemical weapons are to be eliminated by mid-2014.

**27 October:** 19 opposition groups in Syria stated that they will not attend the Geneva II peace talks, indicating that negotiating with the Government of President al-Assad would be an act of betrayal. It is unclear to what extent these groups represent the armed opposition groups currently fighting in Syria. The Geneva peace talks, which are to take place on November 23, have repeatedly been postponed due to disagreements over preconditions to the talks and over which countries should participate.

**24 October:** Large parts of Syria faced electricity cuts after a gas pipeline feeding a power station was attacked near the Damascus airport. The authorities are working to resolve the problem and electric power has gradually returned to a number of areas.

**23 October:** The leader of the Syrian National Coalition, the main umbrella group for opposition parties, indicated that the opposition group will not attend talks unless several conditions are met, including the removal of President al-Assad, safe passage in besieged areas, and the release of detained men, women and children. The Syrian National Coalition is to meet November 9 to decide on participation in the Geneva peace talks.

**Political and Security Context**

With the Geneva II peace conference back on the international diplomatic agenda, fighting has increased across Syria since the start of October with the Government of Syria taking control of strategic areas around Damascus and in the south of Aleppo. While the Syrian National Council plans to make a decision on 9 November on participation in the Geneva II conference, several armed opposition groups have already publicly rejected participation in the peace talks.

**Armed Conflict:** Clashes, shelling and airstrikes were reported this week particularly in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Dar’a, Homs, and areas around Damascus city. The stalemate which characterised the conflict over the last month has reportedly been broken, with the Government taking control of strategic areas around Damascus and south of Aleppo. Mid-October, Government forces captured a town south of Damascus city, thereby securing a key highway that links the capital with the Damascus International Airport. Opposition forces managed to take control of small pockets in the south of the country.

Clashes around Qalamoun hill in northern Damascus and an attack by Jabhat Al Nusra on Sadad village are widely seen as a premonition to a larger battle for the Qalamoun Mountains. These mountains are located strategiically along the international highway between Damascus and Homs and are a conduit to Lebanese territory as well as an important entry point for supplies from Lebanon.

**Inter-Group Fighting:** The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), an extremist armed group linked to al-Qaeda, enlarged its areas of control in the north, at the expense of other opposition groups. At the same time, mainstream opposition groups are fighting alongside more extremist armed groups in some areas. In Homs, for instance, the different armed groups pressed an advance mid-October against Government troops aimed at capturing major weapons depots. Clashes between Kurdish groups and al-Qaeda affiliated armed groups continue, primarily in Al-Hasakeh governorate. On 25 October, Kurdish fighters took control of Rabia’a post, one of the two main crossings with Iraq, after three days of clashes with extremist groups.

**International Political Context:** While the international community has renewed efforts to organise the Geneva II conference, the same factors that led to an impasse at Geneva I are still in play, namely that many opposition groups will not come to the table without the
assurance that President Assad will not figure in a transitional government. Conversely, the Government of Syria will not enter discussions if this demand is met.

Though several Western and Arab powers agreed with Syrian opposition leaders that President al-Assad should play no future role in a Syrian Government during a conference in London, the opposition is becoming increasingly divided on whether to take part at all in the peace talks. After a number of armed groups engaged in battles in Syria publicly dismissed the authority of the Syrian National Coalition earlier this month, 19 other opposition groups stated on 27 October that negotiating with the Government of President al-Assad would be an "act of treason". The Syrian National Coalition is to meet November 9 to decide on participation in the Geneva peace talks.

Disagreements also exist around who should participate in the conference, with several actors opposing the presence of Iran. However, Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN-Arab League envoy to Syria, recently stressed that it is necessary for Iran to participate. No invitations have been sent for the proposed international conference and the date has not yet been officially set.

Meanwhile, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) stated that the Syrian Government has submitted a detailed plan to destroy its chemical weapon arsenal, in line with a September UN Security Council under which Syria's chemical weapons are to be destroyed by mid-2014. A joint UN-OPCW team, which has been in Syria since the start of October, inspected 18 of 23 declared sites, destroying production equipment in almost all of them.

Regional Conflict: The conflict continues to spill over into neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon whose border region is subject to shelling. Clashes erupted on 21 October in the northern city of Tripoli between communities that support the opposing sides within Syria. At least five people were killed and 47 wounded. The Lebanese Army reinforced its presence in the city in an attempt to stop the fighting.

Turkey has seen regular security incidents as a result of the conflict in Syria. On 28 October, one person was killed by a mortar shell fired from across the border, bringing the total number of casualties on the Turkish side of the border since 2012 to ten. On 15 October, the Turkish military shelled Azaz in Syria in response to shelling on Turkish territory. Turkey has repeatedly carried out such actions in the past whenever retaliatory mortar rounds were fired from Syria on Turkish territory. This is the first time fighters linked to al-Qaeda were targeted. The Government of Turkey is currently building a wall along part of its border with Syria to stop illegal crossings of smugglers and fighters in and out of Syria.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: Revised estimates indicate that the number of IDPs has increased to 6.5 million from April estimates of 4.25 million. The majority of new displacements from June to September were in Homs, Idlib, Aleppo, and the north-eastern part of the country. Large scale displacement is ongoing. MSF stated that over 130,000 people have fled Safira, a town in Aleppo, in October due to heavy fighting. Many of the displaced are extremely vulnerable to low temperatures during the upcoming winter months as they are living in buildings that lack windows, doors and electricity.

Syrians continue to flee to neighbouring countries, despite restrictions in place in Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon. As of 28 October, the number of refugees registered and waiting to register stands at 2,199,291, nearly 20,000 more than last week. Around 800,000 Syrians are registered or awaiting registration in Lebanon (Government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total, including a large number of Syrian migrants), over 552,000 in Jordan (Government estimates 800,000 Syrians in total), over 506,000 in Turkey, 198,000 in Iraq, and over 126,000 in Egypt (Government estimates up to 300,000).

Border restrictions and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in neighbouring countries is resulting in a growing number of Syrians seeking refuge in Europe. Many Syrians in Egypt feel compelled to leave, due to hostile conditions they face. Displaced Syrians face severe difficulties during their flight, including risk of drowning at sea. According to UNHCR, around 1,000 Syrians have been arrested by the Egyptian authorities while attempting to cross into Europe, while at the start of the month a boat carrying an estimated 450 Syrians and Palestinians sank in the Mediterranean Sea.

Access: Despite a non-binding statement made by the Security Council urging parties to the conflict to facilitate the provision of relief, humanitarian access continues to be limited. Six Red Cross workers and one from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were abducted on 13 October in Idlib. Reaching people in need is increasingly problematic due to insecurity, proliferation of checkpoints, and difficulties obtaining Government approval to reach distribution sites. Tensions between opposition groups are also further decreasing the geographic areas aid agencies can cover.

Although the siege on Aleppo city was lifted at the start of the October, some 2.5 million people remain trapped in besieged and hard to reach areas, according to the UN. The Government of Syria and armed opposition groups have systematically laid siege to different contested areas, including the Old City in Homs, villages in Rural Aleppo, and the Palestinian refugee camp Yarmouk. Syrian activists report that the Government tightened the siege of areas in the Eastern Ghouta region outside of Damascus by mid-October. Although over 3,000 people were evacuated from Moadamiyah on the 13th of October, more remain trapped and in need of urgent assistance.

Health: As of 17 October, WHO reported 10 cases of wild poliovirus out of 22 suspected cases detected at the start of October 2013 in Deir-ez-Zor governate. This is the first outbreak of polio in the country since 1999. In response, the Ministry of Public Health launched a vaccination campaign targeting 2.4 million people with vaccines against polio, measles, mumps and rubella, but experts fear the disease will be hard to control. Polio vaccination rates have significantly decreased since the start of the crisis, from 95% coverage in 2010 to an estimated 45% in 2013. A surveillance alert has been issued for the region to actively search for additional potential cases.

More disease outbreaks are feared as the health system and WASH infrastructure have been significantly affected by the crisis. WHO says it is already seeing increased cases of measles, typhoid and hepatitis A in Syria. In July, 60% of public hospitals, 34% of public health centres and 92% of public ambulances were affected by the conflict. A lack of medicines and medical equipment further restricts healthcare provision. Paediatricians have reported a noticeable increase in rates of moderate and acute malnutrition.
**Fuel:** At the start of October, the Government withdrew parts of the subsidy on fuel, leading to a 20% increase in the price of a litre of gasoline, from SYP 80 to SYP 100, according to officials. This will lead to a further increase in food prices due to higher transportation costs. Increase heating costs for many urban households using gasoline-powered generators to cope with frequent electricity cuts are also expected.

*Updated: 29/10/2013*

**YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**Highlights**

**26 October:** Despite a Saudi amnesty for undocumented migrants that was scheduled to expire in early July and was extended until November, 200,000 people have been deported since April. The majority of the returnees are undocumented migrant workers with daily arrivals numbering between 600 and 700 people in September. Most are traveling through the Al Tuwil border crossing in Hajjah Governorate.

**Political and Security Context**

**Political landscape:** Yemen remains highly strategic for the US in its efforts to contain threats from al-Qaeda affiliated militants and separatist tribes and for Saudi Arabia’s access to the nearby sea where oil tankers pass. The US, supported by Yemeni authorities, continues its drone strikes campaign against the militants. Since late July, drone attacks have killed at least 40 people in Yemen, including four suspected al-Qaeda militants in al-Bayda province.

Reports state that the Islamist militants have regrouped since being driven out of former strongholds during the 2012 military offensive carried out by the US-backed Yemeni army. The alleged aim of the Islamist militants is to set up an Islamist State in eastern Yemen.

The National Dialogue Conference (NDC), aimed at finding a common political agreement and recommendations for a new constitution and voting system was due to complete its work on 19 September, opening the way for full democratic elections in February 2014. Despite numerous protests and violent incidents in Sana’a and Aden Governorate, all 565 NDC participants have agreed to install Yemen as a federal state. Southern secessionists wish to divide Yemen into two regions, giving the south significant control over its own affairs, while northern parties favour a multi-region federation.

Participation of southern separatists remains uncertain with threats to withdraw support to NDC, despite Government assurances that the future of the south will be thoroughly discussed. In late August Yemeni authorities apologized to southern separatists and northern rebels for wars against them in an effort to encourage their continued participation in the NDC. On 9 October, the southern separatist al-Hirak and northern Shia al-Houthi movements staged a sit-in protest over a lack of consensus on the future of their respective regions and demanded approval of a post-NDC roadmap before agreeing to any resolution. The renewed boycotts suggest that further delays to the process are likely although it was scheduled to resume on 26 October.

The Southern Movement will continue to boycott the final plenary unless the South is given the right to self-determination and the southern issue resolved. The Houthis are reportedly insisting that victims of the Sa’adah wars be provided compensation. The ongoing boycott indicates the extent of differences between the Houthis, the Southern Movement, and the broader NDC. Given the extent of the divisions, it is unlikely that major solutions will be found, particularly regarding the north-south issue, within the current time frame allotted to the NDC.

**Safety and Security:** Suspected al-Qaeda militants continue their campaign in Yemen’s Lahij, Hadramout and Hajjah provinces. On 20 September at least 31 Yemeni soldiers and policemen were killed in attacks in Al-Shabwa governorate, the deadliest attack since May 2012, when a suicide bomber killed more than 90 soldiers at a parade in Sana’a. The Ministry of Interior is preparing to deploy more soldiers and security forces to prevent attacks on civilians.

Local security forces have been on high alert since early August amid fears of an imminent attack by al-Qaeda in Sana’a. Earlier reports indicated that al-Qaeda militants entered Sana’a from the Hadhramaut, Abyan, Marib, and Al-Shabwa governorates, potentially planning a large-scale terrorist bomb attack. The Ministry of Interior has bolstered security measures at government installations, the presidential palace, the airport, embassies, foreign installations, and the Mövenpick Hotel, which is hosting the NDC. On 6 October, one person was killed in what was reported to be a failed attempt to kidnap the Ambassador of Germany. In response, several diplomatic missions suspended activities outside their embassies.

There is a high risk of abduction of foreigners, particularly in large cities, including Sana’a. There have been nine abductions/attempted abductions of expatriates in Sana’a since February 2013.

The Yemen-based branch of al-Qaeda stated on 14 October that its attack on the army base in the city of al-Mukallain (in the south-east) on 30 September, targeted an operations room used by the US to direct drone strikes against militants. Amid threats of similar assaults, Yemeni officials denied that the army base contained a joint US-Yemen operations room, stating that its task was to prevent piracy in the nearby Arabian Sea.

**Conflict patterns:** Violence and insecurity continue across Yemen 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. Yemen is home to one of the most active wings of al-Qaeda – al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). In recent weeks, clashes between Sunni Islamists and Shiite rebels killed at least 42 people in the provinces of Amran and Rudrama.

Tribal clashes over scarce resources frequently result in casualties. Due to continued tribal attacks on energy supply lines, large parts of Yemen, including Sana’a, are frequently without electricity.

A year-long ceasefire agreement was reached in Amran between tribesmen loyal to the Al-Houthis and tribesmen loyal to the Al-Ahmar family on 14 September. The tribal-mediated agreement is a break from fighting, but not a permanent solution.
A confrontation between qat farmers and Government forces over the exploration of new water wells broke out on 6 October in Wadi Al-Ghail of Al-Qaeda district, in Ibb governorate. Water cuts in Al-Qaeda district, which occasionally last for two months, force locals to find other solutions including purchasing water at a high cost or bringing it from Dhi Al-Sifal district by car. The six day drilling operation has reportedly resumed, with the support of ten military vehicles stationed in the area to protect the site. Clashes over water resources between the Qura and Al-Marzooq villages in Taiz governorate renewed on Saturday.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

An estimated 13.1 million people (55% of the population) in Yemen needs humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA.

Displacement: As a result of widespread conflict, according to the UN in early September, over 306,000 IDPs remain in Yemen’s north, including Sana’a. Improved security has allowed 162,000 IDPs to return to areas of origin in the southern Abyan governorate and neighbouring areas. Further returns are ongoing, according to UNHCR, despite authorities’ challenges in meeting the needs of the returnees.

UNHCR recorded the arrival of over 46,000 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants from the Horn of Africa during the first six months of 2013, with an estimated 39,000 from Ethiopia and the rest from Somalia. Although this number if noticeably lower compared to 56,000 in the same period for 2012, the overall number of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants in Yemen has been rising for the past six years. A record 107,500 people made the journey to Yemen in 2012. UNHCR states that Yemen hosts more than 242,000 refugees. According to IOM, 22% are women and girls who have been victims of repeated gender-based violence.

Yemen requested assistance from IOM on 5 July in a potential repatriation of 200,000 Yemeni migrant workers forced to leave Saudi Arabia as part of a crackdown on undocumented migrants. Despite a Saudi amnesty for undocumented migrants that was scheduled to expire in early July and was extended until November, the Government reports that approximately 200,000 people have returned to Yemen since April. IOM reports that over 108,000 returns were between June and August. The majority of returnees are undocumented migrant workers with daily arrivals numbering 600-700 people in September, with most traveling through the Al Tuwal border crossing in Hajjah Governorate. According to local sources, 300,000 to 500,000 people could ultimately be deported to Yemen as a result of the policy.

Disaster: Since mid-August, heavy rains and flooding have affected 26 districts in nine governorates of Yemen. The number of affected has reached 50,000 people in southern and central regions. Since mid-August, 37 people have been killed and several are still missing due to the floods. Affected governorates include Taiz, Hajjah, Al Hudaydah and Ibb, and the Arqa area between Shabwah and Abyan governorates. Though information remains limited, there are reports of displacements and loss of livestock, livelihoods, and infrastructure in several regions of Yemen. In some areas, scarcity of drinking water has been reported.

The flash floods had a severe impact on three IDPs camps near Haradh in Hajjah governorate, affecting about 12,000 people and destroying half the tents. According to OCHA, the heavy rains washed away over half the IDP shelters in Camp 1 and Camp 3.

On 4 September OCHA reported that the new flash floods in western Yemen wiped away the main road connecting Mudhaykhirah, Al Hammadi, and Taizz, and damaged crops, farms, and houses. Local media reported on 12 September that over 100 people were displaced.

Access: Information about humanitarian needs remains difficult to ascertain due to humanitarian access hampered by insecurity and the risk of abduction of aid workers. Since the start of the NDC, civil disobedience campaigns have disrupted humanitarian work and educational institutions in southern Yemen.

Food Security: WFP reported a decrease in the number of severely food insecure people, from five million people identified by the 2012 Comprehensive Food Security Survey to 4.5 million people in September 2013. The overall number of food insecure people remains at ten million. The primary underlying causes of food insecurity are extreme poverty and high unemployment, compounded by conflict and insecurity. Food security conditions are of major concern in Aden and Lahij governorates where 90% of households are food insecure and 30% severely food insecure.

According to FAO, recent surges in prices that reached their highest level since 2011 in April are likely due to conflict in several southern areas. During April 2013, Yemen's general inflation was 14%, while that of food inflation stood at 16.5%.

Despite the below-average March-May rains in the main cropping areas of the west, the preliminary crop production estimates suggest that the 2013 cereal harvest is forecast to be 13% higher than the five-year average. Recent reports indicate that the desert locust situation has further deteriorated in Yemen and is potentially dangerous to the crops, especially given limited survey control operations which are heavily constrained by insecurity. Most infestations are along the foothills near Marib and Bayhan, but important populations are present in remote and isolated areas north of Wadi Hadhramaut and on the edge of the Empty Quarter between Al Abr, Hazar and Thamud. These areas are difficult to access. It is here that an outbreak occurred in 2007, which led to a swarm invasion in the Horn of Africa. More swarms are likely to arrive from the plateau area to the north between Minwakh, Hazar, and Thamud where the local population has reported infestations. Desert locust populations are expected to remain in Yemen. However, if northerly winds develop over the Gulf of Aden and persist for several days, there is a risk that swarms could move south from the interior of Yemen, cross the Gulf of Aden, and reach northern Somalia and adjacent areas of eastern Ethiopia.

Because Yemen imports up to 90% of its staple foods, the locusts are not expected to have a large impact on domestic food prices and availability.

Health and Nutrition: A collapse of public services following the civil unrest in 2011 severely disrupted access to health services, clean water, and basic sanitation. The UN reported that an estimated six million people did not have access to health care across the country in May. In 2012, 170 children died from measles.
As of 15 October, UNICEF reported that 1,060,000 children <5 are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition, of whom 279,146 suffer from severe malnutrition. Previously, UNHCR reported that 998,000 children <5 are acutely malnourished, with the 15% emergency threshold exceeded in six governorates.

Updated: 29/10/2013

IRAQ DISPLACEMENT, INSECURITY

27 October: Kurdish armed groups captured the Yaaroubiyeh post in north-east Syria after three days of clashes with jihadist groups there, including Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL. An Iraqi intelligence official confirmed that Kurdish rebels now held the crossing point, one of two main crossings with Iraq, adding that Baghdad brought reinforcements to the area to prevent any spillover of violence.

22-27 October: A series of attacks in Baghdad and Mosul killed at least 62 people. Another 33 people were killed in bomb attacks across Iraq this week.

Political and Security Context

National political landscape: Over the past weeks, violence has accelerated in Iraq, bringing the country closer to general destabilisation, due to deep-rooted sectarian divisions between Shi'ite Muslim, Sunni Muslim, and Kurdish factions. According to the UN, 1,000 people were killed and 2,000 wounded in September. Areas of the country most affected include Baghdad, North, North-Central and West areas of the country. Baghdad was the worst affected province with 89% of civilian deaths. In July, the UN indicated that there were 1,057 victims and 2,326 wounded in the highest monthly toll since April 2008. So far in 2013, nearly 6,000 civilians have died and 12,000 injured as the country has slid to levels of violence unseen in five years.

This week saw a string of car bombings in Baghdad, an explosion at a market, and a suicide attack in the northern city of Mosul which killed at least 62 people on 27 October. Another 33 people were killed in bomb attacks across Iraq this week. The attacks are mainly claimed by the Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda. At present, bombings are increasingly targeting cafes and places where families gather, as well as the usual military facilities and checkpoints.

On 2 September, a roadside bomb struck the convoy of Turkey's consul general in Iraq travelling from Erbil to Mosul in the north with no casualties recorded. The attack came as relations between Ankara and the central Baghdad governments have been especially strained over the Kurdish issue. On the same day in Baghdad, a suicide bomb targeted the home of an Al-Qaeda militia chief recently appointed to lead the Sahwa, a collection of Sunni tribal militias.

Deadly violence has plagued areas around Baghdad and Kirkuk, raising concerns about destabilisation as the country went through one of the deadliest Ramadan in years with over 800 killed. The majority of attacks were claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the al-Qaeda affiliated group that enjoys strongholds in Al Anbar, Ninaveh, Kirkuk, most of Salah ad Din, and parts of Babil, Diyala, and Baghdad. On 30 August, ISIL claimed responsibility for bombings in Baghdad and other areas of Iraq in retaliation for the execution of Sunni Muslim prisoners. These attacks are one of the worst in the wave of sectarian bloodshed to hit Iraq in the past five years.

The continuing string of deadly attacks is increasingly putting pressure on Iraqi authorities who are blamed for their inability to prevent the violent escalation. In response to the surge of sectarian violence Iraq executed 42 people for mass killings and other "terrorism" offences this week.

According to observers, levels of violence could increase ahead of elections, planned for April 2014. The elections are widely seen as the next major opportunity to shake up Iraq's political deadlock.

The ongoing violence is linked to Iraq's long-running political dispute between Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and religious and ethnic groups opposing the allegedly sectarian policies of his Shia-led Government. Since the start of 2013, widespread discontent of the Sunni Muslim minority has fuelled unrest with tensions at their highest since US troops left the country two years ago. During Ramadan, attacks on Shia communities increased across Iraq with many attributed to groups affiliated to al-Qaeda.

The civil war in Syria further contributes to volatile relations between Sunni, Shi'ite, and Kurdish communities in Iraq. In July, the UN warned that escalating violence in Iraq can no longer be separated from the war in Syria due to an increased active presence of Iraqi armed groups in Syria. On 30 August, in another indication of the regional aspect of sectarian Islamist militancy, an Iraqi Shi'ite militia group al-Nujaba'a, an umbrella movement which includes Iraqi Shi'ite militants who have crossed into Syria to fight alongside troops loyal to Syrian President al-Assad, officially stated that it would attack US interests in Iraq and the region, if Washington carries out a military strike on Syria.

The first provincial elections in Iraq since the departure of US troops, held in April, were an important test of Iraq's political stability ahead of 2013 parliamentary elections. The Prime Minister's State of Law coalition came top in April's elections, but failed to win a majority in any district. On 31 August, highlighting the rising disaffection with the ruling political group, hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets in Baghdad and central and southern Iraq to protest against generous pension payments to lawmakers in a country where many struggle to get work and access basic services.

Kurdish region: Political landscape: On 27 October, Kurdish armed groups captured the Yaaroubiyeh post in north-east Syria after three days of clashes with jihadist groups there, including Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIL. An Iraqi intelligence official confirmed that Kurdish rebels now held the crossing point, one of two main crossings with Iraq, adding that Baghdad brought reinforcements to the area to prevent any spillover of violence.

UNHCR reported that despite political turmoil, the conflict in Syria, and tension at the Turkish border, security in the Kurdish governorates of Iraq remains stable. On 27 August, contradicting an earlier statement made by the President of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region on 10 August, a senior Iraqi Kurdish official indicated that Iraq's northern Kurdistan region had no plans to send troops to Syria to defend fellow Kurds as fighting
between Kurds and Islamist anti-government forces in northern Syria continues.

On 29 September, militants launched a coordinated suicide and car bomb attack on the headquarters of the security services in the capital of Iraq's usually peaceful Kurdistan region, killing 11 people in the first major assault there since 2007. The explosions occurred one day after results of the region's parliamentary elections were announced. ISIL claimed responsibility the attack stating that it was carried out in revenge for the region's support for Kurds fighting Islamists in Syria. ISIL has claimed responsibility for attacks on both sides of the border and has fought Kurds affiliated with the Democratic Union Party, which dominates in Syria and is aligned with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Iraqi Kurdistan's main opposition party has come in second in the autonomous region's parliamentary election, according to preliminary results on 28 September that left the shape of the government still unclear a week after the vote. The Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan shared power in the previous cabinet with a combined 59 of 111 parliamentary seats, having fought their rivalries in a civil war during the 1990s. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the Regional Government delayed local presidential elections to 2015, extending the term of Kurdish leader Barzani. Kurdish opposition denounced the extension as illegal.

While tensions persist between the central authorities in Baghdad and Iraqi Kurdistan, both sides have made attempts to move closer. Better relations with the Kurds should help ease pressure on Iraq's Shi'ite leadership, which is facing increased sectarian strife that it blames on Sunni Islamist insurgents. On 8 July, Kurdish leader Barzani visited Baghdad, following a visit of Prime Minister Al-Maliki to Kurdistan in June, the first such visit in over two years. According to local reports, Iraq's deteriorating security situation and the sharing of power between the two parties over the disputed areas of administrative jurisdiction are to be addressed in their dialogue.

As of early September, the withdrawal of Kurdish militants from the PKK from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan has stopped, with fighters citing failures by the government to take steps agreed under a peace process. They vowed to maintain the ceasefire for now, but at the end of July, PKK commanders warned of new clashes if Turkey did not take concrete steps to advance the process. On 4 July, Kurdish militants attacked two military outposts in southeastern Turkey, breaking a three-month ceasefire. Despite the start of the withdrawal on 14 May, the Turkish Government stated in August that only 20% of PKK fighters had left Turkey, and they were mostly women and children.

The arrival of former PKK insurgents is likely to strain already tense relations between the regional Kurdish authorities and Baghdad. It is also unclear what impact the withdrawal of the PKK militants from Turkey will have on the civil war in Syria where an increased activity by armed Kurdish groups, close to the PKK, has been reported over the past weeks.

Kurdish militants in Iraq previously warned that the fragile peace process is endangered by increased military activity in the area, a lack of co-operation from Baghdad, and the continued detention of Kurdish politicians. Increased military surveillance and the construction of new army posts in the mainly Kurdish southeast are seen as undermining the opposition's withdrawal from Turkey to Iraq.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: UNHCR has warned that the significant increase of sectarian violence across Iraq threatens to spark a new internal displacement of Iraqis fleeing insecurity. Since the start of 2013, bombings and rising sectarian tensions have displaced 5,000 Iraqis, with people mostly fleeing from Baghdad into Anbar and Salah Al Din governorates, and causing displacement in Diyala and Nineveh governorates.

Many Iraqis in Syria have returned to Iraq. As of 22 January, UNHCR cited 68,122 returnees since mid-July 2012, with Baghdad receiving the largest number. Roughly 1.13 million Iraqis are currently displaced in Iraq as of September 2013, but there is limited updated information on figures. Some 467,000 IDPs, returnees, and squatters live in over 382 settlements on public land or in public buildings with limited access to basic services.

UNICEF has reported massive numbers of Syrian refugees crossing into Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkabour crossing, following the opening of the border on 15 August. This crossing point was re-opened by Iraqi Kurdistan authorities on 15 August after having been closed since 19 May. As of 3 October, over 60,000 people, roughly half children, have fled to Iraq from Syria since 15 August of whom 30,000 have been registered and the remaining 31,000 await registration. As of mid-September, the flow of Syrian refugees to Iraqi Kurdistan has remained steady at 800-1,000 people per day, according to UNHCR. The rate is consistent with earlier flows in April and May 2013, prior to the mid-May closure of the Fishkhabour border crossing in Duhok Governorate.

UNICEF reported on 9 September that most of these refugees are now in various locations in Duhok, Erbil, and Suleimaniyah governorates where nine new refugee camps and transit centres have been set up. The influx is expected to continue with reports that there are over 100,000 Syrians waiting to cross into Iraq on the Syrian side of the border. In late August, Iraq's Kurdish authorities reportedly introduced a limit of 3,000 refugees allowed through the Peshkabour crossing, following the opening of the border on 15 August. This limit was re-opened by Iraqi Kurdistan authorities on 15 August after having been closed since 19 May. As of 3 October, over 60,000 people, roughly half children, have fled to Iraq from Syria since 15 August of whom 30,000 have been registered and the remaining 31,000 await registration. As of mid-September, the flow of Syrian refugees to Iraqi Kurdistan has remained steady at 800-1,000 people per day, according to UNHCR. The rate is consistent with earlier flows in April and May 2013, prior to the mid-May closure of the Fishkhabour border crossing in Duhok Governorate.

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At Erbil, about 2,000 new arrivals are camped at a site in Kawergost town where UNHCR has established an emergency transit/reception area. Some refugees are sheltered under UNICEF reported on 9 September that most of these refugees are now in various locations in Duhok, Erbil, and Suleimaniyah governorates where nine new refugee camps and transit centres have been set up. The influx is expected to continue with reports that there are over 100,000 Syrians waiting to cross into Iraq on the Syrian side of the border. In late August, Iraq's Kurdish authorities reportedly introduced a limit of 3,000 refugees allowed through the Peshkabour crossing, following the opening of the border on 15 August. This limit was re-opened by Iraqi Kurdistan authorities on 15 August after having been closed since 19 May. As of 3 October, over 60,000 people, roughly half children, have fled to Iraq from Syria since 15 August of whom 30,000 have been registered and the remaining 31,000 await registration. As of mid-September, the flow of Syrian refugees to Iraqi Kurdistan has remained steady at 800-1,000 people per day, according to UNHCR. The rate is consistent with earlier flows in April and May 2013, prior to the mid-May closure of the Fishkhabour border crossing in Duhok Governorate.

As of of 20 October, the number of Syrian refugees in Iraq was approximately 228,000, including the estimated 63,000 who fled to Iraq since mid-August. To date, Kurdistan hosts over 90% of these refugees. The total number of refugees is expected to double by end 2013.

The situation at Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq's Dohuk Governorate, is especially worrying. The camp houses over 70,000 Syrian refugees in critically overcrowded conditions. Another 90,000 refugees are scattered in and around urban centres in Iraqi Kurdistan. Spontaneous returns to Syria stand at 12,807 individuals returning through the Darabun crossing point.

Around 13 camps and centres are currently under construction in the Kurdistan region,
however many are on former military bases with a danger of unexploded ordnances, mines, and other explosive weapons. Women and children are especially vulnerable as they venture out to collect fruit and other types of food.

OCHA and NRC state that Iraq's appeal for financial support to host the Syrian refugees is heavily underfunded with only 14% of the money required for the humanitarian response materialised by early July.

Access: Although humanitarian access is less restricted, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, the north, the central governorates, and the Disputed Territories. Security in Anbar province remains unstable with underlying internal conflict, risk of terrorism, and spillover of the Syrian crisis. Access to Al Qa'im refugee camp remains difficult, though missions can now be carried out by helicopter.

Health: Overcrowding in Domiz camp is impacting health and sanitation, which is already below humanitarian standards, with inadequate water and sanitation facilities increasing the risk of water borne diseases. Measles has been reported in new camp arrivals.

Updated: 29/10/2013

MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS

Highlights

22-28 October: Despite the progress of the peace talks between the authorities and insurgent movements, new violent clashes have been reported between 22-28 October in Kachin State’s Mann Si Township between government troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) with an unknown number of people trapped by the violence in the area, according to local media. Renewed fighting happened less than two weeks after authorities and Kachin insurgents signed a fresh ceasefire in mid-October. No report on casualties is available to date.

Late October: As reported by OCHA, over 649,000 people are internally displaced in Myanmar because of violence. In western Rakhine State, an estimated 143,000 people remain displaced because of the inter-communal violence. In central Mandalay region, an estimated 5,500 people have been displaced since violence erupted in March and April. Following prolonged conflict, an estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern Shan states, and up to 400,000 people continue to be displaced across the southeast of the country.

Political and Security Context

Political Context: Since August, central authorities have made progress toward the pacification of Myanmar, signing several ceasefire agreements with various insurgent groups representing ethnic minorities. Against this background, and although violence flared up in parts of Myanmar in September and October, the government still plans to hold a ceremony at which an alleged *nationwide ceasefire*, promised by President Thein Sein in July, would be signed with the country’s many armed militant groups.

On 10 October, authorities signed a fresh peace deal with Kachin rebels. The deal, which followed three days of negotiations, is aimed to open the way for political dialogue and end the conflict in Kachin. Prior to the deal, authorities released a group of political prisoners in a presidential amnesty, the third such move since the start of 2013. In July, President Thein Sein promised to free all prisoners of conscience by end 2013. The latest amnesty allowed for the release of members of ethnic minority armies with whom the government is seeking peace deals.

In May, a seven-point peace agreement was achieved between the Government and the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO). The KIO, seeking greater autonomy for the one million Kachin people, is essentially chairing the alliance of 11 ethnic armed groups, the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC). Fighting between the Government and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the KIO, reignited in June 2011 after a 17-year old ceasefire crumbled.

In early August, the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front, a once outlawed student movement, signed a state-level ceasefire agreement with Karen State government representatives. The deal was seen as a step toward broader national reconciliation. In mid-June, an agreement to push ahead with a national ceasefire between authorities and the Union Peace-Making Committee and Karenni National Progressive Party, representing the Red Karen in Kayah State, was reached.

Security Context: On 17 October, several small bombs exploded in northeastern Myanmar in Namkham, a town in Shan state bordering China, where ethnic groups have been fighting government forces. These incidents are the latest in a string of low scale attacks that have been hitting the country since the start of October. The explosions killed one person and injured another two. On 14 October, a rudimentary time-bomb exploded in a hotel in Yangon, wounding one foreign tourist. Although authorities have suggested that these explosions are part of a coordinated series of bomb attacks across Myanmar by a group targeting tourist haunts, a Buddhist temple, and other public places, no clear connection between the attacks has yet been established. Moreover, it is unclear if the attacks are related to ongoing inter-communal strife or the protracted insurgencies affecting parts of the country. Since 11 October, multiple blasts have been recorded across the country, leaving at least four dead and several injured.

In June and October 2012, sectarian confrontations between ethnic Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority shook western Rakhine state, displacing tens of thousands of people. According to reports, clashes between Buddhists and Muslims since June 2012 have killed at least 237 people, including 192 in Rakhine state. In recent weeks, human rights infringements were reported, and tensions remained high with authorities imposing restriction measures on the displaced Muslim minority in an increasingly tense local context.

Multiple violent incidents have been reported with fresh inter-communal violence between Buddhists and Muslims surging near Yangon in early October and in Thandwe, a coastal township in western Rakhine State, in late September where it lead to casualties.

In August, outbreaks of communal violence were reported from remote Htan Kone in Myanmar’s northern Sagaing region while several communal incidents were reported from Rakhine’s Thandwe, Pauktaw, and Mrauk-U townships in July and June. On 20 July,
authorities eventually lifted the state of emergency imposed around Meikhtila where heavy clashes and attacks, which resulted in 44 people killed and over 70 injured, occurred in March and April. Several thousands of people are still displaced in the area as of October.

Military Operations: As reported by local media in late October, despite progress of the peacemaking talks between the authorities and insurgent movements, new violent clashes were reported from 22-28 October in Kachin State’s Mann Si Township between government troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) with an unknown number of people trapped by the violence in the area. Renewed fighting happened less than two weeks after authorities and Kachin insurgents signed a fresh ceasefire in mid-October. No report on casualties is available to date.

Heavy fighting in northern Kachin State and in the northern part of neighbouring Shan state was reported in September as the authorities reinforced their troops in these areas.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: As reported by OCHA in October, over 649,000 people are currently internally displaced in Myanmar because of violence.

In western Rakhine State, An estimated 143,000 people are displaced because of the inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012. An estimated 36,000 people across 113 isolated villages face ongoing tension and movement restrictions and are considered crisis-affected and needing humanitarian assistance.

In central Mandalay region, near Meikhtila, an estimated 5,500 people are displaced following violence in March and April.

An estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern Shan states, including over 53,000 in areas beyond Government control. Many have been displaced for up to two years, triggering renewed and additional needs for provision of basic services, livelihoods, and protection. The most urgent needs in displaced communities include education, health care, renovation of shelter, replacement of NFIs, and WASH facilities. In late October, an additional up to 1,500 people have been displaced by violence near the Mann Si Township.

Up to 400,000 people across 36 townships continue to be displaced in the southeast following years of conflict, according to OCHA.

In June, UNHCR reported that 28,000 Rakhine Muslims were registered as refugees in Malaysia. However, according to groups representing them, the real number of Myanmar Muslim immigrants is much higher and has surged this year because of the violence.

Disaster: According to the UN, heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have displaced almost 50,000 people across the country this year, though most people have since returned home as of late September. During the monsoon season, heavy rains and flash floods were reported in different parts of Myanmar, notably in Yangon in late August and in the northern parts of the country in the first half of September.

In September, WFP reported that affected rural people would require food assistance until the harvest season in November-December as floods have destroyed food stocks and paddy fields. An estimated 70,000 acres of farmland have been flooded or destroyed this year.

Access: Access has reportedly improved as major highways in Kachin state, closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the Government and the KIA in 2011, were reopened on 17 March following the renewal of talks between the two sides.

In early September, OCHA reported that an 11-truck humanitarian convoy led by the UN and other humanitarian partners delivered food, medicines, and other items to displaced communities living in the Woi Chyai Camp in Laiza town in Kachin state. This is the first time that cross-line missions have been permitted to deliver humanitarian assistance to Laiza since December 2011. These missions supplement aid delivered on a regular basis by local NGOs. In June, for the first time in nearly a year, an UN-led aid convoy was allowed into other non-government controlled parts of Kachin state.

Access to affected populations in Rakhine state remains difficult, complicated by media campaigns 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 national and international aid workers. In early July, OCHA encouraged humanitarian providers to adopt a “conflict-sensitive” approach to aid distribution with clear communication with the communities to explain the basis of aid distribution to mitigate the perception among the Rakhine population that assistance had been disproportionately provided to Muslim minorities.

Food Security: As reported by FAO in mid-June, the food security situation has improved across most of Myanmar. However, a poor harvest due to below average seasonal rains in lower Sagaing, western and central parts of Mandalay and most of Magway, is expected to lead to a deterioration of food security conditions in these areas. In Rakhine, southwest, Kachin, and Northern Shan states, where thousands of people have been displaced, food security remains a concern.

Health: Even though the numbers of dengue cases and related deaths were lower than expected for this year’s rainy season, health authorities still recorded 16,000 cases and 75 deaths for 2013, as of 12 September. In June, the cumulative number of dengue cases had surpassed the total for all of 2012, and officials feared that the monsoon season would worsen the epidemic.

As noted by OCHA in mid-July, a vulnerability mapping exercise showed that 36,000 people in 113 isolated villages in Rakhine State have no or limited access to basic services, including markets, education, and health care. Access to services is impeded by ongoing tension and restrictions on freedom of movement. This is in addition to the estimated 140,000 people displaced by 2012 inter-communal violence.
**Highlights**

**Mid-October:** The food supply in Gaza has further deteriorated due to significant disruptions in tunnel trade with Egypt and increases in the prices of goods. In Gaza, food insecurity levels have surged from 44% to 57%.

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**International Security Context**

**International political landscape**

On 19 July, an initial agreement between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) on direct final status negotiations was announced. On 28 July, the Israeli government approved the release of 104 Palestinian prisoners as a sign of its readiness to revive the Middle East peace process. The peace talks opened formally in West Jerusalem on 14 August, and Israel freed 26 of the promised 104 long-serving Palestinian and Israeli Arab prisoners on the same day. The Israeli government approved the release of another 26 Palestinian prisoners on 28 October. The remaining prisoners will be released in four groups over the next seven months depending on progress in the newly-resumed peace talks with the Palestinian authorities. Negotiators were holding peace talks in Jerusalem on 16 September, although Israeli sources refused to confirm the meetings.

Two rockets fired at a southern Israeli coastal city on 28 from the Gaza strip may have been meant to spoil the peace negotiations. During the previous prisoner release in August, Gaza militants fired rockets across the border and Israel responded with air strikes. The negotiation process has been disrupted several times and is frequently in danger of collapsing due to political developments in both countries.

On 29 November 2012, the General Assembly voted to grant Palestine non-member UN observer State status, while expressing the urgent need for the resumption of negotiations between Israel and Palestine to move toward a permanent two-State solution.

**National political landscape**

While the negotiation process is expected to be lengthy, an ease of access and movement for the population in the OPT and for goods is pressing as recent action to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai has included imposing severe restrictions on movements of people through the Rafah Crossing into the Gaza Strip and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian-Gaza border. Around 1.7 million people are affected by the restrictions in the Gaza Strip, as reported by OCHA in late September.

On average, fewer than 398 people per day have crossed the Rafah Crossing in both directions since July 2013, about 29% of the numbers who crossed in the first half of 2013. On 11 September, Cairo closed the Rafah crossing completely following the crash of two explosive-laden cars into a security building on the border zone, which caused the death of six Egyptian soldiers. The crossing has been closed frequently for up to a week in a row, and even when open, hours have been reduced from nine to four and days from seven to six.

Egypt announced its intention to destroy the network of smuggling tunnels used to deliver goods to the Gaza Strip, on the grounds that Palestinians have been using the underground passages to help Sinai militants. The Sinai Peninsula has seen frequent battles between the Egyptian military and Islamist gunmen.

On 14 October, Israel froze the shipment of building materials into Gaza after discovering what it says is a sophisticated “terror tunnel” into its own territory from Palestinian land. Due to security reasons, it stopped the transfer of building materials into Gaza. Israeli authorities did not say how long the ban would remain in force. The Israeli army said the tunnel was buried 18m underground, made of concrete and ran for 1.7km with 450m extending into Israel. Hamas Islamists in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for the tunnel beneath the heavily fortified Israel-Gaza frontier.

Due to the closure or destruction of these tunnels, the Gaza strip suffers from a lack of basic goods such as fuel for cooking and heating, affecting businesses, agricultural production, and health services, according to the UN. The fuel crisis has meant Gaza’s daily power cuts last up to eight hours. Prices of basic foodstuffs have risen: flour is up 9%; cooking oil 5%; and sugar 7%.

Gaza’s economic situation is deteriorating with several thousand jobs in the construction industry affected, livelihoods eroded, and prices increasing. The Hamas government has paid only 77% of its $25 million August payroll for Gaza’s 50,000 civil servants. A special payment of 1,000 shekels ($280) to employees before the Eid al-Adha holiday was announced. However, it remained unclear whether full September salaries would be paid.

According to WHO, an average 300 patients leave Gaza each day to access medical treatment. The Rafah Crossing is the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians. Movement across the other crossing points Erez and Kerem Shalom in northern Gaza Strip has been severely restricted since September 2000. Kerem Shalom, the only functioning official crossing for goods to and from Gaza, was closed for 52 days during the first four months of 2013.

**Safety and Security**

The peace negotiations face several severe challenges, one of which is the issue of Israeli settlements. On 16 August, Israel announced that it was moving forward with plans to build 1,200 new housing units in East Jerusalem and the West Bank and another 890 units in Gilo settlement, East-Jerusalem. Construction of new homes in illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank has increased by 70% in the first half of 2013, as reported by the Israeli NGO Peace Now. On 17 October, the group said that 1,708 new homes were started between January and June, compared with 995 in the same period in 2012. Israeli media reported in May that Prime Minister Netanyahu ordered a freeze on new tenders for settler homes. Most of the new construction is taking place in areas where tenders are not required, circumventing the freeze.

Excessive use of lethal force continues to impact civilians in the OPT.

Direct peace talks were briefly cancelled in August after clashes between Palestinians and Israeli forces erupted in the West Bank. Four people were killed and 24 wounded in a clash in the West Bank’s Kalandia refugee camp. UNRWA reported on 27 August that one of its staff members was shot dead and another one wounded by Israeli forces during an operation in Kalandia refugee camp. Credible reports say both men were on their way to
work and were not engaged in any violent activity. An UNRWA investigation is ongoing.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

According to OCHA, the humanitarian situation in OPT remained unchanged during 2013. Longstanding protection threats affecting the Palestinian population, including movement and access restrictions, continue to generate high levels of humanitarian need.

Access: Combined with the heavy Egyptian military deployment along the border and severe access restrictions on people and vehicles into the border area, a dramatic decline in the transfer of goods and fuel through the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza has been reported.

On 20 September, Israeli forces seized a vehicle carrying tents from an international humanitarian organisation destined for Khirbet al-Makhul, West Bank, where 48 Palestinians, including 16 children, urgently need emergency shelter following repeated demolitions by Israeli authorities. The forces confronted members of the humanitarian and diplomatic communities who were present on site. The UN and the European Union have condemned the halt of humanitarian aid to the population in need.

Food Security: According to OCHA, 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities. Over 770,000 people are food insecure in the West Bank alone as of 17 June, according to the UN. WFP estimates that in the event of a complete closure of the tunnels in the Gaza-Strip, it will need to meet the needs of an extra 50,000 – 60,000 people.

As reported by WFP since early July, the food supply in Gaza, has further deteriorated due to disruptions in tunnel trade with Egypt resulting in price increases (+7% for oil, +33% for rice). Economic pressure on Gaza could impact the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The unemployment rate, which is normally around 30%, is expected to rise as construction and tunnel-trade employment stagnates. Prior to the tunnel closure attempts, the WFP Socio–Economic and Food Security Survey revealed an increase in the food insecurity in Palestine, showing that 1.6 million people (34% of households in Palestine) were food insecure, a rise from 27% in 2012. The deterioration was most pronounced in Gaza, where food insecurity levels surged from 44 to 57%.

Health and Nutrition: One third (30%) of essential medicines and 51% of medical disposables are at zero stock in the Gaza Ministry of Health Central Drug Store, noted OCHA. More than half the chemotherapy drugs and ophthalmic drugs are at zero stock.

WASH: As reported by OCHA, an estimated 600,000 people in the Gaza Strip may not have access to adequate and safe water and sanitation services as a result of increased power outages and lack of fuel. Approximately 150,000 people, who currently rely on 12 water wells operated by only standby generators, are at risk.

Updated: 29/10/2013

Pakistan Conflict, Floods, Displacement, Earthquake

Highlights

Late October: As reported by the Center for Research and Security Studies, September was the deadliest month in 2013 in Pakistan. The death toll amounted to 493 people with another 555 injured in attacks, the bulk of the victims were civilians. The reported number marked a significant increase of 35% compared to August. The death toll due to violence was the highest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, followed by Sindh, the FATA, and Baluchistan respectively.

28 October: As reported by local media on 28 October, the latest string of cases has brought the national polio count to 53 so far this year, with 38 cases recorded in the FATA. In 2012, 58 polio cases were recorded in Pakistan. On 28 August, health officials warned of a polio outbreak after the disease was detected in 16 children in North Waziristan.

26 October: As reported by the Iranian media, 14 Iranian border guards were killed and three others captured in an attack by armed men on the southeastern frontier with Pakistan. In response, the Iranian side executed 16 people that were allegedly elements of terrorist groups. In the aftermath, and with few details available, Iran appealed to the Pakistani authorities requesting Islamabad to tighten control of its border. No official reaction from Pakistan is yet available.

26 October: Kabul intends to officially demand an explanation regarding the situation with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar during a meeting between the two leaders scheduled to take place in early November. On 21 September, Pakistan agreed to release Baradar, one of the founders of the Taliban insurgency. He is seen by Kabul as a respected figure who could use his influence to persuade moderate Taliban to negotiate with the Afghan authorities.

23 October: Prime Minister Sharif urged once more the US to end drone strikes. In August, the US Secretary of State had promised that attacks would stop in an effort to ease tensions with Islamabad.

Political and Security Context

India-Pakistan Context: On 8 October, and though recent talks to appease bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi were conducted, India’s military continued to accuse Pakistan of helping insurgents to push into Indian Kashmir as foreign forces withdraw from neighbouring Afghanistan. According to the Indian military, eight militants were killed in an operation as the military continue to fight a group that crossed into India in September. Pakistan has denied it is helping militants to cross into the Indian part of the contested region.

On 29 September, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, amid heightened tensions over their shared Kashmir border. During the meeting, both leaders announced their intention to try to restore calm as an initial step toward reconciliation.
On the eve of these talks, on 26 September, new incidents were reported along the border, with Indian forces reportedly killing three militants who allegedly infiltrated Indian Kashmir from Pakistan and attacked Indian police and soldiers. According to local media, at least nine people were killed on the Indian side, while the Indian authorities reported that they killed all three militants. In a separate incident, the Indian military reported that it had killed at least a dozen militants from a group of 30 to 40 heavily-armed fighters that had crossed from Pakistan into northern Kashmir. The latest attacks were widely seen as an attempt to derail the high-level talks between Islamabad and New Delhi.

Tensions have been running high along the India-Pakistan contested border in Kashmir, with international observers fearing that the November 2003 ceasefire and stalled peace talks between the two countries may be put into question. Since 8 August, violence has spiked between New Delhi and Islamabad after Indian authorities blamed Pakistani troops for killing five soldiers in a border attack. Islamabad has denied being behind the attack. In the aftermath, several fatal incidents were reported in August across the Line of Control, which marks the de facto border in the disputed region. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for the incidents that killed at least 44 members of the security forces since the beginning of the year, up from 17 for all of 2012, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which monitors the violence. Meanwhile, on 6 September, an Islamist rally was openly staged in Islamabad where several thousand people allegedly called for holy war against India.

In mid-August, several sources in the Pakistan-based Islamist terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba commented that the group is preparing to reignite the fight over Kashmir once Western troops leave Afghanistan next year. The bombing of the Indian consulate in the Afghan city of Jalalabad on 3 August, for which the Taliban has denied responsibility, might be an early indication of this change of strategy.

New Delhi has accused Islamabad of trying to push militants onto its side of Kashmir to revive a decade-old revolt there. On 11 September, Indian paramilitary forces allegedly killed a man during a demonstration in Shopian district, which triggered violent protests and led authorities to impose a curfew in parts of Indian Kashmir. Several protests have recently sparked in Indian Kashmir with three people killed on 9 August in a demonstration in Jammu. Underscoring Indian concerns, protesters allegedly unfolded a Pakistani flag and shouted pro-Islam, pro-independence slogans after offering Eid prayers.

**Afghanistan-Pakistan Context:** Pakistan has played a pivotal role in establishing contact between the Taliban and the US in Qatar, which prompted Afghan President Karzai to express his discontent over being bypassed. On 26 August, President Karzai arrived in Islamabad to mend bilateral relations while testing the ground for Pakistan’s involvement in peace talks with the Taliban. One of the visit’s aims was allegedly to press Islamabad into releasing senior Taliban commanders in detention in Pakistan who are seen to be instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table. On 21 September, Pakistan agreed to release Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a former Taliban second-in-command. Baradar, one of the founders of the Taliban insurgency, is seen by Kabul as a respected figure who could use his influence to persuade moderate Taliban commanders to negotiate with the Afghan authorities. On 3 October, a potential meeting was cancelled after Taliban commanders refused to meet their former chief Baradar in Peshawar allegedly because the latter was accompanied by Pakistani security agents. As of 9 October, Pakistan still had not freed the former second-in-command, Baradar as promised. In September, Pakistan released a group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander called Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not directly handed over to the Afghan authorities. As of 26 October, mutual suspicions continue to run high while Kabul is intending to officially demand an explanation regarding the situation with Baradar during a meeting between the leaders of the two countries that is scheduled to take place in early November.

On 10 October, US forces reportedly captured senior Pakistani Taliban commander Mehsud in a military operation in eastern Logar province. Other reports suggested that Mehsud was seized from an Afghan government convoy in the province, as Afghan officials were trying to recruit him to launch peace talks several weeks ago, contributing to current tensions between Washington and Kabul. The arrest of Mehsud could represent a blow to Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) in Pakistan, while the movement is reportedly facing dissention over Islamabad’s attempts to launch peace talks.

**Iran-Pakistan Context:** As reported by the Iranian media, 14 Iranian border guards were killed and three others captured in an attack by armed men on the southeastern frontier with Pakistan. In response, the Iranian side executed 16 people that were allegedly elements of terrorist groups. In the aftermath, while few details are available, Iran appealed to the Pakistani authorities requesting Islamabad to tighten control of its border. No official reaction from Pakistan is yet available.

**National Political Context:** On 22 August, by-elections were held in seats that were forced to annul results from the May vote due to violence or because candidates had since vacated their seats. The elections allowed Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif’s party, Muslim League–Nawaz (PML-N), to further consolidate its power and increase the new government’s ability to push through unpopular economic reforms. On 30 July, Mamnoon Hussain, an ally of Sharif, was voted to be the Pakistani President, a largely ceremonial role.

Since coming to power in May, Sharif has repeatedly suggested that his administration is ready to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban. On 10 September, politicians from the main coalition and opposition parties backed Sharif’s calls for a dialogue, a united move that was welcomed by a Pakistani Taliban spokesman. On 16 September, the Pakistani Taliban set conditions for participating in the peace talks, demanding that the government release prisoners and withdraw troops from its tribal areas. This declaration is raising doubts about prospects for negotiations. In August, the Prime Minister publicly indicated his desire to welcome the TTP to the negotiation table while leaving open the possibility to continue using force. The issue is highly controversial in Pakistan. It is unclear if the influential Pakistani military welcome such talks, and tensions between military officials and the authorities are reportedly on the rise over the matter.

On 9 October, Hakimullah Mehsud, a Senior Pakistan Taliban leader unrelated to Latif Mehsud, who was arrested in Afghanistan by US troops, suggested that he was open to peace talks with the Pakistani authorities while complaining that Islamabad has not yet taken any serious steps to begin dialogue. Mehsud reiterated that, in the meantime, the TTP would continue to target the US and its allies and demanded that any ceasefire in Pakistan must include an end to US drone strikes.

In September, Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and located near the
In September, Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and located near the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) where Islamist militants have strongholds, was hit by several bloody attacks. TTP leadership has denied responsibility for the attacks and stressed that it mainly targets “legitimate military assets” in its fight against the authorities. However, some observers have suggested that the last series of attacks may point to deep divisions running through the Pakistani Taliban movement between those ready to respond to the government’s offer to negotiate and hardliners. While some officials within the TTP unofficially acknowledged the existence of rifts within the movement, Pakistani authorities seem to remain reluctant to launch full-scale military operations against the TTP.

On 11 October, a court ordered former Pakistani president Musharraf to be detained for 14 days in the latest development in the ongoing quarrel between the country’s former strongman and the judiciary. The order followed Musharraf’s arrest the previous day over accusations that he was responsible for a 2007 raid on a radical mosque that killed over 100 people. The arrest of the former army chief may be seen as a move of the judiciary to further challenge the power of the very influential military in Pakistan.

Security Context: Tensions are running high in Pakistan with regular Taliban attacks being reported across the country. According to an independent count conducted by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 4,286 persons were killed and 4,066 injured between January and 31 August in targeted killings, militant attacks, incidents of terrorism, and security operations by the armed forces and intelligence agencies.

As reported by the CRSS in late October, September was the deadliest month so far this year in Pakistan. The death toll was 493 with another 555 people injured in attacks, the bulk of the victims were civilians. This number marked a significant increase of 35% compared to August. According to the report, the death toll due to violence was the highest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, followed by Sindh, the FATA, and Baluchistan respectively. At the district level, large urban centres such as Peshawar, Karachi, and Quetta were the most targeted by attacks.

On 21 October, at least five passengers were killed and 16 wounded after a bomb explosion on a train travelling toward Quetta in western Baluchistan. It was not immediately clear what group was responsible for the bombing. On 16 October, a suicide bombing west of Dera Ismail Khan in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province killed the province’s law minister and seven others while wounding an additional 30 people in an attack claimed by an armed group allied to the Pakistani Taliban. On 10 October, bomb attacks hit four major cities — Quetta, Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi, as well as the semi-tribal area of Bannu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The string of attacks killed nine people and wounded 60. On 7 October, a bomb exploded near a polio vaccination team in Peshawar, and killed two people in the latest Taliban insurgent attack to date. On 3 October, a Taliban attack against a pro-government rival armed group in northwestern Orakzai tribal district killed at least 17 people. On 2 October, a suicide bomber killed at least three people and wounded 12 others at a southwestern border crossing point between Afghanistan and Pakistan. On 2 October, a bomb killed two soldiers and wounded three others involved in relief operations related to the earthquake near Mashkey town in Baluchistan province. The attack was claimed by ethnic Baluch separatists who have been fighting in the area for years and have promised to further step up attacks against military personnel.

On 22 September, in one of the deadliest attacks to date against Christians in the predominantly Muslim country, two suicide bombers blew themselves up outside an Anglican church in Peshawar. At least 80 people were killed while dozens were injured in the attack claimed by the Taliban-linked militant group TTP Jundullah. Following the bombing, the Prime Minister Sharif significantly toughened his stance regarding dealings with the Islamist militants, but fell short of calling for outright military action against the insurgents. The scale of the attack targeting Christians may have major repercussions on how authorities’ deal with the Pakistani Taliban movement. On 20 September, suspected militants threw grenades at a mosque in Peshawar, killing at least three Islamic preachers and wounding 18 others, according to local sources. On 15 September, two high-ranking Pakistani military were killed by the Taliban in separate attacks in the Upper Swat and the Upper Dir districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Since the beginning of September, attacks have been reported from Quetta and from the troubled North Waziristan region.

In August, terrorist attacks and armed assaults were recorded in the southern port city of Karachi, Gilgit-Baltistan territories in the north, and Punjab province. During the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, attacks surged in the area of Quetta with over 70 people killed and dozens injured. Quetta is at the forefront of militant Islamist violence, a Baluch separatist insurgency, and violence against the Shiite Muslim minority that constitute a little over 10% of the country’s population. In July, Pakistan was plagued by almost daily violence that killed over 200 people, with attacks increasingly targeting the Shiite Muslim minority. On 30 July, a Taliban attack on a prison in the city of Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, near the Afghan border, allowed insurgents to free 250 prisoners, including Taliban militants.

On 8 October, rising tensions between Hindus and Muslims were reported in Pakistan’s increasingly unstable Sindh province. According to local reports, a crowd of Islamic fundamentalists dug up the grave of a Hindu man and dragged it through the streets of the southern town of Pangrio in a dispute over the location of the grave. According to the authorities, the situation was brought under control before tensions escalated.

Military Operations: On 6 September, at least seven militants, including two senior commanders, were allegedly killed in a suspected US drone strike near the Afghan border in the FATA. An increasing number of such attacks in the FATA have been reported with at least six occurring since Sharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by authorities in late August, 339 drone attacks have been recorded since 2004 resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2,200 people, including 400 civilians and 200 victims deemed “probable non-combatants” in FATA. No US data on the number of people killed in drone strikes is available. In late October, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released separate reports voicing criticisms over the recourse to drone strikes and detailing the deaths of dozens of civilians in such attacks.
Seeing these US-led attacks as a breach of Pakistani sovereignty, the Prime Minister Sharif has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes against militants, although one such attack killed the number two of the Pakistani Taliban, Wali Ur-Rehman, in North Waziristan on 29 May. On 23 October, Sharif urged once more the US to put an end to drone strikes while, in August, the US Secretary of State had promised that such attacks would stop in an effort to ease tensions with Islamabad. Against this background, relations between the US and Pakistan have nevertheless recently improved. In mid-October, the US have moved to restart security assistance to Pakistan that had been largely suspended after relations became strained in 2011.

Meanwhile, and although reports remain scarce and casualty figures difficult to ascertain, military operations are ongoing in Pakistani tribal areas between government troops and Taliban insurgents.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement:** According to authorities, an estimated 300 people were displaced in Kashmir on 26 August, following shelling from the Indian side.

OCHA reported that, as of mid-October, more than one million people are displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA due to protracted conflict. Since mid-March, government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militant groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency have led to additional and massive population movements. As of early June, UNHCR reported an estimated 80,000 people displaced from Khyber Agency to safer grounds in Peshawar, Kohat, and towards the camps of New Durrani in Kurram Agency and Jalozai in Nowshera District. An estimated 60,000 additional people began to flee their homes in Kurram Agency in mid-May due to the government’s security operations against armed non-state actors. As of 6 June, 51,582 people were registered in New Durrani camp. As of 18 July, according to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, about 66,000 IDPs had returned to their homes in Kurram, South Waziristan and Bajaur.

According to OCHA as of 15 July, an estimated 1.03 million IDPs were still in need of humanitarian assistance, 45% located in the Peshawar area. As noted by OCHA in early August, 90% of IDPs live with relatives or in rented houses. Most IDPs are subsistence farmers. Displacement has forced them to leave their farms and relocate to the Peshawar area where employment and livelihood opportunities are limited. At present, many IDPs have switched to irreversible coping strategies, taking on debt and selling assets to pay for food. Most of the 1.64 million Afghan refugees located in FATA require humanitarian assistance.

On 30 June, the Government agreed not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June, with Kabul and Islamabad agreeing, at a recent UN-backed meeting, to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation. Pakistani media reports that the presence of Afghan refugees is triggering tensions in host provinces. On 5 July, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province hosting an estimated 60% of Afghan refugees, officially opposed extending Afghan refugees’ stay in the country and suggested that should the need arise, registered Afghans be equally distributed among the four Pakistani provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab, and Baluchistan.

According to OCHA on 15 September, 1.62 million Afghan refugees remain in Pakistan. An additional estimated 2.4 million undocumented Afghan refugees are reportedly residing in Pakistan and Iran.

**Disaster:** According to the Pakistan Red Cross Society, an estimated 185,000 people have been severely affected by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake on 24 September and its main 7.2 magnitude aftershock on 28 September in the southwestern districts of Awaran (160,000 people affected) and Kech (25,000 affected), 350km south of Quetta in Baluchistan province. According to the Baluchistan authorities, at least 200,000 people have been affected by the two quakes. As of mid-October, at least 376 people have been killed and an estimated 824 injured by the tremors. The death toll is expected to rise as rescue teams reach remote villages. The districts of Awaran, Kech, Gwadar, Pajgur, Chaghi and Khuzda were affected, and entire villages were reportedly flattened across these impoverished and sparsely populated areas of Baluchistan. According to local reports, the earthquake destroyed over 21,000 houses.

In April 2013, a 7.8 magnitude quake in neighbouring Iran killed 41 people and affected more than 12,000 in Baluchistan.

According to authorities, as of 6 September, monsoon rains have affected 1.5 million people across the country. 53% of those affected are in Punjab with Narowal (222,260 people affected), Muzzafargarh (173,444), Jhang (127,230), and Rajanpur (95,171) the hardest hit districts. Other parts of the country were severely affected including Kashmore (105,515 people affected), Sukkur (79,005), Khairpur (74,830), and Jamshoro (65,559) as the hardest hit districts in Sindh. Floodplains from Sibi to Jaffarabad districts (148,889 people affected) were the most severely affected in Baluchistan. As of mid-October, significant humanitarian needs, notably with regard to food insecurity and livelihood support, remained in the affected areas, according to OCHA.

In addition, 75% of the affected 1.46 million acres of crops are in Punjab, triggering food security concerns for the affected population. To date, the number of people displaced in camps has reduced from over 12,000 people to 4,155 in 408 relief camps across the three provinces. The floods have reportedly killed at least 193 people and injured over 1,100 people.

According to OCHA as of late April, around 1.5 million people still needed critical services in Baluchistan, Punjab, and Sindh provinces, following the flash floods triggered by heavy rains in September 2012. Many affected districts are still struggling to recover from the 2010 and 2011 flooding and have large inundated areas.

**Access:** Aid response to the earthquakes that hit Baluchistan in September have been complicated by the remote region being home to separatist insurgents who fear that the army, which is overseeing aid operations, may take advantage of the crisis to move more forces into the area. Attacks on helicopters carrying aid workers were reported in September. On 10 October, new attacks by Baluch militants against security forces and government officials engaged in relief operation were reported. As of 9 October, aid workers reported that several foreign agencies have been denied permission to work in the Awaran district, the epicentre of the earthquakes, confirming ongoing difficulties to get the authorities’ clearance to work in the affected areas.
Assessments and humanitarian operations are hampered by difficult access due to insecurity and administrative delays. In June, OCHA reported 44 attacks against aid workers between January and April, with 18 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 15 in Sindh province, four in Baluchistan province, one in the capital Islamabad, and six in FATA. The total figure for last year was 42 across Pakistan. Several deadly attacks on polio vaccination teams in FATA have been reported since the beginning of 2013.

Food Security and Malnutrition: Food insecurity is at emergency levels with an estimated 60% of Pakistan’s population considered food insecure. Inflation, rising fuel prices, and stagnating domestic productivity are pushing up food prices. Seven districts face IPC phases 3 (Crisis) and 4 (Emergency).

In June 2013, food inflation rose by 8.1% from 2012, against 4.4% for non-food inflation. Prices of wheat and wheat flour have steadily increased since June 2012, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

Health and Malnutrition: On 19 September, authorities in the northwestern Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province near the Afghan border, declared a health emergency after nearly 5,000 cases of dengue fever were reported in a month. As reported by OCHA in mid-October, over 7,000 people tested positive for dengue in the province since September. To date, at least 26 people have died from the disease that is currently affecting areas that do not fall in the traditional endemic belt for dengue, a significant difference with usual cyclical dengue outbreaks affecting Pakistan. It is believed the disease spread from Lahore, where an outbreak killed 362 people and infected over 21,000 in September 2011.

On 28 August, health officials warned of a polio outbreak after the disease was detected in 16 children in North Waziristan, a tribal district where militant groups have banned vaccination. As reported by local media on 28 October, the latest string of cases has brought the national polio count to 53 so far this year, with 38 cases being recorded in the FATA. In 2012, 58 polio cases were recorded in the country. Children are an especially vulnerable group, with most children affected being <5. According to authorities, over 240,000 children in North and South Waziristan are at risk with a Taliban ban on vaccination continuing to exacerbate the serious polio outbreak.

Since the start of 2013, 269 deaths from measles have been reported. According to local media, 141 children have died of measles since January in Punjab province alone. Sindh province, hardest hit by the measles outbreak, was also affected by flash flooding that occurred in September 2012. WHO described the situation in Pakistan as alarming due to a steady increase in fatal measles cases. According to OCHA, in Punjab and Sindh provinces, 54% of 8,844 children assessed between January last year and mid-May this year were not vaccinated against the disease.

Malnutrition rates in some flood-affected districts were beyond emergency thresholds before the recurrent floods in 2012 and are predicted to worsen. According to WFP as of June, 15% of Pakistani children are severely malnourished, and 40% from stunted growth.

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high. Over the year, Bangladesh has seen recurrent *hartals* called by JI or the BNP to protest against the arrest and conviction of senior party officials for committing offences during the 1971 War. The *hartals* have caused significant disruption to business and losses to the economy.

On 9 October, Bangladesh’s war crimes tribunal found a senior member of the BNP guilty of crimes against humanity stemming from the nation’s 1971 Independence War and sentenced him to life imprisonment. On 1 October, the tribunal sentenced a senior opposition leader to death in the seventh such verdict by the body. In contrast to previous convictions, both sentences triggered only limited protests across the country.

On 18-19 September, a two day national *hartal* was enforced after a senior leader from JI was handed the death sentence, overturning a previously imposed life sentence, for crimes committed during the war. In the violence that erupted after the verdict, one person was killed in the southern coastal district of Noakhali and dozens injured across the country. In mid-August, police and protesters clashed during a 48-hour *hartal*, called by JI. While the JI strike triggered tensions, it was only minimally supported by the BNP, allied to JI. The strike followed a Bangladeshi court ruling that declared JI illegal on 1 August, largely forbidding it to take part in the general elections scheduled in early 2014. In the wake of the decision, party activists took the streets in Dhaka and other towns including Bogra, Jessore and Gaibandha. Several *hartals* have been recorded since January 2013.

While authorities struggled to contain the ongoing protests, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in late July that Bangladeshi security forces have frequently used excessive force in responding to street protests, killing at least 150 protesters and injuring over 2,000 since February 2013. HRW has criticized the trials indicating that the tribunal’s procedures fall short of international standards. Several critics also suggested that the trials were used by the AL as a mean to undercut the two biggest opposition parties, the BNP and JI. Several BNP and JI leaders are still officially on trial.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement:** In early August, OCHA reported that following inter-communal violence at the border town of Tripura, northeast Bangladesh, around 1,500 people sought refuge and protection in India.

**Disaster:** As of mid-October, and though information remains scarce, communities in southwestern Bangladesh are affected by water-logging, with stagnant water remaining in the fields, according to OCHA. According to local assessments, an estimated 119,000 people are affected in Satkhira and Jessore districts in the coastal southwestern part of the country.

As of 15 September, local authorities stated that flash floods starting on 10 September in Jamalpur, Rajshahi, Gaibandha, Kurigram, and Sirajganj districts affected over 178,000 people. The northern Dhaka division is among the most affected areas. In July, torrential rainfall and consequential onrush of water from upstream resulted in floods in several northern districts, notably Thakurgaon, Gaibandha, Dinajpur Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Lalmoirhat, Kurigram, Jamalpur, and Sirajgonj. To date, an estimated 124,000 people were affected and nine killed.

Bangladesh was spared significant human impact from Cyclone Mahasen that was weaker than expected. Nonetheless, the cyclone caused damage, including 49,000 destroyed and 45,000 partially destroyed houses, mostly in Patuakhali, Bhola, and Barguna districts. Government sources report that 14 people were killed and 65 injured by the cyclone. As of 22 May, over 1.2 million people were affected by the cyclone with 1.1 million people having been evacuated.

Bangladesh is considered one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries.

**Food Security:** Some 40% of the population is food insecure. The lingering effects of frequent natural disasters, including floods at end June, in mid-July, in late September in 2012, in mid-May in 2013, and violent demonstrations and disturbance, and other localised problems have raised the level of food insecurity of a high number of households.

**CABDIA FLOODS, TYPHOON**

**Highlights**

**25 October:** 168 people have reportedly been killed, while over 1,737,000 people, more than 10% of the country’s population, were affected by weeks of extensive floods that impacted 20 of 24 provinces in Cambodia. The floodwaters have also washed landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) from contaminated to cleared areas, increasing risks to the affected population. As of late October, waters were reportedly receding across the country but more slowly than expected in the worst affected provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey in the northwest.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disaster:** As of 25 October, 168 people have reportedly been killed, while over 1,737,000 people, more than 10% of the country’s population, were affected by weeks of extensive floods that hit 20 out of 24 provinces in Cambodia. Over 119,600 people have been evacuated from affected zones to safer areas. Over 160,000 houses, 1354 schools, 69 health centres and hospitals, and 498 pagodas along with roads, bridges and infrastructure were flooded and damaged.

The floodwaters have also washed landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) from contaminated to cleared areas, increasing risks to the affected population. As of late October, waters were reportedly receding across the country but more slowly than expected in the worst affected provinces of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey in the northwest.

As of 15 October, as reported by the UN and humanitarian organizations, 17 provinces have remained flooded across the country since the third week of September. Heavy rains were reported throughout the northwest and along the Mekong River in central and southern Cambodia. The provinces of Otdar Meanchey, Banteay Meanchey, Preah Vihear,
Battambang, Pailin, Siem Reap, Pursat, Stung Treng, Ratanakiri, Kratie, Kampong Cham, Kampong Chhnang, Kampong Thom, Prey Veng, Phnom Penh, Svay Rieng, and Kandal have been affected.

Initial assessments have identified food, shelter, access to safe water and sanitation, and health as the most pressing needs of affected populations. New assessments are currently in progress. Several assessments, notably in Battambang province, one of the most affected areas, are ongoing.

Updated: 29/10/2013

CHINA FLOODS, TYPHOON

Highlights

No new update this week. Last update was on: 15/10/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster: As of 9 October, as reported by local authorities, ten people were reportedly killed and five others remain missing since Typhoon Fitow brought rainstorms to eastern China's Zhejiang Province. On 10 October, the rains had however reportedly stopped in many parts of Zhejiang.

On 7 October, Tropical storm Fitow, packing winds of up to 121 km/h, made landfall in Fujian province, just south of Zhejiang province, bringing heavy rainfall and causing widespread blackouts according to local sources. In Zhejiang 574,000 people were evacuated, while in Fujian 177,000 were displaced according to the authorities. Since August, large parts of the country have been affected by disasters, particularly flooding.

On 29 September, 74 Chinese fishermen were missing after three fishing boats sank in the South China Sea as Thailand and Vietnam braced for torrential rain and flooding due to Typhoon Wutip. The boats sank about 330 km from China's island province of Hainan, according to Chinese authorities.

On 21-22 September, category 5 Typhoon Usagi, that formed near the Philippines, made landfall in China, killing 25 people in the southern province of Guangdong. According to the authorities, as of 24 September, over 7.965 million people have been affected in Guangdong, with 27 people dead, 466,000 people evacuated, 9,700 houses collapsed, and more than 24,000 others were damaged. The Typhoon Usagi, locally known as Odette, is reportedly the strongest typhoon to hit China this year. This raises the death toll to over 380 lives claimed by natural disasters across China since early August.

As of 4 September, additional floods and heavy rain have affected more than 5.2 million people in the province of Heilongjiang, on the border with Russia. Residents from 904 towns and townships have been affected by the floods, and 331,000 people have been relocated. The floods caused 18,300 houses to collapse, according to authorities. The area, along with the neighboring provinces of Liaoning and Jilin, had been hit by severe flooding, reportedly the worst in decades, following heavy rains from 10 August. Local authorities declared an end to the state of emergency for the province on 20 September.

On 28 and 31 August respectively, two earthquakes, a 5.1-magnitude quake and a 5.9-magnitude, affected an estimated 120,000 people in southwest China's Yunnan province. According to the authorities, three people were killed and 44 injured in the counties of Shangri-La and Deqen, the most severely affected areas. 596 houses were reportedly destroyed and 14,359 houses and more than 870 km of road damaged by the two earthquakes.

Since mid-August, China has experienced two typhoons in the south of the country and extremely severe flooding in the north with an estimated death toll surpassing 200. The authorities estimate the total number of affected by the disasters at over 10 million.

Heavy rains struck southern China as the country was affected by Typhoon Trami which made landfall on 23 August. The heavy rains triggered landslides that increased the number of casualties. According to local authorities, the typhoon has affected almost two million people in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous region, coastal Zhejiang and Fujian provinces, and central China's Hunan province. The total estimated displaced population stands at over 380,000 people. An estimated 1.4 million people were affected in the Zhejiang and Fujian provinces alone, with over 351,000 people displaced. At least two people were killed, hundreds of houses damaged, and crops lost across the provinces.

China's southern regions were affected by Typhoon Utor which resulted in 70 people dead and another 18 missing. Guangdong province experienced the most typhoon-related casualties, with 43 reported deaths as of 22 August according to IFRC. Following its passage across the Philippines on 12 August, Typhoon Utor, locally known as Labuyo, hit China's south eastern Guangdong province on 14 August. According to the authorities, it also affected the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous region. All areas were struck by heavy monsoon rains in the aftermath.

Authorities reported that, as of 19 August, the typhoon and rains that followed have affected an estimated 8.37 million people in the south of the country. At the same time, the authorities reported that some 6.67 million people were displaced. In Heilongjiang and Fujian provinces alone, with over 351,000 people displaced. At least two people were killed, hundreds of houses damaged, and crops lost across the provinces.

The provinces of Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang in north-eastern China, near the border with Russia, have been hit by severe flooding, reportedly the worst in decades, following heavy rains from 10 August. As of 19 August, authorities reported that 800,000 people have been affected; 100,000 were evacuated, and 113,000 hectares of farmland were damaged in Liaoning. In Jilin, 760,000 people were reportedly affected, of whom over 100,000 were displaced and 35,000 houses damaged or destroyed. In Heilongjiang, nearly two million people were affected, of whom 140,000 were displaced and 15,000 houses damaged, according to the authorities. As of 20 August, an estimated 3.74 million had been affected across the three provinces. At least 85 deaths were reported across the three provinces and 100 people were reportedly missing. Since these three areas are major grain producers and the autumn harvest is entering its key phase, the authorities have
reported concerns regarding agriculture recovery.

In mid-August, other Chinese provinces were affected by heavy rains and subsequent floods, including central Hunan province where floods affected 85,400 people in Lanshan county. Of the affected, 35,000 people were displaced, and five people were confirmed dead in the area. At least 6,200 hectares of farmland were affected and almost 200 houses damaged.

China is an extremely hazard-prone country, regularly suffering from floods, earthquakes, landslides, and hailstorms.

Reviewed: 22/10/2013

JORDAN DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

As of 29 October: Over half a million Syrian refugees (552,061), including those awaiting registration, have crossed into Jordan since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, according to UNHCR.

Political and Security Context

After six days of relative calm along the Syria-Jordan border, coinciding with the Eid Al Adha holiday, a resurgence of heavy shelling was reported on 20 October in the southern Syrian villages of Daal, Nawa, Sheikh Al Maskin, Al Tufs, and Daraa. The Jordan Armed Forces said only around 400 Syrians crossed into Jordan on 26 October, marking a drop from the Eid Al Adha holiday, which saw 4,900 Syrians flee to Jordan over a five-day period, the largest refugee influx in nearly two months.

The border region with Syria has seen increased fighting over the last weeks, as the opposition has pushed to gain more ground. On 9 October, opposition fighters reportedly took control of the Hajanah border post, near the Syrian city of Dar’a, after besieging it for two months and fierce clashes erupted around it lasting a month. The border post is adjacent to an old customs post seized by opposition fighters on 28 September. With its capture, opposition forces now control a ribbon of territory along the border from outside Dar’a to the edge of the Golan Heights.

On 28 September, after four consecutive days of fighting, Syrian opposition forces, including members of an al-Qaeda linked group, captured the Ramtha military post on the outskirts of Dar’a city, at the border with Jordan. The Government of Jordan sent the Syrian authorities a letter of protest after a shell landed in Ramtha, inside Jordanian territory during the clashes. The military advance of opposition forces is also felt within Jordan where officials stated this week that al-Qaeda linked militants of the al-Nusra Front have been recruiting Jordanians for the fight against Syrian President al-Assad.

While Jordan’s economy and its social fabric have been significantly impacted by the large influx of Syrian refugees, the country has remained politically stable and secure. However, this balance is fragile.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

The alleged chemical weapons attack on 21 August drove thousands of displaced Syrians towards Jordan; roughly 10,000 civilians fled the Damascus governorate on 21 August, with border towns receiving mass waves of hundreds of IDPs. However, the number of Syrians entering Jordan is still lower than in previous months due to fighting on the border.

Displacement: In June, fighting along the Jordanian-Syrian border closed main access routes into Jordan, forcing displaced Syrians to use more arduous desert routes to enter the country. According to Syrian opposition groups, heavy clashes and shelling blocked off routes into southwest Syria, forcing opposition forces to restrict cross-border activity to essential movement of fighters and medical supplies and continue to suspend mass refugee crossings. Refugees are reportedly waiting two to three days in border regions before crossing into Jordan often delayed further due to increased security measures put in place to deal with the numbers of forged documents.

Syrian activists and rebel officials said 80 displaced people have died from starvation on the border, as heavy shelling prevents refugees from entering Jordan, raising the number of displaced people stranded on the border to 70,000. However, this number is not confirmed and estimates range from 10-100,000. On 15 September, Syrian activists and rebel officials said heavy shelling is preventing some 5,000 civilians from entering Jordan.

As of 28 October, 552,061 Syrian refugees, including those awaiting registration, have crossed into Jordan according to UNHCR. This influx has swelled Jordan’s population size by 11%, placing enormous pressure on national resources. Recent reports warn of rising tensions between Jordanians and Syrian refugees, especially in communities hosting large numbers of displaced Syrians.

Around 23% of Syrian refugees live in camps, the rest in local communities. Most refugees are in northern areas near the Syrian border, e.g. Irbid, Mafraq, Ramtha, and Zarqa. Recent statistics from the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization note that urban refugees comprise 75% of the total refugee population: 30% in Amman; 45% in the north; 15% in the middle; and 3% in the southern region.

On 9 October, protesters blocked the Irbid-Amman road, near the Azmi al-Mofti Palestinian refugee camp, and clashed with security forces attempting to secure the area. This is the latest in a series of recent incidents that underscore the persistent threat of unrest in Jordan’s outlying areas, including major cities like Irbid. Riots have re-erupted in Jerash, as a tribal altercation between residents of the Al-Hadada neighbourhood and those of the Gaza Palestinian refugee camp evolved into clashes between Palestinians and the Jordanian police force. The riots are said to be led by pro-reform Jordanian youth who are angry about the contracting economy.

Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp is the equivalent of an entirely new city, equivalent to the country’s fifth largest with over 130,000 residents. The lack of security in certain parts of Za'atari camp impedes refugees’ access to services. Limits of transportation impact accessibility to health services for the most disadvantaged, including persons with disabilities, older mobility-challenged refugees, and pregnant women. Security incidents in Za'atari camp are frequent. On 6 October, refugees clashed with the staff while asking for
the registration process to be sped up. Police intervened and restored order.

Jordan's King Abdullah II has asked for support for the swelling number of Syrian refugees, warning on 25 September that his country was overwhelmed. Based on trends from January to March 2013, it is likely that one million Syrians could need support in Jordan by end 2013, with as many as 300,000 hosted in camps and 700,000 with local residents, according to UNHCR. The government said on 26 September that it needs US$850 million in international assistance to meet the needs of this many refugees. Jordan's Minister of Foreign Affairs predicted that Syrian refugees could make up 40% of Jordan's population by mid of 2014 unless the crisis ends.

On 21 October, the Jordanian Labour Minister stated that the country will deport 5,723 illegal Syrian workers in November unless they obtain government permits. According to the Ministry, there are currently 15,000 illegal workers, including 5,723 Syrians.

In August, officials said that Jordan was finalising preparations for its third Syrian refugee camp, with the capacity to receive its first refugee families in September (Michiezen Al Gharbiya camp in the eastern city of Azraq). The camp is designed to host up to 500,000 Syrians in its initial phase, according to the UN, with an expandable capacity of up to 130,000. To date the camp remains unopened.

Nearly 9,000 refugees in Jordan left for Syria in June, bringing the number of returnees to over 68,000 in the past two years. Many returnees only spend a short amount of time in Syria and then re-enter Jordan. According to UNHCR as of 7 October, refugee returns from Jordan to Syria average 300 people per day.

Food Security: As a result of the refugee influx, Jordan's economy, water, energy, education, and housing resources remain strained. Commodity prices are higher in Jordan than in Syria, and the purchasing power of refugees to cover basic needs keeps decreasing. Jordan also has high unemployment (around 14%), inflation, and poverty.

Due to increased demand, cereal import requirements in 2013/14 (July/June) are forecast to exhibit a slight increase (about 5%) on the 2012/13 level of 2.19 million tonnes. According to the National Department of Statistics, the monthly rate of food price inflation (year-on-year) reached 4.4% in June 2013, fuelled by increases in vegetable prices. By contrast, bread and cereal prices declined by 1.4% due to Government support schemes.

All humanitarian programming is now required to include interventions to support poor Jordanians as a way of sharing the burden of the government to meet ongoing needs of both refugees and its own vulnerable population. The socio-economic conditions in poor and food-insecure areas are not expected to improve in the short or medium term and could deteriorate with the continuation of the crisis.

In early August, the UN reported that some Syrian refugees are donating to poor Jordanians or selling them extra food received from aid agencies at a discounted price. Northern governorates have been hit particularly hard by the refugee influx and demands on basic service provision. In Mafraq governorate, where locals are heavily affected by prices and irregular water supply, food, blankets, tents, and other items with UNHCR and other agency logos are publicly for sale.

In Jordan, coping behaviour varies between camp and non-camp refugees. Those in host communities are resorting to more severe coping strategies due to a lack of readily accessible services, including provision of free food. According to WFP, the most recurring consumption-based coping strategy is reliance on less preferred and less expensive food. Many adults also restrict their own consumption to feed small children. UNHCR reports that 23% of community-based refugees exhibit a ‘poor’ or ‘borderline’ Food Consumption Score compared to 18.5% of refugees in camps, highlighting the needs of both refugees and host communities.

To accommodate the spike in water demand, Jordan is drawing on additional water resources, including buying water from private wells. The extra demand on water and sanitation services will cost the Government over $700 million dollars per year, even as Jordanians receive less water per capita.

Health and Nutrition: New cases of water-borne and water-related diseases are appearing in Za'atari camp on a weekly basis, including diarrhea, scabies, leptospirosis, rotavirus, and hepatitis A. Other communicable diseases related to hygiene conditions have been reported, including acute jaundice syndrome, chicken pox, lice, and measles. While these diseases are often seasonal or endemic in the region, there have been alerts issued for a measles outbreak (six cases in Za'atari camp from 9 November 2012 to 14 June 2013, according to UNHCR) and higher-than-usual levels of jaundice, scabies, and lice.

Updated: 29/10/2013

LAOS FLOODS, EPIDEMIC

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was on: 08/10/2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster: According to OCHA, as of 2 October, over 217,000 people were affected in the five southern provinces of Salavan, Champasak, Attepeu, Savannakhet, and Xekong in Laos following ongoing extensive floods. Since mid-September, an additional three people had reportedly died, over 1,500 people were evacuated, and nearly 1,500 houses were damaged or destroyed. The recent additional flooding was caused by a tropical depression that passed through the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) from the South China Sea during 17-23 September and brought with it heavy rains. The affected areas were already flooded following ongoing heavy rains since June. An estimated 50,000 people were in need of immediate food assistance during the last three months. According to the UN, as of 29 August, an estimated 119,625 people were affected by the flooding and 17 people had been killed between June and mid-September.

From June to August, several provinces in the Northern and Central part of Laos were flooded due to heavy continuous rainfall. The authorities reported that two tropical storms Jebi (31 July–3 August) and Mankhut (5-7 August) caused flooding in the northern provinces of Oudomxay, Xayabuly, Xiengkhoung, and Bolikhamsay, in the central
provinces of Khammoune, Xieng Khuang, and Luang Prabang, and in the southern province of Vientiane.

As stated by the UN, floods have damaged 14,000 hectares of rice with important loss of livestock also reported. Multiple public buildings and infrastructure, including schools, bridges, irrigation systems, water and sanitation systems were damaged in floods areas.

Health: As of 16 September, 50,000 cases of dengue fever have been recorded across all provinces since January 2013. The outbreak is the worst in the country’s history, with cases reported in all 17 provinces according to OCHA. The number of cases this year is four times higher than in 2010 and 11 times higher than in 2012. To date, 92 deaths have been reported this year with around 70% being children <15 years. The case-fatality rate is 0.2%.

The provinces in the far northwest, centre and far south of the country are among the worst affected. The highest concentrations of cases have been recorded in the capital Vientiane (4,617 cases) and the Champasak province (3,306 cases) in the southwest as of August. WHO indicated on 12 September that even though the numbers remained above the epidemic alert level, the weekly trend has been decreasing over the last month. The epidemic was expected to worsen as the rainy season is ongoing and previous epidemics have historically peaked in August and September.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

LEBANON CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST

Highlights

28 October: Clashes between rival factions in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli continued on 28 October for the fifth consecutive day leaving 47 people wounded and five dead. Intense clashes occurred in the rival suburbs of Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tabbaneh.

As of 28 October: UNHCR reported that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached 802,000 including 87,000 awaiting registration. Refugees continue to cross into Lebanon daily. With no formal camps, refugees in Lebanon are spread across 1,500 locations.

Political and Security Context

International political landscape: Widespread involvement of Hezbollah alongside Syrian Government troops in the offensive against the opposition-held stronghold Qusayr has prompted the Free Syrian Army and Jabhat al-Nusra to independently warn that their fighters could start fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon. On 10 July, the UN Security Council called on Hezbollah to end all involvement in the Syrian conflict. Hezbollah leader Nasrallah denied on 23 September that his group had received chemical weapons from Syria after members of the Syrian National Coalition opposition group accused President al-Assad of transferring chemical weapons to the Lebanese Shi'ite group to avoid inspection after agreeing to put them under international control.

The first major clashes between Lebanese Hezbollah militiamen and Syrian opposition fighters inside Lebanese territory were reported in June. In the aftermath, shelling of Lebanese territory, including the eastern town of Hermel, a reported Hezbollah stronghold, from an area in Syria allegedly controlled by opposition forces, resulted in new deaths. Shelling from Syria in the border regions frequently results in casualties. At least 15 Syrian shells hit several towns in the northern district of Akkar, on 14 October.

Political landscape national: Insecurity in Lebanon has grown with renewed fighting between different sectarian groups. The Syrian conflict is increasingly spilling into Lebanon, with almost daily shelling and sporadic clashes in the north and eastern border areas. With repeated inter-sectarian strife reported in Tripoli, fears are rising that the Syrian conflict may become a regional one between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims.

Clashes between rival factions in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli continued on 28 October for the fifth consecutive day leaving 47 people wounded and five dead. The Lebanese army deployed to Tripoli on 28 October while intense clashes occurred between rivals in Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tabbaneh. Many residents of the two impoverished neighbourhoods, which have suffered frequent rounds of fighting since the outbreak of conflict in Syria in 2011, have fled their homes for other parts of the city. Some armed fighters in Bab El Tabbaneh declared their loyalty to the Al-Qaeda affiliated ISIL. There is risk of further unrest as fighting in the Qalamoun region in Syria, adjacent to the Lebanese Bekaa Valley is expected to increase.

On 23 August, 47 people were killed and more than 500 wounded in blasts that exploded outside two mosques in a Sunni neighbourhood of Tripoli. While local officials tried to play down the sectarian nature of the attack, the twin blasts came as a stark reminder of the increasing carryover of the Syrian war into Lebanon along sectarian lines. To date, no group has claimed responsibility. In June, intermittent clashes between supporters of the different Syrian parties, split along different neighbourhoods in Tripoli, were reported.

Attacks on Hezbollah strongholds and Hezbollah related groups in Lebanon have become more frequent. This week, the Lebanese security forces defused a car bomb in the Mamora area, in the southern suburbs of Beirut. Security forces intervened on 15 October to restore calm in Al-Tariq Al-Jadideh after the presence of masked gunmen from Resistance Brigade, a group linked to Hezbollah, sparked tension in the Beirut neighborhood.

On 15 August, a car bomb in Beirut’s Ruwais district, another stronghold of the Lebanese Shi'ite armed movement Hezbollah, killed 27 and wounded over 330 people. A previously unknown group, the Battalion of Aisha, said it carried out the attack because of Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian war. On the same day, the Syrian opposition National Coalition warned against the emergence of a cycle of violence in Lebanon if Hezbollah continued to send fighters to help the Damascus regime.

On 9 July, the Lebanese Parliamentary Speaker announced that the March 8th coalition, a major bloc in the Lebanese political system, collapsed after a frail alliance between two of its major parties, the Amal Movement and the Free Patriotic Movement, ended. The expiration of the March 8th alliance is expected to give a major boost to efforts to form a new Cabinet which has been delayed several times.
On 31 May, the Lebanese Parliament unanimously voted to extend its mandate by 17 months after failing to adopt a new electoral law at a time of deep internal divisions over the war in Syria. Elections that were originally planned for June were postponed. On 1 June, President Sleiman lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Council to challenge the Parliament's decision to extend its mandate and delay elections.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

Both host and refugee populations are impacted by increasing pressure on the health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices. Tensions are rising between host communities and refugees over strained resources, particularly with regard to overcrowded health facilities and employment. Many Lebanese families see their livelihoods eroding as wages decrease and rent prices soar, with hard-pressed Syrian refugees working for less money and sharing single-family homes with multiple families to save on rent. Real economic growth was 7% in 2010, fell to 1.8% in 2013 and is expected to be at 2.1% in 2014. In June 2013, general inflation reached almost 9% year-on-year (compared to 2% in June 2012). Food inflation eased from 5.7% in June 2012 to 3% in June 2013. Unemployment rates are expected to double to 29% in 2014.

**Displacement:** As of 28 October, UNHCR reported that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached close to 802,000, including 87,000 awaiting registration. According to UNHCR, an additional 100,000 persons are unwilling to register.

Refugees now represent over 18% of the country’s population and continue to cross into Lebanon daily. With no formal camps, refugees are spread across 1,500 locations of which 400 are informal settlements. Vulnerable Syrian families are settling in communal areas in Beirut (highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.); 69% of refugees stay in rented accommodation including unused shops, worksites and tents in makeshift settlements, half-finished buildings, and cramped apartment blocks, often in unhygienic conditions and with little access to food, water, and medical care.

An increasing number of evictions in some areas of Lebanon has been observed during the past weeks, due to rising tension between Syrian refugees and host communities. This is particularly noted in informal settlements. It is now extremely challenging for these refugees to find alternative accommodation, especially as winter approaches.

According to the Lebanese General Security Authority, there are currently two million Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Lebanon’s population has grown by 25% in under two years, while health, education, water and sanitation systems have all exceeded their capacities. According to media sources, the Lebanese government is implementing strict entry controls on Syrians attempting to enter the country at all border crossings. Only Syrians with valid identification cards or passports can enter. The measures reportedly aim at preventing extremist and anti-Lebanese groups from entering the country. While the majority of Syrian continues to be granted access to Lebanon according to UNHCR, there is a reported increase of arrest and detention of Syrians for illegal entry and stay.

On 23 July, Lebanese Social Affairs Minister first stated that special teams would start shutting down unlicensed Syrian-run businesses.

**Access:** Security in Tripoli and in northern and eastern border villages remains volatile with rockets and shelling hitting a number of towns, impeding humanitarian access, and restricting activities, and the availability of services.

The lack of funding continues to hamper humanitarian response in Lebanon. On 7 June, a Revised Regional Response plan was launched, requesting $1.2 billion for humanitarian operations in Lebanon. The Lebanese Government has requested an additional $500 million to provide aid to Syrian refugees and host communities.

According to the UN, the highly fragile situation in Lebanon, with intensified hostility in the north, South and Bekaa, is affecting programme delivery and staff movement. Access to unregistered Syrians detained in Lebanon remains challenging.

**Food Security and Livelihoods:** According to a World Bank assessment, the continuing refugee inflow will increase national vulnerability. Should refugee inflows continue, more than 170,000 additional Lebanese could fall into poverty by 2014, due to competition with refugees for unskilled labour. Currently, one million Lebanese live in poverty. The study estimates that the unemployment rate in Lebanon could double, exceeding 20% and affecting 320,000 people. An estimated US$1.6 billion will be needed to restore quality and access to health, education, and social safety nets to pre-crisis levels. According to the Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees conducted in May 2013, 70% of Syrian refugee households cannot meet basic food and non-food needs. The number of people requiring food assistance continues to increase, putting stress on existing resources.

**Health and Nutrition:** UNHCR reported in July that access to health care is challenging for Syrian refugees living in remote locations. Outstretched available resources, short working hours, and non-availability of trained health personnel limit the adequate provision of care for the displaced who suffer from trauma, substandard living conditions, and depletion of savings and assets. Common needs include reproductive health care, family planning, child health care, treatment for acute illnesses, chronic disease, and mental health.

According to UNHCR, the current supply of medicines for acute and chronic diseases is insufficient to cover the rising demand. Prevention of disease control and outbreaks in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation, presents a challenge.

*Updated: 29/10/2013*

**PHILIPPINES CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOON**

**Highlights**

*24 October:* To date, the death toll from the 7.2 magnitude earthquake that hit on 15 October stands at 198 people killed with 11 still missing and 668 injured. According to authorities on 24 October, the number of affected stood at over 3.1 million people across six provinces of Central and Western Visayas regions. An estimated 337,334 people have been displaced by the disaster. As rainfall is expected in the coming days, the living conditions of those affected are expected to deteriorate.
Political and Security Context

Elections: Village elections held in the Philippines on Monday 28 October went off relatively peacefully, but according to officials, violence in certain rural areas resulted in two killings, shootouts, and burning of a voting centre. According to a police official, the police and troops were on high alert for the elections as a result of 22 people killed and 27 injured in pre-election violence.

Situation in Mindanao: OCHA reported on 7 October that fighting between a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) around Zamboanga City in Mindanao ended. It is unclear if rebels are still hiding in areas where clearing operations for unexploded ordinance (UXOs) continue. As of 22 October, UNHCR reported an estimated 202 casualties and 324 in Zamboanga City.

On 27 September, according to authorities, the AFP captured several dozen rebels, with about 300 captured overall to date, and reportedly rescued the final civilian hostages held by the Muslim insurgents. About 200 people, local reports note, including 166 rebels, were killed and almost 140,000 displaced during the three weeks of fighting in Mindanao. These numbers, however, should be treated with caution.

On 23 September, Muslim rebels of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) clashed with the AFP and took hostages in a fresh outbreak of violence in the central part of southern Mindanao Island. During the clashes, at least four fighters on each side were killed as the rebels reportedly took 15 hostages who were later released. According to authorities, BIFF fighters retreated as the AFP received reinforcements. The attack came as the confrontation between the AFP and another Islamic insurgent group elsewhere in Mindanao entered its third week. The BIFF claimed that the incidents were not related.

On 9 September, fighting broke out in coastal villages at the outskirts of Zamboanga City, in the west of Mindanao Island, between a splinter group of the MNLF and AFP. Fighting between the rebel group that took over 200 people hostage and the AFP resulted in weeks of street fighting around Zamboanga City. Heavy fighting has left entire neighbourhoods razed to the ground. As reported by Human Rights Watch on 19 September, Philippines security forces and Muslim rebels have committed serious abuses during fighting in Zamboanga.

The latest attacks in Mindanao are seen as an attempt to sabotage talks to end decades of conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and a breakaway group of the original MNLF that has conducted armed attacks in the area over the past decades, and the government.

Mindanao Island has been plagued by a decade old rebellion by Muslim fighters that has left thousands dead. The original MNLF fought a 25-year guerrilla war for independence, until the signature of a peace treaty in 1996 granted it limited self-rule in the southern Muslim area. The MILF officially signed an historic peace deal with authorities in October 2012 and has been conducting final negotiations with the Government over the past year. It is expected to take over an expanded autonomous Muslim region in the south by 2016. Talks resumed in August amid deadly attacks by the splinter guerrilla group that left 15 dead in Mindanao. In July, a compromise on the sharing of local revenues with the creation of a Muslim self-rule area in the Mindanao region that is expected to be led by the MILF was reached. President Aquino said the ongoing talks aim to end decades of rebellion that had claimed 150,000 lives in the country’s Muslim southern regions.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: OCHA reports that torrential rains caused by the southwest monsoon and the effects of Typhoon Danas, locally known as Ramil, from 4-8 October caused flooding and landslides across the Zamboanga peninsula including Zamboanga city and the municipalities of Siocon and Sirawa in Zamboanga del Norte province and Tungawan municipality in Zamboanga Sibugay province. This has resulted in additional displacement in an area where, according to IOM, almost 140,000 people had already been displaced by fighting in September. As of 22 October, UNHCR reported that 105,700 people are displaced in Zamboanga city (79,214 displaced by conflict and 26,486 by flooding), and 9,693 people are displaced in Basilan province (8,450 from flooding and 1,243 from conflict).

As of 22 October, according to OCHA an estimated 131,748 people were affected in Zamboanga city and 18,226 people affected Basilan province. As reported by ICRC in mid-October, some of the 41,000 people living in 29 evacuation centres will probably have to stay there for the next two months, as shelling or flooding has damaged their houses.

Disaster: On 15 October, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit southern Philippines, southeast of Manila near the town of Carmen in Bohol province. No tsunami alert has been issued to date, but several aftershocks have been recorded. The initial quake struck at an estimated depth of 35 km around Bohol Island, to the north of Mindanao Island. As of 24 October, authorities reported 198 people dead, 11 missing, 668 injured, and more than 3.1 million people affected across six provinces of Central and Western Visayas regions. An estimated 337,334 people have been displaced by the disaster, of whom 79,297 people are in 129 evacuation centres while the remaining nearly 80% are staying outside. The earthquake destroyed/damaged 54,684 houses, 41 bridges, and 18 roads and caused power cuts across affected areas. With further rainfall expected, living conditions of the affected people are expected to deteriorate. According to IFRC, priority needs are emergency shelter, food, clean water and medical care.

On 11 October, Typhoon Nari (category 2), locally known as Santi, struck central Philippines, North of Manila, bringing further rains. As of 16 October, an estimated 871,000 people had been affected mainly in Central Luzon and Ilocos Regions. The typhoon destroyed/damaged over 53,000 houses, as well as roads, bridges, and crops according to authorities. Power supply was cut sporadically across all affected areas. The typhoon left the archipelago on 13 October.

Since 23 September, monsoon rains worsened by Typhoon Usagi, locally known as Odette, have pounded the country. The most severely affected area was the town of Subic, 80 kms northwest of Manila. Some affected areas experienced further heavy rains as tropical depression “Paolo” hit the area on 27 September.

As of 27 September, OCHA reported that Typhoon Usagi and the monsoon rains have displaced over 100,000 people and left 30 dead since 23 September. Nearly 600,000
people across six provinces, Bataan, Zambales, Rizal, Batangas, Cavite, and Occidental Mindoro, have been affected by heavy rains, and over 123,000 remain displaced as of 27 September, in an area that has been hit by several severe disasters over the past weeks. 86,186 displaced people are staying with family and friends, while 20,753 are in 103 evacuation centres.

Access: Mercy Relief reported on 21 October that bad weather was slowing down relief efforts to remote communities affected by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in Bohol. OCHA further reported on 16 October that humanitarian workers are struggling to reach those affected by the earthquake because of logistics constraints. The earthquake destroyed infrastructure, including bridges and roads, in Cebu and Bohol provinces, and triggered power cuts, leaving the whole island province of Bohol without electricity and with disrupted telecommunications.

Health: As noted by local health authorities, an epidemic caused by water contaminated with rat urine has hit a flood-ravaged region in the north of the country. To date, six people were killed by the ongoing epidemic, and 132 people have been affected by leptospirosis in and around the northern city of Olongapo.

According to the Department of Health, 1,528 dengue cases were reported in the first quarter of 2013 in Soccsksargen region, of whom 669 (41% of cases) are children <10. In KorONDal City, South Cotabato province, the municipal government declared a state of calamity on 27 June after a dengue outbreak was declared in the town. According to authorities, 239 dengue cases have been recorded as of 8 June, more than the 159 cases recorded in 2012. Dengue has also surged in central Philippines, particularly in the province of Iloilo, south of Manila, where the number of people affected is already 71% higher than the number recorded for the same period in 2012.

Updated: 29/10/2013

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

Highlights

No new development this week. Last update was on: 23/09/2013.

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

Political and Security Context

Political Context: On 17 September, UN human rights investigators released a report that documented human rights abuses of inmates in North Korea's prison camps suffering from starvation, torture, and other unspeakable atrocities. The inquiry, based on testimonies from North Korean exiles, came after pressure from Japan, South Korea, and Western powers to investigate and begin building a case for possible criminal prosecution. The report was rejected by Pyongyang and may strain relations between the North Korean regime and the international community that have only lately begun to improve.

On 5 September, North Korea agreed to restore a cross-border military hotline with South Korea, in a sign of easing tensions between the rival states. The line had been shut down in early spring.

On 14 August, North and South Korea agreed to reopen the joint industrial park in Kaesong after a series of talks concerning this rare bilateral economic cooperation. The two countries announced on 10 September that the facilities would be reopened. In April, Pyongyang pulled its 53,000 workers out of the park at the height of tensions with Seoul and Washington over its nuclear military programme. On 7 August, Pyongyang announced that it was ready to reopen the joint industrial zone. The statement came only an hour after Seoul, exasperated by the North’s lack of responsiveness, signalled its willingness to let the facility close definitively. Prior to closing, Kaesong was a rare source of hard currency for North Korea.

The reopening of Kaesong appears to be a step toward improving Pyongyang’s relations with the West. After the soaring of the relations between Pyongyang and the West in early spring, relations with Seoul improved after an unexpected reversal on 6 June from Pyongyang, which proposed opening a dialogue. On 9 June, North and South Korean officials held their first talks in years in a positive end to months of military tension.

On 27 June during a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his South Korean counterpart Park Geun-hye in Beijing, Chinese authorities agreed to push for new talks between the two Koreas and appeared to favour a denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster: In mid-July, heavy seasonal rain resulted in flooding in many parts of DPRK. Particularly affected are the provinces of North and South P’yongan. According to the Red Cross, Anju City, in South P’yongan province, was 80% flooded after the Chongchon River caused embankments to break on the morning of 21 July.

Noted by OCHA on 23 August, floods in DPRK have affected 800,000 people and left almost 49,000 homeless. Farmland has been inundated with at least 10,000 hectares affected, and 1,000 hectares of crops destroyed. Damage to agricultural land is extensive with up to 40% of the land in Pakchon county, including 80% of paddy, affected. An assessment conducted by the Health Cluster on 6 August documented damage to roads, bridges, houses, and public buildings, limiting the access of affected persons to basic health care and services. An increase in the number of diarrhoeal diseases was reported due to extensive damage to the water system. An estimated 678,000 people need basic health care, essential drugs, and hospital supplies for life-saving interventions.

On 9 August, authorities reported that the floods affected 73 counties and caused severe damage in 22 counties. Over 11,000 buildings were reportedly damaged. The number of affected was given at 788,000 people, including 56,000 children <5 and 14,800 pregnant women. In early August, authorities estimated the death toll at 33 dead with 18 people still missing. An estimated 59,000 people were displaced. According to WFP, IDPs are suffering from a lack of access to safe drinking water. This comes after flooding and a
subsequent typhoon in July and August 2012, which affected roughly 700,000 people, damaging health facilities and reducing access to primary and secondary health care.

Access: Humanitarian access to the country is limited. In early June, WFP approved a new two-year operation for DPRK starting on 1 July and targeting 2.4 million people, almost all children and pregnant and nursing women, with about 207,000 MT of food assistance.

Food Security: Little up-to-date information is available on the food security situation in DPRK. According to an August OCHA report, an estimated 16 million people, of a total population of 24.6 million, are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance. OCHA further reports that although the humanitarian situation has improved slightly over 2013, the structural causes of vulnerability persist and external assistance is needed, notably targeting the most affected northeastern provinces.

Despite the UN reporting that the main 2012 harvest and 2013 early season crops will see a 10% increase compared to a year earlier, which allegedly should result in the smallest cereal deficit since at least the early 2000s, the food security situation remains grim. According to OCHA, the lack of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser and plastic sheets) remains the main challenge for food production.

Health and Nutrition: Despite a slight improvement, malnutrition rates continue to be alarming. According to the 2012 National Nutrition Survey quoted in OCHA’s August 2013 report, the chronic malnutrition (stunting) rate among children <5 is 27.9%, while 4% remain acutely malnourished (wasting). Chronic under-nutrition is a public health problem and a major underlying cause of maternal and child mortality.

Reviewed: 29/10/2013

Political and Security Context

Riot police in Haiti broke up an anti-government demonstration attended by thousands of people to mark the anniversary of the 1991 ousting of the former President Aristide on 1 October. A small group of protesters responded by setting ablaze barricades that blocked a major thoroughfare through the heart of downtown Port-au-Prince. Haiti was to have held legislative and local elections in 2011, but infighting among various government branches has delayed the vote. The current head of state, Martelly, has said that elections will be held this year, however, this seems unlikely to happen before end 2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement: As of 22 October, nearly 3½ years after the earthquake, an estimated 172,000 people remained displaced in Haiti, according to IOM, 107,000 fewer than reported in early July. This is the highest decrease in the IDP population since April 2012. Between July and September, 46 IDP sites have closed. In June, the Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster anticipated the number of IDPs to further reduce to 211,000 by December 2013; this has now been exceeded.

Currently, 306 IDP sites and camp-like settlements host the remaining IDPs. Of the 306 sites, 72 (24%) are reportedly on public land, while 75% (229) are on private property. The status of the remaining four sites could not be determined by IOM. The situation in the sites on private land is problematic with 75,000 IDPs possibly facing illegal forced eviction by land owners in the coming months. Camp-settlements are vulnerable to floods and landslides, putting the IDP population at risk in the upcoming hurricane season.

In addition, 300,000 people could be affected by the ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic that children of undocumented migrants, even if born in the Dominican Republic and registered as Dominicans, are not eligible for Dominican citizenship. If this sentence is applied, it means up to 300,000 people of Haitian origin could become effectively stateless. Without documents, they would be unable to access health and education services, get married, or own property.

Disaster: Haiti remains highly fragile and highly exposed to external shocks. The resilience of the population and its capacity to cope with new crises is extremely low.

Reports indicate that 119 of Haiti’s 140 municipalities have been severely affected by drought, the tropical storm Isaac and/or hurricane Sandy in 2012, displacing at least 58,000 people.

In early May, FEWSNET reported that seasonal rainfall in the Nippes, Sud, and Grand’Anse departments was less than 50% below average. Seasonal rainfall in the Ouest and Sud-Est departments has also been below-average. The largest seasonal deficits occurred across the southwestern peninsula in the Nippes, Sud, and Grand’Anse departments. An increase in rain during the first week of August helped relieve the dryness over parts of Haiti. However, moderate seasonal precipitation deficits remain in many areas in the northwest and the south. Continued below average rainfall could further increase moisture deficits and negatively impact crops.
Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 led to massive flooding, affecting 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grand’Anse, and Sud were the most severely affected departments. As of early April 2013, 72,000 people affected by Hurricane Sandy still needed humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA. Forecasts by the Directorate for Civil Protection anticipate that 600,000 people could be affected and 200,000 displaced by adverse weather conditions this year.

**Food Security and Malnutrition:** According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security as of 16 October, three million Haitians are food insecure. This figure is 44% lower than OCHA’s early October estimate. According to the report, the number of severely food insecure people has also declined in 2013, from 1.5 million to 600,000 people.

In early October, OCHA reported that 1.5 million people across Haiti were still severely food insecure and risked a nutritional crisis; another 5.2 million people face moderate food insecurity. These 6.7 million people struggle to meet their own food needs on a regular basis according to WFP; 44 of 140 municipalities are affected, with over half the population facing high food insecurity. An estimated 800,000 people suffering from severe food insecurity had reportedly not received any emergency assistance and have begun implementing negative coping mechanisms.

The June IPC round in Haiti indicated that most departments faced stressed food security conditions (IPC phase 2). Some households in these areas, such as the agro-pastoral areas of North, Artibonite and Central Highlands, were in crisis food security conditions (IPC phase 3). The poor and very poor in municipalities in the Sud-Est, Ouest, and Nord-Est departments face crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) and have switched to irreversible coping strategies. Poor seed availability due to increasing prices, which are 20-30% higher than the 5-year average, is threatening this year’s crop yields.

The 2013 harvest of the main cereal season was completed in September. Despite below average precipitation during the sowing period, the absence of tropical storms and flooding has resulted in good maize yields. Preliminary official estimates point to an increase of 30% in production from 2012’s sharply reduced levels. Planting of the secondary season has resulted in good maize yields. Preliminary official estimates point to an increase of 30% in production from 2012’s sharply reduced levels. Planting of the secondary season has begun under favourable weather conditions. With the arrival of the new harvest into the markets, prices of local maize meal, an important staple, have declined. In remote areas, such as Jeremie and Hinche, prices were higher than in September 2012 due to access difficulties. Prices of imported rice, the main staple in the country, remained stable in most markets in September.

**Health and Nutrition:** In July, rains triggered localized cholera outbreaks in several departments, especially in Artibonite, Nord-est, and Centre; 992 new cholera cases and six deaths were reported in the week of 13-19 July alone. Nationally, the number of new cases in September was 5,641 compared to 5,136 in July. New cholera cases surged from 3,357 in May. From 19-26 October, WHO reported 1,512 new cases and 31 deaths in one week. All ten departments of Haiti have registered new cases. According to OCHA on 11 October, the number of reported cases since the beginning of 2013 is 41,701 and the number of deaths 360. Artibonite is the most affected and most vulnerable department, with just seven partners involved in the cholera-response.

Since the beginning of the epidemic in October 2010 until 10 October 2013, the total number of cholera cases reached 682,573, of whom 379,870 were hospitalised (56%) and 8,330 people died. Some 60,000 new cholera cases are expected before end 2013, with the caseload already at over 40,000 people affected. Funding for the cholera response is covered by the least funded component in the Humanitarian Action Plan, only 23% of funding requirements for the health sector were met as of October. Contamination of rivers, unhygienic conditions, and inadequate sanitation are the principal causes for the spread of cholera. Some 42% of the population does not have access to clean water.

Human rights lawyers reported that they plan to seek compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on UN peacekeepers. The decision to file suit in New York comes after the UN said earlier this year that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti.

An estimated 73,000 children <5 suffer from acute malnutrition, down from 82,000 as previously reported, including 18,000 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Rural children are especially affected.

*Updated: 29/10/2013*
More than 60 people were injured and 29 killed in fighting on 23 August between inmates at the maximum security area of Palmasola jail in the city of Santa Cruz. Overcrowding is a major challenge for Bolivia's prison system. Already running at almost double capacity, 2011 saw a 20% rise in the number of inmates, presenting a fertile breeding ground for criminal gangs. Budget constraints and overcrowding also affect the way prisons are run in the country; with funding for guards tight, the insides of Bolivian prison facilities are often effectively run by the inmates themselves.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Several cumulative disasters have affected Bolivia since the beginning of the rainy season, having a severe impact on livelihoods and food security.

Disaster: On 15 October, a chain of several earthquakes in the eastern region of Bolivia affected up to 2,000 people (440 families), but no casualties were reported. According to the Observatory of San Calixto based in La Paz, the largest material damages occurred in three Guarani communities (namely Cotoca, Las Cutas and Yateirenda) of the municipality of Cabezas, in the province of Cordillera, belonging to the department of Santa Cruz. The main quake, measuring a magnitude of 5M, was registered just after 16h local time and had its epicentre 21.1 kilometres deep, located 78 kilometres Southwest of the city of Santa Cruz. Some 32 aftershocks were recorded in the following days. The eastern regions of the country are particularly vulnerable since they are regularly affected by drought, floods and earthquakes.

On 19 June, the Government issued a National Emergency Decree due to drought in the Departments of Tarija, Chuquisaca, El Chaco, Santa Cruz, and southern Cochabamba. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people are affected by drought and an estimated 87,000 hectares of crops have sustained damage.

The department of Tarija is the worst hit with around 44,000 hectares of crops estimated to have been lost. Santa Cruz recorded the highest number of affected cattle with approximately 29,400 dead. In Cochabamba, 24,805 hectares in 594 communities reported damage during the first half of 2013. The most serious damage was caused by flooding (51%), drought (33%), and other lower-impact weather events.

On 25 October, the Bolivian Civil Defense reported that it had begun the distribution of 300 tons of food to 120,000 families in 15 municipalities affected by drought in the department of Cochabamba. Water tanks, pipes and other material support will also be delivered.

On 28 August, the Government reported that heavy snowfall and frost have affected the six departments of Cochabamba, Potosi, Oruro, La Paz, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca. Authorities reported that around 53,500 people have been affected. Some 1,270 hectares of crops were damaged and 2,830 heads of cattle killed. Livestock is the only livelihood for most affected families in these areas.

In March, several southern departments were severely affected by damaging levels of torrential rain and floods, especially in Chuquisaca, Potosi, Tarija and Cochabamba. Overall, the floods impacted 145,000 people in nearly 25% of Bolivia's municipalities. In Cochabamba alone, 40,000 people were affected between 18-25 March.

Food Security: FAO reported that the 2013 aggregate cereal production is forecast to decrease by 11% compared to the previous year. The recently harvested 2012-13 main season maize crop was severely affected by drought during the vegetative period.

Results of a multi-sectoral assessment from August 2013 confirmed a deterioration of the food and nutrition security situation of the affected households. Many families have significantly reduced the frequency and quantity of food consumed. Many workers have migrated from their communities in search of casual labor. The affected households are not expected to recover until the next harvest in April/May 2014.

WFP noted at the end of July that the impact of price changes of staple foods on the cost of the basic food basket from April to June was severe. The seasonally adjusted price increases for rice and maize both stood at 43%. After declining in the previous months, the price of wheat flour, which is mostly imported, rose sharply in the first half of June, increasing by 19% and 36% in the major cities of La Paz and Santa Cruz respectively, and remaining significantly higher than a year ago.

According to the Ministry of Rural Lands and Development, at least 15,000 hectares of crops were damaged by the torrential March rains in the south of the country, but the Ministry has discounted the possibility of food security risks. However, according to WFP, at least 25,000 people needed food assistance in March. Subsistence farmers who normally cultivate crops at the riversides were the most affected. The floods hit at the end of the lean season, as farmers were about to harvest their crops and food reserves were at the lowest. Families that traditionally store their harvested potatoes and onions in the fields also lost reserves.

Updated: 29/10/2013

COLOMBIA INTERNAL UNREST, DISPLACEMENT

Highlights

As of late September, social unrest continued with many protesters congregated in several areas across the country, including Meta in central Colombia and Cesar on the Caribbean coast. New protests have been recorded in Cordoba and Antioquia. However, no blockades or confinements have been reported.

Political and Security Context

As of late September, social unrest continued with many protesters congregated in several areas across the country, including Meta in central Colombia and Cesar on the Caribbean coast. In Cordoba in the north-west, a new indigenous movement launched a protest against mining operations on their native territories. In Antioquia, protesters denounced the installation of new military bases in their towns. In all of these areas, with the exception of Boyacá, which was the scene of major protests by farmers during August, conflict has had persistent humanitarian impacts over several years. These protests have not led to blockades and confinements as in past months, and the humanitarian community has created a strategy to ensure it can reach people in need during large protests.
On 13 September, OCHA reported that major protests were held throughout the month of August in 20 of Colombia’s 32 departments, with the population demanding improved social conditions in the country. Due to severe restrictions on mobility, several major cities were cut off, causing the rapid depletion of food stockpiles. Along with critical humanitarian access restricted in the southwest, central Colombia and the south, severe impact was recorded on basic services. Approximately 443,000 people were affected, and 15 municipalities in central Colombia were among the most affected due to confinement. As of 30 August, negotiations with the protesters ended the strikes in that area, but civil unrest is on-going in other regions.

On 13 October, a 15th round of peace negotiations between the Government and FARC ended with the parties trading accusation over responsibility for the slow pace of the talks and for the first time failing to issue a joint statement on their progress.

End of August, the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army, the country’s largest guerrilla group) resumed peace talks with the Government, following a brief interruption in reaction to a proposal that any agreement be put to a national referendum. National dialogue was initiated in August 2012 to seek an end to the conflict, but the Government called off the ceasefire several times, alleging violations of the truce by the FARC. In May, the two parties reached an agreement on one of the most contentious issues: land reform and compensation. Early July, the FARC announced they would be working with the ELN (National Liberation Army, the second largest guerrilla group in Colombia) to find a political solution to the social and armed conflict. End of August, President Santos announced that the Government was ready to begin peace talks with the ELN.

The Colombian government wants a peace accord by November- the start of a national electoral cycle with a presidential vote in May 2014, a deadline both parties and observers now say is unlikely to be met.

Colombia has said it is ready to integrate up to 40,000 of demobilised rebels into society, as peace talks between FARC rebels and government negotiators entered their 15th round. Nevertheless, fighting has continued despite the resumption of peace talks on 3 October. On 5 October, two people were killed in an attack by FARC guerrilla forces in Solano, Caqueta department.

In addition, on 7 October, Colombia’s second most important oil pipeline, the Cano Limon-Covenas, has been temporarily shut down after having been damaged by three bomb attacks. No group has claimed responsibility so far. A separate attack last week blamed on the FARC forced the temporary closure of the 190-mile (306 km) Transandino pipeline in southern Colombia.

In May, Colombia witnessed a 28% increase in armed actions, as compared to April, particularly in urban centres, including Cali, Medellín, Bucaramanga and Cartagena. Organised crime and urban violence are huge challenges to security and access to basic services in Colombia.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disaster:** OCHA reported on 31 August that the protests affected 443,000 people, including 241,000, which suffer severe humanitarian impact. Natural disasters account for around 38,000 people affected in September, the vast majority due to flooding and wind storms along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts.

The official meteorological institute, Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales, reported that Colombia’s second rainy season began on 15 September. It typically lasts through mid-December, and forecasts indicate a likelihood of increased rainfall in central Colombia and along the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. The highest precipitation is likely to occur in October and November, with wind storms also predicted.

As of 10 September, OCHA reported that at least 78,530 people were affected by floods in 12 municipalities of the department of Putumayo. Hundreds of homes and 30,000 ha of crops were destroyed, and estimates of at least 1,000 people have not received assistance due to the limitation of movement as a result of the strikes. Authorities warned about the beginning of the second rainy season in the Andean and Pacific regions, which will run until early December.

The first rainy season of between mid-March and mid-June affected 140,000 people in one third of all municipalities in the country. The most affected zones were on the Pacific Coast in Chocó department with 64,215 people affected, followed by Cauca and Antioquia departments.

**Displacement:** Beginning of August, the Victim’s Registry reported that between 1985 and 2013, 5,800,000 people were registered as internally displaced because of long-term conflict, with an estimated 127,714 IDPs in 2012 alone. Nearly 20,000 IDPs have been displaced in 82 mass events so far in 2013, 820 of them in September.

On 25 September, two mass displacement events were reported from the border with Venezuela, Norte de Santander, with at least 800 people displaced in the municipalities of Cucuta and Sardinata. The population is in need of shelter, potable water and food. The food stocks were estimated to last until 26 September.

**Access:** Limited humanitarian access in Colombia is a major constraint of both humanitarian assistance provided to affected populations as well as access of population to aid and assistance.

A total of 33,636 people were reported as being confined in May, bringing the new total for 2013 to 71,659 people as reported by OCHA Colombia is suffering from chronic displacement. This makes it the worst month for confinement since monitoring began in January. The most significant event was a major restriction on the mobility of civilians by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army (FARC-EP) in north-west Colombia around the municipality of Briceño in Antioquia. towns in the region.

Attacks on medical missions are one of the most worrying humanitarian problems and one of the least reported, as well as the serious consequences for people who depend on medical services. Concerns arise about the increase observed in 2013, largely due to incidents in the context of protests in July and August. In addition there are serious constraints imposed by non-state armed groups in the form of APM/UXOs. Thus far in 2013, 305 victims were recorded of them 132 were civilians.
Health and Nutrition: On 26 October, the Paraguayan Ministry of Health reported 400 cases of dengue per week in the sole metropolitan area of the capital Asunción. The cities of San Lorenzo and Capiata are among the most infected with approximately 150 new cases per week. The dengue outbreak has killed 362 people and infected more than 133,000 in the country so far in 2013.

Updated: 29/10/2013

PARAGUAY DROUGHT

Highlights

26 October: The Paraguayan Ministry of Health reported 400 cases of dengue per week in the metropolitan area of the capital Asunción. The cities of San Lorenzo and Capiata are among the most infected with approximately 150 new cases per week. The dengue outbreak has killed 362 people and infected more than 133,000 in the country so far in 2013.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disaster: The Chaco region, stretching over northern and western Paraguay, is currently experiencing a severe drought. The government of Paraguay declared a state of emergency on September 16 for 90 days. The National Secretariat of Emergency (SEN) reports that some 15,200 families (76,000 people) are affected in the departments of Presidente Hayes, Boquerón and Alto Paraguay. The worst affected districts in President Hayes are Lieutenant Irala Fernández, Puerto Pinasco and Villa Hayes. In Boqueron, the worst affected districts are Mariscal Estigarribia, Philadelphia and Loma Plata, and in the department of Alto Paraguay, almost all districts are severely affected.

Authorities have reported that the crisis is acute but rainfalls are expected to be received soon. Food stocks have rapidly decreased and many laborers and workers have lost their livelihoods due to the drought. In addition significant loss of pasture has resulted in mortality of cattle, which has been observed to be up to 25-30% in some communes.

As of late October, authorities have been distributing water and non-perishable food to the affected area in response of the drought that affect rural and indigenous communities. The affected population faced floods in the same zone last year.

On 21-22 September, a local severe hailstorm hit parts of Paraguay. According to the SEN, several departments of the country were affected by the storm, among which the worst affected are Central, Cordillera, Caaguazú and San Pedro. In total, an estimated 70,000 across the country are affected as of late September.

According to the National Emergency Secretariat, 99 schools were damaged in the violent storm, leading to disruption of activities. The departments hardest hit by the storms were reported to suffer large crop losses according official reports. Despite favourable weather conditions during most of the cropping season, severe frost at the end of July and during August in the main producing areas of Alto Parana, Itapua and Caaguazu caused severe damage to the crop. Preliminary official estimates anticipate a reduction of the harvest between 30 and 40% and this year's output could decline up to 840,000 tonnes, well below the early production forecast of 1.4 million tonnes. Moreover, it is anticipated that the quality of this year's wheat will also be negatively affected.
Introduction to the Global Emergency Overview Update

The Global Emergency Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global Emergency Overview collates information from a wide range of sources, including Reliefweb and media sources, and displays this information in a manner that allows for quick comparison of different humanitarian crises. The primary objective of the Global Emergency Overview is to rapidly inform humanitarian decision makers by presenting a summary of major humanitarian crises, both recent and protracted. It is designed to provide answers to four questions:

1. Which humanitarian crises currently exist? (World map)
2. What has happened in the last seven days? (Highlights and Snapshot)
3. What is the situation in the country affected by a crisis? (Highlights Box and Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Emergency Overview consists of three main sections:

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

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

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

Second, the snapshot briefly describes what has happened in the last seven days from the date of publication, by outlining the crises that have occurred in the different highlighted countries.

Third, narratives for each country included in the Global Emergency Overview reflect major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country over the last months. Narratives are written based on secondary data. For each country, a specific highlights box is also added to put emphasis on the major developments that happened over the past 10 days.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones click here.

To download the mobile application for iOS phones click here.

Update

The Global Emergency Overview will be updated once a week and the results will be available every Monday before midday (Central European Time/Central European Summer Time). In case of major new humanitarian events or an escalation of an on-going crisis which triggers a change of prioritisation, the Global Overview will be updated on an ad-hoc basis.

Disclaimer

While ACAPS has defined a methodology striving to ensure accuracy, the information provided is indicative and should not be used in isolation from alternate sources of information for any decision making. ACAPS is not responsible for any damage or loss resulting from the use of the information presented on this website.