**Snapshot 25 February – 04 March**

**Syria:** Violence is ongoing across the country, with rebel infighting in the northwest and renewed clashes in parts of Damascus. While several military ceasefires have allowed some access in besieged areas, insecurity continues to interrupt aid distribution, and access remains highly constrained from Damascus to Rural Aleppo, where 1.25 million people are estimated to be in need of food assistance. To date, over 9 million people have been displaced by the crisis, 2.5 million of whom have crossed into neighbouring countries.

**Central African Republic:** Violence against Muslims has intensified in CAR, prompting UN officials and Human Rights NGOs to warn of an ongoing “ethno-religious cleansing”. To date, the conflict has displaced an estimated 701,000 people including over 276,000 in the capital Bangui. At least 1.6 million are considered severely food insecure and fears of a full-scale food and nutrition crisis are growing. French military presence was extended beyond its initially planned size and timeframe, now reaching 2,000 troops for an open-ended period. Targeted attacks against INGOs have increased, and point towards a deterioration of humanitarian access.

**South Sudan:** The situation remains highly volatile in the east and northeast of the country, with heavy fighting reported between Government and rebel forces in late February. To date, the crisis has displaced an estimated 885,200 people, 190,000 of whom have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia. In a further political development, both the Government of South Sudan and the opposition agreed in...
principle to the formation of an interim government, pending presidential elections.

Last Update: 04/03/2014 Next Update: 11/03/2014
The Central African Republic (CAR) has been in the midst of an escalating emergency since 5-6 December 2013, when fighting between rival armed groups in the capital, Bangui, left at least 1,000 people dead, and prompted the deployment of international peacekeeping troops. In mid-February, due to an increase in attacks against Muslim civilians, peacekeepers started concentrating their efforts against the main orchestrators of the violence: self-defense Christian militias or ‘anti-balaka’.

French Intervention and International Context

On 28 January, French President François Hollande visited CAR and met with Central African President Catherine Samba-Panza to discuss the crisis. On 14 February, France had announced that it would deploy an additional 400 soldiers to strengthen its already 1,600-strong force in CAR. On 25 February, France also announced the extension of its deployment to the Central African Republic (CAR) beyond its initial timeframe, which was due to come to an end in April. Earlier announcements about such potential extension had underlined that the UN Security Council would need to renew the mandate allowing the deployment of French and African troops in CAR. According to French authorities, the rationale for the extension is that the situation on the ground is worse than initially expected. The new French deployment should be transferred to the European Union (EU) force that is expected to start arriving in CAR in late February.

On 18 and 21 February, CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza had asked France to extend its military presence until the CAR presidential election, which is due to take place in February 2015 at the latest. The initial UN Security Council mandate that authorizes the deployment of French and African Union troops expires in April 2014, but the review and potential expansion of this mandate is due to be discussed by the UNSC in late February.

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

On 15 February, the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs announced that the deployment of the EUFOR-CAR, which was decided on 20th January and authorized by the UNSC on 28 January, would take place as of early March. Its initially planned size (500 men) may be doubled to reach 1,000. This would represent the biggest EU military operation in six years. While the specific date of deployment remains to be determined due to ongoing negotiations within and amongst Member States, a meeting is scheduled on 27 February to further determine the respective contributions of participating countries. The EUFOR-RCA is due to be based in and around Bangui, where it will be active for six months and tasked with helping stabilization efforts.

Meanwhile, on 7 February 2014, the International Criminal Court announced the opening of a preliminary inquiry into potential war crimes and crimes against humanity in the CAR, the first step towards an official investigation and potential trials.

On 28 January, the UN Security Council had adopted a resolution which invites the interim Central African Republic (CAR) government to speed up the transition and impose

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**Politics and Security**

5 March: The UN Secretary General is expected to outline his recommendations to the UN Security Council regarding the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) into a fully-fledged UN peacekeeping mission. The UN said it envisaged that the peacekeeping operation would comprise up to 10,000 troops and 1,820 police personnel.

28 February: A senior UNHCR official reiterated that “ethno-religious cleansing” was ongoing in CAR, a warning that had already been voiced by Human Rights NGOs and UN officials in mid-February.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Since the political crisis erupted in CAR in March 2013, a wave of sectarian violence has surged across the country, largely in the capital and in CAR’s northwest, leading to a worsening humanitarian situation.

- Immediate humanitarian assistance is needed by 2.5 million people, half of whom are children. The total CAR population, 4.6 million people, has been impacted in some way by the ongoing conflict (WFP, OCHA).

- An estimated 701,500 persons are internally displaced in CAR, 276,000 of which are located in the capital, Bangui (OCHA). Over 290,000 mostly long-term CAR refugees are living neighbouring countries (UNHCR).

sanctions against those responsible for violent incidents across the country. The UNSC also requested that presidential and parliamentary elections be organized as soon as possible, ideally in the second half of 2014, and no later than February 2015. In late January, targeted sanctions, travel bans and asset freezes, were added to the sanctions regime.

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

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

In late November, France had circulated a UNSC resolution to allow international troops to use force to try to stabilize the situation in CAR. The resolution aimed at strengthening the African stabilisation force in CAR as a first step toward turning it into a formal UN peacekeeping mission. On 4 December, Paris officially received UNSC authorization to use lethal force to help AU peacekeepers in CAR. The UN also implemented a sanctions regime by imposing an arms embargo that requires all countries to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel to CAR.

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

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

African Union Presence

On 5 March at the latest, the UN Secretary General is expected to outline his recommendations to the UN Security Council regarding the possible transformation of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) into a fully fledged UN peacekeeping mission. The UN said it envisaged that the strength of the peacekeeping operation would comprise up to 10,000 troops and 1,820 police personnel.

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

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

Since fall, various UN officials had indicated that the AU force might eventually be transformed into a full-scale UN peacekeeping operation, numbering between 6,000 and 9,000 troops, if local conditions in terms of governance are met. In late February, this seemed an increasingly probably scenario. However, UN Security Council officials had informally noted that a decision on the deployment of UN peacekeepers would not be made until after the AU-led force had had a chance to try and stabilize the situation. In addition, the UN indicated that it may deploy an official force, but only if certain conditions are met, including a political transition framework and for the transitional government to distinguish between forces who represent the state and those who do not.

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

Political Context

On 28 February, a senior UNHCR official reiterated that “ethno-religious cleansing” was ongoing in CAR, a warning that had already been voiced by Human Rights NGOs in mid-February. Killings and mass departures of Muslims by anti-balaka groups had intensified throughout February. CAR President Catherine Samba-Panza had denied such cleansing was ongoing but warned that criminal anti-balaka would be ‘hunted’. This had marked a noteworthy hardening of tone against the anti-balaka among key national and international political players in mid-February.

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

On 25 January, the new CAR President Samba-Panza appointed Andre Nzapayele, a former secretary general of the African Development Bank and vice president of the Development Bank of Central African States, as her new Prime Minister. In the aftermath, Nzapayele formed a government of 20 ministers, including several members of the administration of former President Djotodia. The new cabinet reportedly includes both
Samba-Panza, previously mayor of Bangui, was elected by members of the National Transitional Council to be interim president on 20 January, about a week after former rebel leader Djotodia resigned as president. His resignation came amid increased pressure from regional and international powers. President Samba-Panza, whose appointment was welcomed throughout CAR and by the international community, pledged to meet with armed groups and immediately called for the disarmament of warring factions. The departure of Djotodia may allow for a fresh start in peace efforts between the different warring parties, although the lack of structure of the different armed groups is likely to make any attempt at comprehensive negotiations complicated.

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

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

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

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

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

As of 19 February, an estimated 7,400 international French and African Union peacekeeping troops were deployed to CAR, whilst an additional 500 to 1,000 also-mandated EU troops and 3,000 additional MISCA troops are expected to be deployed over the coming weeks. As of 17 February, half of French troops were deployed in Bangui, whilst the other half was in the regions.

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

By mid-February, humanitarian actors reported a decrease in the occurrence of armed clashes, allegedly due to the decreasing number of Muslim people, who have been fleeing the anti-balaka controlled regions. However, fighting was still occurring in the PK5, PK12 and Combattants neighbourhoods of Bangui. 20 Muslim men were reportedly killed near Sibut, a town located some 150km to the north-east of Bangui, whilst trying to escape to Chad.

As of early February, a UN death toll indicated that at least 2,000 people have been killed in CAR since the start of the crisis, including 1,118 in Bangui since early December 2013.

Killings and mass departures of Muslims had been continuing in CAR throughout February. Attacks were reported in the Western town of Cantonner near the Cameroon border on 16th February, where 8 people including 2 anti-balaka were killed in a clash with MISCA soldiers. On 16th February, the anti-balaka seized the western town of Berberati, which is CAR’s second city and had been a Seleka stronghold for months. MSF reported that 6,000 people are trapped in the Western town of Bouar, and cannot flee for fear of being slaughtered by anti-balaka. Anti-balaka have been reported to have gathered in cities along axes used to evacuate convoys of Muslims, namely Yaloke and Boali.

On 2 February, following negotiations with ex-Seleka fighters, international troops from Operation Sangaris and the MISCA peacefully retook control of the occupied northern town of Sibut, a gateway to the northeast of the country where many former Seleka fighters are regrouping. The town passed under the control of former Seleka fighters the previous week amidst reports of violence against civilians. According to latest reports, the international troops are currently deployed in the northwestern provinces of Paoua, Bozoum, Baoro, Bouar, Bossangoa, Bouca, and Kaga Bandoro as well as in Bangui, Yakoke, Boali, Bambari, Ndele and Bangassou.

In mid-February, local sources reported that several ex-Seleka commanders have openly mooted the idea of dividing the country, a scenario that can no longer be completely discarded. The concern was also emphasized by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, who indicated that there was a distinct risk “the Central African Republic could end up divided as a result of sectarian violence. Various sources also cited mass departures of Muslims to the North (as well as to neighbouring countries) as a potential motive for partition. The French Defence minister subsequently announced that France would not recognise any partition of CAR. This latest developments should be considered alongside reports indicating that Muslim ex-Seleka fighters are currently regrouping and establishing strongholds in the northeast after having largely deserted Bangui under pressure from the international peacekeeping force. As reported by unspecified diplomatic sources, the ex-Seleka is now more fragmented than ever following the forced resignation of Djotodia, its former leader and the country’s short-lived interim President.
Meanwhile, and although information remains difficult to ascertain, local reports in early February indicated that an unidentified armed group had formed a new organisation called the Independence Movement of Northern Central African Republic. The stated objective of this new militia is to protect northern interests against neglect and oppression. While the situation remains dynamic, the formation of a group openly advocating independence, or at least autonomy, for the Muslim North may be an early indication of the path the conflict will take in the mid-term.

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

Security Context

Anti-Balaka armed groups, retaliating for widespread abuses committed mostly against Christians by Seleka fighters, are still massively targeting Muslim populations, destroying mosques and committing various abuses. In mid-February, French military sources further reported that the anti-Balaka armed groups have emerged as the main threat to peace in the country while these mostly Christian groups have gained traction over the past month as the main opponents of the ex-Seleka.

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

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

As of mid-February, acts of violence had been mostly reported in the third, fifth, eighth, PK5, PK12 and Combattants districts of Bangui, but also in the northwest, with reports of reprisal operations by ex-Seleka and anti-balaka militias in Bozoum, Bossangoa, Mbaiki, Bossembele, Nana-Bassaka, Yaloke, Berberati and Sibut. On 8-9 February, violence and looting in the capital left at least 11 people dead, including two Muslims who were reportedly lynched and a Bangui member of the National Transitional Council.

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

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

In January, violence in Bangui left at least 50 dead and over 60 wounded despite patrols by French and AU troops. The areas of PK-12 and PK-13 are deserted as thousands of Muslim civilians have fled towards Chad. PK-5, the commercial hub of Bangui, saw repeated attacks and looting on hundreds of stores belonging mainly to Muslims. On 24 January, anti-Balaka fighters allegedly killed a former Minister, Joseph Kalité – a Muslim reportedly close to ex-President Djotodia.

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

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Due to the widespread looting of health facilities and other public buildings, the population
is largely deprived of access to basic services. As of late February, 2.5 million people, of an estimated population of 4.6 million, including half of children, needed immediate assistance according to the OCHA, a slight decrease compared to the 2.6 million reported in the MIRA. The MIRA further reported that the whole population of the country, 4.6 million people, was living in affected areas.

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

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

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

**Access**

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

As of early March, NGOs reported an increasing targeting of international NGO staff by anti-balaka, who reportedly accused them of “helping” the Muslims through assistance programmes. Vehicle theft, death threats and physical attacks were thus reported.

As of mid-February, WFP began airlifting cargo with food assistance to CAR from Cameroon for distributions to IDPs. Food stocks are to be pre-positioned across CAR before the start of the rainy season in May, when many roads will be impassable. The airlifting of food assistance is rendered a necessity because of the continuous insecurity that makes the road between Cameroon and Bangui unreliable. Against this background, humanitarian actors have also reported recurrent administrative problems at the Cameroon border affecting relief convoys.

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

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

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

Levels of internal displacement in CAR remain hard to ascertain. As of 27 February, OCHA reported that there were an estimated 701,500 IDPs in the country, including over 276,000 across 69 sites in Bangui. This represents a significant decrease compared to the 838,000 people, including 413,000 in Bangui, reported to be internally displaced in early February. At least half of the displaced are reportedly children.

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

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

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

**CAR Refugees in neighbouring countries**

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

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

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

On 6 February, the UNHCR had reported that since 1 December, 34,400 new CAR refugees arrived to neighbouring countries, including 16,700 in Cameroon, 5,700 in Chad, and 12,000 in DRC. Counting these arrivals, UNHCR had reported that over 268,700 mostly long-term CAR refugees were living neighbouring countries, including 114,000 in Cameroon, 81,000 in Chad and 59,000 in DRC.

**Refugees in CAR**

As of January, the MIRA indicated that there are an estimated 17,500 long-term refugees in CAR, mostly from the DRC and Sudan. In April and May, an estimated 5,000 people crossed into CAR from Sudan’s Darfur region following tribal clashes. According to local media, 2,200 Sudanese refugees from camp Bambari demanded to be moved from the camp due to deteriorating security and the dire humanitarian and health situation in the camp.

**Third-country nationals fleeing CAR**

As reported by IOM-Chad on 13 February, an estimated 63,000 CAR ‘migrants’ have arrived to Chad, both by air and land. On 20 February, the Tchad government announced the end of its air evacuation programme, declaring that 99% of its citizens who had wished to have been repatriated. IOM reports had indicated that 3 people had died in an evacuation cargo flight in January, although conditions of these deaths remained unclear.

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

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

**Food Security**

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

As of late February, FewsNet reported that due to continuing violence in the CAR, the country was still experiencing a food crisis (IPC Phase 3 – Crisis). Earlier this month, FewsNet had projected that the country would be experiencing a Phase 3 – Emergency - situation by August 2013, meaning that ‘at least 1 in 5 households will face significant food consumption gaps with high or above usual acute malnutrition, or will be marginally able to meet minimum food needs only with unsustainable coping strategies such as liquidating livelihood’.

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

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

As of late January, FAO reported that out of these 1.3 million people in need of food assistance, approximately 60% are in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and 40% are in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Five of the areas most affected by food insecurity were the districts of Ouham, Nana-Grébizi, and Mbomou. Following December episodes of fighting, the situation is also likely to have deteriorated to IPC Phase 4 in the four additional districts of Lobaye, Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, and Ombella-Mpoko. Assessments conducted by WFP in November also indicated significant food insecurity in the northern Vakaga and Bamingui-Bangoran provinces. Moreover, most IDPs groups are currently facing at least Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels. As reported by FEWSNET in January, IPC Phase 3 levels of food insecurity will prevail until June 2014 for at least 20% of the population in Bangui and in northwestern and southwestern regions.

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

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

In February, NGO reports warned that the flight of traders, most of whom are Muslim, has increased the risk of a food crisis, compounding an already critical situation. Moreover, the refusal of transporters, most of whom are Muslim, to take the road with their goods, for fear of targeted attacks, has also hampered food availability and led to price hikes.
In December, FAO had reported that, in particular, maize prices in Bangui rose by 31% between January and November 2013, while millet prices increased by 70% between March and October in Ouham province, an important sorghum and millet producing area in the northwest. As reported by FAO in November, the average inflation rate, which surged from 1.3% in 2011 to 5% in 2012, is forecast to rise further to 8% in 2013.

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

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

Health and Nutrition

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

On 25 October, OCHA stated that 60% of health facilities had been vandalised, looted or destroyed, and over 80% of the local medical doctors had moved to Bangui from the countryside, a situation that still prevailed according to the MIRA in January 2014.

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

Measles

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

According to OCHA, outbreaks of measles had been reported almost everywhere, with at least 600 confirmed cases as of 25 October 2013. The Health Cluster reported cholera outbreaks in 15 of 22 health districts.

Malaria

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

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

HIV/AIDS

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

Malnutrition

According to the nutrition cluster in late January, malnutrition rates remain high. An estimated 28,000 children <5 are expected to suffer from SAM in 2014, and 75,000 affected by MAM. A recent exploratory mission in southwest CAR, in Nola, Boda, Berberati, Gamboula, and Gadzi, revealed increased levels of GAM, ranging from 6% to 10.3%. In May 2013, as reported by an IPC seasonal analysis, the prevalence of SAM in children <5 was above the WHO emergency threshold by 2% in nine of 16 prefectures.

Protection

The protection of civilians remains a key issue of concern as fighting between armed and so-called self defence groups rages on across several parts of the country. In late February, OCHA reported that 15,000 Muslims were still at risk of being attacked, especially in the PK-12 district of Bangui where 3,000 people are currently prevented from being evacuated due to insecurity, and the towns of Boda, Bouar and Bossangoa. In February, Amnesty International released a report warning that ‘ethnic cleansing’ was ongoing against the Muslim population – a suggestion that remains disputed amongst some NGOs and the international community. In late October, Amnesty International published a report expressing deep concern about serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law during the armed conflict. Documented violations included attacks, executions and torture of civilians, indiscriminate shelling, sexual and gender based violence, and forceful recruitment of children. Since March, several international organisations have expressed similar accusations.

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

Humanitarian partners, including UNICEF, have indicated that children, notably among IDPs, are exceptionally vulnerable to abuses. In particular, the re-recruitment of children by armed groups, some of whom had been recently demobilised, remains an issue.
Since late January, armed violence has increasingly targeted Muslim civilians, raising the alarm among humanitarian actors about the potential for large-scale killings in the country.

Education

An estimated 2.3 million children in CAR have been affected by the ongoing violence. According to UNICEF, seven of ten children have not returned to primary school since the conflict started in December 2012. 65% of the 165 schools visited by UNICEF had been looted, occupied, or damaged by bullets or shells.

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

WASH

According to MIRA, significant WASH concerns remain in the majority of displacement sites where the concentration of IDPs surpasses the number of WASH facilities available.

Updated: 04/03/2014

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

19 February: The UN announced that an additional 100 soldiers would be deployed to support the UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) in the town of Pweto, in northern Katanga province where militia violence is worsening. So far, the Congolese Army (FARDC) had deployed only one battalion to Katanga province and the 22,000-strong U.N. mission only 450 soldiers.

19 February: The UNHCR reported that approximately 14,200 refugees from neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) have entered the DRC since December 2013, bringing the overall number of CAR refugees in DRC to 62,100.

18 February: The Tripartite Commission on the Voluntary Repatriation of DRC refugees living in the Republic of the Congo held its third meeting in Brazzaville. Representatives of the Governments of DRC, Congo and UNHCR agreed to step up the voluntary repatriation by June.

KEY CONCERNS

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

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

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

- DRC is hosting over 254,000 refugees from various countries. The crisis in Central African Republic (CAR) has caused 62,100 CAR refugees to cross into DRC (UNHCR, February 2014).

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

- So far in 2014, WHO recorded 2,413 cases of cholera and 40 deaths across the country (WHO, February 2014).

Politics and Security

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

International and Regional Context

On 18 February, the UNHCR reported that approximately 14,200 refugees from neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) have entered the DRC since December 2013, bringing the overall number of CAR refugees in DRC to 62,100.

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

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

National Context

The UN Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region visited DRC on 14 February and called on Congolese authorities to fulfill their commitments to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, signed by 11 nations in February 2013. Congo's neighbours promised not to interfere in its internal affairs and not tolerate or
support armed groups. At the national level, DRC’s commitments include accelerating reforms within the security sector, which is an essential step for expanding State authority, particularly in eastern DRC. Another priority is the swift implementation of an effective programme to disarm and reintegrate former M23 combatants. However, nine months after its creation, the national monitoring mechanism is still not operational due to funding issues.

The Special Envoy’s visit came amid reports of several potential human rights violations, including the killing of more than 70 men and women in Masisi territory, North Kivu province, allegedly committed by armed groups wielding machetes.

According to the UN Stabilisation Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) as of mid-January, ADF/NAFLU and the Rwandan Hutu rebel group FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) still pose a serious threat to Congolese civilians.

On 17 January, the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) launched a UN-backed offensive against the Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF/NAFLU) militia in Beni, North Kivu. The ADF/NAFLU has been blamed for a spate of attacks and kidnappings around the town of Beni in North Kivu which killed at least 60 civilians in December. The ADF/NAFLU, believed to number up to 1,400 fighters, is an alliance of groups opposed to the Ugandan government that has operated from bases in eastern Congo since the mid-2000s, undermining Kinshasa's control in the area. Kampala has previously said it would share intelligence and capture fleeing rebels but would not intervene directly in operations on the ground in the DRC.

On 4 February, FDLR's interim leader indicated that they had started laying down their arms and were ready for talks with Kigali but UN peacekeepers said they had seen no evidence of disarmament yet. Claims by the FDLR rebel group came as UN forces prepared to target the insurgents in coming months. The FDLR was officially set up in 2000 by mainly Hutu Rwandan gunmen operating in eastern DRC, where the remnants of the extremist Hutu militia fled after they were defeated by the Tutsi-led army that ended Rwanda's genocide. Kigali has previously refused talks with the rebels, accusing them of still wanting to exterminate Tutsis. Kampala called on Rwanda to hold talks with its rebels, and the M23 rebels in Nairobi on 12 December 2013, Martin Kobler, Head of the UN Stabilization Mission in DRC, told the UN Security Council that there was evidence to suggest that the M23 rebel group is still recruiting combatants and resuming activities, notably in Ituri. He called on the Congolese Government to speed up disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of M23 ex-combatants and urged neighbouring Uganda and Rwanda to prevent M23 elements from sheltering training troops. In a public statement addressed to Kobler, M23 rebels denied the UN’s accusations.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Counter-Insurgency Campaign in the East**

The end of the M23 uprising was followed by several waves of fighters surrendering in the east, including militants from other groups active in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Katanga,
namely the Hutu-dominated militia Nyatura, the Hunde-dominated Alliance for a Free and Sovereign Congo, and the Nduma Defence of Congo. The starting of the reintegration process has led other rebel groups such as Raiya Mukombozi and Raiya Mutomboki to announce the end of their rebellion on the condition that their fighters could join government forces. However, renewed acts of violence allegedly committed by surrendered rebels were still recorded in early 2014. In Shabunda Territory, South Kivu, a Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process was initiated, but in the absence of guidance and support, the security situation did not improve and renewed exactions and clashes perpetrated by Rayia Mutomboki rebels were reported by UNICEF late January.

Moreover, other armed groups including the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Force (ADF-Nalu) and various Mayi Mayi militias continue to terrorize the population across eastern DRC.

On 16 January, FARDC launched an offensive, dubbed ‘Sokola’ ("clean out in Lingala") in the eastern Kivu region of Beni against the ADF/NALU militia. The operation follows the successful November routing out of the M23 militia after a joint UN-FARDC exercise. So far, no major population movements have been reported, with the exception of preventive movements from Kokola towards Oicha. On 21 February, local media reported that the Congolese army had recaptured Mbau-Kamango axis, leading to the Ugandan border.

On 1 February, OCHA reported that the offensive launched against ADF/NALU rebels was starting to have negative effects in Ituri district (Orientale) where some elements of the armed group are said to have retreated into Mambasa forest and Irumu territory. Continuing combat may limit access for humanitarian agencies.

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

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

On 11 December, the 20,000-strong peacekeeping force announced that its troops have launched a military operation against the FLDR. Ongoing operations to neutralise armed groups in the east also plan to target the ethnic Ngiti Patriotic Resistance Force of Ituri (FRPI) and the Forces for the Liberation of Congo (FLPC).

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

Security Context

North Kivu Province

On 13 February, MONUSCO reported that they had received reports about several human rights violations including a summary execution of over 70 men and women committed in Nyambako villages I and II, Masisi territory, northeast of Goma. The summary executions were allegedly committed by armed groups to spread terror among the population. On 17-18 January, local sources already reported that armed clashes between government forces and elements of the Patriotic Alliance for Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS) erupted in Masisi territory. Violence reportedly caused population displacement in the town of Kitchanga.

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

On 13-14 December, MONUSCO discovered the bodies of 21 civilians killed in attack by suspected ADF/NALU in the area of Beni, North Kivu.

South Kivu

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

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

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

Katanga Province

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

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

**Orientale Province**

On 18 February, OCHA said that intensified raids and looting, allegedly committed by members of the Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI) had been reported in South Irumu, in the absence of the national army. However, according to some sources, the militia would be willing to surrender in order to benefit from the new amnesty law initiated by the Congolese Government.

According to OCHA on 12 February, the prevailing security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) is starting to impact the southern part of the Bas-Uélé District with the arrival of heavily armed elements suspected to be ex-Seleka members. Local populations fear that continued incursions might trigger mass displacement and destabilize the region.

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

The province has been affected by the LRA, a Ugandan militant movement operating in DRC since 2005 and was responsible for 164 incidents in 2013. According to OCHA on 31 December 2013, the last quarter of 2013 saw a sharp increase in LRA incidents with 52 attacks, 14 deaths and 99 reported abductions. Most attacks (65%) occurred in Dungu territory of Haut Uélé district, where attacks have been reported every month since January.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

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

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

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

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

Physical and infrastructural impediments to delivering aid are significant due to mountainous and volcanic terrain and a lack of asphalted roads in some areas, especially in Maniema province. In Katanga, poor quality roads, the threat of violence and insufficient resources are hampering efforts to assist up to 400,000 people displaced by violence.

**Displacement**

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

**IDPs**

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

**North-Kivu Province**

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

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

During the last several months the region of Pinga, some 80 km north-east of Walikale, has been affected by clashes between the armed groups Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), Nduma Defense of Congo (NDC) and the FARDC to control the area. These clashes caused the displacement of thousands of people towards more secure zones in Walikale and Masisi. Despite the return of more than 15,000 inhabitants, the situation deteriorated mid-January, when NDC attacked FARDC’s positions in Pinga. In the meantime fighting between APCLS and FARDC in the neighbouring area of Kitchanga also triggered small-scale displacements.

The security situation has been deteriorating since the death of FARDC Commander Colonel Mamadou Ndala on 2 January and the launch of military operations against the ADF-Nalu.

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

**South Kivu Province**

According to OCHA as of 31 December 2013, there are currently 579,607 IDPs in South Kivu, a decrease compared to September due to improved security in Shabunda territory. Clashes between Nyatura and Raiya Mutomboki in mid-October in Kashovu (Masisi, North Kivu) were the main cause of displacement. As of 12 February, OCHA reported the return of some 26,000 IDPs in the territory. Their most urgent needs include food, NFIs, health and education.

Since mid-January, OCHA reported that over 5,900 people fled violence perpetrated by Raiya Mutomboki rebels in Maniema Province to seek refuge in Shabunda territory, South Kivu. Despite the beginning of a process of disarmament of Raiya Mutomboki in Shabunda Territory, protection of civilians has not improved. In 2013, this area recorded an increase in incidents of protection of about 51% (2,858 against 1,894 in 2012), reflecting a deterioration in the protection of civilians.

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

**Orientale Province**

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

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

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

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

On 21 January, local media reported that an estimated 12,000 people remain displaced in the forest of Balobe (Bafwasende territory, 260km from Kisangani, Orientale Province). They originally fled clashes between FARDC and Mayi-Mayı rebels.

Following attacks by LRA rebels on 25 December in the villages of Baday and Nambala (Bas-Uele District), Caritas reported the presence of 5,000 IDPs in Bulumasi (Bondo Territory), all urgently needing humanitarian assistance. As of 7 January, over 40 deaths were recorded by Caritas. This influx of IDPs is threatening the food security of local communities.

**Katanga Province**

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

Pweto is considered to be the territory most affected by violent events and hosts up to 160,000 IDPs (36% of IDPs in the province), followed by Kalemie (14.7%), Malemba Nkulu (11.8%) and Manono (11.3%). According to OCHA on 18 February, an estimated 20,000 people remain displaced across four informal camp sites in Manono, all living in dire conditions. Late December 2013, the total number of displaced persons in Manono territory was 46,220. Most urgent needs include shelter, WASH and health as the rainy season is currently under way in the region.
More than half (56%) of the displacement in the province is mainly due to fighting between FARDC and Mayi Mayi militias who are seeking independence for the natural resource-rich province. Humanitarian partners face difficulties in accessing these communities due to widespread insecurity and heavy rains, which has left roads impassable and areas where assistance can be delivered often find themselves targeted by Mayi Mayi militias seeking to pillage supplies.

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

**Maniema Province**

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

**Equateur Province**

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

**Refugees in the DRC**

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

The worsening security situation in CAR has resulted in significant refugee movements to DRC, mostly Equateur and Orientale provinces, despite the closure of the border in December. According to UNICEF, refugees from conflict-ridden CAR continued to arrive in small waves of around 30 to 40 people throughout January. In the first week of February, the city of Gbadolite (Equateur province) registered a peak of 1,100 arrivals. The UNHCR reported on 19 February that approximately 14,200 refugees from neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) have entered the DRC since December 2013, bringing the overall number of CAR refugees in DRC to 62,100. Around half of the refugees are living in four refugee camps, and the other half with host families.

In addition, 71,750 former Angolan refugees live in DRC, including 23,940 candidates registered for voluntary repatriation and 47,815 candidates who have opted for local integration.

**DRC Refugees in neighbouring countries**

Late December 2013, UNHCR reported that an estimated 430,000 Congolese refugees currently live in neighbouring countries, including 152,900 in Uganda, 72,000 in Rwanda, and 65,000 in Tanzania, and 43,000 in Burundi.

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

**Returnees**

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

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

**Food Security**

According to the results of the 10th analysis report on Integrated Food Security Phase Classification undertaken in December 2013, 6.7 million people or 11% of the rural population face food security and livelihood crisis or emergency. The figure represents an increase of 300,000 people compared to June 2013. Despite a slight improvement in North Kivu, the number of regions affected by severe food insecurity has increased. The most severely affected populations (IPC Phase 4) are localized in five territories of three provinces, namely: Katanga (Manono, Mitwaba, and Pweto territories); Maniema (Punia territory); and Orientale Province (Sud Irumu territory), where the escalation of civil conflict during 2013 severely damaged local livelihood systems and caused massive displacement. In June 2013, five territories were classified in phase 4 but only in two provinces: North Kivu (Rutshuru, Nyiragongo, Masisi, Walikale); and Katanga (Manono). A relative reduction was reported in the number of territories classified in crisis phase (IPC phase 3) from June to December 2013, from 82 to 68.

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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

Cholera is endemic in DRC. So far in 2014, WHO recorded 2,413 cholera cases and 40 deaths across the country, representing a case fatality rate of 2%. According to local health authorities, 26,944 cholera cases were recorded in 2013, including 491 deaths, reflecting a fatality rate of 1.8%, reflecting a decrease from 30,753 cholera cases and 709 deaths in 2012.

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

According to WHO, cholera outbreaks persist in four provinces: North and South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale. According to WHO as of 7 February, 961 cases of cholera including 2 deaths have been registered in South Kivu, with Uvira, Ruzizi and Nundu health zones still reaching epidemic levels. WHO also reported 698 cases and 17 deaths in North Kivu province.

According to WHO, the cholera epidemic continues to gain ground in Katanga Province. As of 7 February 2014, the province had recorded 725 cases including 19 deaths, with a case fatality of 3%. In 2013, Katanga was the province most affected by cholera with 13,726 cases and 348 deaths registered against 6,930 cases and 223 deaths in 2012. The health district of Lubumbashi alone recorded almost half of cholera cases in the province.

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

**Malaria**

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

**Measles**

As of 7 February, WHO reported 2,236 cases and 29 deaths in 8 health districts of four provinces. According to local health authorities, DRC recorded over 89,000 cases of measles in 2013, including 1,392 deaths.

**Malnutrition**

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

**Protection**

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

*Updated: 25/02/2014*

**GAMBIA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

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

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

**Humanitarian context and needs**

**Disasters**

Heavy rainfall led to devastating floods in the Sahel region in August 2013. A lack of early warning systems led to over 3,300 people across the Gambia being affected. At least two people were killed and 216 displaced and hundreds made homeless or left without income or livelihoods. As of 30 January, OCHA said the flood-affected population were still vulnerable and in need of assistance.

**Displacement**

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

**Food Security**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 285,000 people are at risk of food insecurity, caused by both flooding and drought exacerbated by a lack of proper irrigation and poor land use practices which have led to low productivity. In November, FAO reported that continued food assistance is needed, especially for vulnerable populations. Coping mechanisms have eroded due to the 2011 Sahel Crisis and heavy flooding in July/October 2012 and August/September 2013, leaving households vulnerable. Access to food continues to be constrained by high food prices and the lingering effects of the Sahel food crisis. Two thirds of households in the pocket of the country face food insecurity, of which 5.5% suffer from ‘moderate’ or ‘severe’ food insecurity.
As stated above, the national situation regarding food insecurity is further influenced by the fact that some twenty million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. In addition, across the region an estimated 5 million children under five years of age are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis and pressure on resources accordingly.

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Diarrhoea**

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

**Malaria**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

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

Reviewed: 25/02/2014

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**18 February:** Two people were killed and thirty-three others injured in Conakry when street protests turned violent. Protesters, angered by ongoing power cuts, attacked offices of a Brazilian construction firm in further signs of widespread popular discontent and frustration with the government due to a perceived lack of development in the country.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Over 220,000 people (out of 6.7 million) in Boké, Kindia, Conakry Bdespite (West) and N’Zérékoré (South) suffer from severe food insecurity. An additional 1.8 million people are estimated to be moderately food insecure (FAO, 28 November).

- Since the beginning of 2014, a measles outbreak has killed five children and led to at least 1300 new suspected cases in the urban municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma in the capital, Conakry city (UNICEF, 12 February).

- Child health is a particular concern in Guinea. In December 2013, 139,200 children were suffering from acute malnutrition, another 609,696 from chronic malnutrition, and another 1,592,892 from anaemia (WFP).

- Concerns about cyclical epidemics of cholera in Guinea remain. Around 291 cases and 29 deaths were reported. The rainy season, dirty water and population movement are amplifying the spread (OCHA 4 November).

**Politics and Security**

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

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

With the exception of the Hope for National Development (PEDN), all opposition parties now have a seat at the newly elected National Assembly. Criticism of the presidential decree to reconstitute the National Transition Council however remains. On 25 November, at least one person was killed and several were wounded during a protest over the results of the parliamentary elections which took place on 29 September. Guinea’s opposition parties called their supporters to the streets to protest a Supreme Court decision released on 15 November that rejected all opposition challenges to the ruling party’s victory in the elections.

Two people were killed and thirty-three others injured in Conakry when street protests turned violent on 18 February. Protesters, angered by ongoing power cuts, attacked offices of a Brazilian construction firm in further signs of widespread popular discontent and frustration with the government due to a perceived lack of development in the country.

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

Security context

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

Inter-Communal Violence

The Guinean Government reported on 25 July that a sudden outbreak of ethnic violence killed at least 100 people between 15-17 July, a significant increase compared to the previously announced death toll of 58. The UNHCR reported on 19 July that 242 were wounded after Guerze tribesmen, who form the majority population in the forest region, allegedly attacked three ethnic Konianke in the town of Koule. Fighting spread to the provincial capital Nzerekore, 570 km southeast of Conakry, and clashes reached the town of Beyla on 17 July. According to the UN, security and defense forces were deployed to restore order, with the support of additional troops from Macenta and Gueckedou, and calm seems to have been restored as of 22 July.

Guinea’s opposition parties withdrew from UN-mediated election talks with the government after violence broke out on 20 June and left three anti-government activists shot and nine others wounded. The negotiations aimed to secure opposition participation in the long-delayed parliamentary polls, which were meant to seal the mineral-rich nation’s transition to civilian rule following a coup in 2008.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

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

Food Security

According to FEWSNET in mid-February, Guinea’s food security outlook until August 2014 should remain unchanged from last year and the five-year average. Guinea is expected to be at Phase 1: Minimal in August, and during the lean season, expected in June-September 2014.

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

Health and Nutrition

Measles

UNICEF reported a sharp increase in measles cases, echoing an earlier confirmation by the Ministry of Health of 1300 new suspected cases and five child deaths in and around the capital Conakry since the beginning of 2014. This figure represents a dramatic increase in the 2013 figures provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) which, on February 1, said only 54 out of 215 cases of measles had been confirmed. UNICEF and the Government of Guinea have started a massive emergency campaign in the capital city of Conakry, rolling out to affected communities throughout the country, to vaccinate over 1.7 million children. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) similarly launched a vaccination campaign, expecting to vaccinate 394,000 children between six months and ten years old in the Matam, Matoto and Ratoma neighbourhoods
of Conakry.

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

On 25 January, the Ministry of Health declared a measles outbreak in the urban municipalities of Matam, Matoto, and Ratoma in the capital, Conakry city. On January 27, the health authorities reported they that were struggling to control the spread of the disease which by then had reached 15 districts (among them, Boké, Coyah, Dubreka, Kissidougou and Mandiana). One child was reported dead from measles in mid-November and a further 37 are now infected out of 400 suspected cases. Almost all the cases have been reported among children under ten. According to the Demographic Health Survey, only 37 percent of children have been fully vaccinated. Low immunization coverage has raised fear of a major epidemic, with the Ministry of Health conceding that the current stock of measles vaccine is insufficient. The last major measles outbreak was in 2009 and infected 4,755 and killed 10.

Cholera

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

As reported by OCHA, Guinea experienced severe cholera outbreaks in 2012 and continued to report cases throughout 2013 in different parts of the country. Nevertheless, the country has witnessed a steady decline in the number of cases this year with 294 cases of cholera reported nationwide since the beginning of the year compared to 5,523 cases (and 105 deaths) in September 2012. However, Guinea is the country reporting the highest Case Fatality Rate, with an estimated 30 deaths so far (9.4%).

Malnutrition

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

Updated: 25/02/2014

MALI CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

26 February: A vehicle belonging to the iNGO Médecins du Monde (MdM) ran over an improvised explosive device near the airstrip of Kidal airport, in northern Mali, seriously injuring two passengers. Thus far, there is no evidence MdM was deliberately targeted.
The Tuareg Rebellion and the National Reconciliation Process

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

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

Background to the 2012 Tuareg Rebellion

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

In late November 2013, the MNLA ended the ceasefire and took up arms, marking a rupture in the ongoing process to honour the June peace deal, which had led the creation of an alliance of three Tuareg and Arab rebel movements to form a united front in the peace talks with the government. In order to facilitate dialogue, in November, President Keïta lifted arrest warrants against four leaders of the Tuareg rebellion and created a Ministry for National Reconciliation and the Development of the Northern Region to seek solutions to the Tuareg issue.

Security Context

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

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

International Presence and Military operations

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

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

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

On 20 January, five Chadian MINUSMA peacekeepers, were slightly injured when their car hit a landmine during a patrol about 30 km north of Kidal.

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

**Access**

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

A vehicle belonging to the iNGO Médecins du Monde (MdM) ran over an improvised explosive device near the airstrip of Kidal airport, in northern Mali, seriously injuring two passengers. Thus far, there is no evidence MdM was deliberately targeted.

**Displacement**

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

**IDPs**

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) reported that around 200,000 people are currently internally displaced across Mali. This figure represents a decrease from 350,000 in June 2013 and can largely be attributed to an improvement in the security situation. Most of Mali’s IDPs reside in the south – about 46,000 – in Bamako, while others reside in Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso and Mopti, regions bordering the capital on the north, east and south. However, the situation remains volatile, notably in the north. Bamako hosts the largest number of IDPs (62,500), followed by the northern regions of Gao (47,000), Timbuktu (45,000) and Kidal (34,000).

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

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

**Refugees**

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

**Returnees**

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

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

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

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

**Food Security**

On 17 February, the FAO reported that low levels of rainfall led to significant production shortfalls in northern, rice-producing areas along the Niger River, as well as in the Dogon Plateau. The Low food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) of poor households evolves Stress (IPC Phase 2) from March to more than 20 percent of the population in the localities the Dogon Plateau and the western Sahel and agropastoral areas of north because of the significant decline in agricultural production and the effects of the sluggish climate economic. Without humanitarian assistance, these areas, as well as the North riverine areas where livelihoods have not fully recovered from last year’s conflict, will face crisis outcomes during the 2014 lean season in June-August 2014. At Phase 3: Crisis, FAO estimates for pockets of food insecurity crisis in Mali’s most affected areas, to be experienced with the highest likely severity in August. However, this situation will not exceed the emergency threshold of 20 percent of the population hence, a situation comparable to both August 2013 and the five-year average.

As late January, OCHA reported that 3.3 million people are at risk of food insecurity, while more than 800,000 of the food insecure are in a critical situation. Many households are
expected to continue to face food insecurity due to the poor crops last year in some areas and to the consequences of the 2012/2013 conflict. The estimated results of the agropastoral season, according to the Government and its partners, indicate a total drop of 9% in agricultural outputs compared to the five-year average (2008-2013), and a drop of 6% compared to the difficult 2011-2012 crop year.

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

Key drivers of the food crisis are chronic vulnerability due to recurrent shocks as drought, floods, epidemics, and locust and increasing poverty and market instability that have contributed to deterioration of livelihoods. The national situation regarding food insecurity is further influenced by the fact that some 20 million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. In addition, across the region an estimated 5 million children under five years of age are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee crisis and pressure on resources accordingly.

Health and Nutrition

Child Malnutrition

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 136,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and another 360,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). These figures represent a decrease when compared to July estimates by UNICEF of 660,000 GAM and 210,000 SAM.

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

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

Protection

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

Updated: 28/02/2014

MAURITANIA FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

20 February: FEWSNET reported that the southern most region of Guidimaka is predicted to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity between April and June 2014.

Early February: A high-level international delegation, co-led by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the League of Arab States (LAS), and OCHA, visited Mauritania to meet government, UN and other humanitarian agencies. Strategic cooperation and the strengthening of partnerships, to ensure Mauritania remains on the humanitarian assistance agenda, were the main focus of discussions.

KEY CONCERNS

- 470,000 people were estimated to be at risk of food insecurity across the country (OCHA January 2014).

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

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

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

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

Politics and Security

Regional Context

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

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

Political Context

On 18 February, UNPO concluded its 9-day fact-finding mission to Mauritania during which first-hand evidence of slavery practices was collected. In addition, UNPO met with civil society organisations and convened a roundtable with different relevant actors on the practice of slavery.

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

A high-level international delegation, co-led by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the League of Arab States (LAS), and OCHA, visited Mauritania in early February. Participants included representatives from Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the African Union, ECHO, and several NGOs from the Gulf region. During the five-day mission, the delegation met with Government, UN agencies, humanitarian partners and national NGOs to discuss the potential for strategic cooperation.

The delegates travelled to the southern regions of Brakna and Gorgol, meeting with actors on the ground and with communities affected by food insecurity, malnutrition and floods to explore concrete assistance support.

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

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

Displacement

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

Food Security

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

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

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

Northern Guidimaka in Mauritania is anticipated to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity between April and June. In these worst-affected areas, the ability of
households to expand their coping in the coming months beyond current levels will be limited and as a result, the poor are expected to either face some consumption deficits or only be able to marginally meet their basic consumption needs through irreversible coping strategies.

Infestations of pests on flood recession agriculture in the Senegal River Valley and in the agropastoral zone significantly reduce household grain production in these areas. Following the poor distribution of rainfall in 2013, parts of these areas have already undergone significant deficits in their rainfed cereal production. In rainfed areas and agropastoral cultures, poor households continue to depend on food purchases until June due to below average grain production. Their seasonal income is not sufficient to fully compensate for production losses. They will face difficulties in meeting their essential non-food needs and they will be in a situation of stress (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity between January and June 2014.

On 28 January, FAO reported that despite the 2013 above-average harvest, the food security outlook remains uncertain in various regions due to the ongoing impact of last year’s erratic rains and the presence of 66,392 Malian refugees in the east of the country. Harvesting of the 2013 cereal crops was completed in December and an above-average harvest was recorded for the second year in a row with 33% above the previous five years average, according to FAO. By contrast, pastures have been affected by insufficient rains in several regions, notably in Brakna, Gorgol, and Guidimaka.

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

Health and Nutrition

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

Malnutrition

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

Updated: 28/02/2014

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No significant developments this week, 28/02/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- At least 418,000 people are classed as severely food insecure across Niger. Another 4.2 million are food insecure (OCHA 30 January).
- Around 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM January 2014).
- In mid February, fourteen new cases of cholera in the Maradi and Zinder region have given rise to concerns that Niger may be affected by the cholera epidemic in neighbouring Nigeria.
- A cereal deficit in the agricultural regions of Tillabery and Zindi has led to an increase in the prices of major local cereals (+30% in comparison to 2012) and millet and sorghum (+25% in comparison to 2012) (GIEWS/ FAO).
- The impact of population movement in water-scarce Tillabery region, notably from Mali, remains a concern. In terms of the national caseload, the region accounts for 33% of measles, 70% of cholera, 98% of diphtheria and 17% of malaria cases (OCHA).

Politics and Security

Political context

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

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

On 8 February, 36 parties supportive of Niger’s President Issoufou mobilised 18,000 people to rally against the opposition in the capital Niamey, in response to large-scale opposition-held protests which took place in December 2013. Additionally, the government accused a leading opposition figure of calling for a coup and inciting ethnic strife. Over the past two weeks, at least six journalists and three civil society leaders have been arrested over similar accusations.
On 28 December, thousands of protestors from the opposition party Alliance for the Republic, Democracy and Reconciliation (ARDR) took to the streets to express their discontent over the reported failure of the government to improve living standards. It was the largest public protest since three years, since a ban on opposition marches was lifted a month before.

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

On 14 August, President Issoufou appointed a national unity government, in an attempt to reinforce political stability, address regional security threats, and deal with corruption, impunity, demographic and economic challenges.

Security context

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

On 2 January, OCHA reported that humanitarian workers travelling from the southern regions towards the border with Mali, Chad and Libya need military escorts. When travelling towards Algeria, OCHA recommended humanitarian teams to travel in convoy.

Displacement

Crisis in neighbouring countries have led to the arrival of refugees from Mali and Nigeria. When fighting broke out in Mali in 2012, thousands of people fled the country and crossed into neighbouring countries. Thousands crossed into Niger, 80% of them being women and children. Malian refugees reportedly reside in camps, nomadic pasture areas or urban settings. Since May 2013, Southeastern Niger (Diffa region) has witnessed an influx of almost 40,000 displaced persons from Northern Nigeria following the declaration of the state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States in Nigeria on 14 May 2013. Nigerian refugees mostly reside with host families in the Diffa region.

Refugees

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 87,000 refugees reside in Niger. In Mid-February, UNHCR reports that the 39,362 people displaced since May, consist of Nigerien (29,168), Nigerian (10,044) and nationals of Chad/Chadian (150). The majority of the displaced are women and children who live with host families in Bosso, Abadam, Main Soroa, Diffa, Kablewa, Tchoukoudjani, Garin Amadou and Baroua.

On 7 February, ECHO reported that approximately 2,000 people have sought refuge in Guéssérré, in the southeastern Diffa region, following ongoing violence in Nigeria in the past week. These refugees, have fled into Niger due to clashes between the militant group Boko Haram and the Nigerian military in northeastern Nigeria.

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

Returnees

As of 30 January, OCHA reports, there are 44,300 Nigerien returnees who have fled violence in the northern regions of Nigeria.

Food Security

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

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

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

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

**Pockets of acute food insecurity**

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

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

Certain households in the above-mentioned areas will have trouble meeting their basic food needs between January and June and will experience “Crisis” levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). However, since these crisis conditions will affect less than 20 percent of households in different regions, the zone classification remains as “Stressed” (IPC Phase 2).

As of 7 February, ECHO reports that the ongoing violence in Nigeria and the displacement of 40,000 into Niger, consequently, caused for farmland to be affected in large areas. The ICRC adds that poor security conditions almost halted trade with Nigeria, therefore causing a leap in the prices of basic necessities. Another aggravating factor, is the fact that annual crop and livestock figures for the Diffa region were already poorer in comparison to the rest of the country.

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

**Health and Nutrition**

**<5 mortality**

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

**Cholera**

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

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

**Malnutrition**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 356,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 650,000 suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), amounting to a caseload of 1 million children under 5 suffering from Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM). This represents an increase compared to 2012 and 2013, when respectively 567,659 and 625,486 children were suffering from GAM. UNICEF reported in mid-October that more than 2,500 children under 5 died of malnutrition between January and August 2013.

**Diphtheria**

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

**SOMALIA  CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**24 February:** The militant group Al Shabaab vowed to recapture all Somali territory that it lost in the past year, after the government said a military offensive, led by an expanded African peacekeeping force, would drive them out of their remaining strongholds by the end of 2014.

**21 February:** Al Shabaab rebels launched a major suicide attack against the heavily-
The fortified presidential palace in Mogadishu, triggering a firefight with security forces. While the President was unharmed, nine people died in the attack, including four insurgents and five Somali soldiers or officials.

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

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

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

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

**Politics and Security**

**Political Context**

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

**Security Context**

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

On 21 February, Al Shabaab rebels launched a major suicide attack against the heavily-fortified presidential palace, triggering a firefight with security forces in the capital Mogadishu. While the President was unharmed, nine people died in the attack, including four insurgents and five Somali soldiers or officials. The incident took place two days after the government announced a military offensive would drive the militants out of their remaining strongholds by the end of 2014.

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

On 10 February, two car bombs wounded at least five people in the capital Mogadishu. No group claimed responsibility for the attack but authorities blamed the incident on the militant group Al Shabaab who were responsible for a twin bombing in the capital on 2 January, which killed 11 people. In early January, the militant group said the first attack represented the start of its 2014 insurgency campaign. On 27 December, a suspected al-Qaeda-linked Al Shabaab bomb attack killed at least eight people in the Daynille district of Mogadishu. Although Al Shabaab did not claim responsibility for the attack, the group has carried out several large-scale attacks against various targets across the country over the past year.

Although security in the capital Mogadishu has improved since its lowest point in August 2011, attacks by Al Shabaab in urban centres and along transport axes are common. Besides Al Shabaab’s activism, the capital is also witnessing sporadic violence perpetrated by other unidentified armed groups targeting mostly soldiers and security forces.

Until late-2010, Al Shabaab still controlled a significant part of Mogadishu and surrounds, but the past three years marked considerable strategic gains by the joint Somali and AU-led campaign, especially since 2011 with the involvement of Ethiopian and Kenyan troops. The expansion of the federal government has pushed Al Shabaab to expand both southwards and to the northeast, and even though the number of attacks and fatalities has decreased between 2010 and 2013, Al Shabaab retains strongholds in parts of rural southern and central Somalia and in the mountains of the northern semi-autonomous Puntland region.

On 24 February, the militant group Al Shabaab vowed to recapture all Somali territory that it lost in the past year, after the government said a military offensive, led by an expanded African peacekeeping force, would drive them out of their remaining strongholds by the end of 2014.

Expansion of the AMISOM peacekeeping force was authorized in November, and is expected to launch a broad offensive in the coming weeks along with Somali military troops.

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

Puntland

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

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

Military Operations and International Presence

In late February, the Federal Government of Somalia and the AMISOM announced an upcoming military offensive in southern and central regions, where Al Shabaab and other smaller armed groups still hold swathes of rural territory, towns and villages. The AU’s Peace and Security Council endorsed in November the recommendation to boost AMISOM with an additional 4,400 soldiers, taking its total strength to more than 22,000. The UN Secretary General urged member nations to provide AMISOM with financial and military support. Following the Westgate attacks in Kenya, the UN envoy for Somalia called for additional AU troops to counter the 5,000 Al Shabaab fighters, which the UN said posed an international threat.

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Humanitarian Access

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

As of late September, Al Shabaab continued to interfere with relief operations in rural areas across southern Somalia, particularly in Middle Juba region and parts of Bakool, Bay, and Gedeo 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 aid.

FSNAU notes that conflict has disrupted the movement of food and other basic commodities in most parts of these regions, particularly in Bakool. Attacks on aid workers pose a serious constraint for humanitarian operations.

On 14 August, MSF who had been operating in 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.

Displacement

Internal Displacement

According to UNHCR, an estimated 1.1 million Somalis are IDPs. Most of the displaced reside in the south-central region (893,000), and the rest in Puntland (130,000) and Somaliland (85,000). In the south central region, the capital Mogadishu records a very high concentration, with 369,000 IDPs living in makeshift camps.

In January 2013, the authorities announced their plan to relocate IDPs from the capital to camps outside the city, as a consequence of urban development. As a result, the UN estimates that several thousands of displaced persons were evicted during August and September 2013. According to UNHCR, about 27,000 people were evicted from different settlements in Mogadishu in November and December, and while the official relocation plans had been put on hold by the government, trends show that eviction of IDPs by private land-owners has recently increased. The proposed solution is to move the displaced to the Deynille district, west of the city centre. This area is considered particularly insecure due to Al Shabaab’s activism, and ownership issues raise the
question whether the land is public property and thus available for relocation purposes.

**Refugees**

On 17 January, the UNHCR reported that more than 1 million Somalis were now registered as refugees in neighboring countries, the majority in Kenya (around 477,000), Ethiopia (246,000), and Yemen (240,000).

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

**Disasters**

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

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

**Food Security**

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

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

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

**Wild Polio Virus**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

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

Updated 26/02/2014

SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late February: The Ethiopian-based South Sudan United Democratic Alliance (SSUDA), an exiled opposition organisation, asked to participate in the ongoing peace talks. The SSUDA also said it supported the formation of an interim government, as proposed by IGAD mediators, and insisted that the negotiations must be inclusive.

Late February: The security situation in the town of Malakal, Upper Nile, remained tense following heavy fighting between Government and opposition forces. According to latest reports, the town was deserted with a strong presence of opposition forces near the airport and hospital area. While the overall death toll is unknown, reports said at least 16 deaths and 120 wounded were among the IDPs residing close the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) base, located in an area which got caught in the middle of the fighting. Heavy looting was also reported across the town.

Late February: Uganda announced it would withdraw its troops from South Sudan, where it is supporting the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Uganda said the withdrawal would take place as soon as the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) was ready to take over. A decision concerning the replacement deployment is expected within the coming weeks.

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

27 February: OCHA reported that an estimated 885,200 people have now been displaced by the ongoing fighting – 190,000 of whom have fled as refugees to neighbouring countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia.

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

24 February: Local authorities reported that over 68,000 people were displaced from their villages in Duk county, Jonglei, following an attack by reported rebel fighters which allegedly killed three civilians. Most displaced were said to be moving toward Twic East county.

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

KEY CONCERNS

- The security situation in South Sudan remains volatile with ongoing conflict and clashes, particularly in Lakes and Unity states.
- Over 885,200 displaced, including 190,000 in neighbouring countries and 75,000 people sheltering in ten UN peacekeeping bases (OCHA).
- Up to 300,000 IDPs are currently living in 33 sites which are at risk of flooding. Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people currently reside in flood risk areas (OCHA).
- Humanitarian partners reported that an estimated 3.7 million people are currently facing Crisis and Emergency levels (IPC Phase 3 and 4) of food insecurity, the vast majority of them located in the eastern states worst affected by the crisis.

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

Politics and Security

Since inter-communal fighting broke out in mid-December 2013, violence has rapidly spread across the eastern part of the country, mostly in Jonglei state and the central tri-state area of Lakes, Unity, and Warrap. Whilst the fighting has eased since the signing of a ceasefire in late January, tensions continue to run high, especially in the northern states bordering with Sudan.

Sudan – South Sudan

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

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

National Context

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

Peace negotiations

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

According to latest reports, the two sides are yet to agree on the role and composition of the proposed government, and adjourned the resumption of the talks for consultations with their superiors, amid reports of ongoing fighting on the ground.

Despite the securing of a ceasefire in late January, a second round of negotiations between South Sudan’s warring parties stalled 11 February. According to local and opposition sources, these new talks failed due to Juba’s refusal to meet the opposition’s demands, namely the withdrawal of Ugandan forces and the release of the remaining four political detainees still in Juba’s custody.

In late January, South Sudan’s government released seven of 11 political detainees, but vowed to put on trial a remaining four key leaders accused of attempting to topple President Kiir, and while their fate was set to be part of the second round of negotiations, the opposition reportedly insisted that their request be fulfilled before they resume dialogue.

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

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

Security Context

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

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

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

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

In a separate event on 24 February, local authorities reported that over 68,000 people were displaced from their villages in Duk county, Jonglei, following an attack by reported rebel fighters which allegedly killed three civilians. Most displaced were said to be moving toward Twic East county.

In the state of Central and Eastern Equatoria, the security situation remained relatively calm. In Unity, the town of Bentiu was reportedly tense but stable, with new arrivals in the UN base due to fears of a possible attack by armed forces. In Leer town, no new incidents
were reported, but humanitarian partners observed significant military presence in the area.

In early February, clashes were reported in the states of Jonglei, Lakes, and Unity. While Jonglei remained relatively calm, local sources reported that at least 25 people were killed in Bor county on 5 February by armed men suspected to be associated with insurgents loyal to Machar. In Lakes state, OCHA reported that clashes in the area of Rumbek East caused temporary suspension of movement on the axis between Rumbek and Yirol. In Unity state, OCHA indicated that clashes continued in Guit and Leer counties. Additionally, local sources reported that nine people were killed in an attack on a reported civilian convoy in Mayom county on 10 February. Local authorities blamed the attack on anti-government forces, an accusation denied by the insurgents.

To date, casualty numbers cannot be verified due to limited access, but thousands of people are believed to have been killed or injured since the conflict started over two months ago. The International Crisis Group estimated the death toll to be 10,000. As of 6 February, humanitarian partners reported that over 5,100 people have sought treatment for gunshot wounds since mid-December; although the number of gunshot patients has significantly reduced since early February, possibly due to decreased clashes between the warring parties compared to January.

**Military presence**

Uganda announced it would withdraw its troops from South Sudan, where it is supporting the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). Uganda said the withdrawal would take place as soon as the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) was ready to take over.

The African Union’s Peace and Security Council has been notified and is reportedly expected to meet in the coming weeks to decide on the modalities for the deployment of the African emergency force.

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

**Inter-communal violence**

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

In Lakes state, unverified reports indicated inter-communal incidents in various locations between 24-27 February.

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

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

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

The eastern state of Jonglei has a long history of sporadic violence and is considered most affected by the lack of basic infrastructure, chronic insecurity rooted in cattle raids, conflict over natural resources, and armed hostilities between the national army and non-state actors. The state is home to six ethnic groups, with the Dinka and the Nuer numerically and politically dominant. Tension and violence often focus around the Nuer, based in northern Jonglei, and the Murle, a minority group based in the south of the state. Inter-clan animosity stems from competition over water resources and grazing land and is considered to have become more violent since the second Sudanese civil war with widespread militarisation of the population and availability of small arms. As a result, deaths resulting from inter-communal fighting have increased, along with attacks and abductions of civilians and significant population displacement. In 2013, the rise of ethnic violence in Jonglei forced 120,000 people to flee to the bush, where they are cut off from aid and face severe food insecurity. According to observers, the lack of state-provided authority, security and justice mechanisms had pushed many Murle to join Yau Yau’s SSDA.

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

According to aid agencies, the crisis which erupted in South Sudan in mid-December has caused significant population displacement across the east of the country and toward neighbouring countries. Insecurity and armed clashes are reportedly hampering the delivery of assistance, while the UN reported widespread violation of human rights and targeted violence against civilians.

Access

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

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

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

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

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

Displacement

As of 27 February, OCHA reported that an estimated 885,200 people have been displaced by the crisis, 190,000 of whom have crossed to neighbouring countries. As of 13 February, UNHCR released a non-return advisory for South Sudanese fleeing the conflict, therefore recommending that States refrain from returning South Sudan nationals to the country, unless cases involve people who may have committed serious human rights violations.

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

According to OCHA as of 27 February, the number of IDPs in South Sudan now stands at 695,200, with most located in the northern state of Unity (183,000), and the northeastern states of Upper Nile (122,800) and Jonglei (128,500). An estimated 75,600 people are sheltering in ten UN bases. According to UNICEF on 11 February, 394,600 children <18 are among the IDPs.

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

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

Refugees in South Sudan

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

Returnees

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

South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries

As of 27 February, the number of South Sudanese who fled to neighbouring countries since mid-December stands at 190,000, including 82,000 people into Uganda, 54,000 into Ethiopia, and 18,000 into Kenya. Aid agencies also reported that an estimated 35,000 people crossed into Sudan since 15 December, while some 2,600 people have arrived in the contested Abyei area since the beginning of the crisis.

Disasters

As of late January, OCHA indicated that up to 300,000 IDPs are currently living in 33 sites which will be at risk of flooding during the approaching rainy season from April to October. Overall, an estimated 1.48 million people currently reside in flood risk areas.

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

Food Security

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

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

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

South Sudan’s economy is almost entirely reliant on oil production and the ongoing internal crisis and tensions with neighbouring Sudan continue to threaten oil production and exports.

Since 2012, there has been a reduction in oil revenues following disagreement over oil revenue sharing with Sudan. Along with a de facto devaluation of the national currency between 2011 and 2013, the downfall of oil exports and the increase of imports are likely to reduce significantly households’ purchasing power, as the country largely depends on food imports.

Additionally, the population relies mostly on low productivity agricultural and pastoral activities based on traditional systems. While the current crisis has not affected the main harvest, forecasted to be 38% above the recent 4-year average, most conflict-affected states show high cereal production deficits against their cereal demand.

Health and Nutrition

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

Measles

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

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

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

Wild Polio Virus

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

Hepatitis E

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

Malnutrition

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

Updated: 04/03/2014

SUDAN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late February: The African Union (AU) indicated that talks between Khartoum and the SPLM-N rebels could resume in the coming days. The first round of negotiations was adjourned on 18 February after the two sides simply traded accusations and failed to meet face-to-face to discuss a cessation of hostilities and the issue of humanitarian access.

24 February: The UNHCR reported that the estimated number of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals, fleeing the violence in their country, currently stands at 31,160, most of whom have fled to White Nile state. Around 2,600 people have arrived in the contested area of Abyei since the beginning of the South Sudanese crisis in mid-December.
20 February: Local sources reported that Janjaweed militiamen attacked a number of IDPs near Nyala, South Darfur, injuring three people. On the same day, the militia also carried out an attack on an IDP camp. No casualties were reported.

20 February: Three leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) met with the US Special Envoy to Sudan, to discuss their position regarding the comprehensive peace process, the unification of the negotiations platforms, and their view about Sudanese President Bashir’s call for dialogue.

19 February: Local sources reported that the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) and pro-government militia elements carried out a raid on an IDP camp in Zalingei, Central Darfur, with reports indicating that residents were beaten and looted as they demonstrated against the Social peace Conferences organized by the Darfur Regional Authorities (DRA). Two people were allegedly killed by the troops and more than 20 others were wounded.

18 February: Local sources reported that that dozens of people were killed and injured in clashes between Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen in Um Bukhun, Central Darfur. Violence reportedly erupted following the assassination of a Misseriya tribal chief, but local authorities blamed the fighting on the withdrawal of the Intelligence and Security Service and the Central Reserve Forces from the region.

KEY CONCERNS

- Political and security tensions continue to run high in Sudan due to the ongoing conflict in neighbouring South Sudan. Khartoum has expressed concern about an influx of refugees and arms as the unrest continues.

- An estimated 31,160 newly arrived South Sudanese crossed into Sudan since the beginning of the crisis in South Sudan in mid-December (UNHCR February 2014).

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

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

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

- According to OCHA on 31 January, there are now nearly 2 million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 who were displaced in 2013.

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

Politics and Security

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

Sudan – South Sudan

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

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

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

While there has been a gradual improvement of relations in March 2013 - when a technical agreement for the implementation of all elements from the 2012 cooperation deal was signed - tensions rose again in June, with disputes arising about the alleged support by Juba to rebels in Sudan, and accusations that Khartoum was backing the rebels fighting in Jonglei state, South Sudan. This destabilisation of bilateral relations once again threatened to disrupt again the oil and transit fees that make up both countries’ main source of foreign income.
In September, the two sides issued a joint statement in which they agreed to expel rebel groups from the demilitarised zone on the border between the two countries and open crossing points for oil export. The next meeting of the Joint Security Committee is set to be held in Juba in mid-January 2014.

**Insurgent Groups – The Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF)**

While sporadic border clashes and oil export disruption threaten to revive tensions between Sudan and South Sudan, Khartoum continues to struggle to curb insurgencies waged by non-state armed groups in the southern states of South Kordofan, Blue Nile, and Darfur.

On 20 February, three leaders of the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) met with the US Special Envoy to Sudan, to discuss their position regarding the comprehensive peace process, the unification of the negotiations platforms, and their view about Sudanese President Bashir’s call for dialogue. In turn, leaders of the JEM, SLM-MM and SLM-AW restated that the SRF is against any partial solution for the crises in the country, expressed their wish to unify both the Darfur and the South Kordofan-Blue Nile platforms in order to reach a comprehensive solution, and insisted that security must be establish on the ground before any meaningful dialogue could take place.

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

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

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

**Instability in the East**

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

**Humanitarian context and needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

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

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

On 4 October, the AU Rapporteur of the joint Sudan and South Sudan Security Committee announced that Sudan and South Sudan had agreed to re-open five border crossings between the two countries. The Committee recommended that both countries agree on facilitation of delivery of humanitarian aid and the transport of citizens stranded at the borders, the relocation of refugees from the demilitarised zone, and the repatriation of prisoners of war.
On 21 August, the Sudanese Interior Minister announced that the government would introduce new rules governing the work of foreign relief organisations. Authorities will now only allow national organisations to work for human rights, excluding foreign humanitarian groups and UN agencies. The imposition of additional restrictions on foreign actors underlines Khartoum's lasting discomfort with international organisations that it has repeatedly accused of exaggerating the magnitude of conflicts in the country, disseminating false information, and spying.

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

Displacement

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

**Internally Displaced**

According to OCHA as of 31 January, an estimated 2.3 million Sudanese are currently internally displaced due to food insecurity and conflict.

**Sudanese refugees in other countries**

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

**Refugees residing in Sudan**

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

Since fighting broke out in South Sudan in mid-December, violence has spread to six out of ten states. Violence is reportedly most intense in the north eastern states of Upper Nile and Unity, which has raised fears about a significant influx of refugees and also the potential return of around 200,000 Sudanese refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile States, who are currently residing in refugee camps in Unity and Upper Nile State. As of late January, the Government of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) reported that the number of South Sudanese refugees who arrived in Sudan is estimated at 8,100 people, with most of them located in While Nile State.

On 24 February, the IOM reported that South Sudanese refugees, reportedly from Upper Nile state, continue to move into East Darfur and South Kordofan, while secondary movements were also recorded from While Nile state to Khartoum. However, the daily rates of arrivals at the border have been reduced from more than 1,300 people every week to less than 300.

According to the UNHCR, by late February, the estimated number of newly arrived South Sudanese nationals, fleeing the violence in their own country, stood at 31,160, most of whom had fled to White Nile state. Approximately 2,600 people have arrived in the contested area of Abyei since the beginning of the South Sudanese crisis in mid-December.

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

**South Sudanese returnees**

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

**Food Security**

As of 11 February, FEWSNET reported that an estimated 3.3 million people in Sudan face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of food insecurity. This figure is expected to increase to 4 million in March/April, due to the early onset of the lean season, rising food prices, and the impact of conflict in South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur States.

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

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

**Darfur**

**Politics and Security**

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

The Darfur peace process is currently stalling due to the fact that it does not include all the parties aligned in the Sudan Revolutionary Front, and because insurgents groups request a comprehensive settlement for the whole of Sudan, and not a partial dialogue for Darfur only.

On 10 February, Joint AU – UN senior official met with the leadership of the Darfuri non-sigatory movement in Uganda. Representative from the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), Sudan Liberation Army / Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement / Gibril Ibrahim (JEM/Gibril) met with the official to follow-up on the outcomes of the technical workshop on peace and security in Darfur which was held in Ethiopia last December.

This three-day All Inclusive Peace and Security in Darfur Technical Workshop aimed to draw the Darfur rebel movements that did not sign the 2011 Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) to the negotiating table and revive the peace process. At the time, reports stated that parties discussed the humanitarian situation in Darfur as well as the lack of access to affected populations, and JEM and SLM-MM restated their demand for a comprehensive, inclusive, just and sustainable negotiated peaceful settlement of the Sudanese conflicts at the closing of the workshop.

On 26 January, Sudanese President Al Bashir reportedly met with the leader of the former rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), in a bid to resolve a conflict over the implementation of a peace deal signed in April 2013. On 24 January, JEM announced it suspended its participation in the meetings related to the implementation of power sharing and security arrangements agreements, accusing the head of Darfur peace implementation of voluntarily slowing the process. The JEM also underlined the delay in the formation of the ceasefire commission, and added that UNAMID did not yet start the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration process (DDRP).

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

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

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

**Military Operations**

Since the beginning of August, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) have carried out regular air raids targeting East Jebel Marra in South Darfur, and Kadja and Dady areas of North Darfur. Security has reportedly deteriorated significantly since late December with almost daily air strikes in these areas. According to local sources, on 10 February, aircraft of the SAF bombed the areas of Kara and Khor in East Jebel Marra, reportedly causing no casualties. According to local sources, on 26 January two children were killed in an alleged military bombing on the Konjara-Kushena road in East Jebel Marra. On the same day, the SAF bombed areas east and west of Jebel Marra, destroying water wells, killing an unknown number of livestock and setting fire to farmland and pasture areas. According to local sources on 20 January, aerial bombardments targeted East Jebel Marra, notably the areas of Kadareik and Um Laouta. While no casualties were reported, army troops reportedly carried out raids on villages, looting property and crops, and accusing the population of supporting the armed insurgency. According to local sources on 16 January, SAF launched several air raids in areas south of Nyala, South Darfur, causing acute malnutrition in Red Sea state.

On 24 January, JEM announced it
displacement, injuries and widespread damage on three villages. On 10 January, similar raids in East Jebel Marra killed one person. According to UNAMID, ten were killed in aerial bombardments near Shangil Tobaya and Sharafa in East Jebel Marra on 29 November, but government troops denied they carried out the attack. On 5-6 November, SAF reportedly launched intensive air raids causing widespread destruction in the valley of Jebel Dengo, north of Dady. An unknown number of people were killed in the raids and hundreds were reportedly displaced. According to local media reports, intensive air raids on 23 October killed one and injured at least 12 people, destroyed 30 houses and a school in East Jebel Marra, affecting the villages of Tangarara, Hillat el Dum, and Arashu. In early September, at least seven people were reportedly killed in similar air strikes against Darfur’s East Jebel Marra in the vicinities of Kined, Silo, and Shangil Tobaa. A European international organisation, the Society for Threatened People (STP), has condemned what it described as indiscriminate air raids on civilians in the Jebel Marra Mountains that forced thousands of people to flee the area in late August.

Insecurity and Violence against Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

IDPs across Darfur continue to face attacks from various armed non-state actors. According to the Association of Displaced Persons and Refugees of Darfur, the areas of North, Central, and West Darfur are the most at risk.

On 20 February, local sources reported that Janjaweed militiamen attacked a number of IDPs near Nyala, South Darfur, injuring three people. On the same day, they carried out an attack on an IDP camp, however no casualties were reported.

On 19 February, local sources reported that the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) and pro-government militia elements carried out a raid on an IDP camp in Zalingei, Central Darfur. Reports indicated that residents were beaten and looted as they demonstrated against the Social peace Conferences organized by the Darfur Regional Authorities (DRA). Two people were allegedly killed by the troops and more than 20 others were wounded.

Tribal Violence

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

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

Central Darfur

Localised fighting between Misseriya and Salamat tribes in Central Darfur state has flared up over the past months. The fighting is primarily linked to a long-standing conflict over access to resources, including land. In the latest expression of inter-tribal conflict, local sources reported on 18 February that dozens of people were killed and injured in clashes between Misseriya and Salamat tribesmen in Um Bukhun. Violence reportedly erupted following the assassination of a Misseriya tribal chief, but local authorities blamed the fighting on the withdrawal of the Intelligence and Security Service and the Central Reserve Forces from the region. A Salamat tribal chief was allegedly killed in a retaliation attack, and both victims were members of the Reconciliation Committee of Central Darfur.

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

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

East Darfur

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

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

**North Darfur**

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

**Humanitarian Access**

Access to the Darfur region remains restricted due to on-going hostilities and insecurity, including the direct targeting of aid workers and peacekeepers. According to the UN, 16 peacekeepers were killed in hostile acts in Darfur throughout 2013, which represents a 50% increase compared to 2012, and which brings the number of personnel killed to 57 since UNAMID was deployed in 2008. According to OCHA, two peacekeepers were killed in December when a UNAMID patrol was ambushed by armed men in South Darfur. On 29 November, the UN reported that two Sudanese health ministry workers helping to vaccinate children in the Darfur region had been killed. On 24 November, a UNAMID convoy came under attack by unknown armed men on the road from Kabkabya to Saraf Omra in North Darfur. One Rwandan soldier was shot and killed. On 23 October, the head of a national NGO was killed by unidentified armed men on the road from Kabkabya to Saraf Omra in North Darfur. One Rwandan soldier was shot and killed. On 23 October, the head of a national NGO was killed by unidentified armed men on the road from Kabkabya to Saraf Omra in North Darfur. One Rwandan soldier was shot and killed.

In Central Darfur, according to humanitarian organisations, more than 25,000 people have been internally displaced since April. In access to humanitarian supplies by road especially to the southern corridor localities of Um Dukhun and Bindisi.

**Displacement**

**Internally Displaced**

According to OCHA on 3 January, there are now nearly 2 million IDPs in Darfur, including 380,000 who were displaced in 2013 as a result of inter-tribal fighting and clashes between the SAF and armed movements since January. This figure is more than double the number of people internally displaced in Darfur in 2011 and 2012 combined.

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

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

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

**Refugees**

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

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

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

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

Health and Nutrition

Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL)

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

Blue Nile, West and South Kordofan States

Politics and Security

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

Insurgent Groups

The states are mainly affected by the activism of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), which is an offspring of the politico-military group which initially led the southern rebellion during the 1983-2005 civil war and which is now in power in the newly independent state of South Sudan.

As of late February, the African Union (AU) indicated that talks between Khartoum and the SPLM-N rebels could resume in the coming days, after a first round was adjourned on 18 February. Despite international pressure to reach a ceasefire, negotiations between the warring parties were adjourned after the two sides simply traded accusations and failed to meet face-to-face to discuss a cessation of hostilities and the issue of humanitarian access. On 23 February, the AU presented a proposed agreement which includes humanitarian access to more than one million people, the adoption of an immediate ceasefire, and the designation of the third-party to monitor its implementation on the ground.

Peace talks had resumed on 13 February under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in Ethiopia. It was first time they had met since the short-lived negotiations between the two sides collapsed in April 2013. At the time, the two delegations failed to agree on the agenda of the talks with the SPLM-N reportedly demanding to allow humanitarian access to the civilians in conflict-affected rebel-held areas in SKBN - a request rejected by Khartoum on the grounds that rebels would take advantage from such humanitarian assistance.

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

In mid-January, South Kordofan’s governor called on traditional leaders to convince rebels to lay down their weapons and join the ongoing efforts to develop the region, and proposed to hold a conference for peaceful coexistence between the different components of the district where different tribes reside.

Security Context

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

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

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

Local sources reported on 19 February, that suspected Sudan People’s Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) rebels had launched a rocket attack against Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan state, a day after peace talks with the government broke down. The most recent rebel fire on Kadugli was in mid-December when SPLM-N rebels claimed it was retaliation for government attacks on civilians.

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

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

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

Humanitarian Access

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

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

Displacement

Internally Displaced

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

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

As reported in local media in early December, renewed tribal fighting in the Um Deibut area in West Kordofan triggered the displacement of over 6,000 people to El Taboun and Babanusa in West Kordofan, and Adila in East Darfur.

Sudanese refugees in other countries

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

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

Food Security

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

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

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

Health and Nutrition

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

Wild Polio Virus

Sudan’s Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) announced that the polio vaccination campaign in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and Blue Nile should start in December. However, as of January 2014, negotiations between the government and the SPLM-N had failed to make any progress on the issue, with the two sides failing to sit face-to-face to discuss humanitarian needs, including polio vaccinations.

In late October, the Government of Sudan announced a 12-day cessation of hostilities in non-government controlled areas in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, beginning on 5 November 2013, in order to facilitate a polio vaccination and vitamin A supplementation campaign for children <5. However, the efforts to initiate the vaccination campaign failed due to outstanding disagreements over the logistics of the operation. The UNICEF and WHO-led campaign, originally planned for October, was due to target 147,000 children <5 in areas controlled by the SPLM-N in South Kordofan and 7,000 children in Blue Nile who have not been vaccinated since the ongoing armed conflict began in 2011. If the vaccination campaign is to be implemented, it will be the first cross-line access into SPLM-N areas from within Sudan since 2011.

Yellow Fever

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

Updated: 26/02/2014

BURKINA FASO FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

24 February: FEWSNET reported that poor households in and around the Sahel region, including those in Burkina Faso, increasingly lack access to food and are therefore more reliant on market purchases and more likely to sell their livestock as a means of survival. Between April and June, FEWSNET said that low-income households across Burkina Faso are predicted to experience Stressed acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2).

20 February: FEWSNET reported that erratic rainfall in localized northern areas of the country and other countries across the southern Sahel, resulted in crop losses of up to 50 per cent and below-average pasture growth. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households.

KEY CONCERNS

- Long-term displacement of 35,000 Malian refugees continues to put pressure on the resources of host communities in Burkina Faso (OCHA).

- 1.3 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity across the country (OCHA).

- 514,000 children suffer from global acute malnutrition – out of which 144,000 are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), and 370,000 from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).

Politics and Security

Regional Context

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

**Political Context**

Burkina Faso has been generally politically stable for over two decades, but of late has suffered from the fallout of the political and military crisis in neighbouring Mali. Instability and unrest in Niger and Côte d’Ivoire also continue to have an impact on the country. Political divisions arising from concerns that President Compaoré might push for constitutional changes, potentially revising Article 37 of the Constitution, allowing him to run again in 2015, led to a wave of resignations in early January and could lead to further political instability.

A week after the opposition staged the largest demonstration in decades on 18 January, observers predicted that President Compaoré would face an uphill battle to stay in office beyond the 2015 elections. Shortly following the protests, the government issued a statement saying that it remained open to political dialogue. However, defectors from the ruling party then aligned themselves with the opposition and on 25 January formed a new political movement, the Movement of People for Progress (MPP), continuing their campaign to force the President to step down next year. The President of the MPP is the former head of the National Assembly, Roch Kabore. Protests have been peaceful so far, however, the country could experience significant upheaval if the President were to push through the constitutional amendments regardless.

On 22 January, a week after resigning from Parliament and leaving the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), Victor Tiendrebeogo, also known as Laré Naaba Tigré, one of Burkina Faso’s most prominent tribal chiefs and former Minister of Moro Naaba, held a press conference to explain his departure. Tiendrebeogo insisted that even if his former party came back to the idea of modifying Article 37, he would not return. On 18 January, the opposition organized marches in the capital Ouagadougou and throughout the country to protest the potential revision of Article 37 of the constitution.

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

As of 18 February, FEWSNET reported that up until August 2014, Burkina Faso will experience a decrease in food assistance needs compared to the five-year average. The

**Displacement**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that Burkina Faso is currently hosting 35,000 Malian refugees. The growing numbers of the displaced and their livestock, are reportedly putting pressure on host communities and the already scarce resources available.

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

On 30 January, OCHA reported that prolonged displacement, as a consequence of the Mali conflict, is putting additional stress on communities hosting the 35,000 refugees, and up to 200,000 of their animals.

On 31 December, OCHA noted that 49,975 Malian refugees have now taken refuge in Burkina Faso (unchanged since 22 April 2013), including 27,146 children (UNHCR). Refugees are located in seven formally recognized 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 Soum, Oudalan and Seno, where almost 90% of Malian refugees are settled.

**Food Security**

**Impact regional food crisis Sahel region**

FEWSNET reported on 24 February that poor households in and around the Sahel region, including those in Burkina Faso, increasingly lack access to food and are therefore more reliant on market purchases and more likely to sell their livestock as a means of survival. Between April and June, low-income households across Burkina Faso are predicted to experience stressed acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 2).

Regionally, the 2013/14 crop production in the Sahel was average. However, FEWSNET reported that erratic rainfall in localized northern areas of the country and other countries across the southern Sahel, resulted in crop losses of up to 50 percent and below-average pasture growth. These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households.

These poor harvests have led to below-average food stock levels for affected households. Pasture and water availability for livestock is also lower than usual in many areas, causing transhumant pastoralists in parts of the region to start their southern migration several months earlier than usual.

**National Outlook**

As of 18 February, FEWSNET reported that up until August 2014, Burkina Faso will experience a decrease in food assistance needs compared to the five-year average. The
lean season is expected to take place from July to September 2014. By August, the Burkinese population is likely to experience a Phase 2: Stressed food security situation.

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

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

Due to favourable weather conditions and government support of the agricultural sector, Burkina Faso had a good national cereal production for the second year in a row, with yields 30% higher than the 2011/2012 production (GIEWS/FAO). The current record in cereal production enables markets to be generally well supplied and coarse grains prices have remained significantly lower than the previous crisis-affected levels. Food prices are forecast to remain stable in view of relatively high supply levels in neighbouring countries and the declining international rice prices.

Continued food assistance is needed in the Sahel, North and East regions as a result of localized rainfall deficits in 2013. Ouallao and Soum provinces in the northern Sahel region, already facing food insecurity and high malnutrition rates, are heavily affected by the influx of 50,000 refugees (as of early November 2013) from Mali. According to FEWSNET in late November, new crops from ongoing harvests are forecast to enable most households to replenish their food stocks. Poor households are expected to have regular food access and pursue their normal livelihoods and should thus experience Minimal Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between now and March 2014. Very poor and poor households in the North and East livelihood zones in the Sahelian region, where an estimated 90% of people depend on agriculture and livestock for livelihoods, should be able to offset the expected shortfall in cereal production without resorting to atypical sales of livestock. These households are expected to experience Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between now and March 2014. Rising prices and increased production will boost household income, particularly income from sales of livestock and cash crops. This will help improve household terms of trade and strengthen livelihoods.

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

### Health and Nutrition

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

#### Meningitis

As of 15 October 2013, UNICEF reported that 2,479 cases of meningitis and 294 deaths were recorded in all 63 districts of Burkina Faso since the beginning of 2013. The total number of cases is low compared to recent years as there has been no epidemic yet this year.

#### Measles

From January to October 2013, a total of 2,832 cases of measles - with 53 new cases from September to 13 October, and 12 deaths were reported -equals to a mortality rate of 0.42%. These cases included measles-related complications such as pneumonia, croup or encephalitis. Of these, 976 or 34% of cases and no deaths were reported in the Sahel region.

#### Malnutrition

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

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

According to UNICEF in late October, the 2013 annual caseload of children <5 with SAM was 96,000. In May, UNHCR and WFP reported that malnutrition is alarming among certain Malian refugee communities, especially in Goudebou, where rates are beyond critical thresholds (SAM: 5.3%, MAM: 19.1%).

### Updated: 25/02/2014

#### CAMEROON FOOD INSECURITY

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

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

**23 February:** Nigeria closed its border with the Far North Region in Cameroon citing concerns about Boko Haram activity and the flow of weapons into Nigeria. Security threats in this region further include kidnappings, undocumented movement of foreigners and the influx of refugees from CAR, Chad, Nigeria and Sudan. Officials have
expressed concern for refugee camps to become targets for attack or to conceal militants.

21 February: The UNHCR reported that 7,921 third-country nationals have arrived in Cameroon from the Central African Republic. They are mainly from Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and are being repatriated by their governments. As of today, 2,774 have been repatriated.

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

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

KEY CONCERNS
- The impact of the 2011-2012 drought it still being felt across the country and chronic food insecurity remains in the northern parts of the country. Around 615,000 people are still at risk from food insecurity and malnutrition. (CFSVA).
- Only 30 percent of Cameroon’s 20 million inhabitants have access to piped drinking water. In Yaounde, the needs surpass three times the current capacity (Government).
- More than 30,000 refugees from CAR arrived in Cameroon in the recent weeks and the numbers could rise to as many 43,000 (WFP). The latest arrivals bring the overall total of CAR refugees in Cameroon to over 126,000 (UNHCR).
- The Cameroonian-Central African Republic border continues to be an area of humanitarian concern, especially the road from Bangui to the border with Cameroon (OCHA, ECHO, 26 February).
- Further risk of violence fuelled by concerns that militants from Nigeria’s Boko Haram and rebel fighters from CAR could cross into the country and create further insecurity for civilian populations.

Politics and Security

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

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

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

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

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

Bakassi region

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

However, border patrols – comprised of military factions from both countries – and UN observers, are in place to monitor protection and basic rights of people. Meanwhile, authorities are addressing the absence of basic necessities such as water, electricity and communication facilities. Furthermore, UN country teams in the area are supporting several projects, including a recently launched measles vaccination campaign.
At the beginning of the month, the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC), a UN-backed panel on border demarcation, held its 32nd Session in Abuja. Nigeria’s Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, Mohammed Adoke, stated that Nigeria had urged the Cameroonian government to allow Nigerians living in the Bakassi Peninsula (deemed by the International Court of Justice in 2002 to belong to Cameroon) to be able to earn a living and live in decent conditions without fear of discrimination, irrespective of their legal status. On 12 June 2006, President Obasanjo and President Biya signed the Greentree Agreement concerning transfer of authority and withdrawal of troops from the Peninsula. The CNMC was created to monitor the implementation of the agreement. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN for West Africa and Chairman of the CNMC, Said Djinnit, stated that the UN has commended Nigeria and Cameroon for their resolve in ensuring completion of the peace agreement and transfer process in Bakassi, concluded on 14th August 2013, in accordance with the terms of the Greentree Agreement.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Displacement

On 21 February, the UNHCR reported that 7,921 third-country nationals have now arrived in Cameroon from the troubled Central African Republic. They are mainly from Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and are being repatriated by their governments. As of today, 2,774 have been repatriated.

Refugees from the Central African Republic

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

As of 25 February, WFP reported that more than 30,000 refugees from CAR arrived in Cameroon in the recent weeks. WFP expects this figure could rise to 43,000 refugees.

On 21 February, UNHCR reported a sharp rise this month in number of CAR refugees fleeing to Cameroon. In total, 126,145 refugees now reside in Cameroon. Since the beginning of February, 19,565 refugees from CAR have crossed into Cameroon to escape violence.

The growing number of new arrivals and their need for food and other basic necessities has resulted in higher prices and shortages of goods. Many of the refugees are living in appalling conditions, lacking sufficient food and shelter. Host communities have taken in many people, but they cannot share their homes and resources with everyone. Moreover, rent increases are also affecting local residents.

On 15 February, UNHCR began moving CAR refugees away from areas just within and along the border with Cameroon.

On 17 February, it was reported that Rwandan peacekeepers had helped to move around 2,000 Muslims fleeing from CAR to safety in Cameroon. However, ten people were killed when the Rwandan troops were forced to fight Christian militias from attacking the convoy during the evacuation.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that more than 22,000 refugees from the neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) have crossed over the border into eastern Cameroon in recent weeks, 9,000 arrived in the first ten days of February.

Refugees from Nigeria

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

OCHA reported that over 4,000 refugees from various countries have sought refuge in Cameroon since mid-January. The most recent influx includes over 12,400 Nigerian refugees in Cameroon, 2,183 of which have been relocated to the Minawao camp, in Mayo-Tsanaga department in the Far North Province of Cameroon. A further 6,000 Nigerian refugees have opted to stay with host communities near the border.

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

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

Food Security

The impact of the 2011-2012 drought it still being felt with chronic food insecurity remaining in the two Sahelian North and Far North regions due to recurrent climatic shocks and which have negatively impacted agricultural activities. Moreover, since May 2013, the North and Far North regions have received over 8,000 Nigerian refugees, increasing pressure on resources. The national situation regarding food insecurity is further influenced by the fact that some 20 million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance, as reported by OCHA on 3 February. In addition, across the region an estimated 5 million children under five years of age are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Regional violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement, a refugee
A malaria outbreak in the Far North region was declared in early December. Prior to this, 182,400 cases of malaria were reported between January and September 2013, representing a 10% increase in cases recorded during the same period in 2012. Authorities blamed the recent upsurge on low bed net use, heavy rains, weak medical services and widespread poverty.

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

**Wild polio virus**

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

**WASH**

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

**CHAD FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**20 February:** The Chadian government said it had completed the evacuation of its citizens from neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) where violence is still ongoing. However, the IOM estimated that some 15,000 Chadians still remain at risk in CAR while another 10,000 are stranded in Cameroon, having fled CAR.

**18 February:** The IOM registered over 70,900 Chadian returnees, CAR refugees and Third Country Nationals in N'Djamena and five transit sites in the south of the country, including 980 unaccompanied or separated minors. An IOM profiling indicated that the evacuees are mostly women and children and that only half are strictly Chadian nationals, 30% being dual nationals and 20% being only Central African.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Chad remains at the junction of four major regional crises: Sudan, CAR, Nigeria and Libya. An estimated 467,000 refugees are currently living in Chad (OCHA, CHAD, WFP).

**Health and Nutrition**

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

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

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

On 14 February, local media reported that food prices in Cameroon have soared by over 20 per cent over the last three months. The growing food shortages are being compounded by prolonged water scarcity following limited rainfall. Government statistics reveal that only about 30 per cent of 20 million inhabitants have access to piped drinking water. According to the state water company (CDE), in Yaounde, the current needs surpass three times the available capacity.

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

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

**Updated:** 28/02/2014
Ongoing violence, looting and killings by anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka armed groups in Bangui and north-western Central African Republic (CAR) continue to drive out thousands of civilians to neighbouring countries, including Chad and led to warnings from a top U.N. official of “ethnic-religious cleansing” of Muslim minorities.

Chad is by far the largest recipient of CAR evacuees and refugees. As of 18 February, arrivals of Chadian migrants, CAR refugees and Third Country Nationals from CAR continued at transit sites in N’djamena and in the south of the country. The IOM registered over 70,900 Chadian migrants, CAR refugees and TCNs in N’djamena and five transit sites in the south of the country, including 980 unaccompanied or separated minors.

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

### Chadian returnees

Since the intensification of violence in Central African Republic in December 2013, Chad had stepped up the evacuation of its citizens, many of whom are reportedly being targeted by Christian militia who accuse them of having links to the Seleka.

UNHCR reported that an estimated 56,000 Chadians, mostly children and women have been repatriated from the troubled CAR since December 2013 – both on emergency flights and in land convoys. Returnees have mostly been located to N’djamena and the southern sites of Doyaba, Mbloïyo, Sido, Gore, and Doba. Many of the transit centres are of poor quality shelter with limited sanitation access to clean water. Many more Chadians are expected to return from CAR as the violence ongoing, over-stretching the humanitarian capacity in Chad, a country many of them have never lived in. Many returnees entering Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship since they were born in the country, which may cause specific concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee). While many returnees entered Chad for the first time and hold CAR citizenship since they were born in the country, which may cause specific concerns about their legal status (migrant versus refugee).

UNHCR is working with Chadian authorities to formalise this recognition through an official announcement so as to avoid statelessness in the future. According to government figures, over 300,000 Chadian nationals lived in CAR prior to the ongoing crisis.

The Chadian government said it had completed the evacuation of its citizens from neighbouring Central African Republic (CAR) where violence is still ongoing. However, the IOM estimated on 21 February that some 15,000 Chadians remain at risk in CAR and another 10,000 are stranded in Cameroon, having fled CAR. The government has underlined that all Chadian migrants must return to their zone of origin within ten days of arrival to preclude the establishment of permanent settlements. However, given that many migrants have little or no ties with Chad and transportation is limited, over 49,000 currently still reside in seven transit centres in the capital and the South with very little access to basic services, notably at Doyaba, N’djamena and Sido transit centres. With the continuing influx of new arrivals, and thousands more expected in the South and in transit sites, living conditions of returnees are gradually deteriorating in terms of WASH, medical services, shelter and access to drinking water.
As of late November 2013, around 150,000 Chadian returnees from Libya have arrived since the start of the Libya Crisis in 2011, according to OCHA. Sporadic arrivals continue in Faya-Largeau and areas of northern Tibesti region.

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

**Refugees in Chad**

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

According to UNHCR, escalating violence in CAR has sent a wave of about 15,000 refugees fleeing in the Chadian southern regions in 2013, bringing the total population of Central African refugees in Chad to more than 96,000. Since the start of December, some 7,700 CAR refugees have crossed the border, with about 5,000 being transferred to the refugee camps of Dosseye (4,000) and Belom in southern Chad. Further influxes of refugees are foreseen for 2014, as the security and humanitarian situation in CAR continues to deteriorate.

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

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

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

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

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

**Food Security**

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

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

Below-average household food stocks and agricultural labour incomes, along with abnormally high food prices, will cause consumption gaps for the poor during the peak of the lean season in July. Currently, FEWSNET indicates that poor households are only minimally meeting their food consumption needs and are facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) acute food insecurity. However, between April and the start of the next harvests in October, food security outcomes will deteriorate to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels with consumption gaps expected.

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

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

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

Chad’s food insecurity problem is part a wider crisis in the Sahel region. OCHA estimates that 20 million people are currently at risk of food insecurity in the Sahel region and 2.5 million of them need urgent lifesaving food assistance. In addition, across the region, an estimated 5 million children under five years of age are expected to suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition.
**Health and Nutrition**

**Measles, Polio and Meningitis**

Late January, UNICEF reported that the border region with CAR is prone to recurrent outbreaks of measles, polio, and meningitis. The level of immunization among refugee and returnee children is unknown but believed to be low, heightening the risk. As of 8 February, 176 suspected cases of measles have been recorded in 15 districts in Ndjamena and across southern Chad (border region with CAR and Cameroon).

**Malaria**

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

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

**Malnutrition**

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

*Updated: 26/02/2014*

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**ETHIOPIA | FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**24 February:** The UNHCR reported that over 42,300 South Sudanese refugees have registered in Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan. The government and humanitarian partners indicated they expect as many as 150,000 refugees to arrive from South Sudan in the coming weeks.

**Late January:** According to OCHA, renewed water shortages were reported in drought-prone woredas (administrative districts) in the central and northeastern regions of Oromia, Afar and Tigray.

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**KEY CONCERNS**

- Ongoing armed insurgencies in the southeast Ogaden region. Frequent outbreaks of violence due to clan and inter-communal tensions.
- Ethiopia is now hosting over 431,000 refugees from countries including Kenya and South Sudan (UNHCR).
- An estimated 2.7 million people are in need of food assistance, which represents a 12% increase compared to the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia, Somali, Amhara, Tigray, and Afar (FAO, November).
- The number of reported measles cases has surged in Ethiopia since mid-January 2014, with 3,162 suspected cases reported so far.

**Politics and Security**

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

The Somali militant group Al Shabaab has been repeatedly threatening Ethiopia since 2011, and Addis Ababa recently pledged that Ethiopian troops will remain in Somalia until durable peace and security is maintained. So far, no attacks have materialised. The government has to date been able to suppress protests and contain armed insurgencies in the Ogaden and Oromo regions, but has yet to address the root causes of the violence.

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**
Refugees

UNHCR reported that Ethiopia is currently hosting around 431,000 refugees, including 245,000 Somalis, 84,200 Eritreans, 68,400 South Sudanese, 33,800 Sudanese, and 4,230 refugees from other countries. December saw the arrival of more than 3,800 refugees, mostly from Eritrea. In addition, as of 24 February, UNHCR reported that over 42,300 South Sudanese refugees, mostly from Jonglei state, have registered in Ethiopia since the outbreak of fighting in neighbouring South Sudan. The government and humanitarian partners indicated they are expecting as many as 150,000 refugees to arrive in the coming weeks.

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

Returnees

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

Food Security

According to the government and humanitarian partners, an estimated 2.7 million people need food assistance due to consecutively below average {eq}beld\text{ and }sugum\text{ rains, low crop production, deterioration of livestock, and asset depletion. This represents a 12% increase compared to the first half of 2013. The most affected regions are Oromia (897,000 people in need), Somaliland (690,970), Amhara (548,000), Tigray (321,400), and Afar (152,600).}

According to FEWSNET as of January, the food security situation is reportedly stable in most parts of the country and is expected to remain at the current levels through March 2014. East and West Hararghe, northern Amhara, southern Tigray, and a few areas in SNNPR experienced below average {eq}kiremt\text{ rainfall or flooding, and the population, likely to remain at Stressed level (IPC Phase 2) of food insecurity until March, is expected to fall into Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from April to June. In pastoral and agro-pastoral areas in Afar region, poor households are expected to remain at Stressed levels from February to June.}

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

Health and Nutrition

Polio

A new case of polio was confirmed in January in Somali region, bringing the caseload in Ethiopia to nine. All cases were reported in Woredas which shares borders with Somalia where the polio outbreak in the region started in May. A new immunization campaign to target over three million children is ongoing.

Measles

According to the WHO, the number of reported measles cases has surged in Ethiopia since mid-January 2014, with 3,162 suspected cases reported as of 17 February. Over 90% of the cases were recorded in SNNPR. A vaccination campaign targeting 6.8 million children under 15 was due to start on 11 January, but continues to be delayed due to lack of resources.

OCHA reported on 16 December that 2,860 cases had been confirmed between January and October. Nationally, with children <5 constituting 37% of the affected.

Malaria/Dengue

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

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

Child Malnutrition

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

WASH

According to OCHA in January 2014, renewed water shortages were reported in drought-prone areas in the central and northeastern regions of Oromia, Afar and Tigray.

Updated: 26/02/2014

LESOTHO FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC
**Key Developments**

No significant developments this week, 04/03/2014.

**Key Concerns**

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

- Lesotho has the world’s highest rate of HIV prevalence, currently over 480,000 people are affected, which is 23.5% of the population (WFP, June 2013).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

As of early October 2013, FAO estimated that 223,000 people require assistance due to constrained food access in Lesotho. The largest proportion of food insecure (27%) is located in the western Maseru district. The Food and Nutrition Security Working Group (Southern Africa) (FNSWG) reported that this number includes some 15% of the rural population.

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

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

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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

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

Updated: 04/03/2014

**Madagascar Food Insecurity, Epidemic**

**Key Developments**

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

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

**Key Concerns**

- An estimated 4 million people, or 27.5% of the households in rural areas, are food insecure following reduced harvest in 2013. A further 9.6 million people are at risk of food insecurity (FAO).

- Since April 2012, Madagascar has experienced Malagasy Migratory Locust infestation, which threatens the livelihood of 13 million people (FAO).

- A plague outbreak affected 4 out of 112 districts in the country in December 2013. 86 cases have recorded since September, including 42 confirmed deaths (WHO). With the upcoming peak of the rainy season between February and March, heavy rains and poor waste management are raising concerns that the disease could spread to other areas.

- Madagascar is dealing with its worst locust outbreak since a 17-year-long outbreak which began during the 1950s. In March 2013, approximately 50% of the country was infested by swarms of locusts (FAO).

**Politics and Security**

**Political Context**

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

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

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

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

Security Context

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

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Natural Disasters

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

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

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

Food Insecurity

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

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

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

In February, OCHA indicated that a combination of damage to agricultural lands due to floods and tropical storms in early 2013, insufficient rains throughout the remainder of the year, a devastating locust infestation, reduced domestic rice harvest and rising food prices are some of the primary reasons for persistent food insecurity in the country.
On 11 February, FAO reported that rains during the 2013/14 cropping season (October-June) have been generally satisfactory, with some deficits recorded in the south-west in December. However, abundant rains in January revived cumulative rainfall levels, limiting the potential negative impact on crop productivity. Given the current conditions, an average rice crop in 2014 is foreseen.

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

**Locust Outbreak**

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

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

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

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

**Health**

**Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague**

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

Updated: 04/03/2014

**MALAWI FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**2 March:** OCHA said that an outbreak of African armyworm affected 16 districts and a total of 10,903 hectares of land throughout February. The armyworm is known to attack more than 40 plant species including key crops such as corn, wheat and maize.

**2 March:** FEWSNET said that food prices for June 2014 were likely to rise atypically until the next harvest in April. The Kwacha, the Malawian currency, is expected to further depreciate which could have the joint effect of increasing local transportation costs while simultaneously making exports more competitive within the region. Together, these could put additional pressure on market supplies, resulting in even higher prices.

**28 February:** OCHA reported that the 2013/14 rain season affected 54,280 people, or 10,856 households, in 19 districts across the country.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Over 1.85 million people will need food assistance between November 2013-March 2014, which represents an increase of 27% from the figure released in July 2013 (Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee, November 2013).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Heavy Rainfall and Floods**

As of 28 February, OCHA reported that the 2013/14 rain season affected 54,280 people, or 10,856 households, in 19 districts across the country.

**Food Security**

**Insecurity**

As of 27 February, FEWSNET reports that due to ongoing humanitarian interventions and normal levels of ganyu – short-term rural labour relationships – opportunities, acute food insecurity among poor households in targeted areas has been revised downward from Stressed food insecurity (Phase 2) to Minimal (IPC Phase 1). FEWSNET projects that between the months of April and June 2014, the majority of poor rural households across the country will likely access adequate food through a combination of purchases from markets and some own household stocks.
On 2 March, FEWSNET reported that staple food prices increased throughout most of South Africa in January as the November-to-March lean season began to peak. In Southern Mali, maize prices have reduced across the country due to Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) supplies and humanitarian assistance. Maize prices increased most rapidly in Northern Malawi (by 50 percent in Mzuzu), where particularly low trader stock levels and very limited subsidized sales were available in January.

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

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

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

**Armyworm outbreak**

On 2 March, OCHA said that an outbreak of African armyworm affected 16 districts and a total of 10,903 hectares of land throughout February. The armyworm is known to attack more than 40 plant species including key crops such as corn, wheat and maize. The armyworm attacks mainly grasses. Crops attacked include: corn, forage grasses and small grains such as oat, wheat, barley, rye and other small grains.

**Updated: 04/03/2014**

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**SENEGAL FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**20-21 February:** Senegal’s National Union of Doctors (Syndicat Autonome des Medecins du Senegal SAMES) staged a partial strike, only providing minimum services, as ongoing disputes with the government over working conditions and wages continued.

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

**18 February:** FEWSNET reported that national level crop production was about 17 percent lower than average this year. Poor households in areas of the north and southeast will be most affected and are likely to be Stressed (Phase 2) from April onward.

**17 February:** FEWSNET reported that forecasts show that Senegal will be in need of external food security assistance until at least August 2014.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- As of 30 January, 2.2 million people were declared as being at risk from food insecurity (OCHA).

- Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in children <5 remains a key concern. The estimated SAM burden for 2014 of 78,888 children (UNICEF) was already topped by the recent figures of 79,000 SAM children (OCHA, 30 January).

**Politics and Security**

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

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

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

**Food Security**

**Regional Outlook**

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

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

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

**National Outlook**

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

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

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

OCHA reports the cereal production has decreased by 17%, consequently resulting in high food prices. The Food Security and Nutrition Survey (ENSAN) reported in June 2013 that rural food security levels have generally deteriorated since 2010. Rural households are more at risk (25.1%) with the regions of Casamance showing very high levels of food insecurity (Ziguinchor 68%, Sedhiou 67%, and Kolda 50%), and the regions of Matam and Kedougou following with high prevalence of food insecurity at 48% and 45.6% respectively. According to the FAO in early December, erratic rains disrupted groundnut, cowpea, and cereal production. Agricultural production and output remains uneven across the country, with crops in Dakar, and the northern areas of Fatick and Kaoack reportedly the worst affected. Agriculture lands were submerged by floodwaters in Fatick and Kedougou. In Kedougou, Senegal agricultural lands were flooded by the Gambia River and in Fatick agricultural lands were reportedly flooded by flash floods. The post-flood situation could lead to an increase in food insecurity and malnutrition in the 2013/14 marketing year.

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Tsetse fly**

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

WASH

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

Updated: 25/02/2014

SWAZILAND FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

17 February: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the World Bank, said an estimated 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity in 2014 - 56,300 of whom (approximately 5% of the population) will require immediate food assistance. The 2013/2014 figure represents a 150% increase on the 2012/2013 figure of 116,000.

KEY CONCERNS

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

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

Humanitarian context and needs

Food Security

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

According to OCHA quoting the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and World Bank on 17 February, an estimated 290,000 Swazis will be at risk of food insecurity in 2014, of which 56,300 people (approximately 5% of the population) will require immediate food assistance. The overall figure represents a 150% increase on the 2012/2013 figure of 116,000 that was given by WFP’s Vulnerability Assessment in November 2013.

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

However, according to SADC as of 3 February, Swaziland experienced a near-normal start of season in October 2013. Slightly higher than average rainfall have been experienced in most areas throughout the growing season until the end of December, despite storms which caused damage to crops and infrastructure in December and low rainfall received in the first 20 days of January.

FAO indicated on 11 February that harvesting of the 2014 cereal crops, mainly maize, is expected to start in May. Overall, production prospects are favourable, with remote sensing imagery indicating satisfactory maize crop conditions.

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

Updated: 27/02/2014

TANZANIA FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

28 February: FEWSNET reported that maize and rice prices remained atypically stable due to surplus supplies from the June-to-August 2013 harvest. FEWSNET also added that the prices of maize and rice might increase marginally due to ample availability countrywide. Bean prices are likely to increase earlier than usual due to below-average January-to-February harvests in the northern bimodal areas.

KEY CONCERNS

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

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

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

Food Security

On 17 February, OCHA reported that a total of 1,615,445 people are currently food
insecure across Tanzania.

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

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

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

In addition, in Kagera region, production of food has been significantly reduced following the infestation of bacterial disease in banana and cassava plants. As a result, market dependence has increased, resulting in high demand of food from outside the livelihood zone. Currently, this region is facing Stressed (IPC phase 2) food security conditions that are expected to end in February, when alternative food crops (yams and potatoes from the Vuli season) will become available at household and market levels.

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

Displacement

Refugees

According to UNHCR as of mid-2013, Tanzania hosts about 102,000 refugees mainly from DRC and Burundi. The country has a decades-long history as a major country of asylum, having hosted millions of refugees from conflicts across Africa’s Great Lakes region.

However, Tanzania accelerated expulsions of refugees from Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, following a 29 July 2013 Presidential decree stipulating that all migrants without “valid residential documents” had to leave the country by 11 August 2013, or be forcibly removed by security forces. Many of those expelled had lived in Tanzania for several decades.

According to the IOM in February 2014, an estimated 63,300 people (43,100 from Burundi, 15,500 from Rwanda and 4,700 from Uganda) have been forcibly repatriated from Tanzania. The returnee population is largely deprived of access to basic services. For the Ugandan returnees in Sango Bay, IOM warned of a looming shortage of food rations. The Government of Rwanda meanwhile reported that the provision of reintegration assistance, especially shelter, is the most pressing need. For Burundians, there is concern over family reunifications, as the majority of the returnees wish to return to their families in Tanzania.

Updated: 04/03/2014.

ZIMBABWE FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

No new developments this week. Last update: 18/02/2014.

KEY CONCERNS

- An estimated 2.2 million people – 25% of the rural population – is, and will continue to be, food insecure until April according to the National Vulnerability Assessment Committee. A further 1.67 million were considered food insecure during the same period for 2013 reflecting a significant worsening of the food security crisis in the country.

- In Masvingo province, the Zimbabwean authorities declared a State of Disaster on 9 February, and appealed to the international community to help evacuate and assist an estimated 60,000 people at risk in the dam basin and downstream. While the provision of aid is being stepped up, significant humanitarian needs remain at the transit points and relocation sites, especially in the sectors of water, sanitation, health, shelter, education and food.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Disasters

Heavy rains, which started in late January, led to flooding in several parts of the country, resulting in at least three deaths. The flooding also triggered population displacement and destroyed homes and property. The most affected areas are Chivi and Masvingo district – in the southeastern Masvingo province, and Tsholotsho district – in the northwestern Matabeleland North province.

According to local authorities, the normally drought-prone Masvingo province reportedly received nearly double the annual average of rainfall, causing water levels to rise rapidly at the partially constructed Tokwe-Makorsi dam, raising fears that the dam would not withstand the volume of water. However, National Authorities say there is currently little risk of the Tokwe Mukorsi dam bursting.

In Masvingo province, the Zimbabwean authorities declared a State of Disaster on 9 February, and appealed to the international community to help evacuate and assist an estimated 60,000 people at risk in the dam basin and downstream. While the provision of
Food Security

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

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

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

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

Overall, the aggregate cereal harvest in 2013 was estimated at about 1 million tonnes, close to 150,000 tonnes below the 2012 output and about 27% below the five-year average.

Maize production was particularly low in 2013, estimated at about 799,000 tonnes, 17% lower than the below-average output in 2012.

Poor rainfall during the main cropping season (November-June) in southern and western provinces, as well as an overall contraction in planting, contributed to this year’s production decline, FAO reported. 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.

The average price of maize grain in rural areas has been gradually increasing since June. This is significantly earlier than the normal start of seasonal price increases, which is usually in October. This development reflects the current maize deficit across the country. The price differences between grain deficit and grain surplus areas are large, and continue to widen. Moreover, prices this year have been much higher than prices from the same time last year as well as the average. September prices were 23% higher than the price recorded same time last year, and 28% higher than the 3-year average.

Food Insecurity

On 11 February, FAO announced that the upcoming cereal harvest was expected to be below-average, due to dry conditions in late 2013. Low water levels in the dams in the south of the country was also a contributing factor to food insecurity (FAO, 2014).

Botswana’s upcoming cereal harvest was predicted to be below-average, due to dry conditions in late 2013. Low water levels in the dams in the south of the country were low according to Government sources. This development was cited as an aggravating factor of food insecurity, and will lead to water rationing in some regions of the country.

As of late November, FAO reported an estimated 372,000 people remain at risk of food insecurity in 2013-2014. Government estimates have also indicated that 372,479 people or 49 percent of the rural population (18 percent of the total population) are classified as food insecure. Additionally 28 percent of Botswana’s population suffers from chronic food insecurity.

Botswana’s food insecurity is linked to an ongoing drought which is affecting all areas of the country and adversely impacting on crop growth in the main agricultural areas of the east and south. The government officially declared the 2013/14 agricultural season a drought year following an assessment which confirmed that rainfall was poorly distributed and much below normal in most parts of the country. The areas most affected by the drought are Ngamiland, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Southern and Central districts.

The 2012-13 cropping season was largely characterised by a prolonged period of below average rains, punctuated by intense rainfall in January which caused localised flooding and minor damage to the agriculture sector. The aggregate cereal production is estimated at 45,000 tons, 17% below the five-year average.

Although domestic production covers only 10 percent of Botswana’s total consumption requirements, the FAO says poor production in the subsistence sector and deterioration in livestock conditions have aggravated the food security situation.
BURUNDI  FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY, LANDSLIDES, DISPLACEMENT, POLITICAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

9-10 February: Severe floods and landslides, following torrential rains, largely affected the capital Bujumbura, killing 77 people and injuring over 180, the Red Cross said.

5 February: Three ministers from the opposition political party resigned from government, triggering concern about a political crisis which could potentially spark ethnic tensions across the country.

KEY CONCERNS

- Recent torrential rains have left over 12,000 people homeless in the region of Bujumbura (Red Cross, February 2014). There remains an urgent need for assistance with shelter and basic humanitarian supplies.

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

Politics and Security

Despite years of stability, the political landscape remains tense in Burundi. On 5 February, three ministers belonging to Uprona, a mostly Tutsi political party allied to Burundi’s mostly Hutu ruling party National Council for the Defense of Democracy–Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), resigned from government. This move followed the forcible removal of two Uprona leading figures from key government positions by CNDD-FDD.

In December, the ruling party made controversial announcements regarding the revision of the Constitution and of the running of the current President, Pierre Nkurunziza, for a third term in office in the upcoming 2015 election. The move reportedly triggered a political crisis, due to a perceived threat to the inter-ethnic power-sharing balance. As per the Arusha peace agreement of 2000, seats in government are distributed between representatives of Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups.

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

As of January, the UN Security Council voted to extend the mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB) until 31 December 2014 and to outline a plan for a handover of the management of UN programmes to the UN Country Team after this date. This constitutes a noteworthy transition in the international community’s support to Burundi in the aftermath of the civil war that ended in 2006, suggesting an increased emphasis on a non-emergency aid architecture.

In February, upon request by the Burundi government, the UN Secretary General was tasked by the UN Security Council to establish an electoral observer mission ahead of the election, that is due to operate before, during, and after the election.

A civil war that led to inter-ethnic killings between Hutus and Tutsis marred Burundi between 1993 and 2006. Due to land scarcity and high population density, tensions over land ownership are pervading. This is partly due to a high number of former IDPs and refugees returning to their place of origin after the end of the war and claiming ownership over land where other families, often of a different ethnic background, had since settled. Discontent is further fuelled by the reported economic slowdown currently affecting the country.

Disasters

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

Displacement

Burundian returnees

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

As of 30 September, UNHCR reported that nearly 26,925 people remained in transit centres in Mabanda (Makamba), Kinazi (Muyinga) and in Bukemba (Rutana). IOM reports that conditions for many Burundians currently stranded in border transit centres are deteriorating due to heavy rains. Many migrants, including vulnerable women, children and sick people have little or no shelter. Children are at particularly high risk of contracting diseases associated with the wet season, including respiratory infections and diarrhoea. Humanitarian workers reported that there is an acute need for emergency life-saving services including primary health care, ante-natal and post-natal care and vaccination for children.
IDPs

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

Burundian refugees

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

Refugees in Burundi

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

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

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

Food Security

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

In February, the FAO announced that harvests of the ‘A’ season crop, that runs from September to February, were slightly below average due to plant diseases and heavy rains. This situation mostly affects the Plateaux Humides region in central Burundi.

According to FAO estimations, poor households in the Plateaux Humides may face Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels as a result of this poor “A Season” crop harvest. Most households will experience IPC phase 1 (Minimal level) of acute malnutrition until June 2014, when the main “B season” is due.

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

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

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

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

According to FEWSNET as of late October, the new returnee population was expected to
require continued humanitarian assistance to meet essential food and non-food needs.

Health

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

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

Updated: 26/02/2014

IVORY COAST FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

27 February: President Ouattara confirmed he would return to Abidjan on 2 March. He had been hospitalized in Paris since early February. His absence fuelled rumours of a serious health condition, sparking concerns about a potential succession battle in an already politically tense environment ahead of the 2015 presidential election.

26 February: The UN said that government efforts to deliver justice, promote reconciliation and disarm fighters, following the violently disputed polls of 2010, are still failing to protect the country from the threat of renewed instability.

23 February: The government reported that at least four Ivorian soldiers were killed when suspected gunmen from Liberia raided a border town in the west of the country. A number of gunmen were also killed.

21 February: A UN Independent Expert called for key reforms in order to ensure the upcoming 2015 presidential elections are democratic and credible. Suggestions include reforming the Independent Electoral Commission, updating the electoral list, the unbiased reintegration of ex-combatants and organisation of trials related to the post-election crisis, as well as reparation for victims of the crisis.

19 February: The Assistant Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations visited Ivory Coast stating the UN would continue to ensure a strong presence in the country.

KEY CONCERNS

- 6.4 million people are at risk from food insecurity. In the western Montagnes district, at least 76,500 people are suffering from severe food insecurity. Chronic child malnutrition is also a concern (OCHA, 31 December).

- 3.13 million people in Ivory Coast do not have access to potable water and sanitation (OCHA, 31 December).

- Ongoing concern about region of Zanzan, on the eastern border with Burkina

- Agricultural production still impacted by over a decade of civil unrest.

Politics and Security

Political Context

On 27 February, in a speech at the Embassy of Ivory Coast in Paris, President Ouattara confirmed he would return to Abidjan on 2 March. He had been hospitalized in Paris since early February. His absence fuelled rumours of a serious health condition, sparking concerns about a potential succession battle in an already politically tense environment ahead of the 2015 presidential election.

On 26 February, the UN said that government efforts to deliver justice, promote reconciliation and disarm fighters, following the violently disputed polls of 2010, are still failing to protect the country from the threat of renewed instability.

A UN Independent Expert called for key reforms in order to ensure the upcoming 2015 presidential elections are democratic and credible. Suggestions include reforming the Independent Electoral Commission, updating the electoral list, the unbiased reintegration of ex-combatants and organisation of trials related to the post-election crisis, as well as reparation for victims of the crisis.

On 19 February, the Assistant Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations visited Ivory Coast stating the UN would continue to ensure a strong presence in the country.

As the 2015 elections approach, the opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)'s attempts to unite the opposition parties into one common front are facing delays and obstacles. Whilst the united platform was supposed to be created by 13 February, five of the 11 invited parties have so far declined to sign the founding document proposed by the FPI. These opposing factions have accused the FPI of consistently refusing to join other common opposition efforts as developed by the Permanent Framework for Dialogue (CPD) over the past two years. Previously, the largest opposition and oldest political party, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), held a political rally on 23 January to discuss with activists and party members how to regain power in the 2015 elections.

Within the framework of direct dialogue, initiated over a year ago between the Ivorian government and the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) the two sides met for the first time in 5 months in January 2014. Ahead of the meeting, the FPI, a party created by former President Laurent Gbagbo, asked to convene the General Assembly in order to tackle the issues relating to the preparation and organisation of the presidential elections. While both government representative Kouadio-Ahoussou and FPI President N'Guessan said the discussions were fruitful, Abidjan reportedly rejected the FPI's request, arguing that FPI should join the dialogue in the existing dialogue framework, alongside the eleven other opposition parties.

Tensions between the current administration and the FPI date back to the 2010-2011...
Ivorian crisis, and remained strained due to the FPI’s position regarding current President Ouattara’s ineligibility for the 2015 campaign, due to doubts surrounding Ouattara’s nationality. In November 2013, preparations for 2015 presidential elections began despite disagreement on election mechanics. Following negotiations between government and 11 political groups, under the Framework for Permanent Dialogue in September and October, on 9 December, the first political dialogue in a decade was kicked off by the Ivorian Popular Front and Rally of Republicans.

National Reconciliation Process

On 28 February, the president of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Konan Banny, announced the opening of ‘listening centers’ to facilitate dialogue between victims and executioners.

On 25 February, a high-level delegation, headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN, Ms. Mineaudou, visited Mount Peko and Bagohou village. In meetings with local authorities, the delegation discussed issues related to reintegration, disarmament and provisions needed for resettlement of communities in Mount Peko. The delegation also visited Guiilo, west of Abidjan, discussing the difficulties and challenges the region faces, which are – among else – access to drinking water and electricity, (youth) unemployment, construction of health facilities and schools, and disarmament of armed groups. Also of ongoing concern are child maltreatment and gender-based violence.

On 18 February, a Legal Clinic in Korhogo, north of Abidjan, was opened in the presence of a delegation of the Opération des Nations Unies en Côte d’Ivoire (ONUCI). The Clinic will enable civilians to access and legal guidance and pursue their cases for justice.

On 6 February, the UN Operation in Ivory Coast (UNOCI) – the peacekeeping mission mandated to protect civilians and support the government in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants, held an inter-community dialogue meeting to address issues of social cohesion, national reconciliation, consequences and challenges of gender-based violence, and other issues related to the DDR process.

On 4 February, by presidential decree, the mandate of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) was extended for another 12 months. The Commission was created in 2011 and given a two-year mandate. On 13 January, OCHA reported that the Commission, acting within this mandate, was weak in addressing divisions stemming from an armed rebellion in 2002 which divided the nation and left 3,000 people dead. Despite the CDVR issuing a report outlining human rights violations and causes of a decade-long socio-political crisis, investigations and public hearings are still yet to be carried out.

On 2 February, the Ivorian government released 70 senior army officers and politicians who had been detained whilst awaiting trial for crimes including murder, kidnapping, and corruption. The release of the 70 detainees, all of whom are reportedly close to the deposed President Gbagbo, was considered a goodwill gesture as part of the ongoing political détente and reconciliation process. A dozen other detainees were freed provisionally between November 2011 and August 2013. However, critics of President Ouattara’s government have expressed concern that such political compromises undermine the authority and independence of the judiciary.

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

In the beginning of 2011, the Ouattara government estimated that there were more than 100,000 former combatants eligible for DDR. However, this figure is based on what was widely seen as a flawed and inflated census. On 10 February, it was reported that more than 27,000 ex-combatants had been demobilized. On 13 January, the UN Human Rights Council published its findings on the human rights situation in Ivory Coast for the period May 4 to December 30, 2013. Whilst there has been some improvement, the security situation remains fragile due to a persistent culture of violence and a large consistency of ex-fighters who have not yet benefited from DDR programmes.

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

Security Context

On 23 February, the government reported that at least four Ivorian soldiers were killed when suspected gunmen from Liberia raided a border town in the west of the country. Several gunmen were also killed in the incident. Several assaults were carried out before, with the UN and the government often blaming allies of former President Gbagbo.

Humanitarian context and needs

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

An area of particular concern is Zanzan, on the eastern border with Burkina Faso and Ghana, where nearly 60% of the population live below the poverty line, and three quarters of the population lack access to safe drinking water. The presence of humanitarian organisations remains low in comparison with populations’ needs. UNICEF reports that the most pressing needs include child protection and gender-based violence (FGM), access to water and health facilities, malnutrition, education, and birth certificate issuance/provision.

Access

On 6 February, ECHO reported that a humanitarian convoy transporting relief goods was attacked by armed men in Duekoue, in the west of Ivory Coast. Personnel on-board was
reportedly harmed. The attacks come after a period of relative calm since the progressive ending of post-electoral violence in the country, raising concerns on increasing insecurity for the region. In addition, large quantities of illicit arms are still circulating in the country, threatening peace and stability and jeopardizing provision of humanitarian aid.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

At the beginning of 2013, UNHCR reported that 36,500 IDPs had returned home. Humanitarian needs are pressing for another 45,000 IDPs, and their host communities, in this western district.

Ivory Coast has been selected as a pilot country for the UNSG’s Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions, which will involve profiling of the displaced population, and host and vulnerable communities.

**Refugees in Ivory Coast**

According to OCHA, 19,472 refugees have been repatriated in 2013.

For 2014, the UNHCR is prioritizing finding solutions for Liberians and Rwandans whose refugee status has ceased by facilitating local integration or undertaking resettlement assessments; others will continue to receive international protection.

**Returnees and Ivorian Refugees in Neighbouring Countries**

In late December, the UNHCR said that an estimated 70,730 Ivorian refugees still reside in neighbouring countries, namely Liberia (52,785), Ghana (8,461) and Guinea (6,170). This figure represents a significant decrease from 2011 (250,000) and 2012 (85,000). Most returnees – around 73 per cent – returned to the region of Cavally and Tonkpi.

**Liberia**

More than 52,000 Ivorian refugees fled to Liberia following the violent 2011 electoral dispute which ended in the arrest of former President Laurent Gbagbo.

On 18 February, the head of the UN refugee Agency in Liberia expressed concern over the alleged ‘forced extradition’ of 14 Ivorian refugees. These refugees were part of a group of 23 accused by Ivory Coast of being mercenaries.

On 10 February, the UN said that Ivorian refugees in Liberia stated that disarmament of former fighters, stronger efforts at national reconciliation and an increase in the repatriation grant would encourage them to return. An estimated 52,785 Ivorian refugees reside in Liberia, having sought refuge there because of post-election violence in November and December of 2010. However, fearing repetition of these events, many state they are hesitant to return until after the presidential and parliamentary elections have taken place in 2015.

On 19 October, President Ouattara called upon the around 50,000 Ivorian refugees residing in Liberia to return, having signed a peace and security agreement with President Sirleaf-Johnson of Liberia that same day. Voluntary repatriation programs by UNHCR and the Liberian Refugee Commission in Liberia assisted 16,232 refugees to return, mostly from camps and communities in Grand Gedeh, Nimba, and Marlyland counties, doubling the total repatriation figures for 2011 and 2012. Towards the end of 2013, the trend of return slowed down with a monthly average of 1,300 returnees. Stated reasons for a hesitation to return among Ivorian refugees in Liberia, as well as those in Ghana and Togo, are a fear of reprisal and lack of safety guarantees, or a lack of access to land.

**Disasters**

As of 31 December, OCHA reported that 26 per cent of the capital Abidjan remains at risk from floods and landslides which could possibly affect 80,000 people.

**Food Security**

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

As of 31 December, OCHA reported that 6.4 million people are facing food insecurity. In the western Montagnes district, 76,500 people suffer from severe food insecurity. The October 2013 assessment by FAO, WFP, and the Ministry of Agriculture, indicated that 500,000 in the west and the north are food insecure. The most affected areas are the south-western regions of Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassanda (Toulepleu, Boleoquin and Tai) where 387,000 people face food insecurity, including 123,000 who need immediate assistance in areas at risk of the District of Montagnes (Toulepleu, Boleoquin and Tai). In the northern region of Savanes, an estimated 193,000 face food insecurity, including 99,000 in need of immediate assistance in the heavily populated area around Korhogo.

**Health and Nutrition**

Despite government measures to grant access to public health clinics providing primary health care, access to basic rights remains problematic for people of concern (Liberian refugees affected by cessation clauses and 350,000 stateless people) due to a lack of proper documentation.

The 2012 Demographic and Health Survey reports that their essential drugs are often out of stock in health facilities at all levels.

**Meningitis**

As of 31 December, OCHA expressed concern about the risk of a meningitis epidemic throughout the north of Ivory Coast, due to the harmattan – a dry and dusty trade wind – period in West Africa from late November to mid-March.

**Diarrhoea**
Diarrhoea is a major concern, only 17% of patients received adequate treatment in the form of oral rehydration. In 2011, the WHO reported that a year-round exposure and risk to diarrhoeal diseases accounted for a high proportion of childhood and adult illness and death. Compounded by a high rate of malnutrition and limited health care (including basic rehydration facilities), the burden of morbidity and mortality associated with diarrhoeal diseases is high. 15% of all deaths of children <5 in 2000-3, 5% of deaths of neonates in 2000, and 16% of deaths of people of all ages in 2002 were due to diarrhoeal diseases.

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

**Malnutrition**

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

**WASH**

As of 31 December, OCHA reported that 3.13 million people do not have access to potable water and sanitation. Most of them, namely 42 per cent, reside in the north of Ivory Coast. Another 25 per cent in Abidjan and the south-east, and 30 per cent in the west. The principal causes of death among children <5 are related to the quality of water, sanitation and bad hygiene practices.

**Protection**

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

**FOOD INSECURITY, INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

21-22 February: A ‘Marsabit Peace Initiative’ meeting took place in Nairobi, bringing together community representatives and leaders from conflict-ridden communities, namely the Borana, Gabra, Burji, Sakura Garre and “Corner communities”. These communities reside in Moyale and surroundings in Marsabit county, which has been hit by recurrent waves of violence over the past year. The event aimed to bring peace to the troubled county and marked the unveiling of the Boma Peace Agreement.

24 February: The UNHCR reported that an estimated 18,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed over to Kenya since violence erupted in the neighbouring country in mid-December. The majority are currently residing in the northwestern camp of Kakuma.

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

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

- Kenya is currently hosting more than 587,000 refugees, including at least 475,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the northeastern Dadaab refugee camp on the outskirts of Nairobi (UNHCR, August 2013). An estimated 13,350 South Sudanese refugees have crossed into the country in recent weeks. (UNHCR, February).

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

**Politics and Security**

**National Context**

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

**Al Shabaab Insurgency**

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

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

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

On 7 February, three people were stabbed in riots which broke out after Friday prayers in the coastal city of Mombasa - Kenya’s second largest. Around 300 men, some of them armed, blocked the roads in protest at the arrest of some 130 Muslim men whom the police accused of attending a radicalisation session in a mosque. A few days before, local sources reported that clashes ignited between the authorities and Muslim youths in Mombasa, following a police raid on a mosque in which three people died and over 100 were arrested. The operation was initially launched after the police received information about an alleged jihad convention taking place in the mosque. According to local security forces, mosques have been at the heart of Al Shabaab’s attempts to radicalise Kenyan Muslims, and Kenyan authorities have reportedly been dismantling recruitment networks among the Muslim minority communities.

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

**Inter-Communal Violence**

On 21-22 February, a ‘Marsabit Peace Initiative’ meeting took place in Nairobi, Kenya, bringing together community representatives and leaders from the communities which have experienced conflict over the last years, namely the Borana, Gabra, Burji, Sakura Garre and “Corner communities”. These communities reside in Moyale and surroundings in the northern Marsabit county, which has been hit by recurrent waves of violence over the past year. The event, organised at the initiative of the Central Government, aimed to negotiate peace in the county. According to OCHA, inter-communal violence has increased over the course of 2013, and escalated significantly toward the end of the year, notably in December in Marsabit county, where tribal clashes erupted along the border with Ethiopia and caused significant population displacement. In 2013, 491 people were killed and another 1,235 injured in inter-communal violence fuelled by competition over political representation and resources. This number represents only a marginal decrease compared to 2012, when 503 were killed and 1,315 injured in similar events. However, records showed that population displacements due to inter-communal conflicts were significantly lower year-on-year, from 116,000 in 2012 to 47,000 in 2013.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In unrelated violence in western Kenya, tension is high along the West Pokot and Turkana county borders after two people were killed early October by raiders suspected to be Turkanas. At the 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 for the killing of a Turkana boy by Samburu raiders. The western province saw a surge in indiscriminate attacks by various armed groups and gangs in early May, affecting the cities of Bungoma and Busia. However, the two communities recently held talks where they agreed to resolve peacefully feuds between them.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Displacement**

**Internal Displacement**

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

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

**Refugees**

According to the UNHCR on 24 February, an estimated 18,000 South Sudanese refugees have crossed over to Kenya since violence erupted in the neighbouring country in mid-December, and are currently residing in the northwestern camp of Kakuma. The camp, which has a capacity of 100,000, is currently hosting an estimated 150,000 people. The daily rate of arrival is as high as 500 and latest reports indicated that the most pressing needs include protection for separated children, registration and health services.

On 31 December, the UNHCR reported that Kenya is currently hosting more than 587,000 refugees, including at least 477,000 Somalis who reside mostly in the north eastern Dadaab/Alinjugur refugee camp complex (391,000), the northwest camp of Kakuma (54,000) and the capital Nairobi (32,400). On 10 November, a tripartite agreement was signed by UNHCR and the governments of Kenya and Somalia to establish the legal framework for the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees. The Kenyan Government estimated the number of Somali refugees in Kenya at 600,000 as of late June 2013 and has been pushing to expedite the return of these refugees since the attack on the Westgate Mall in September, citing national security concerns and calling for the closure of the Dadaab camp complex.

**Food Security**

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

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

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

*Updated: 27/02/2014*

**NAMIBIA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**21 February:** OCHA reported 32 cases of cholera, including 2 deaths (Case Fatality Rate of 6.3%) in the Katutura area, 8 kilometres north of the capital Windhoek, where 200,000 people are now highly at risk of coming into contact with the vibrio cholera bacteria. National Health authorities are coordinating a response in conjunction with the UN and the Namibian Red Cross to prepare for a serious outbreak.

**KEY CONCERNS**

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

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

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

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

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

**Health and nutrition**

**Cholera**

On 21 February, OCHA reported 32 cases of cholera, including 2 deaths (Case Fatality Rate of 6.3%) in the Katutura area, 8 kilometres north of the capital Windhoek. Katutura is a densely populated area of 200,000 individuals with low socio-economic indicators and a popular destination for urban migrants. Poor WASH conditions and open defecation in the area are of concern, as this could exacerbate the outbreak. This is the first recorded outbreak of cholera in Windhoek. National Health authorities are coordinating a response in conjunction with the UN and the Namibian Red Cross to prepare for a serious outbreak.

Since late 2013, cholera outbreaks have largely been confined to the northern regions, particularly Opuwo in Kunene and sporadic suspected cases in Omusati, Oshana and Ohangwena.

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

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

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

Malnutrition

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

WASH

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

Updated: 27/02/2014

NIGERIA INTERNAL UNREST, FOOD INSECURITY, EPIDEMIC

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

2 March: FEWSNET reported that trade flows between Nigeria and neighbouring Cameroon and Chad continue to be disrupted due to ongoing unrest and instability stemming from the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency. On 25 February, Nigeria closed its northern border with Cameroon – from northern Borno State, by Lake Chad, to the southern end of Adamawa state.

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

28 February: Ahead of the 2015 elections, the UN Independent Expert on minority issues wrapped up her first visit to Nigeria saying ‘good and inclusive governance’ was essential to ensuring minority rights, equality and peaceful coexistence in the country. Nigeria’s minority rights and communal tensions remain key areas of concern for the 

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

25 February - 1 March: At least 117 people, many of them children, were killed in a spate of BH attacks in various areas in the northern of the country. At least 37 people were killed in the northern Adamawa state. On 25 February, 45 teenagers were brutally killed as they sleep in their college in Buni Yadi, Yobe state.

KEY CONCERNS

- 9.5 million people in Nigeria are affected by or at risk from natural disasters and conflict. The ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast is key concern. Due to the significant increase in violent attacks, the International Criminal Court (ICC) qualified the conflict in Nigeria as a civil war in November 2013. Over 300 people, mainly civilians, were killed in February 2014 alone.

- 470,565 people are internally displaced, of which 290,002 from the SoE states (OCHA/NEMA, February 2014).

- Nigeria’s global acute malnutrition (GAM) stands at 1.74 million. 540,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) (OCHA, January 2014).

- 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity (OCHA, January 2014).

- Nearly half the Nigerian population does not have access to safe water (UNICEF).

- The emergence of 1,287 cholera cases reported this year in Nigeria - compared to zero last year - is a worrying trend for cholera experts given the lack of WASH infrastructure in the country and growing humanitarian concerns tied to the conflict in the northeast (OCHA, February 2014).

Politics and Security

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

Alongside fears of a possible military defeat in the fight against the Islamist-led insurgency of Boko Haram, political instability plagues the country, mainly due to pressure from opposition factions on President Goodluck Jonathan who are questioning his intention to run again in the February 2015 elections.

2015 Elections: Tensions within the Ruling People’s Democratic Party
On 28 February, at the end of her first official visit to the country, Rita Izsák, the UN Independent Expert on minority issues, said she recognised the challenges of the complex ethnic, religious and linguistic make-up of Nigeria, but stated that ‘good and inclusive governance was essential to ensuring minority rights, equality and peaceful coexistence for all of Nigeria’s citizens’.

In a press conference on 24 February, President Jonathan defended the army’s role against Boko Haram, stating the fight against these insurgents is improving. Following an appeal by the Borno state governor for the deployment of more troops, the President stated he could also pull the military out for the region to become completely unsafe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On 5 February, an agreement on the 2014 budget was still held being delayed due to a personal clash between Finance Minister Okonjo-Iweala and the Parliament. The National Assembly Budget and Research Office called for a public hearing with the Finance Minister to question her performance prior to a budget vote. The government stated it could continue using last year’s budget for another six months, before it would be forced into shutdown due to the unresolved crisis. In late January, Nigeria’s main opposition party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), called upon its parliamentarians to block all legislation including the 2014 budget until rule of law was restored in Nigeria.

Security Context

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

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

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

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

Boko Haram Insurgency

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

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

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

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

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

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

On 23 February, US Secretary of State, John Kerry, condemned the Boko Haram attacks and underscored a commitment to help Nigerian authorities to crack down on the militants the United States deems a terrorist organisation.

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

**Boko Haram Attacks**

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

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

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

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

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

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon strongly condemned the brutal slaying of the students in Buni Yadi, voicing the hope that the perpetrators will be brought to justice swiftly.

On February 19, suspected Boko Haram Islamists attacked Bama town, southeast of Maiduguri – the capital of Borno State, sparking a battle with soldiers and killing a large number of insurgents. A series of alleged suicide blasts were also reported.

On 16 February, Boko Haram Islamists killed more than 100 people in an attack of, the mostly Christian, Izghe village in Borno state, northeastern Nigeria. There were no security forces present at the time of the attack. Last week, on 13 February, Boko Haram gunmen killed nine Nigerian soldiers in Madagali area of Adamawa state. The soldiers were reportedly on a mission to avert the planned attack on Izghe village. On 18 February, the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights strongly condemned the attack on several villages in seven villages in Adamawa state, killing 65 persons; and the attack on Izghe village, Borno state, killing 90 persons. OHCHR urged the Nigerian Government to do more to provide security and protection to civilians, especially in areas prone to attacks and where a state of emergency has been proclaimed. On 19 February, the extremists returned to Izghe village killing three and torching remaining homes.

On 15 February, gunmen also attacked a fishing village on Lake Chad, killing an unspecified number of residents.

On 12 February, about 39 people are believed to have been killed in an attack by Boko Haram militants in Konduga in the north-east Borno state. In addition, a mosque and more than 1,000 homes were razed to the ground.

On 1 February Shaikh Adam Albani, a Muslim leader critical of the BH and supportive of a Nigerian military campaign against them, was shot dead in Zaria, Kaduna State. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the killing. On 20 February, the leader of BH, known as Shekau, appeared in a video claiming responsibility for the death of Albani saying that BH was further intending to bomb Niger Delta oil refineries and target several national leaders.

Since the beginning of the year, more than 300 people have been killed in BH attacks in Adamawa, Yobe and Borno states. In many of the onslaughts, surrounding houses and buildings were razed to the ground.
**Niger Delta**

On 25 January, an attack on a security patrol boat on the Nembe-Bassanbiri waterways in Southern Bayelsa state was carried out by the rebels of the Movement for Emancipation of the Niger Delta. It claimed responsibility for this attack, stating it served as a reminder of the rebel group's presence in the oil rich delta.

**Inter-communal violence**

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

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

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

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

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

**Access**

On 25 February, OCHA reported that most of the international actors have withdrawn from the unstable northeastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, all of which have been declared as in a State of Emergency, due to security reasons.

**Displacement**

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

Maintaining the civilian character at places of asylum or displacement remains a concern. Moreover, there is a lack of Government’s capacity to ensure the protection of basic human rights of refugees; and recurrent crises have eroded the ability of households to withstand repeated and frequent disturbances.

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

**Refugees**

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

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

**IDPs**

As of February 2014, OCHA – in accordance with new Government figures – reports that 470,565 IDPs still reside in Nigeria, of which 290,002 (of which 51 percent are children) from the State of Emergency (SoE) states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa.

**Food Security**

The food security situation in Nigeria, especially in the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, is exacerbated by the ongoing food crisis across West Africa. Due to a combination of conflict and production deficits in localized agropastoral areas of the Sahel, some 20 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity throughout the region, of which 2.5 million need urgent lifesaving food assistance. An estimated 5 million children under five years of age will suffer from malnutrition in 2014, and some 1.5 million of them will face acute malnutrition. Violence and insecurity has forced 1.2 million people to flee their homes creating protracted internal displacement and a refugee crisis.

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that 4.2 million people are at risk of food insecurity in Nigeria.

On 2 March, FEWSNET reports that trade flows between Nigeria and Benin are proceeding normally, while trade flows toward Cameroon and Chad are disrupted by Boko Haram-related conflict. In Nigeria, remaining stocks from the 2012/13 marketing year were below-average because of the effects of last year’s flooding and conflict-related market disruptions; actors along the marketing chain (local and regional) continued to rebuild their stocks in January. Staple food demand outpaced market supply, resulting in increasing prices in many areas. Prices remained above their respective January 2013 and five-year average levels.

On 20 February, in its January-June 2014 food security outlook, FEWSNET states that the country’s main harvest has concluded, increasing food availability and access. In general, the harvest was favourable due to a lack of major shocks (e.g. flooding, pest infestation, and drought) and increased access to inputs. Consequently, most of the population will be in Minimal food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and June.

During the January to March 2014 period an increase in dry season activities across the country will increase income earning opportunities, purchasing power, and food access. Coupled with the harvest of late maturing crops of millet, sorghum, cowpea and groundnut, even in western areas pervasively affected by dry spells, most households in the country will have a typical access to food and income and will experience Minimal acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 1) between January and March 2014. Households in the northeast, however, will experience food insecurity related to civil conflict, as is discussed further below. Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity levels will persist for most households across the country between April and June. Even though they resort more to market purchase to meet their consumption needs, most households will experience typical revenues through income-generating activities. For households in central and southwest areas of the country affected by atypical dryness during the rainy season and those households in the northeast affected by conflict, negative acute food security outcomes are expected.

State of Emergency (SoE) states: Borno, Yobe and Adamawa

Since the Boko Haram conflict in the northeast persists, substantial populations have been displaced in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, limiting farming, market access, and income-generating activities. Crop production was also below average in these areas. Households in Borno and Yobe states are worst affected and projected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity during the January to June period. As of 17 February, FAO reports that households remaining in the area depend mostly on market purchase in an attempt to meet food needs during the height of the lean season, which will take place from March to September in the vulnerable northeastern region. However, seasonal incomes will be significantly below average due to the disruption of conflict on typical livelihoods. The current situation is similar to the food assistance outlook of August last year, yet, it represents an increase when compared to the five-year average.

Due to the ongoing conflict in the area, many poor households have not been able to engage typically in their normal livelihood activities for the past several years. Production from this past cropping season has been significantly below average, and consequently household food stocks will be depleted earlier than usual. This is further exacerbated by limited income earning opportunities in the area and high market prices, limiting food availability and access. Households will marginally be able to meet minimum food needs only with accelerated depletion of livelihood assets, meaning households in this area will face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity during January to March period. From April to June, households will intensify market food purchases on credit, and use atypical sale of livestock and productive assets to meet basic food needs. Other households will skip meals and divert non-food resources to access food. This however, will not completely offset their difficulty in meeting their food needs, with households continuing to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity through June.

Middle Belt, North Central and Southwestern regions

In the Middle Belt, north central and southwestern parts of the country, people continue to be affected by flooding and dry spells, which result in a below-average harvests. By April 2014, poor households will face rising food costs and most likely having to resort to the sale of additional livestock animals, increased casual labor, and migration. Households in Niger state, west of the capital, are most affected and are expected to be at a Stressed (IPC 2) Phase through June.

Health and Nutrition

On 5 February, the UN said that persistent attacks by BH have caused the health care system in Borno State to collapse. Dozens of clinics have been shut down and doctors have fled, leaving residents to seek cross-border medical attention. ICRC adds that tens of thousands are missing out on vital services because of conflict, and the availability of shelter, food, water, clothes and health services has worsened in the northeast region. These developments could have a detrimental impact on the reliability of epidemiological surveillance systems and the quality of care still being delivered. For instance, routine vaccinations as the polio campaigns are now limited to the Maiduguri metropolis. A break in procurement chains for anti-malarial drugs and bed nets is another concern.

Cholera

After UNICEF reported a cholera outbreak in and around Kano and Nassarawa states on 29 January, ECHO also reported that 524 cases of cholera, including ten deaths, had been confirmed in the Middle Belt and in northern Nigeria during the first three weeks of January. The northwestern Zamfara State is considered the most affected. These updated figures represent a massive increase compared to the same period in 2013. According to OCHA, as of mid-December, 2,880 cholera cases had been reported in 2013 across 16 states. Over 70 people died, and in +1 Local Government Areas almost 90 cholera high risk wards have been identified. These figures represent an eight-fold increase compared to the same period in 2012.

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

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

WASH experts underline that there is a high risk for a large cross-border cholera outbreak in the states bordering Lake Chad (viz. Chad, northern Cameroon, northeast Nigeria, and south east Niger) due to the occurrence of previous outbreaks in this area, the current caseload that exists during an inter-epidemic period, and the precarious security situation occurring in northeast Nigeria with accompanying spill over of this crisis into neighbouring Cameroon and Niger.

**Lassa fever**

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

**Polio**

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

**Malnutrition**

As of 30 January, OCHA said that Nigeria’s global acute malnutrition (GAM) stands at 1.74 million. 540,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) A further 1.2 million suffer from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).

**WASH**

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

Updated: 03/03/2014

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**ZAMBIA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new developments this week.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- 1 million people are at risk of being food insecure, mostly in the Southern part of the country (FAO, February 2014).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Food Security**

As of 15 February, FAO reported that according to 2013 vulnerability assessments, one million people (200,000 households) were at risk of being food insecure. They are mostly located in the Southern part of the country.

As of February, FEWNET reported that despite the lean season being currently under way in Zambia, food insecurity is currently minimal (IPC Phase 1). Staple food prices were reportedly high, a situation expected to peak in March. Food prices are reportedly higher than the seasonal average, which is likely to put a stress on poorer households.

Due to erratic rainfall during the 2013/2014 season, the 2014 crop production was expected to be slightly below-average, according to FEWSNET. Rain conditions are expected to be normal to below-average, leading to dry-spell which may lead to a delay in the planting season in the south and south-eastern parts of the country until March.

Main cereal crops are maize, millet and sorghum, which are harvested throughout May-June.

Updated: 27/02/2014

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**ERITREA FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

No new development this week. Last update was on: 14/02/2014.

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

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and religious freedom still a major concern in Eritrea (UN, HRW).
Ongoing serious human rights abuses prompt thousands of Eritreans to flee the country every year. In December, Ethiopia was hosting an estimated 84,200 Eritrean refugees (UNHCR).

Over 60% of the Eritrean population was reported to be undernourished between 2011 and 2013 (WFP).

**Politics and Security**

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

On 5 February, the human rights situation in Eritrea was again discussed at a meeting of the UN Human Rights Council where it was again pointed by several participants that human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention and torture, remained widespread in Eritrea.

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

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

**Displacement**

**Eritrean Refugees**

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

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

Djibouti also receives an estimated 110 Eritreans each month.

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

**Refugees in Eritrea**

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

**Food Security**

As reported by FAO on 11 February, erratic rainfall has affected the 2013 cropping season in Eritrea. Although available information remains limited, erratic rainfall is likely to have resulted in less fields being cultivated last year, as well as impacted on crop development during the crucial grain filling phase. In addition, FAO indicated that livestock, that did not have good pasture conditions, had also probably been affected.

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

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

**Health and Nutrition**

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

Reviewed: 26/02/2014
AFGHANISTAN

CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

23 February: Taliban fighters attacked an Afghan army outpost in eastern Kunar province, killing 21 soldiers and kidnapping another seven. The attack came as attempts by the US and Kabul to launch peace talks with the Taliban remain stalled.

23 February: The Taliban indicated that it had suspended talks over a possible exchange of Taliban and US prisoners due to what the insurgents called the "complexity" of the situation in Afghanistan. The statement came as Washington officials had hinted at renewed contacts with the Afghan insurgents the previous week.

Late February: WFP reported that in January 2014, the price of wheat and rice, the two main staple foods in Afghanistan, was higher than average in the main cities. This year's price rises were higher than those recorded in January 2013 and higher than the last 5-year average price of the same months.

KEY CONCERNS

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

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

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

International and Regional Political Context

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

Regional Security Context

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

International Military Presence

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

Some observers believe that Karzai prefers to leave the decision about whether to sign the BSA to his successor and that the US might be ready to wait until then before making any decision. To date, the BSA remains in limbo while contradictory signals are being sent from Kabul. On 13 February, Germany’s foreign minister indicated that he had received assurances from the Afghan President that Kabul will sign the BSA without amending it. However, Karzai continues to give no indication of the timing.

On 24 November, the assembly of local elders, the Loya Jirga, issued a much-awaited endorsement for the BSA, a security pact with the US that is to lay the groundwork for an American military presence in Afghanistan after 2014. Following this, Karzai still refused to unreservedly support the deal before the April 2014 presidential elections, unambiguously outlying new conditions to be met by Washington, including an immediate end to US military raids of Afghan homes and the need for a clear US commitment to peace talks with the Taliban. The hand-over of the remaining Afghan detainees from Guantanamo Bay

Political and Security Context
has also been reportedly put forward as a demand by Kabul. In late November, the Afghan leader had additionally requested a commitment from Washington to refrain from backing any candidate in the upcoming elections, a stark reminder of the earlier blame he placed on the US for meddling in the 2009 presidential elections.

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

In response to Karzai’s ongoing demands, US officials have repeatedly indicated that, without the prompt signature of a security pact, Washington would implement the so-called “zero option”, a complete withdrawal from Afghanistan similar to the pull-out of US troops from Iraq in 2011. As part of the BSA, according to official sources, the US planned to leave more than 10,000 troops in Afghanistan for counter-terrorism and training of Afghan forces. Additionally, the failure to sign the bilateral pact could lead to the end of the US’s financial support to the country, along with the disruption of broader western aid. To date, Washington has reportedly not made any decision on the matter, nor has it indicated a deadline regarding when it intends to abandon ongoing talks with Kabul and commit to an entire withdrawal. Official government sources suggested the US are likely to give Afghanistan a year-end deadline. Against the background of the rising insurgency in Afghanistan, which is predicted to worsen next year, the presence of American military personnel is seen as vital for the stability of post-2014 Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, in early December, following protests in Pakistan over drone strikes, Washington was reportedly forced to temporarily halt ground shipments from Afghanistan via its main Pakistan supply route. The affected route, which connects Torkham Gate at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to the port city of Karachi, is crucial to ensure the ongoing withdrawal of the US combat mission from Afghanistan while the alternative Northern Distribution Network – a grid of supply lines running through Central Asia and Russia – is far more costly and politically challenging to use.

Most of the over 84,000 international troops, including an estimated 60,000 Americans, stationed in Afghanistan as of 1 December are scheduled to withdraw by end 2014. Over 75% of the country was expected to be under national security control by end-July 2013, following the formal handover of national security from the US-led NATO coalition to Afghan forces in June. Within the US-led NATO coalition, there is widespread concern regarding the capacity of the 352,000-strong Afghan security forces to cope with the insurgency. As reported by an Afghan official in early September, police deaths have nearly doubled since the NATO forces have started withdrawing and handing over security to local troops. An estimated 1,792 Afghan policemen have died, and over 2,700 have been wounded in the last six months.

National Political Context

April Presidential Elections

As of early February, election campaigning for the April presidential elections got underway amid concerns over the country’s ability to hold the polls because of rising insecurity. With the near-absence of a party political system, the elections are thus likely to be determined by votes based on identity politics. According to international observers, there are currently no favourite candidates to succeed President Karzai, who has been Afghanistan’s only leader since the US intervention in 2001. In early December, after refusing to sign the BSA with the US until after the coming polls, President Karzai went on to suggest the April presidential elections could be delayed. The upcoming polls are seen as a key test of Afghanistan’s stability, amidst the ongoing withdrawal if international troops.

According to observers, the front runners and main candidates for the upcoming elections are: Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Pashtun and US trained anthropologist who has picked the Uzbek ex-Warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum as a running mate; Zalmay Rassoul, Pashtun educated in France and former foreign minister who is reportedly close to Karzai; Abdullah Abdullah, Tajik, former ophthalmologist turned Mujahidin in the 1980’s who has competed against Karzai in 2009, but in whose administration he held the foreign minister post up to 2006; Qayum Karzai, Pashtun and older brother of the president who promised to offer his brother a position; Abdul Rahim Wardak, Pashtun and former guerilla commander who served as defence minister for eight years; and Abdul Rassoul Sayyaf, Pashtun ex-warlord who is believed to be one of the few hardline Islamist commanders to oppose the Taliban.

On 16 February, Hezb-e-Islami, a major Afghan militant group, active since the 1980’s and led by former Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, announced its intention to formally participate in the upcoming presidential elections by calling its supporters to vote for one of the candidates, Qutbuddin Hilal who is not one of the main contenders and used to be part of the militant group. Some observers see however this development as a major cracker within the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan as it is likely to add legitimacy to the future polls. No comment from the Taliban has been yet made available while informal militants’ sources have reported rifts within the Taliban ranks in recent weeks.

In fall, the Taliban officially announced that it would boycott the 2014 presidential elections and continue fighting until all foreign troops leave the country. On 11 January, according to official sources in Kabul, it was announced that Afghan forces would provide security for the vast majority of polling stations in the upcoming presidential elections in April. The elections, when an increase in attacks is expected, should prove a key test of international community, his local supporters argue that his move is aimed at appeasing the Taliban, at a time when Kabul is trying to engage in peace talks with the insurgents. Local opponents of the Afghan leader continue to accuse him of trying to use the security pact to secure influence in the coming elections and of attempting to dissociate himself from the US before leaving power.

Release of Detainees

On 13 February, the Afghan government released 65 detainees despite repeated warnings from the US that the released were dangerous and linked to the killing of Afghan and foreign troops in Afghanistan. The prisoners are part of a much larger group of detainees transferred to Afghan authority last year as one milestone in the US and NATO transition out of Afghanistan. The 65 freed last week were part of a group of 88 whose proposed release by Afghan authorities has prompted US objections in early January. Detained at the jail at the Bagram air base north of Kabul, control of which has only recently been handed to Afghan authorities by the US, the release is likely to further strain relations between Kabul and Washington which are already tense due to a lack of an agreement over the BSA. On 14 February, the US indicated that it currently did not plan to actively target any of the 65 detainees released by the Afghan authorities, although President
Karzai official rejection of US criticism the previous day had further inflamed tensions between the two countries.

**Peace Talks with the Taliban**

Several attempts have been made by Kabul and/or the US to re-launch peace talks with the Afghan Taliban over the past 12 months. Since 2001, the Karzai government has cultivated informal contacts with current and former Taliban figures, but seems to have renewed its effort to establish a dialogue with militant representatives in recent months according to observers. To date, both Washington and Kabul remain thus interested in peace negotiations with the insurgents, yet, and though various official and informal sources have evoked renewed preliminary contacts, no substantial talks seem to have been launched so far.

**Afghan-led Initiatives**

On 19 February, a spokesman for the Taliban reported that the insurgents had nothing to do with a recent meeting in Dubai of former and current Taliban figures who appeared open to talks with the Afghan government, restating the insurgents’ opposition to negotiations. Earlier, on 16 February, Kabul officials reported that a delegation from the High Peace Council, a government body launched to promote a political end to the war, had travelled to Dubai to meet a group of former and current Taliban figures that had allegedly floated the possibility of talks. The aim was to build on an informal meeting held in the same city earlier in February. To date, no additional comments are reportedly available from Afghan authorities.

On 5 February, a spokesman for Afghan President Karzai had confirmed that the government has been holding talks with the Taliban in the hope of paving the way for peace negotiations. According to official sources, talks took place in Dubai three weeks ago between representatives of the government and the Taliban who flew from Doha. To date, it remains unclear to which extent any concrete progress has been made. Western and Afghan officials both say the talks have borne little fruit so far and no peace negotiations have been opened. The US said it welcomed any talks that would bring peace to Afghanistan.

Throughout fall 2103, Kabul made several attempts to reach out to the Taliban through Pakistan. On 29 January, a senior Pakistani official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume peace talks, stalled since the summer, between the Afghan authorities and the Taliban in April after Hamid Karzai steps down following presidential elections. According to all observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan. Besides, the comment also suggests that there is some reluctance on the Taliban’s side to engage with the Karzai administration. The Afghan authorities are trying to engage Taliban leaders in Pakistan to reach to Taliban groups in Afghanistan while the rift between Kabul and Washington is widening.

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

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

**US-led Initiatives**

On 23 February, the Taliban indicated that it had effectively suspended talks over a possible exchange of Taliban and US prisoners due to what the insurgents called the "complexity" of the situation in Afghanistan. The statement came as Washington officials had hinted at renewed contacts with the Afghan insurgents the previous week.

On 18 February, US government sources indicated that the Obama administration may be about to revive talks with the Afghan Taliban, building on a separate initiative that stalled in summer 2013. According to the sources, Washington may be ready to agree to a proposed exchange of Taliban detainees held at Guantanamo Bay in return for a US prisoner of war. The aim is that this first measure would open the door to more substantive talks, possibly in Qatar whose government has played a key role in the previous contacts. Contacts with the Qatari authorities on the issue have reportedly already been restarted. In the aftermath, a spokesman for Washington denied the US were “involved in active negotiations with the Taliban”.

Renewed contacts, which may lead to negotiations between the US and the Taliban, has been cited by President Karzai as a necessary step before Kabul agrees to sign the bilateral security deal with the US.

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

**Security Context**

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

On 23 February, in a high-profile attack, Taliban fighters have staged an assault on an Afghan army outpost in the eastern Kunar province, killing 21 soldiers and kidnapping another seven. The attack came as attempts by the US and Kabul to launch peace talks with the Taliban had apparently again stalled. On 20 February, one guard was killed after a failed attempt by a suicide bomber to target guest house used by foreigners in Kabul. The attack has not been claimed to date while similar attacks have been usually staged by Taliban-affiliated Islamists in the past.

On 12 February, men in Afghan army uniform killed two and wounded another four US soldiers in eastern Kapisa province. The assault was the first so-called “insider attack” to be reported in 2014, while at least ten such incidents in 2013 have led to the deaths of 15 members of the ISAF, forcing NATO to even briefly suspend all join activities with Afghan forces. On 10 February, a car bomb blast targeting a convoy of foreign military vehicles in eastern Kabul reportedly killed two US contractors for the ISAF. The attack was later claimed by the Hezb-e Islami group, allied to the Taliban.

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

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

In December, militants’ attacks were recorded across various parts of Afghanistan, notably hitting, in addition to southern areas, targets in Kabul and in the eastern province of Wardak. The month was notably marked by high profile attacks striking western military targets in the capital area, although overall the number of attacks has reportedly decreased in the country.

As indicated in a UNAMA report released on 8 February, the number of civilians killed or injured in Afghanistan’s armed conflict increased in 2013. The last report thus documented a total of 2,959 civilian deaths and 5,656 injured in 2013, reversing the decline registered last year. The figures mark a 7% increase in deaths and a 17% increase in injuries as compared to 2012, and are similar to record high numbers of civilian casualties documented in 2011. Moreover, the new figures also suggest a slight increase in the number of killed and injured during the second part 2013 since only 1,319 civilians were killed and a further 2,533 injured from January to June.

While improvised explosive devices (IEDs) used by anti-Government elements remained the biggest killer of civilians in 2013, increased ground engagements between pro-Government forces and anti-Government armed groups emerged as the number two cause of civilian casualties with rising numbers of Afghan civilians killed and injured in cross-fire. Overall, the report attributed 74% of casualties to insurgent groups, 8% to Afghan National Security Forces, 3% to international forces, and 10% to ground fighting between the two the insurgents and pro-Government forces. The last 5% of casualties were unattributed, resulting mostly from explosive remnants of war.

Military Operations

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

On 15 January, new tensions arose between Kabul and Washington after the Afghan president blamed the US over an air raid in Parwan province that killed Afghan civilians. Although the NATO-led ISAF reported that a joint force of Afghan troops and foreign soldiers called in the strike after being ambushed by Taliban insurgents, the incident might further jeopardize the signature of the BSA. In the aftermath, the Afghan President thus openly linked the attack to one of the demands he formulated to the US side by again blaming Washington for allegedly refusing to stop air raids on Afghan homes. Over the past months, accidental civilian deaths during ISAF airstrikes have been a major source of friction between Washington and Kabul.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

Climatic Conditions

The severe winter has created additional logistical constraints for humanitarian access. On 10 February, ECHO reported that access roads were blocked between the provincial capitals and districts in some provinces. The most affected provinces are Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan. As reported by OCHA in February, many of 13 passes in Ghor province are closed during winter with snow severely affecting movement along main transport axis.

Insecurity and Attacks against Aid Workers
Active hostilities and threats of violence continue to impede humanitarian access, with contested areas remaining the most problematic. Movement restrictions are increasingly applied to aid workers, and relief organisations are reviewing security protocols. The humanitarian space in Afghanistan continues to shrink, as security is increasingly precarious.

In February, insecurity severely constrained movements and operations across several Afghan provinces. OCHA reported that the presence of humanitarian organizations is concentrated in and around the provincial capital in Badghis province. In Farah province, humanitarian organizations are severely constrained in their movement outside of Farah city with almost no assessments taking place in the east and northern parts of the province. In Ghor province, NGO movement outside of the provincial capital are also several constrained. In Herat province, districts in the north and south remain largely off-limits with five NGO staff being reportedly killed after being abducted in the district of Gulran. The main transport axis is also reportedly unsafe with increasing militant presence in rural areas.

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

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

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

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

Displacement

IDPs
In 2013, conflict-induced displacement has led to the emergence of acute humanitarian needs, with a marked increase in previously stable provinces in the north, particularly in Faryab and Badakhshan, noted OCHA. As of 30 November, there were 612,000 conflict-induced IDPs in Afghanistan, including in Herat, Helmand, Ghor, Farah, and Badghis provinces.

In mid-December, OCHA reported that the number of people internally displaced each year has risen overall from 80,000 in 2011 to 113,000 in 2013. Most parts of the country are highly vulnerable to new waves of displacement, due to both the conflict and natural disasters. In 2013, an estimated 60,000 people had been displaced in northwestern Faryab province because of conflict according to OCHA as of 30 November. Reports also mention large numbers of IDPs being hosted in southwestern Heart province.

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

Refugees

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

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

Disasters

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

Information remains limited, but ECHO reported that severe weather and heavy snow was affecting vulnerable families, including IDPs, in 7 provinces of the country. Local sources indicate that 63 people had died and 12 had been injured. 100,000 livestock are also at
risk. Provinces in central and northern Afghanistan are the most severely affected.

In late January, ECHO reported that heavy snowfall and low temperatures continue to affect northern Darz Aab and Qush Tepa districts of Jawzjan province. As of February, reports indicated that Kunduz, Saripul, Daykundi, Helmand, Herat, Badakhshan, Takhar and Jawzjan in central and northern Afghanistan were the areas more heavily affected by harsh winter conditions. In late February, USAID indicated that Balkh Province was also affected.

### Food Security

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

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

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

As reported by the WFP in February, the average wheat grain retail price in main Afghan cities increased between August 2012 and March 2013. Wheat prices then decreased during the April – June 2013 period only to slightly increase again from July 2013 to January 2014. In particular, the January average price of wheat in main cities of Afghanistan was slightly higher by 5.9% in comparison to the same time last year, and significantly higher by 15.9% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

In addition, the January price for wheat flour was slightly lower by 4.5% compared to the same month last year, and significantly increased by 12.6% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. The January average price for low quality rice, the second main staple food in Afghanistan, was slightly lower by 4.8% compared to the same month last year, and significantly higher by 23.3% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months. By comparison, the January average price of high quality Rice is significantly higher by 11.5% compared to the same month last year, and by 33.4% compared to the last 5-year average price of the same months.

### Health and Nutrition

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

### Polio

Afghan authorities confirmed the first polio case in Kabul since 2001 and launched an emergency polio vaccination campaign in the capital. However, according to medical sources, the girl diagnosed with the disease may have contracted it in neighbouring Pakistan. The highly contagious polio virus remains endemic in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, but the capital Kabul was so far free of the disease since 2001.

### Malnutrition

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

Updated: 25/02/2014

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

**2 March:** Renewed clashes in the Damascus neighbourhood of Yarmouk continued to interrupt aid distribution. Yarmouk, which houses about 18,000 Palestinians and an unknown number of Syrians, has seen some of the worst fighting in the capital and a tight siege has led to severe food shortages and widespread hunger. According to the UN, over 100 people have reportedly died from starvation and hunger-related illnesses.

**28 February:** Fighters from the extremist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) started withdrawing from parts of northern Syria ahead of a deadline set by the Al-Nusra front, a powerful rival al-Qaeda faction. On 24 February, the leader of the Al-Nusra front gave ISIL a five-day ultimatum to accept mediation to end infighting or be "expelled" from the region.

**26 February:** A United States government (US) administration official said that the Government of Syria (GoS) had arrested family members of the opposition delegation to the peace talks in Geneva. In addition, it was reported that the GoS has designated delegates as ‘terrorists’, and seized their assets. A second round of the peace talks in Geneva ended without results on February 15. No date has so far been set for the talks to resume.

**25 February:** Israeli jets bombarded an area in Lebanon, near the border with Syria. Over the past year, Israel has carried out several airstrikes inside Syria to halt suspected shipments of advanced missiles from reaching Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israel
has never confirmed the airstrikes.

KEY CONCERNS

- UN estimates indicate that 6.5 million Syrians are currently internally displaced within the country. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

- Over 3 million people in Syria are living in areas which are difficult to reach. At least 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the GoS or opposition forces. Humanitarian conditions in inaccessible locations are reported to be deteriorating (OCHA). At least 325,000 children under the age of 5 are living in areas that are currently not accessible to humanitarian aid (UNICEF).

- Ongoing sieges are preventing the WFP from reaching approximately 40 locations around Damascus, where at least 500,000 people are thought to be living. Some of these areas have not been accessed for over one year.

- The north-eastern governorates of Syria continue to experience a deteriorating humanitarian situation, with severe access challenges and disruptions in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. At the end of February, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) was able to reach the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor for the first time in 4 months. The number of IDPs in the main cities is increasing, as families flee to urban centres to escape the conflict in many rural areas. Many health centres have closed or are operating below capacity, schools are overcrowded or closed, and water and electricity services are severely rationed.

- A Joint Rapid Food Needs Assessment in December 2013 found that 9.9 million people, or approximately half Syria’s current population, are vulnerable to food insecurity and unable to access sufficient food to meet their basic needs.

- 25 laboratory-confirmed cases of polio were reported in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor and Idlib at the start of March. According to the government, 41 of Syria’s 91 public hospitals, 674 medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged and are out of service.

Politics and Security

Political developments

The UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2139 (2014), demanding that all parties in Syria allow the provision of humanitarian assistance, cease depriving civilians of food and medicine and enable the rapid, safe and unhindered evacuation of all civilians who wish to leave.

Russia, with support from China, had previously blocked three resolutions aimed at pressuring the Government of Syria (GoS). This time, neither Moscow or Beijing blocked the resolution, although Russia did not allow an earlier draft of the resolution which threatened sanctions should Syria fail to comply. On 2 October 2013, the Council adopted a non-binding statement urging more humanitarian access, but the statement only produced a little administrative progress. The Security Council has now adopted five resolutions linked to the Syrian conflict.

Armed conflict

On 28 February, fighters from the extremist group ISIL withdrew from Azaz, a town near the border with Turkey to strongholds east of Aleppo city. ISIL took control of Azaz five months ago from rival opposition fighters. Months of rebel infighting in and around Azaz, 5 km from the Turkish border, has hampered humanitarian access from Turkey into Syria. The withdrawal by ISIL follows a warning by the leader of the Al-Nusra front, which included a five-day ultimatum to accept mediation to end infighting or be "expelled" from the region. The warning comes two days after the killing of Abu Khaled al-Suri, who had acted as al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri’s representative in Syria. It is widely believed that Abu Khaled al-Suri was assassinated by two suicide bombers from the ISIL. Ayman al-Zawahiri has named Al-Nusra front as al-Qaeda’s branch in Syria and has dissolved ISIL. ISIL has angered other factions with its brutal tactics and harsh laws in areas it controls in the northeast.

Areal and tank bombardments on several areas continue in around Yabroud town in the Qalamoun area, around 70 km northeast of Damascus. Since the end of 2013, Syrian armed forces have been trying to re-take control of the town, and its strategic access to the Lebanese border, across which supplies of commodities and weapons flow.

In a further development, the Kurdish group captured Tal Brak in Al-Hasakeh, in northeastern Syria, from Islamist groups on 22 February. If they keep control of the area, which lies between the cities of Al-Hasakeh and Qamishli, it would mark a significant advance in their quest for wider control in the northeast.

Regional

On 25 February, Israeli jets bombarded an area in Lebanon near the Lebanon-Syria border, reportedly targeting a Hezbollah position. There was no immediate confirmation from Lebanese security officials or the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). Over the past year, the IDF has carried out several airstrikes inside Syria to halt suspected shipments of advanced missiles.

In addition, on 19 February, twin suicide attacks hit Beirut’s heavily populated southern suburbs, near the Iranian Cultural Centre, killing 5 people and wounding 80. The attacks were claimed by the Al-Qaeda linked Abdullah Azzam Brigades, who called it an attack against Iranian interests in Lebanon due to Iran’s involvement in the conflict in Syria. This is the second such attack after the Iranian embassy was targeted in November. Attacks on Beirut’s southern suburbs are occurring on an almost weekly basis. In the northern town of Hermel, a car bomb was detonated at an army checkpoint, killing 3 people on 22 February.

In Iraq, extremist militants have been regaining ground over the past year, particularly in the western province of Anbar, which borders Syria, where the city of Fallujah was taken over in January. The latest unrest in Anbar has sparked Iraq’s worst displacement since
2006-2008, with over 400,000 people displaced.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

OCHA’s latest figures from the SHARP appeal published mid-December put over three million people in areas hard to reach due to access limitations in dire need for humanitarian assistance, of whom 242,000 are trapped in areas besieged by either the GoS or opposition forces including Nubul and Az-Zahraa in Rural Aleppo, Eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Moadamiyeh in Rural Damascus. Ongoing sieges are preventing the WFP from reaching approximately 40 locations around Damascus city, where at least 500,000 people are thought to be living. Some of these areas have not been accessed for over one year. In addition, the UN reports that there continues to be little humanitarian access for organisations operating from Damascus to Rural Aleppo, where 1.25 million people are estimated to be in need of food assistance.

Several military truces and ceasefires have been implemented in some hard to access and besieged areas, with varying degrees of adherence, allowing partial and sporadic humanitarian access. Relief distributions took place in Beit Sahem, Babbila and Yalda in the southern outskirts of Damascus after ceasefires were reached between the GoS and opposition groups mid-February. At the end of February, UN partners and IOM were able to undertake an inter-agency road convoy to Bloudan (Rural Damascus), a locality which had remained inaccessible for over six months.

After more than four months of logistics and security constraints, SARC relief convoys also reached the governorate of Deir-ez-Zor in eastern Syria. Humanitarian organizations estimate that more than 110,000 families are in need of humanitarian assistance in the governorate.

**In need**

Revised estimates indicate that the total number of people in need in Syria has increased to 9.3 million, up from the April estimates of 6.8 million. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 7.5 million people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

A recent Syrian Centre for Policy Research study on the socio-economic impact of the crisis estimates that over half the population now lives in poverty, of whom around 4.5 million live in extreme poverty and are unable to fully meet their basic needs. The Economist Intelligence Unit country report forecasts continued economic hardship for Syrians as the conflict continues. Nearly all of the country’s oil sector, which previously supplied some 25% of Government revenue, will remain off-stream. This means the Government of Syria will likely continue scaling-back subsidies in order to ease pressure on the public finances. Many Syrians currently completely rely on the subsidies provided on bread, fuel and other basic items. On 16 December, the UN launched an US$ 6.5 billion appeal to cover the needs in Syria and refugee hosting countries in 2014.

An estimated 6.5 million Syrians are internally displaced within the country with the highest concentration of IDPs in the governorates of Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Homs, Idleb, Tartous, Hama, and Deir-ez-Zor. The Syria Integrated Needs Assessment found over 4.1 million people displaced in eight northern governorates in November 2013.

Thousands of IDPs have also fled the area of Qalamoun over the last three months, fleeing to more secure locations in rural Homs and Homs city and fleeing into Lebanon. The continued escalation of fighting around Yabroud has resulted in the displacement of more than 13,000 people, largely to Lebanon. As the fighting continues, the exodus is also expected to continue.

Over the past week, there has been an escalation of fighting in Quneitra, primarily affecting the south and south-eastern areas and resulting in displacement of people from numerous villages, including those previously displaced (largely from Dar’a and Rural Damascus). Initial registration of 35,000 IDPs indicates tens of thousands have fled to central and eastern Quneitra, north and western Dar’a, and large numbers to Damascus City and Rural Damascus.

Airstrikes in Aleppo have pushed an estimated 500,000 people from several opposition-held areas in the east of Aleppo city. Routes have become increasingly hazardous because of the fighting between opposition groups and ISIL. Some IDPs have reached the Turkish border while others have fled to GoS-held areas of Aleppo.

Due to insecurity in Al-Hasakeh governorate over the past few weeks, approximately 1,500 families have reportedly fled to Tal Hamis, Tal-Braq, Jaza’a, Kharab Askar, and Al Hol, extremely poor rural areas in south-eastern areas of the governorate.

**Refugees**

As of 2 March, the total number of Syrians registered and waiting to register as refugees outside of Syria stands at 2,520,467. Over 944,000 Syrians are registered or awaiting registration in Lebanon (government estimates 1.3 million Syrians in total, including a large number of Syrian migrants). There are nearly 578,000 in Jordan (government estimates 600,000 Syrians in total), nearly 624,000 in Turkey, over 225,500 in Iraq, and over 134,000 in Egypt (government estimates up to 300,000).

The total number of refugees registered by UNHCR is expected to surpass four million by the end of 2014. UNHCR stated that across the region, 400,000 refugees live in formal camps and nearly two million reside outside formal settlements. In February, 14,000 Syrian refugees fled to the Lebanese border town Arsal following the eruption of violence in the neighboring Qalamoun region of Syria on 9 February. Despite sporadic fighting still being reported in and around Yabroud, the pace of the refugee influx significantly decreased toward the end of the month, with only 640 new arrivals identified in Arsal between 20 and 25 February. The recent arrivals bring the total refugee population in Arsal to more than 51,000, exceeding the number of resident Lebanese.

**Health**

The lack of available medicine, particularly for chronic diseases continues to be a critical problem across the country. According to the GoS, 41 of Syria’s 91 public hospitals, 674
medical centres, and 416 ambulances have been damaged and are out of service. The shortage of intravenous fluids is worsening. Insulin, oxygen, and anesthetics are no longer available in many parts of Syria. Before the crisis, Syria produced 90% of its needed medicines. The conflict has led to a 70% decline in production of medicines. With the currency depreciation also taken into account, the price of medicine has increased by 25 to 50%. Medicine is imported, primarily from Lebanon and sold at high prices. Lengthy administrative procedures surrounding supplying the clinics have caused delays in distributing medical equipment and medicines to some areas.

**Polio**

Health actors recently stated that polio remains the most significant health threat in Syria. According to the GoS, 25 laboratory-confirmed cases of polio had been confirmed in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor and Idcleb as of 24 February. Over 2.7 million children reportedly received a vaccination dose, which is above the target of 2.6 million. However, due to access issues, coverage remains suboptimal in several areas including Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama and Rural-Damascus.

**Food security**

Syria media report that around 70% of Syria’s flourmills are no longer operational and that the conflict is seriously impacting food security. Heavy fighting in eastern Aleppo has disrupted market supplies, causing rising inflation and acute shortages of food commodities, particularly wheat flour and bulgur. Compared to average prices in January, the price of bread during the first week of February increased by 49%, as damage to bakeries and milling facilities and shortages of wheat flour almost stopped production in the area. During the same period, the price of staple foods such as rice, wheat flour, vegetable oil and diesel prices also increased.

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

**Protection**

Following the evacuation of civilians from the Old City of Homs between 7-12 February, UN staff have been monitoring the situation of male evacuees between the ages of 15 and 55 undergoing a security clearance procedure by the Syrian authorities. There are concerns over mistreatment of these and other individuals evacuated from opposition controlled areas during GoS interrogations following evacuations.

A US government official stated that the GoS has arrested family members of the opposition delegation to the peace talks in Geneva. In addition, it was reported that the GoS has designated delegates as terrorists, and seized delegates’ assets.

A Human Rights Watch report released mid-February stated that GoS forces have started targeting opposition-held areas with a new type of cluster munitions rockets which is larger, more powerful and deadlier than types previously used in the conflict.

An organisation called the Islamic Law Council of Deir-ez-Zor issued a statement requiring all women in the area to wear the face veil. Last month, Human Rights Watch reported that Jabhat al Nusra and ISIL were enforcing their strict interpretation of Islamic law by requiring women to wear head scarves and full-length robes. Human Rights Watch also cited refugees as having reported that the Islamists were imposing discriminatory rules banning women and girls from moving freely in public, working and going to school.

**Shelter**

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

**WASH**

Ongoing problems at water plants in Damascus, Idlib and Deir-ez-Zor have been reported due to depletion of the water table and a lack of fuel due to increased water pumping. Homs, Idlib and Hama are high-need areas in terms of water availability. In Hama city, damage to the water and sewage network has led to a sharp decrease in water pumping. Water has been rendering unsafe for drinking due to infiltration of the sewage line to the drinking line, leaving three million people without access to safe drinking water.

**Education**

According to UNICEF, nearly 2.3 million children in Syria have stopped attending school. Essential education infrastructure has been destroyed and militarised by parties to the conflict, including more than 4,000, or 18% of Syria’s 22,000 schools. Across the region, more than 60% of the 735,000 school-aged refugee children are not enrolled in school.

Updated: 04/03/2014

**YEMEN CONFLICT, FOOD INSECURITY**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**21 February:** The UN Security Council (UNSC) is currently considering a draft resolution that would impose travel bans and asset freezes on individuals in Yemen who obstruct or undermine the country’s political transition and who commit human rights violations.

**20 – 23 February:** Local sources reported sizeable protests in the southern port city of Aden. Violence erupted as thousands of protesters marched through the streets, renewing demands for full independence and rejecting the recent federation agreement. At least two were killed and dozens injured as security forces reportedly fired live rounds and tear gas at the protesters.
Late February: OCHA reported that an estimated 5 million people, including the over 307,000 people affected by protracted displacement, are in need of protection assistance in Yemen. The lack of adequate protection institutions and weak rule of law expose vulnerable groups to grave violations of their rights, abuse, exploitation and gender-based violence.

KEY CONCERNS

- Violence and insecurity continues in Yemen with regular attacks by local Al-Qaeda branch secessionists and operations by government forces in the south. Various tribal groups, notably Huthi militants in the north, also engage in acts of violence.
- Ongoing conflict has triggered large-scale displacement with over 307,000 people being internally displaced across the country as of February 2014 (UN).
- The humanitarian needs in Yemen are significant. An estimated 14.7 million people (58% of the population) in Yemen will need some form of assistance in 2014 (OCHA).
- As of late 2013, Yemen is hosting almost 243,000 refugees. 22% are reportedly women and girls who have been victims of repeated gender-based violence (UNHCR, IOM).
- Priority needs include food security, with an estimated 10.5 million people – amounting to nearly 45% of the population – being food insecure, as well as access to basic healthcare and WASH (WFP, OCHA).

Politics and Security

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

International Context

On 21 February, the UN Security Council (UNSC) said it was considering a draft resolution – circulated by London – that would effectively impose travel bans and asset freezes on people in Yemen who obstruct or undermine the country’s political transition and those who commit human rights violations. Previously, the UNSC had already expressed concerns regarding reports documenting the continuing interference of former authorities, notably of the former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in the reconciliation talks.

Political Context

Yemen is undergoing a political transition process, which is aimed at opening the way for fully democratic elections in February 2014. Under a US-supported power transfer deal, President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi is overseeing reforms during an interim period after the long-serving former President Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to step down in 2012. In 2013, the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) was set up, amidst heated debate over its lack of inclusiveness of southern delegates, to find a common political agreement and make recommendations for a new constitution and voting system. Scheduled to complete its work in September, the NDC dragged on until late January when the delegates eventually reached an agreement meant to transition Yemen toward federalism.

On 10 February, Yemen’s President Hadi formally approved turning the country into a federal state in a move that is meant to give the troubled south of the country more autonomy. Under the new system, the country will now be split into six regions with the former independent South Yemen being split into two regions, Aden and Hadramout, and the more populous North Yemen into four – Sabaa, Al-Jund, Azaal and Tihamah. According to local sources, a large portion of Southern leaders, aiming at full independence of a unified South and declining to take part in the NDC, rejected the accord. On 11 February, the deal was also rejected by Huthi insurgents fighting in northern Yemen who claimed that the division of the north was unequal in terms of wealth distribution.

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

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

Militants’ Attacks across Yemen and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)

In addition to the several other security challenges the country is facing, AQAP is extremely active in Yemen, relying on strongholds in the south and east, despite counterinsurgency operations conducted by local military backed by US drone strikes.

Pursuing a campaign started in 2012, AQAP targets senior officers from the army and various security services. According to local sources, an estimated 80 officers have been killed since 2012. Against this background, the group has also regularly targeted oil pipelines. Militants have also abducted several foreigners, particularly in large cities, including Sana’a. There have been over 10 abductions/attempted abductions of expatriates in Sana’a since February 2013. In February 2014, at least three such incidents involving foreigners have already been reported, the latest being the kidnapping of a Czech doctor who was released shortly after 22 February. The two other foreigners abducted this month, a British and a German, have not been released yet with little more information being available. The risk of abduction for foreigners remains high in Yemen.
On 22 February, an intelligence officer was killed by suspected al-Qaeda militants in Atek in the southern province of Shabwa in another indication of the rising insecurity within the country.

On 13 February, eleven people were killed after attackers carried out a bomb, grenade and gun assault on the main prison in Sana’a. According to the authorities, the attack which allowed 29 inmates, including 19 jailed for terrorism-related charges to escape was led by an unspecified terrorist group while local media sources indicated that Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula was most likely to be behind the incident.

On 9 February, a bomb exploded in Sana’a, killing a senior officer of the country’s domestic secret service and wounding two other people. The attack was the latest targeting senior security officials in the country’s capital while local authorities blame AQAP for the attacks.

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

On 22 January, in Sana’a, unidentified gunmen assassinated a prominent member of the Shia Muslim Huthi delegation to the NDC. Back in November, another Huthi representative to the talks died in a similar attack. The Huthi group is fighting Sunni Salafis in northern Yemen since October. On 16 January, militants attacked an army base in the city of Radda, south of the capital Sana’a, triggering clashes which killed nine soldiers and retaliatory strikes from the air force. In a separate incident in the southern city of al-Buraq, unidentified gunmen in a car ambushed and killed a high-ranking official from the country’s domestic security services.

**Military Operations and US Drone Strikes**

Yemen remains a highly strategic spot for the US as it tries to provide stability to a country that flanks top oil producer Saudi Arabia and major shipping lines. Against this background, the US, supported by Yemeni authorities, has intensified drone strikes against militants over the past months. To date, despite international and local criticism, the US continues to regularly launch drone strikes in Yemen. Since late July, drone attacks have killed over 70 people in Yemen.

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

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

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

**Conflict in Southern Yemen**

Following the formal decision to turn Yemen into a federal state – effectively splitting the south into two distinct regions – was reached at the NDC and approved by the president, many observers expect violence to escalate in the south. Many leaders and a large portion of the population of the formerly independent South Yemen continue to ask for a mechanism that would allow the South to transition back to full-fledged independence, rejecting the federalist framework.

The decision to divide the south into two separate regions was met with particular outrage, as many southern leaders fear that it is a way to limit their authority and role in a federal Yemen by depriving them control over important areas such as Hadramout, where some of Yemen’s oil reserves are found. In essence, the decision plays on the divisions existing in the South, shattering the myth of a unified southern Yemen. While many Southerners are likely to continue to press for full-fledged independence, the deal effectively closes door on southern separatist ambitions.

Since December, several security incidents between Government forces, protesters and armed separatists were recorded in the south.

On 23 February, local sources reported important protests in the southern port city of Aden after local authorities reportedly prevented a local newspaper linked to southern separatists from being printed at a government-owned press. The incident followed two day of clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

On 21 February, at least one person was killed and 20 injured in overnight clashes between police and pro-independence demonstrators in the southern port city of Aden. Violence erupted as thousands of protesters tried to march through the streets, renewing demands for full independence and rejecting the federal deal. The previous day, similar protests had already triggered violence that led to one person being killed and a dozen injured, as security forces reportedly fired live rounds and tear gas at the protesters.

On 18 February, local sources reported further clashes between government forces and armed separatists in the southern city of Dalea, resulting in nine people being killed, including five soldiers, and 14 soldiers being kidnapped. The incident occurred after gunmen attacked a truck carrying food supplies. The city of Dalea is a stronghold of southern Yemeni separatists and the area has witnessed repeated armed clashes between...
armed and government troops since late December.

On 27 January, a clash between Yemeni troops and southern separatists, who were demonstrating against the country’s reconciliation talks, left four people wounded according to local sources. On 17 January, clashes between Yemeni troops and secessionist militants killed four people in southern Yemen, two of them soldiers. Fighting broke out when the militants, reportedly affiliated to the Southern Movement, ambushed a military vehicle in the town of Dalea.

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

**Conflict in Northern Yemen**

Since late 2013, intermittent fighting has been recorded between Zaidi Shi’ite Huthi insurgents and local tribesmen from the huge Hashid confederation and their Sunni Islamists allies. Most of the conflict centred on Sa’ada and Amran governorates, in northern Yemen. The Huthis, also referred to as Ansarullah by the name of the Huthi revel group, have been advancing from their mountain stronghold in Sa’ada province, in the far north near the border with Saudi Arabia, toward other majority Shi’ite areas near Sana’a with most of the fighting centring on Amran governorate.

According to observers, the various groups are aiming at winning ground ahead of the demarcation of provinces for the creation of a federal Yemen as agreed in the NDC in late January and approved by the President Hadi in February. On 11 February, local sources reported that a spokesman for the Huthi group have rejected the plan for a federal Yemen claiming that the proposed division of the republic does not distribute wealth evenly. Huthis are largely settled in Sa’ada province in northern Yemen and will be included in the Azaal region, which has no significant natural resources or access to sea.

On 9 February, Huthis and armed tribesmen have confirmed that both sides have agreed to another ceasefire following deadly clashes between the two sides in the Arhab district near the capital Sana’a on 4 February, according to local authorities. The last truce is part of an agreement signed committing them to an “immediate” ceasefire and to reopening roads in the area. The deal should, in addition, see Government forces deploy to positions evacuated by rebels and tribesmen, and all fighters who do not come from the Arhab area will have to withdraw. To date, it remains unclear if the new ceasefire will hold while a similar agreement earlier this year has not been sufficient to put an end to fighting across northern Yemen. To date, tensions in Arhab district, located just north of the capital, continue reportedly to run high.

On 7 February, fresh clashes were recorded between Huthi insurgents and local tribesmen and their Sunni Islamists allies. In early February, local sources have reported that the insurgents have sized areas in the northern province of Amran, leaving more than 150 people dead and overrunning the home base of the Al-Ahmar clan which heads the Hashid confederation. Fighting was reportedly recorded in Huth, Khamir, Al Ashah, Wadi Danan and Al Khaiwan, while Huthis were making progress toward Amran city.

As of late January, consolidated casualty figures following several months of fighting remained difficult to ascertain, but at least 300 people, including 210 people who died in more than two months of clashes near the city of Dammaj, were killed on the Salafi-Hashid side since 30 October. The casualty figures for the Huthi group have not been released. Fighting around Dammaj was curtailed earlier in January after a Government brokered ceasefire on 8 January, although violence continued in other areas. Throughout January, heavy fighting was reported the Hashid strongholds of Wadi Khaywan and Usaimat.

Clashes between Huthi insurgents and their Sunni Salafi rivals initially broke out on 30 October in the northern town of Dammaj in Sa’ada governorate. The conflict allegedly started after Huthi fighters, who control most of the area, accused Salafi groups of recruiting foreign fighters to prepare an attack against them. In December, reports indicated that the fighting between the tribes has attracted Salafi-affiliated tribesmen and spread to Al Jawf, Amran and Hajjah governorates. In January, local sources reported that the fighting spread to Hashid groups after the tribes reportedly supported Sunni Islamist groups fighting the Huthis.

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

**Tribal Attacks on Oil Pipelines**

Across the oil-producing country, local sources continue to report frequent attacks by disgruntled tribesmen on pipelines with a significant number of such assaults happening in southeastern Hadramout province. According to observers, local discontented tribesmen stage such attacks to pressure the government to provide jobs, settle land disputes or free relatives from prison.

On 7 February, at least eight people, six soldiers and two armed tribesmen, were killed after armed tribesmen launched an attack to stop maintenance crews repairing an oil pipeline blown up last month in Hadramout province. The assault succeeded in halting work on the line linking Yemen's Masila oilfields to the al-Dabbah export facility on the Arabian Sea.

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

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

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

An estimated 14.7 million people (58% of the population) in Yemen will need some form of assistance in 2014, according to the 2014 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and the 2014 Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).
As indicated in the HRP, published by OCHA in December, nearly all 2 million people residing in northern Yemen, including Sa’ada and Al-Jawf governorates, require humanitarian aid following years of conflict that has destroyed local infrastructure. Landmines and explosive remnants of war still remain a major problem.

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

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

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

**Access**

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

Due to tribal conflict in the north, OCHA reported on 7 January that the need to access people affected by the ongoing clashes in the north remained urgent. However, parties to the conflict reportedly continue to restrict humanitarian access, cutting off assistance to vulnerable IDPs already living in camps and host communities, as well as to people newly displaced by the ongoing conflict in the northern governorates. As of early February, OCHA noted that thousands of IDP families who have registered for assistance in the northern parts of Amran governorate were currently out of reach.

As of late February, the iNGO Medecins Sans Frontieres reported that access remains heavily curtailed across the areas affected by the tribal conflict. In January, access problems had been reported by ICRC while OCHA reported that fuel was in short supply in Sa’ada because roads were blocked, hindering access to civilians in Dammaj and Kitaf who were running out of food, water and medical supplies.

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

Displacement

**IDPs**

As reported by OCHA and UNHCR on 6 February, according to preliminary information and ongoing assessments, an estimated 42,350 people have been displaced following fighting in Amran Governorate which erupted in October 2013. The majority of these people are reportedly living with families and host communities across the governorate with more than a half of IDPs moving toward Amran city. Thousands have sought shelter in other parts of the governorate.

As indicated by OCHA, the recent violence however occurred in areas already hosting IDPs, and it is likely that some people were displaced for a second or third time. As of early February, local sources, quoted by OCHA, also reported that an estimated 7,000 people were still unable to leave the area of conflict. According to WFP, although food distributions are ongoing, an increase may be needed to accommodate the new IDP caseload. To date, information on needs remains limited.

In January, according to local sources, about 10,000 Salafis were made homeless in Sana’a as a result of an agreement reached between the Salafis and the Huthis, which stipulated that 15,000 non-local Salafis residing in the northern area of Dammaj, Sa’ada governorate, had to leave the town. While the government, which had appointed a committee to broker the agreement, committed to provide housing and transportation for the displaced, they reportedly did not receive support, and are said to be staying in mosques and tents in the Sawan district of the capital. An estimated 5,000 other Salafis left Dammaj for other parts of the country.

In late 2013, as a result of widespread conflict, the UN reported that almost 307,000 IDPs remain in Yemen’s north, including Sana’a. 95% of the IDPs are reportedly hosted in the five provinces of Hajjah, Amran, al-Jawf, Sa’ada and Sana’a. As reported by OCHA in late January, all of the people affected by protracted displacement are in need of protection and shelter assistance.

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

**Refugees**

In 2013, over 65,000 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants have arrived in Yemen from the Horn of Africa this year, according to UNHCR. Although this number marks a decrease compared to figures for the same period last year, 88,533, the Gulf of Aden remains one of the world's most travelled sea routes for mixed migration, UNHCR reports. Moreover, the overall number of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants in Yemen has been rising for the past six years. The large majority are from Ethiopia (52,000) and Somalia (11,000). The latter group is automatically recognised as refugees by the Yemeni authorities.

UNHCR states that Yemen hosts almost 245,000 refugees as of early January. According to IOM, 22% are women and girls who have been victims of repeated gender-based
As of early December, according to IOM, an estimated 400,000 Yemeni migrant workers have returned from Saudi Arabia since April as part of a crackdown on undocumented migrants. The Yemeni government says it expects at least another 400,000 jobless returnees in coming months. As reported by UNHCR, an additional over 39,000 Yemeni migrants, many with acute humanitarian needs, returned via Al Tuwal in Haradh District, from Saudi Arabia in January 2014.

The majority of people arriving are undocumented migrant workers with daily arrivals numbering 600-700 people in September, with most traveling through the Al Tuwal border crossing in Hajjah governorate. The returns place a burden on Yemen’s fragile political transition, conjuring up memories of the 1990 expulsion of more than 800,000 Yemenis from Saudi Arabia, which contributed to the unravelling of a 1990 unification pact between the former North and South Yemeni states and led to the 1994 civil war.

Disaster

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

Food Security

Although there has been an improvement in acute food security compared to the crisis year of 2011, when conflict significantly disrupted food access, high levels of chronic food insecurity persist in Yemen. As of January, the total number of food insecure people in Yemen was estimated at 10.5 million, amounting to nearly 45% of the population, according to WFP and OCHA. WFP also 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 early 2014.

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. Despite the national trend of decreasing food insecurity, some parts of the south, particularly Abyan and neighbouring Al-Shabwah, were reportedly worse in June 2013 than in 2011. Food security conditions are also of major concern in adjacent governorates of Aden and Lahij, where 90% of households are food insecure and 30% severely food insecure.

The primary underlying causes of food insecurity are extreme poverty, high unemployment, volatile food and commodity prices, compounded by conflict and insecurity. Populations of greatest concern include the displaced or recently returned. According to FAO, surges in prices that reached their highest level since 2011 in April were likely due to conflict in several southern areas

As of mid-February, FAO reported that the locust infestation remained serious along both sides of the Red Sea. In Yemen, the situation is reportedly most critical as a result of favourable ecological conditions that have allowed several generations of breeding since last autumn. Across the country, locust infestations are mainly concentrated on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea between Al Zuhrah and Suq Abs where many small to medium-sized hopper bands and adult groups continue to breed. Infestations have also been reported on the southern coast near Aden where field operations are limited due to insecurity.

In January, OCHA indicated that the locust outbreak had spread to Hajjah, Hadramaut, Shabwah and Lahj Governorates, destroying acres of fruit trees and other vegetation. Local authorities estimate the locusts have destroyed about 90% of the sesame and millet crops in Hajjah and Al Hudaydah. There is a risk the local infestation will also spread to Al Jar District in Hajjah and destroy this season’s mango crop.

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

Health and Nutrition

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

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

Malnutrition

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

Overall, including malnourished children, an estimated 1.8 million people in Yemen were in need of nutrition as of late January.

WASH

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

Protection
As of late January, OCHA reported that an estimated 5 million people, including all of the IDPs, were in need of protection assistance in Yemen. The lack of adequate protection institutions and weak rule of law expose vulnerable groups to grave violations of their rights, abuse, exploitation and gender-based violence.

As significant part – up to 35% - of Ethiopian migrants registered in Haradh district in Hajjah province in January were also in need of protection while there are reportedly subject to physical abuse and/ or gender-based violence.

Updated: 26/02/2014

IRAQ CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST, DISPLACEMENT

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

3 March: A bomb exploded in a market in the capital Baghdad, killing one person and wounding five others. Meanwhile, west of the capital, gunmen shot dead a policeman in Abu Ghrail. In the northern Nineveh province, militant attacks killed four people.

27 February: A bomb in northern Baghdad and militant attacks in the mainly Shi’ite areas in the country, killed 31 people and wounded another 51, in the provinces of Salahuddin, Anbar, Tuz Khurmatu and Diyala. Over 703 people have been killed in February alone and over 1,740 had died since the beginning of the year in Iraq.

27 February: The Iraqi authorities quoted by the UN Assistance Mission to Iraq (UNAMI) estimated that over 430,000 people (more than 67,500 households) have been displaced by the fighting, most of them within Anbar province.

25 February: A 72-hour ceasefire, declared by Iraqi authorities to halt military operations against the insurgent-held city of Fallujah, was cut short by renewed mortar attacks. Since late December, sporadic fighting has been reported in the mainly Sunni Anbar province, where Islamist militants took control of two key cities in central Iraq, west of Baghdad.

February: According to the Anbar Health Committee, the total civilian death and casualty toll in Anbar for February was 298 killed and 1,198 injured, with 189 and 109 killed respectively in Ramadi and Fallujah. However, these figures could not be independently verified, nor the status of those killed and injured as civilians.

KEY CONCerns

- In 2013, with over 8,800 people killed, tensions and violence between Iraq’s Shi’ite, Sunni Muslim, and Kurdish communities have escalated to levels unseen since 2008. In 2014, an independent death count based on security and medical sources indicated that over 580 people have been killed in February and over 1,550 have died since the beginning of the year (UNAMI, AFP).

- Heavy fighting in the majority Sunni Anbar province, where al-Qaeda militants took control of the cities of Fallujah and Ramadi in December, has led to large-scale displacement of over 430,000 people. In February, the conflict in Anbar province has been spilling over to neighbouring provinces (UNAMI, GOI).

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

- The conflict in neighbouring Syria continues to impact on Iraq, strengthening Sunni militancy and forcing thousands of refugees to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkabour crossing in Duhok province. As of 4 March, over 225,500 people had now crossed into Iraq from Syria since the conflict began (UNHCR).

Politics and Security

International and Regional Context

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

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

Political Context

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

On 4 November, the authorities passed a new election law, opening the way for the parliamentary polls to be held in April 2014 and alleviating concerns that the parliamentary elections would be delayed because of the rising insecurity. The voting on the election bill had been long delayed because of an ongoing dispute between the central authorities and ethnic Kurds, who run their own region in the north. The upcoming general elections are seen as a litmus test of the country’s political stability, amid growing sectarian strife.
In April, the provincial or governorate elections, the first ones held since the departure of US troops, served as a proxy indicator of the country’s stability ahead of the 2014 national elections. Although it failed to win a majority in any district, the current Prime Minister’s State of Law coalition came top in the elections.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Situation in Anbar Province

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

On 25 February, a 72-hour ceasefire, declared by Iraqi authorities to halt military operations against the insurgent-held city of Fallujah, was cut short by renewed mortar attacks. The truce initially followed demonstrations in Fallujah with civilians calling for an end to the bombardments and for the government to allow supplies in the city. While observers commented that this truce may raise the possibility of negotiations to end the crisis, expectations remain limited and no quick solution seems to be in sight. In the aftermath, clashes and violence continued to flare up in the area with the insurgents managing to shot down a military helicopter and launching a suicide bombing attack on a military base east of Ramadi. To date, the fighting in Anbar province has gradually shifted to become a war of attrition between government forces and entrenched militants.

On 24 February, UNAMI indicated that the insecurity in Anbar increasingly spreading to central-southern and northern region, destabilizing Nineveh, Salah-Al-Din and Diyala provinces. On 21 February, dozens of armed Islamist militants thus managed to stage an attack from Anbar on the small town of Al-Sainiyah, near Baiji city, in Salah-Al-Din province. According to local sources, armed Islamic gunmen engaged government troops in Al-Sainiyah for several hours, bombed the local police headquarters and raised the black flag of ISIL. Meanwhile, while the authorities have indicated that the crisis in Sulayman Bek – also a city in Salah-Al-Din province seized by Islamist militants in mid-February – has ended, local sources reported that three villages in the area still remained under the control of ISIL as of 22 February.

On 18 February, the Council of Ministers adopted Prime Minister Maliki’s Anbar Peace Plan, which aims to restore stability in the province, reconstruct damaged property, resettle displaced families, and integrate tribal fighters who fought alongside the military into the police. According to observers, the measures were the last in an attempt to pacify Anbar province, and Iraq’s broader Sunni minority, who have repeatedly complained of being marginalized by the Shi’ite dominated government of Maliki and of being unfairly targeted by heavy-handed security measures.

Ten days before, the Governor of Anbar province officially issued an ultimatum giving the militants controlling Fallujah one week to surrender and promising them amnesty if they do so. According to the senior official, the authorities have, however, no intention of
negotiating with ISIL. In early February, Prime Minister Maliki had stated that the conflict in Anbar was drawing to an end, though he restrained from announcing an offensive on Fallujah.

The statement came after over a month of protracted conflict over Fallujah and Ramadi between militants and security forces. Daily shelling and combat operations have been reported from the area. In recent weeks, government forces have been reportedly able to make progress in retaking some militant-held areas of Ramadi and Sulayman Bek – enjoying notably local tribal support. However, they have only enforced a loose siege over Fallujah fearing, according to observers, that an assault would lead to a prolonged urban conflict with high casualties while Baghdad remains concern that any delay give the insurgents time to further strengthen their positions.

To date, the humanitarian impact of the fighting in Anbar province is difficult to determine, as reports are scarce and humanitarian access to the area curtailed. As of mid-February, no consolidated death toll was therefore available.

According to the Anbar Health Committee in early March, the total civilian casualties in Anbar in February was 298 killed and 1,198 injured, with 189 and 109 killed respectively in Ramadi and Fallujah. However, these figures could not be independently verified, nor the status of those killed and injured as civilians. Meanwhile, the authorities reported that Iraqi troops and allied tribesmen killed 52 militants in two days of fighting in Ramadi on 2-3 March. In the last week of February, 57 Islamist militants were killed after several days of intense fighting near Ramadi. On 21 January, local reports indicated that violence had killed at least 250 people, among them civilians, security forces, tribal fighters and insurgents. Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch (HRW) accused fighters from both sides of causing civilian casualties and damaging property. HRW alleged that Iraqi government forces were using indiscriminate mortar fire, while al-Qaeda and its local allies were launching attacks from populated areas.

As of 24 February, the authorities quoted by UNAMI reported that internal displacement in Anbar province continues to increase. As of late February, fighting in the area has displaced over 430,000 people (67,500 households).

The deadly clashes in Anbar ignited in early December, with the arrest of a Sunni politician sought on terrorism charges, followed by the government’s dismantling of an anti-government Sunni protest camp in Ramadi, Anbar province, an area which has been at the heart of the ongoing insurgency since the 2003 US-led invasion. While many tribes in Anbar shared a common goal with US troops to rout ISIL, the resurgence of the extremist group has divided the tribes, some sympathising with and supporting the Islamist militants, others vowing to help the government regain control.

**Militant Attacks and Executions**

Over the past week, Iraq was again rocked by deadly violence, largely hitting Shi'ite areas of Baghdad, with most attacks attributed by the authorities to ISIL, although the group has not officially claimed responsibility. As of 3 March, an independent death count by Agence France Presse (AFP) based on Iraqi security and medical sources indicated that over 703 people have been killed in February alone and over 1,740 had died since the beginning of the year in Iraq.

On 23 February, at least 17 people were killed and dozens others wounded in bombings and shootings across northern Iraq. The deadliest attacks included an assault on a police convoy in the area of the city of Baiji that killed three policemen and four detainees and a bombing in the Shi’ite neighbourhood of Sadir City in Baghdad that killed five and wounded another 22; several other attacks were recorded in the Baghdad area. On 22 February, a further three policemen were killed in three car bomb explosions in Tikrit, north of Baghdad, according to police sources. In the aftermath, the authorities reportedly declared a curfew in the city and its suburbs, anticipating more attacks and fearing a further spread of instability from Anbar province.

On 20 February, a mortar attack struck the mainly Shia town of Mussayab, south of Baghdad, killing at least 22 people and wounding over 50. While it was not clear who fired them, the rounds appeared to come from among Sunni-dominated suburb. Three days earlier, again in Mussayab, a car bomb killed five civilians and wounded 13. The town is located in a mixed area holding Sunnis and Shias, and has been a flashpoint of sectarian violence in recent years. On 19 February, attacks targeting mainly security forces killed 11 people across the country, mainly in areas north of Baghdad, namely in Baquba, Tuz Khurmato and Mosul. On 18 February, a dozen of car bomb attacks killed at least 49 people and injured over 100 in central Iraq, hitting predominantly Shi’ite districts of Baghdad and the areas around the southern cities of Hilla and Bayaa. A day before, a series of explosions in the capital left at least 24 dead and 94 injured, with attacks targeting mainly crowded areas near Shia mosques.

On 11 February, militants reportedly ambushed and killed 16 Iraqi army soldiers protecting an oil export pipeline near the northern city of Mosul in Nineveh province, through which pipeline stretches from Kirkuk oilfield to neighbouring Turkey.

On 7 February, nine people were killed in attacks on Baghdad and north of the capital, in Tuz Khurmato, where a car bomb killed five and wounded 27 others, and in Baiji, where a blast next to an army patrol killed three. Meanwhile, local media noted that in Baghdad an election candidate, who was reportedly a supporter of powerful Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, was murdered. It was the first killing of a candidate standing in the upcoming April parliamentary elections, although over a dozen election candidates were killed ahead of the 2013 polls. On 6 February a string of deadly car bombings hit commercial areas in Baghdad, killing at least 17 people, marking a third deadly day of widespread blasts in the capital. According to observers, four of the neighbourhoods hit are populated mostly by Iraq’s Shia majority, while the other two were in the commercial Karrada district of central Baghdad.

On 5 February, an estimated 40 people were killed and over 110 injured in a series of blasts in Baghdad, including next to the heavily fortified “Green Zone”, home to the prime
In December, a string of execution-style killings, with at least 41 people found dead in one week, has been registered in Baghdad. New targeted assassinations were reported from various parts of the country in January. According to the authorities, such attacks have been happening on a smaller scale for the past two months with probably Sunni al-Qaeda affiliated groups and Shi’ite militias involved in the killings. Execution-style killings with bodies dumped in public places were widely used when the sectarian strife peaked in Iraq in 2006-2007.

Iraqi Kurdistan Political Context

While tensions persist between central authorities in Baghdad and in Kurdistan, both sides have made attempts to move closer as exemplified by the passing of the new election law in early November. Better relations with the Kurds should help ease pressure on Iraq’s Shi’ite leadership, which is facing increased sectarian strife that it blames on Sunni Islamist insurgents.

As of late January, Baghdad continues to suppress Kurdistan’s push for greater economic independence by reasserting its control over the oil resources in the region. Baghdad insists that it has the sole right to export Iraqi resources, including those from the northern Kurdish region that gained de facto autonomy in 1991. Among other countries, Turkey is currently engaged in negotiations with Kurdish authorities to begin oil exports.

In September, Kurdistan’s main opposition party came in second in the semi-autonomous region’s parliamentary election, beating the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of regional President Barzani came largely ahead. Since 2005, KDP and PUK have ruled through a coalition government as part of a wider deal that has seen them divide up posts in Irbil and Baghdad. As of late October, it was unclear how or if the results would affect the long-standing power-sharing agreement.

The regional government has delayed local presidential elections to 2015, extending the term of Kurdish leader Barzani, a move that the opposition has denounced as illegal.

Kurdish Regional Security Context

On 16 November, President Barzani called on Turkish Kurds to back the fading peace process with Ankara in his first visit to the Turkish southeast in two decades, ostensibly showing his support to Prime Minister Erdogan. Amid shared concerns over the activism of Kurdish militias in Syria, Barzani and Erdogan announced in mid-November their wish to establish a regional interim administration on the model of the Iraqi Kurdistan and settling the issue of the stalled peace process in Turkey. Iraqi Kurds are also concerned over retaining the regional leadership of the Kurds from the Syrian Democratic Union Party (PYD) that has links to the Turkish Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). While Barzani was calling for more Kurdish support to Ankara, a counter rally by the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was denouncing Ankara’s regional policies in Diyarbakir, the main city of Turkish Kurds.

In December, Iraq was marred by recurrent militant attacks, concentrated in the Baghdad area and other urban centres such as Tikrit, Mosul, Kirkuk, and Tamiya. Shi’ite Muslims were especially targeted. In a high profile event in late December, at least 22 Iraqi detainees, all facing terrorism charges, escaped from a Baghdad prison after killing at least one prison guard. The jail break was the latest in a series of prison escapes since the beginning of the year with at least 500 inmates, including several al-Qaeda leaders, having escaped since July.
PKK fighters had left Turkey, and they were mostly women and children. On 15 November, the eve of Barzani’s visit to Turkey, the Turkish authorities reported that Kurdish militants attacked a military convoy near the Syrian border in one of the most serious breaches of the ceasefire to date.

The Kurdish problem continues to be a regional one with the Syrian conflict largely impacting the situation of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq. While the arrival of former PKK insurgents is likely to strain already tense relations between the Kurdish authorities and Baghdad, it remains unclear how the withdrawal of PKK groups from Turkey will impact on the Syrian civil war where armed Kurdish groups have been increasingly active, pursuing their own political agendas. Although a senior Iraqi Kurdish official indicated in August that Iraq’s northern Kurdish region had no plans to send troops to Syria to defend fellow Kurds as fighting between Kurds and Islamist anti-government forces in northern Syria continues, the region is becoming increasingly dragged into the Syrian conflict as various regional Kurdish groups try to assert transnational leadership of the Kurds.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

In early February, humanitarian access to Anbar province remained restricted due to ongoing clashes between government troops and Islamic insurgents. As of 24 February, UNAMI reported that hundreds of people demonstrated in Fallujah for an end to government’s artillery bombardment in the area and for the authorities to allow supplies to enter the city.

As reported by OCHA and ICRC, main roads are impassable due to fighting and several bridges in the province, including one linking the city of Fallujah to Baghdad, have been destroyed. In addition, several humanitarian partners have reported that humanitarian access is also hindered by administrative constraints.

Although humanitarian access is less restricted in most parts of Iraq, security threats for international staff remain high, particularly in Baghdad, the north, the central provinces, and the Disputed Territories. According to reports, access to Al Qa’im refugee camp remains difficult, though missions can be carried out by helicopter.

**Displacement**

**IDPs**

The UNHCR has warned that the significant increase of sectarian violence across Iraq threatens to spark a new internal displacement of Iraqis fleeing insecurity.

The recent outburst of violence in Anbar province has triggered population displacements from Ramadi and Fallujah. As of 27 February, the Iraqi authorities quoted by UNAMI estimated that over 430,000 people (more than 67,500 households) had been displaced by the fighting, most of them within Anbar province. To date, numbers remain difficult to ascertain while ongoing military operations are likely to trigger additional population movements in Anbar and Salah-Al-Din. According to latest reports from OCHA and IOM, many IDPs have scattered around Anbar, which shares a long border with Syria. Some others have moved into the neighbouring Salah-Al-Din, Kirkuk, Baghdad, and Najaf provinces. Up to 15,000 have reportedly sought refuge in the northern semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. According to local sources, the influx of refugees imposes a significant burden on host communities. Additionally, thousands of people are reportedly trapped in what are being described as siege-like conditions in Fallujah and Ramadi. According to the UN, the most pressing needs of the IDPs include food, NFIs, health care and cash assistance.

The government blockade of both cities has resulted in limited access to food, water, and fuel for the population. As reported by UNAMI on 30 January, shelter is becoming a pressing need as the humanitarian consequences continue to mount.

According to the IOM, prior to the outbreak of violence in Anbar province, an estimated 1.3 million people were already internally displaced in Iraq. In 2013, the UN had estimated that only 1.13 million people were internally displaced in Iraq.

**Syrian Refugees**

Syrian refugees continue to cross into Iraqi Kurdistan through the Peshkabour crossing in Duhok province, following the re-opening of the border on 15 August after a closure in mid-May. As of 4 March, UNHCR reported that over 225,500 people had crossed into Iraq from Syria. Between mid-August and early October, an estimated 60,000 people, mainly women and children, had entered Iraq from Syria. On 5 January, aid agencies reported that 2,500 Syrians sought refuge in Iraq following the reopening of the border between Syria and the Iraqi Kurdistan region, which had been closed since November. Iraqi Kurdistan currently hosts an estimated 90% of Syrian refugees in Iraq.

The situation at Domiz camp, in northwest Iraq’s Dohuk province, is worrying. The camp houses over 70,000 Syrian refugees in critically overcrowded conditions. Another 90,000 refugees are scattered in and around urban centres in Iraqi Kurdistan while several camps and centres are currently under construction in the Kurdistan region, many of which are on former military bases with a danger of unexploded ordnances, mines, and other explosive weapons.

**Returnees**

Over 68,000 Iraqis have returned from Syria since mid-July 2012, with Baghdad receiving the largest number.

Updated: 04/03/2014

**MYANMAR INTERNAL UNREST, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

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

**KEY CONCERNS**
- The western state of Rakhine remains tense after repeated outbreaks of communal bloodshed between Buddhist and Muslim communities since 2012. Tensions continue to run high in the area where human rights abuses against the Muslim minority have been reported (UN).

- Over 649,000 people are currently internally displaced as a result of years of ethnic internal conflict. An estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims are displaced in western Rakhine state because of inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012 (OCHA).

- The Myanmar authorities are currently engaged in peace negotiations with all of the country’s ethnic and regional insurgency groups, aiming to reach a nationwide ceasefire in the coming weeks.

Political and Security Context

Political Context

The military-led authoritarian regime in Myanmar has made moves to improve its track-record on human rights over the last years with the release of the opposition activist Aung San Suu Kyi being a turning point in November 2010. In 2013, several amnesties were granted to political prisoners in Myanmar.

In early January, the UN welcomed another presidential amnesty granted to political prisoners convicted of various offences under seven specific laws, including unlawful association, treason and sedition in Myanmar. The pardon, the first one this year and the sixth since the beginning of 2013, reportedly extends to over 200 political prisoners and various other categories of detainees. Local media reported that another amnesty is likely to be granted in mid-January.

As with the amnesties granted on 11 December and 15 November, when the prominent Karen women human rights activist Naw Ohn Hl was released, this recent pardon represents another goodwill gesture on the part of the authorities against the backdrop of reform and ongoing peace talks with several armed insurgent movements.

In September, several amnesties led to the release of members of ethnic minority armed groups with whom the government is seeking peace deals. In July President Thein Sein promised to free all prisoners of conscience by the end of 2013, a promise that might now only be completed in 2014. But while recent efforts by the Myanmar authorities to improve the country’s human rights record has been welcomed, local activists continue to report that the prosecution of dissidents is continuing.

Peace Negotiations

Since its independence in 1948, Myanmar (Burma) has been plagued by endemic internal conflicts. The latter developed mainly in remote ethnically non-Burmese and economically marginalized areas of the country where ethnic and/or political groups conducted protracted insurgencies such as in Kachin, Kayin (Karen), Kayah (Karenni), Rakhine and Shan states. In 2013, the authorities have managed to sign several separate peace deals with the various insurgent movements opening the way toward a nationwide peace accord. However, local sources reported that the Myanmar military were weakly involved in the current peace process that is mainly handled by the civilian authorities through the Myanmar Peace Center.

On 23 January, local media reported that the draft framework for a nationwide ceasefire – the result of a summit between ethnic leaders in Lay Wah on 21 January – has been approved by the representatives of 16 ethnic armed organisations, but awaits endorsement from the Shan State Army – South (SSA-S) and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). To date, available information remains limited. On 29 January, the groups met with the authorities’ chief negotiator to try and move the process forward.

The conference in Lay Wah was the latest in an ongoing series of peace talks aimed at ending the civil conflict that has plagued Myanmar for nearly six decades. In 2013, President Thein Sein promised a nationwide ceasefire by the end of year, but this has so far not been reached.

In late 2013, according to local media sources, the government had signed separate ceasefire agreements with all major ethnic armed groups with the exception of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the armed wing of the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), and the ethnic Ta’aung army. The government says it hopes to now consolidate these agreements into a nationwide ceasefire deal, potentially during meetings in January and February. Some 16 of the insurgent ethnic armed groups are represented by the umbrella group Nationwide Ceasefire Coordination Team (NCCT) that should be instrumental in reaching a nationwide ceasefire.

Security Context

Despite ongoing peace negotiations between the authorities and various ethnic insurgent groups, the security situation remains tense in parts of Myanmar. In addition, massive human rights infringements against the Muslim minority, the Rohingya, in Rakhine state continue to be reported. On 12 February, international observers commented that the nationwide census planned to take place between 30 March and 10 April might further inflame tensions in the country by forcing the population to answer antagonistic and divisive questions on ethnicity, religion, citizenship and status.

On 6 February, ECHO reported that tensions have been further escalating in Rakhine state, as demonstrations were ongoing in northern Buthedaung where between 500 and 2,000 people, including Buddhist monks, participated. The demonstrations, that reportedly remained peaceful, started after the clashes in Du Chee Yar Tan village in south Maungdaw on 13-14 January that displaced an estimated 2,000 Muslims.

According to local sources and several human rights organizations reports, at least 40 people, including women and children, were reportedly killed in retaliatory government attacks on Rohingya Muslims in the western state of Rakhine on 13-14 January. As reported by the iNGO Medecins Sans Frontieres, it had treated 22 people in western Rakhine state who had apparently been wounded around the same time as the reported massacre of Muslims, an incident the government denies while acknowledging the clashes
took place. The UN are calling for an investigation into the incident while tensions remain high in the area.

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

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

Military Operations

Although negotiations are ongoing, various local reports indicated that small-scale military operations are ongoing in Kachin state. To date, reports indicated that if the army is still deployed in Karen State, almost no fighting had occurred in the area since a ceasefire was signed in January 2012. Little information is available on the ground situation in other ethnic areas as of early 2014.

On 12 February, a Kachin Independence Army (KIA) outpost was reportedly sized by government troops in Kachin state, although little information is available to date. On 26 December, government troops had already launched a renewed offensive against the KIA in the north of the country. Local media reported artillery shelling between government troops at a frontline outpost near Nam Lim Pa village in Mansi Township, in southern Kachin State. Accurate information regarding these clashes remains scarce and it remains unclear how this spike in violence will have an impact on the ongoing peace negotiations.

On 18 November, Kachin campaign groups called for an immediate end to clashes between government troops and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), violence that has reportedly affected and effectively trapped an estimated 2,300 people, including children and IDPs, with limited food and shelter in the remote Bhamo-Mansi area of Kachin state, near the northern border with China. According to sources within Kachin armed groups, clashes have been ongoing in the area since October, but the violence would not derail the tentative peace process.

Between 22 and 28 October, violent clashes had already been reported from Kachin state’s Mansi Township between government troops and KIA. Renewed fighting happened less than two weeks after authorities and Kachin insurgents signed a fresh ceasefire in mid-October. No report on casualties is available to date.

Heavy fighting in northern Kachin state and in the northern part of neighbouring Shan state was reported in September as the authorities reinforced their troops in these areas. Local and international organisations reported various human rights abuses being committed in Kachin state.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

An estimated 100,000 people have been displaced by conflict across Kachin and northern

Access

As of late January, OCHA indicated that inter-communal tensions and restrictions on movement continued to isolate many communities in the restive Rakhine State, leaving them with minimal access to livelihoods and basic services. According to reports, the situation is particularly bad in Myebon Township, southeast of the state capital Sittwe. In early February, ECHO reported that some demonstrators were asking for the departure of the UN and INGOs in Buthedaung, northern Rakhine state.

OCHA also reported that, in the second half of 2013, community resistance against international organisations working in Rakhine State increased. Rising anti-aid worker sentiment has created a difficult operating environment and in some areas it is affecting the ability of international actors to provide assistance to Rakhine and Muslim IDPs and vulnerable communities. In some cases, humanitarian assistance has had to be temporarily interrupted. In addition, according to recent monitoring reports, there has been a rise in incidents affecting humanitarian operations across Rakhine State, with local community resistance proving the biggest barrier to effective programme implementation.

Access has reportedly improved as major highways in Kachin state, closed since the outbreak of hostilities between the government and the KIA in 2011, were reopened on 17 March following the renewal of talks between the two sides. As reported by OCHA, in January, six cross-line missions managed to access locations beyond Government’s control in Kachin state where approximately 30,000 IDPs are currently living.

Displacement

IDPs

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

In western Rakhine state, an estimated 143,000 people, mainly Rohingya Muslims, are displaced because of inter-communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslim minority that occurred in June and October 2012. According to reports from human rights groups, Rohingya Muslims face ongoing tension, abuses and movement restrictions and a large part is considered crisis-affected and needing humanitarian assistance. According to the UN, the Muslim minority in Myanmar is subject to many forms of persecution, discrimination and exploitation. As reported by the UNHCR, over 800,000 persons, mostly Muslims, are estimated to be without citizenship in the northern part of Rakhine State.

On 21 November, Myanmar authorities rejected a UN resolution urging them to grant citizenship to the Rohingya Muslims, accusing the UN of encroaching on its sovereignty. The government continues to officially state that the estimated 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims are migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh, who are excluded from citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law.

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. In February, OCHA reported that, in addition to shelter renovation and WASH assistance, the most urgent needs in displaced communities included education, health care and distribution of NFIs. In late 2013, an additional 2,000 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.

**Refugees from Myanmar**

Rohingya Muslims, many of whom have been in Myanmar for generations, are also rejected by neighbouring Bangladesh and are therefore stateless. To date, the majority of Rohingya are also denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities. While an estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims live in official camps where they are assisted by aid agencies, another 200,000 refugees reside in unofficial camps or Bangladeshi villages where they get little to no humanitarian assistance and almost no protection from abuses.

According to investigation reports published by international human rights organizations in early December, Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar are also subject to human trafficking in neighbouring Thailand. To date, following the clashes and persecutions over the last years, notably in Rakhine state, several thousands of Rohingya Muslims are also hosted in Thailand which is pushing for the repatriation of this group to Myanmar, although the Myanmar authorities consider them to be stateless. Besides, as of December 2013, an estimated at least 128,000 refugees, including Rohingya and an estimated 90,000 people from various ethnic minorities, lived in temporary sites along the Thai-Myanmar border.

In early November, UNHCR reported that an increasing number of people, at least 1,500 over the last week of October, from Rakhine state, mainly Muslims, are setting out to sea on smuggling boats from the Bay of Bengal. Although numbers remain difficult to ascertain, such forced departures often result in disasters as boats capsize.

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

**Disasters**

According to the UN, heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have displaced almost 50,000 people across the country this year, though most people have since returned home as of late September. During the monsoon season, heavy rains and flash floods were reported in different parts of Myanmar, notably in Yangon in late August and in the northern parts of the country in the first half of September. In September, WFP reported that affected rural people would require food assistance until the harvest season in November-December as floods have destroyed food stocks and paddy fields. An estimated 70,000 acres of farmland have been flooded or destroyed this year.

**Food Security**

In late January, FAO reported that the food situation across Myanmar is generally improving. Nevertheless, the negative effects of localized flooding last year, particularly in Kayin State and Bago Region, have raised the levels of food insecurity for flood-affected households. In addition, 649,000 IDPs across Myanmar remain at risk of food insecurity.

**Health and Nutrition**

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

**Dengue**

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

**Protection**

As reported by OCHA in February, adolescent girls in camps in Kachin and Rakhine states are facing increasing violence and abuse, including SGBV.

**Reviewed:** 28/02/2013

**OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES COMPLEX**

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

**27 February:** In the West Bank, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian they were seeking to arrest. The man was allegedly affiliated to the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

**13-14 February:** In Gaza, local sources reported that Israeli forces fired live ammunition at a group of Palestinians near the separation fence east of Jabaliya. They were protesting against what they said was a confiscation of lands near the border by Israeli authorities. The shooting killed one person and wounded another 18, including four children, raising the 2014 death toll to 47 for the OPT.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip means the access and movement of people and goods is limited. Recent operations to counter illegal activities and insecurity in the Sinai has included imposing severe restrictions on movements of people through the Rafah Crossing and closing down smuggling tunnels on the Egyptian-Gaza border.
Shortages of affordable fuel used to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions, such as emergency rooms, operating theatres, and neo-natal care in the Gaza Strip.

An estimated 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities.

In 2013, an estimated 1.6 million people – a third of households in the OPT, were considered food insecure, compared to 1.2 million in 2012. Approximately 770,000 of the food insecure reside in the West Bank.

The number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by the Israeli army and security forces since 2006, and annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013. In the OPT, an estimated 315,000 Palestinian are vulnerable to violence from various parties to the conflict, including 130,000 people considered at high risk (OCHA).

Politics and Security

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks

In early January, US Secretary of State John Kerry wrapped up four days of intense shuttle diplomacy between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, saying the two sides had made progress despite failing to agree on a framework for Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. US-brokered peace talks began in July after a three-year deadlock, and an initial deadline to reach an agreement has been set for April, amid deep skepticism a deal could be achieved. The peace talks have also been hampered by a rise in violence in the past few months, with at least 19 Palestinians and four Israelis killed in the occupied territories since the negotiations began.

The United States is trying to broker a “framework” of guidelines addressing core issues such as borders, security, the future of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem, but Israeli officials commented that wide gaps remain in peace talks. Palestinians want to create a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and are seeking a written framework agreement. On the other side, Israel is reportedly looking for a less rigid deal, expressing concerns that any formal agreement could stoke opposition from hardline members of the Israeli government. This came after far-right members of Israel’s governing coalition threatened to topple the government if Netanyahu caved to Palestinian territorial demands.

In late December, Israel informed the US of plans to release about two dozen prisoners, the third group to be freed since the talks resumed in July. In all, 104 long-serving Palestinian inmates are to go free, once a fourth group of prisoners is released at a later time in 2014. However, in a move that could jeopardise the peace talks, Israel also announced a push for more construction in Jewish settlements, again timing the announcement of these plans to offset the anger of far-right political partners at the release of Palestinian allegedly jailed for deadly attacks. Additionally, Israeli negotiators expressed their wish to extend talks beyond the agreed April deadline to January 2016, in return for freezing some settlement construction in the occupied West Bank.

On 7 January, the U.S. ambassador to Israel stated that Kerry would return soon to continue his talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

Local Political Context

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

Gaza’s economic situation is deteriorating with several thousand jobs in the construction industry affected, livelihoods eroded, and prices increasing. In November, the EU reported that over 250,000 workers lost their job across all sectors. Egypt announced its intention to destroy the network of smuggling tunnels used to deliver goods to the Gaza Strip, on the grounds that Palestinians have been using the underground passages to help Sinai militants. The Sinai Peninsula has seen frequent battles between the Egyptian military and Islamist gunmen. Due to the closure or destruction of these tunnels, the Gaza Strip suffers from a severe lack of basic goods such as fuel for cooking and heating, affecting businesses, agricultural production, and health services, according to the UN. It is estimated that in November, less than 20,000 litres of fuel per week entered Gaza via the tunnels, compared to nearly 1 million litres per day until June 2013.

Security Context

Settler-related violence in the West Bank and Israeli military operations continue to undermine the physical security and livelihoods of Palestinians in the OPT.

At present, OCHA estimates that 110 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of over 315,000 people, are vulnerable to violence from various parties to the conflict. Of these, almost 60 communities (over 130,000 people) are at high risk. In early January, human rights groups reported an increase in Israeli military training exercises being held in Palestinian towns and villages and condemned Israeli soldiers for taking up positions in Palestinian homes during mock raids in the West Bank, and detaining civilians for hours without explanation.

Settler-related violence in the West Bank

According to OCHA in January, the number of attacks on Palestinians by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank has increased every year for the past eight years. About 2,100 attacks have been launched by Israelis since 2006, and annual totals are up from 115 in 2006 to 399 in 2013. More than 17,000 Palestinians, 342 settlers and 37 soldiers have...
been injured, while 10 Palestinians and 29 settlers were killed in these attacks.

OCHA reported that between 28 January and 3 February, seven settler-related incidents were reported in the West Bank. Four Palestinians were reportedly injured in the attacks, which also caused damage to Palestinian agricultural properties. Between 21-27 January, eight similar attacks were recorded across the West Bank, resulting in injuries on both sides, and causing property damage.

**Armed violence in the OPT**

In 2013, 28 Palestinians were reportedly killed during military operations conducted by Israeli forces in occupied territories, the majority of them in the West Bank.

In the West Bank on 27 February, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian they were seeking to arrest in the West Bank. The man was allegedly affiliated to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – a small leftist faction.

On 29 January, Israeli soldiers shot a Palestinian, with the army alleging he had opened fire at them. On 24 January, Israeli troops allegedly killed a Palestinian man and wounded another in a cross-border confrontation with protesters in the Gaza Strip. Tensions had been rising after Israeli forces killed two Palestinian militants in Gaza on 22 January, blaming them for a rocket attack during the funeral of Ariel Sharon earlier in the month.

On 19 December, the Israeli army reportedly conducted two separate raids, a town and a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank. In the northern town of Qalqilya, a member of the Palestinian security forces was killed during an overnight arrest. Also in the north, in Jenin refugee camp, clashes erupted after a similar arrest operation, where another Palestinian – a reported member of the Islamic Jihad – was shot dead and several people were wounded.

In Gaza on 9 February, an Israeli airstrike reportedly targeted and wounded a key militant figure considered responsible for cross-border rocket fire. This strike is the latest in a growing number of violent incidents in and around Gaza since the start of 2014. Tensions have been rising after a year of relative calm, with an estimated 33 rockets fired from Gaza towards southern Israel earlier in the year. In early February, Hamas reportedly deployed a 600-strong special security force tasked with preventing cross-border fire by Palestinian factions.

OCHA reported that Israeli airstrikes on January 31 the Gaza Strip injured 10 civilians and caused significant property damage. The strikes were reportedly launched in response to rockets shot by Palestinian factions toward southern Israeli earlier in the day. The Israeli air force responded with a series of airstrikes which caused civilian injuries and property damage.

Between 7-13 January in the Gaza Strip, rocket-fire by Palestinian armed groups towards southern Israel, alongside tank shelling by Israeli forces, continued intermittently along the border fence. On 8 January, a Palestinian militant from the group Islamic Jihad – the second largest faction in Gaza – was reportedly killed by an Israeli attack in the Gaza Strip, a charge rejected by the Israeli military.

**Impact on civilians**

Excessive use of lethal force is also impacting civilians in the OPT.

In the West Bank, OCHA reported that Israeli forces injured 42 Palestinian civilians, including eight children, in clashes which took place between 4-10 February at Al Jalazoun refugee camp – Ramallah, Al Far’a refugee camp – Tubas, and in Ya’bad village – Jenin.

On 29 January in the area of Ramallah, OCHA reported that Israeli forces shot and killed a Palestinian civilian under unclear circumstances. The incident triggered multiple clashes between Israeli military and Palestinians in the Al Jalazoun refugee camp. Between 28 January and 3 February, 55 Palestinians, including 11 children, were injured in clashes with Israeli forces across the West Bank, notably in the area of Hebron, East Jerusalem and Ramallah.

OCHA reported that between 21-27 January, 53 Palestinians – including 10 children, were injured in clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in the West Bank, notably in Abu Dis – Jerusalem governorate, Kafr Qaddum – Qalqiliya governorate, and Wadi Qana – Salfit governorate. These incidents brought to 129 the number of Palestinian injured in similar incidents since the beginning of 2014.

In Gaza on 13-14 February, in the West Bank, Israeli forces reportedly opened fire and killed a Palestinian they were seeking to arrest. The man was allegedly affiliated to the leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

On 31 January, OCHA reported that Israeli airstrikes caused 10 civilian injuries and significant damage to civilian homes, public services and agricultural property. The strikes were reportedly launched in response to rockets shot by Palestinian factions toward southern Israel earlier in the day.

On the same day, seven civilians were injured, including four by live ammunition, when Israeli forces opened fire at demonstrators approaching the fence separating Gaza and Israel. On 16 January, Israeli air strikes in the Gaza Strip reportedly left four children and a woman wounded. One of the strikes targeted a camp allegedly used for training by the Ezzedine al-Qaddam Brigades, the armed wing of the territory’s Hamas rulers. On 9 January, a Palestinian child was reportedly injured due to an Israeli tank shell, shot in response to Palestinian shooting. On 24 December, a child was reportedly killed and at least six people wounded in a series of Israeli air and tank strikes on the Gaza Strip, which allegedly came in response to the shooting of an Israeli along a security fence separating Gaza and Israel. Two other air strikes were reported in northern Gaza on militant positions, where they caused no casualties.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

According to OCHA, 2.1 million people need humanitarian assistance in the Palestinian territories, with protection of the civilian population, improvement of food insecurity, provision of access to basic services, and prevention of forced displacement being the highest priorities. Longstanding protection threats affecting the Palestinian population, including movement and access restrictions, continue to generate high levels of humanitarian need.
Access

Heavy Egyptian military deployment along the border combined with severe access restrictions on people and vehicles into the border area has resulted in a dramatic decline in the transfer of goods and fuel through the tunnels between Egypt and Gaza. As of early January, OCHA reported the waiting list for people registered to travel outside the Gaza Strip now exceeds 5,000 people, including those seeking urgent medical treatment. In December, the number of people exiting Gaza via the Rafah Crossing was only 15% of the monthly average recorded during the first half of 2013, dramatically decreasing from 20,340, to 3,000 people exiting in December. The Rafah Crossing remains the primary exit and entry point to the Gaza Strip for Palestinians. Movement across the other crossing points Erez and Kerem Shalom in northern Gaza Strip has been severely restricted since September 2000.

Displacement

In January 2014, aid agencies in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem reported an increase in Israeli demolitions of Palestinian property, using information made available by OCHA’s Protection of Civilian Database. Between July 2013, when the US-brokered Israeli-Palestinian peace talks began, and December, the number of demolitions increased by 43%, while the number of displaced Palestinians increased by nearly 75% compared to the same period in 2012. Between 28 July and 31 December 2013, demolitions caused the displacement of 452 people, compared to 250 displaced by similar events over the same period in 2012. Additionally, humanitarian partners indicated that of the 663 Palestinian structures torn down in 2013, 122 were built with international donor aid.

Disasters

According to OCHA in December, the OPT experienced one of the strongest winter storms in recent decades, with extreme weather conditions exacerbating already fragile living conditions and livelihoods among a significant number of Palestinians. Extensive damage was caused to greenhouses and animal shelters, resulting in production losses which adversely impact the food insecure population, approximately 1.6 million people.

In the Gaza Strip, heavy rains triggered flooding and widespread power outages in low-lying areas, resulting in the temporary evacuation of 10,000 people, and causing damage to an estimated 21,000 houses. The weather conditions also reportedly caused the collapse of some 70 tunnels.

In area C of the West Bank, herders and Bedouins were also reportedly affected by rains, especially due to the precarious nature of their housing and animal shelters.

Food Security

Over 770,000 people are estimated to be food insecure in the West Bank alone, according to the UN. Prior to the tunnel closure, the WFP Socio–Economic and Food Security Survey revealed an increase in the food insecurity in Palestine, showing that 1.6 million people (34% of households in Palestine) were food insecure, a rise from 27% in 2012. The deterioration was most pronounced in Gaza, where food insecurity levels surged from 44 to 57%. Economic pressure on Gaza could impact the number of persons in need of humanitarian assistance in 2014. The unemployment rate, which is normally around 30%, is expected to rise as construction and tunnel-trade employment stagnates.

Displacement

The shortages of electricity and fuel, as well as of building materials, have further undermined people’s livelihoods, particularly those employed in construction, agriculture and fishing. Additionally, the halt in the smuggling of food products via the tunnel has triggered an increase in food prices – 11% for bread, 33% for rice, and 7% for vegetable oil. These factors combined are expected to be reflected in an increased number of families affected by food insecurity. Figures for 2012 indicate that 57% of the population is affected by food insecurity, up from 44% in 2011. About 1.1 million people (about 65% of the population) are already receiving food aid.

As land preparation for the upcoming growing season is starting, shortages and high prices of fuel in Gaza Strip lead to higher production costs and a greater risk for farmers who plan on growing crops will need (supplementary) irrigation.

Health and Nutrition

Shortages of affordable fuel used to operate backup generators have severely disrupted the normal functioning of critical hospital functions, such as emergency rooms, operating theatres, and neo-natal care, OCHA reports. All health facilities, including 30 hospitals and over 135 health clinics are affected.

Access to health care is further affected by the chronic shortage of drugs. Lack of sufficient funding and coordination between the Gaza and Ramallah authorities are main underlying reasons for this development. The restrictions imposed by the Egyptian authorities on the Rafah Crossing, which has served as the main entry point for most medical donations has further exacerbated the situation. As of late November, 30% of the essential drugs and 52% of medical disposables are at zero stock (141 types of medication and 469 types of medical disposables), according to OCHA.

WASH

As reported by OCHA, an estimated 600,000 people in the Gaza Strip may not have access to adequate and safe water and sanitation services as a result of increased power outages and lack of fuel.

There is an acute shortage of fuel to power standby generators at 291 WASH facilities across Gaza, including water wells, ground tank pumps, booster stations, desalination plants, sewage pump stations and wastewater treatment plants. OCHA states that this has

Displacement

...
resulted in reduced water supply to households, with only 15% of the population supplied every day, 25% once every four days, 40% once every three days, and 20% every two days, with supply cycles lasting 5-6 hours.

In November, OCHA said that fuel shortages, combined with unreliable electricity supply, continue to disrupt the provision of basic services, including water supply, sanitation, health and transportation. For example, the operation of 291 water and sewage facilities has been severely affected, and access to running water has already declined across the Gaza Strip.

When water is supplied, delivery lasts for only six to eight hours. Consequently, many families are forced to purchase unsafe water from unregulated water vendors and distributors. Initial reports indicate that people, mostly children, are filling jerry cans from these desalination units during night hours (when the electricity is on), raising protection concerns.

Updated: 28/02/2014

PAKISTAN CONFLICT, FLOODS, DISPLACEMENT, EARTHQUAKE

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

24 February: Security sources reported that Asmatullah Shaheen, a top commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban, had been killed by unidentified gunmen in Dargah Mandi village near Miransha in North Waziristan in the country’s tribal belt. The killing may be seen as another indication of the increasing fragmentation of the Taliban movement in Pakistan while, according to militants’ sources, Shaheen was considered to be a proponent of peace talks with the Government.

22 – 24 February: Over last week several militants’ attacks that killed have been recorded in different parts of Pakistan against the background of ongoing large-scale military operations in North Waziristan. The attacks have notably targeted the northwestern cities of Peshawar, Kohat, and the Buner district, close to Swat Valley and have killed at least 17 people.

20 – 25 February: Daily airstrikes against militants’ bases and training camps in areas between South Waziristan and North Waziristan have been ongoing since 20 February when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif personally authorized the military operation – a possible sign that the Pakistani authorities have eventually given in to pressure from the military for tougher action against the Taliban. To date, Pakistani security sources reported that over 115 militants have been killed following several days of attacks.

Access to the area remains heavily curtailed and no report from an independent source is available, making it impossible to assess civilian casualties or levels of displacement. Local sources however reported that a significant number of people had been displaced.

20 – 22 February: The Pakistani Taliban declared that there was no chance of peace in Pakistan unless the authorities agree to change the country’s political system and establish Islamic Law. The statement effectively puts an end to the elusive promises brought to life by the recent launch of peace talks between the authorities and the insurgents. On 20 February, Islamabad had already suspended the ongoing talks with the Taliban following attacks by the militant group against the military.

18 February: Pakistan’s former ruler Pervez Musharraf eventually arrived to court to face treason charges that may result in the death penalty. The trial represents a landmark event that may further test the balance of power between an increasingly assertive civilian government and the influential military establishment who ruled Pakistan under Musharraf and still retain significant power.

Mid-February: OCHA reported that an estimated 1.08 million people, largely IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the FATA, were in need of protection assistance. In addition, an estimated 690,000 people were reportedly in need of assistance on access to safe drinking water and improved knowledge of household water treatment among off-camp IDPs and in areas of return in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the FATA.

KEY CONCERNS

- Military operations against the Taliban in the north western tribal areas and militant attacks in urban centres are ongoing and continue to impact civilians. To date, peace talks between the Pakistani Taliban and the authorities have still not officially started.

- An estimated one million people are internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal belt as of mid-December. Though numbers are difficult to ascertain, there are an estimated 2.5 million documented and undocumented Afghan refugees in Pakistan (UNHCR).

- As of December, other priority humanitarian needs in Pakistan were related to access to basic health care, with an estimated 1.21 million in need of health assistance, nutrition assistance - with an estimated 1.59 million people in need, and food security with an estimated 1.06 million people, almost exclusively IDPs, needing immediate assistance (OCHA).

- As of February, an estimated 1.21 million people, almost exclusively IDPs (living both in and outside camps) and returnees are in critical need of food assistance (OCHA).

- Pakistan is an extremely hazard-prone country. In September, an estimated 185,000 people were severely affected by a 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Baluchistan province (OCHA).

Political and Security Context

The security situation remains volatile as militant attacks in urban centres and military
operations against the Taliban in the tribal belt are ongoing. To date, Pakistani authorities were unable to start comprehensive peace talks with the insurgents, although a preliminary meeting with representatives of the insurgents was held in early February. As of February, Pakistan’s relations with neighbouring countries, as well as the US, remain tense.

US-Pakistan Relations and US Drone Strikes

On 4 February, official sources said the US has sharply cut back on drone strikes in Pakistan as peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban get underway. However, the Obama administration indicated that it would continue carrying out strikes on senior Al Qaeda officials if any immediate threat to the US was identified. Over the past six months, official and public outrage over drone strikes has intensified, with local leaders saying they constitute a breach of the country’s sovereignty. However, as NATO winds down combat operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s support remains essential for Washington.

In early December, following protests in Pakistan over US drone strikes, Washington was forced to temporarily halt ground shipments from Afghanistan via its main Pakistan supply route. The affected route, which connects Torkham Gate at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border to the port city of Karachi, is crucial to ensure the ongoing withdrawal of the US combat mission from Afghanistan. The alternative Northern Distribution Network, a grid of supply lines running through Central Asia and Russia, is far more costly and politically challenging to use. A long-term suspension of the supply lines running through Pakistan could potentially derail the whole US regional strategy.

In November, the death of Pakistani Taliban’s leader Mehsud, and continuation of drone strikes, had significant repercussions for short-term US-Pakistan relations. These events may also prove to undermine recent improvements that were signalled by the resumption of US security assistance to Pakistan that had been largely suspended since 2011. In Pakistan, several politicians had called for a suspension of US military supply lines into Afghanistan as witnessed between November 2011 and July 2012.

On 21 November, the day after Pakistan’s Foreign Minister indicated that the US had committed to cease drone strikes whilst the government tried to re-engage the insurgents in peace talks, another drone attack was carried out against an Islamic seminary in the Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The strike killed a senior member of the Taliban-linked Haqqani Network (HN), Maulvi Ahmad Jan, and four other people. HN has come under pressure following the shooting of its chief financier in Islamabad on 11 November by unidentified men. Although the authorities gave no official comment, Washington has long called for Pakistani authorities to crack down on the group blamed for high-profile attacks in Afghanistan and listed as a terrorist organisation by the US since September 2012.

The drone attack on 21 November was the first to be conducted in Pakistan since the 1 November, when Hakimullah Mehsud, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban, was killed in a US drone strike in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), probably in North Waziristan, along with three other militants. The strike occurred as Pakistani authorities started negotiations with the TTP. In the aftermath, Islamabad openly denounced the attack as a US bid to sabotage the peace talks and the hardliner Mullah Fazlullah that assumed command of the TTP immediately rejected negotiating with authorities. On 4 November, US Secretary of State Kerry officially endorsed the attack that killed Mehsud.

Prime Minister Sharif has repeatedly called for an end to US drone strikes against militants, although such attacks have led to the deaths of several senior TTP leaders. Nevertheless, an increasing number of drone attacks in FATA have been reported, with at least nine occurring sinceSharif was sworn in on 5 June. As reported by Pakistani authorities in late August, 339 drone attacks have been recorded since 2004 resulting in the deaths of an estimated 2,200 people, including 400 civilians and 200 victims deemed probable non-combatants in FATA. No official US data on the number of people killed in drone strikes is available, though numbers released by Islamabad have been questioned by independent organisations. In late October, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch released separate reports voicing criticisms over the recourse to drone strikes and detailing the deaths of dozens of civilians in such attacks. In January 2014, western sources stated that the number of civilian casualties in 2013 in Pakistan was much lower than Pakistani estimations, based on the study of news reports, field investigations and research by iNGOs.

India-Pakistan Context

On 8 October, despite the holding of talks aimed to calm bilateral relations between Islamabad and New Delhi, India’s military continued to accuse Pakistan of helping insurgents to push into Indian Kashmir as foreign forces withdraw from neighbouring Afghanistan. Pakistan denies it is helping militants to cross into the Indian part of the contested region.

On 29 September, Prime Minister Sharif met his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, amid heightened tensions over their shared Kashmir border. During the meeting, both leaders announced intentions to restore calm as an initial step toward reconciliation. On the eve of these talks, on 26 September, new fatal incidents were reported across the Line of Control, the de facto border in the disputed region, after heavily armed militants reportedly crossed from Pakistan into India. Since 6 August, tensions have been running high in Kashmir, with international observers fearing that the November 2003 ceasefire and stalled peace talks between the two countries may be put into question. India and Pakistan have been trading blame for the incidents that, as of early September, killed at least 44 members of the security forces since the beginning of the year, up from 17 for all of 2012, according to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, which monitors the violence.

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

Afghanistan-Pakistan Context

On 29 January, a senior official stated that Islamabad sees a chance to resume stalled peace talks between the Afghan authorities and the Taliban in April after Afghan President Karzai steps down following presidential elections. According to observers, Islamabad is likely to play a crucial role in any renewed peace initiative in Afghanistan.
The comments from Pakistan could indicate reluctance on the part of the Taliban to engage with the Karzai administration. Afghan authorities have asked Taliban leaders in Pakistan to reach to Taliban groups in Afghanistan as the rift between Kabul and Washington widens.

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

In late October, a breakthrough in negotiations between President Karzai and Prime Minister Sharif was reportedly achieved at a meeting in London. In the aftermath, on 20 November, a delegation of senior officials from Afghanistan's High Peace Council travelled to Karachi to start peace talks with the Afghan Taliban, and met notably with Baradar, who had been released by Islamabad in September, but reportedly remained under close Pakistani supervision. During its visit, the Afghan delegation reportedly met with the former Taliban commander, but no discussion was effectively conducted. Earlier, Islamabad released a first group of detained Afghan Taliban, including senior commander Mansoor Dadullah, who were similarly not directly handed over to Afghan authorities. The release of influential Taliban commanders detained in Pakistan is seen by the Afghan authorities as instrumental in bringing the Taliban to the negotiation table.

**National Political Context**

On 27 November, Lieutenant-General Raheel Sharif was nominated as the country’s new army chief. Considered a moderate, Sharif is known for his role in reshaping Pakistan's strategic policy in 2007, when he turned the focus away from the rivalry with India and pushed for a more nuanced policy which considered the internal threat from militants as equally pressing. To a large extent, the nomination may be seen as another attempt by civilian authorities to put pressure on the influential military establishment.

On 18 February, Pakistan's former ruler Pervez Musharraf eventually arrived to court to face treason charges that may result in the death penalty. Officially, Musharraf's trial had opened in Islamabad on 1 January. The trial represents a landmark event that may further test the balance of power between an increasingly assertive civilian government and the influential military establishment who ruled Pakistan under Musharraf and still retain significant power. The development is thus reported to be a victory for the country's increasingly assertive judiciary, although several observers voiced concerns that the trial may anger the Pakistani military.

On 18 November, Pakistan authorities decided to put Musharraf on trial for treason for suspending the constitution and declaring a state of emergency in 2007 while he was in power. The decision is the latest development in a lasting imbroglio of intertwined legal cases against the former ruler since he returned to Pakistan from voluntary exile to participate in May polls.

On 22 February, the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban, declared that there was no chance of peace in Pakistan unless the authorities agree to change the country’s political system and establish Islamic Law. The statement effectively puts an end to the elusive promises brought to life by the recent launch of peace talks between the authorities and the insurgents.

Although the chief spokesman for the movement reiterated in the aftermath that there was still hopes that the talks would resume, the statement effectively represents a major personal setback for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who has repeatedly pushed for a negotiated solution with the insurgents since arriving to power. The diplomatic stalemate is thus likely to put Prime Minister Sharif increasingly under pressure from the military and the hawks of his administration to validate a more aggressive course of action against the insurgents while military operations in North Waziristan are already ongoing since mid-February. According to informal sources, the Pakistani military establishment, although supporting a negotiated solution publicly, has been pushing for tougher action against the Taliban over the past weeks.

On 20 February, Islamabad had already suspended the ongoing talks with the TTP following attacks by the militant group against the military. In a rare admission of casualties, Pakistan’s army indicated that more than 100 soldiers had been killed by Taliban fighters since September 2013, around the moment Prime Minister Sharif convened an all-party conference which unanimously opted for peace talks. The decision to officially suspend the dialogue with the TTP came hours after the military bombed suspected Taliban hideouts in a tribal area on the Afghan border, opening the way for a major offensive that is now ongoing.

Two days before the suspension, the negotiations had already suffered a setback after a government committee cancelled a scheduled round of talks following the reported execution of 23 soldiers in revenge for army operations, held in captivity by the Taliban since 2010. While a faction of the TTP announced it had killed the soldiers, it is still unclear whether it acted with the approval of the Pakistani Taliban's central command. Since the launch of the talks in January, several Taliban representatives have been increasingly seen as trying to distance themselves from the violence on the ground, in a possible indication of the existence of rifts within the TTP. Meanwhile, on 18 February, an attack by Taliban militants against an army car that killed a senior army officer, had also dealt a blow to the peace initiative.

Over the past decade, short-lived ceasefires achieved through tentative peace initiatives have often been used by the TTP to buy time to regroup and find new resources in order to resume fighting. With military operations ongoing in North Waziristan, the lack of consultation with the powerful Pakistani military on the decision to begin talks is also seen as an important constraint and another sign of the growing rift between the military establishment and the civilian authorities.

On 29 January, the administration of Prime Minister Sharif reinvigorated the government's commitment to a dialogue-first approach to the Taliban insurgency, saying also that talks...
could not go ahead before the cessation of violence. A special four-member committee of non-parliamentarians was reportedly formed to kick-start the dialogue. Responding to the offer, a TTP spokesman indicated that a Taliban leadership meeting would be convened in the coming days to discuss the issue, whilst continuing to deny that there was any rift within the Islamist movement.

On 30 October, while at a summit in London, Prime Minister Sharif announced that his administration had started talks with the Pakistani Taliban in an attempt to end the insurgents’ attacks across the country. Since coming to power in May, Sharif has repeatedly suggested that his administration was ready to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban, although counterinsurgency operations were to continue until negotiations started.

**Pakistan’s Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP)**

On 24 February, security sources reported that Asmatullah Shaheen, a top commander of the Tehreek-e-Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban, had been killed by unidentified gunmen in Dargah Mandi village near Miransha in North Waziristan in the country’s tribal belt. Shaheen had formerly held the position of interim chief of the Pakistani Taliban, following the death of Hakimullah Mehsud in November. Against the background of the break of peace talks between the Government and the Taliban in mid-February, the killing may be seen as another indication of the increasing fragmentation of the Taliban movement in Pakistan since the death of Mehsud. According to militants’ sources, Shaheen was considered to be a proponent of peace talks with the Government.

On 1 November, the leader of the TTP, Hakimullah Mehsud, was killed in a US drone strike and the TTP promoted Mullah Fazlullah, a brutal commander from the Swat Valley, as its new leader at a “shura” meeting. Earlier reports had suggested the relatively moderate Khan Said would assume command. On 7 November, the TTP officially rejected the idea of further peace talks with the authorities, a clear indication of the hardline turn taken by the movement with the promotion of Mullah Radio, a nickname gained by Fazlullah for his Islamist radio broadcasts in Swat valley. On 8 November, the TTP announced that it would orchestrate a wave of revenge attacks for the killing of Mehsud and chiefly target “security forces, government installations, political leaders and police”.

On 2 December, local militant and intelligence sources claimed that the elusive Mullah Fazlullah had relocated from Afghan Nuristan province, where he was based following a 2009 push by the army into Swat valley and gone back to tribal areas to assume command of the Taliban insurgency. According to several sources, his escort included three high-profile Taliban commanders, Azam Waziristan, Mufti Abdul Rashid, and Muftah Udin, in a clear attempt to give more credibility to Fazlullah’s leading position within the TTP.

To a large extent, the TTP is a fragmented movement comprised of several factions that pursue different agendas. The promotion of Fazlullah is an important change within the movement whose centre of gravity may shift from the traditional North Waziristan area to the Swat valley, although it is yet unclear from where Fazlullah is intending to lead the insurgency. According to local sources, the promotion of Fazlullah is already triggering a rift in the TTP with the loyalty of several commanders to their new leader vacillating despite the reported endorsement of Fazlullah by Afghan Mullah Omar. Eventually, sources close to the militants have also repeatedly hinted that differences of opinion also exist within the TTP regarding the possibility to engage into peace talks with the Government.

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

**Security Context**

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

CRSS reported that the violence-related casualties in October came down by approximately 50% compared to September. The death toll was 291 with another 277 people being injured with targeted killing being one of the major causes of deaths followed by acts of terrorism, militants’ attacks and counter-terrorism operations by security agencies. In October, Sindh was the province most affected by violence, counting more deaths than Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan combined. October thus marked a significant decline compared to September – the deadliest month so far this year with a 35% increase compared to August – when the death toll was 493 with another 555 people injured in attacks, the bulk of the victims being civilians. By contrast, the number of dead were highest in KPK, followed by Sindh, FATA, and Baluchistan in September.

Over last week several militants’ attacks that killed at least 17 people have been recorded in different parts of Pakistan against the background of ongoing large-scale military operations in North Waziristan. On 24 February, a suicide bombing outside the Iranian consulate in the northwestern city of Peshawar has resulted in two security guards being killed and more of a dozen people being injured. The attack was claimed by the Pakistani Islamist armed group Mast Gul, previously known for violently opposing Indian rule in contested Kashmir. The group also declared its intention to further target Iranian installations, as well as Shi’ite communities, in Pakistan. On 23 February, at least 12 people were killed, mostly from the Shi’ite minority, following a bombing at a bus stop near government and police offices in the northwestern district of Kohat, according to police sources. On 22 February, a roadside bomb targeting a local leader of a national party killed three people and injured another two in northwestern Buner district, close to Swat Valley.

On 18 February, Taliban fighters opened fire on an army car and killed a senior officer in Peshawar, in an attack certain to destroy the prospects of peace negotiations between the government and the insurgents. The talks had been cancelled the previous day after insurgents said they had executed 23 soldiers in revenge for military operations in FATA. A week before, 13 people were killed and another 20 wounded in an attack targeting a
cinema in the north western city of Peshawar. Also in Peshawar on 12 February, an attack on the home of a policeman killed nine members of a pro-government militia.

On 13 February near Karachi, an explosion targeting a bus of policemen killed 12 and wounded another 58. The incident was claimed by the Taliban.

In the second week of February, Pakistan's Baluchistan province grew increasingly volatile. On 10 February, authorities reported that separatist rebels blew up three gas pipelines in Baluchistan, cutting supplies to Punjab province, Pakistan's most populous and wealthy, overnight. The attack was claimed by the banned Baluch Republican Army. On 9 February, eight people were killed following an attack on the home of two pro-government militia leaders in restive Baluchistan region. Following the assault, six of the attackers were killed in ensuing clashes with members of the militia and armed paramilitary forces.

On 4 February, a suicide bomber killed at least eight people and injured 42 near a mosque frequented by minority Shi'ite worshippers in a neighbourhood of Peshawar. On 2 February, a Peshawar cinema was hit by two blasts that killed five and injured at least 31. On 29 January, three bomb blasts in Karachi, including a suicide attack on security forces, killed four people and injured another four. On 23 January, six people were killed and seven injured in a bombing in Peshawar. The incidents were the latest in an upsurge of militant attacks which have left at least 104 people dead in January.

On 21 January 2014, a bomb exploded near a bus carrying Shi'ite pilgrims returning from neighbouring Iran to the western city of Quetta. The blast killed at least 22 people and wounded over 20 others, many victims were women and children. On 20 January, a suicide attack in Rawalpindi injured 30 and killed 13 people including eight soldiers and three children in a market next to Pakistan's military headquarters. On the same day, also in Rawalpindi, a bomb attack detonated at an army check point, killing at least 12 people. This came one day after the TTP killed 26 soldiers and wounded at least 25 others in a suicide bombing in the northwestern city of Bannu, in the deadliest attack on Pakistan's military in several years. The two high-profile attacks on 19-20 January are said to mark a sharp upturn in violence from the TTP after a period of relative calm following the death of the leader Hakimullah Mehsud in a drone strike in November.

Earlier in January, attacks by militants targeted several urban centres and volatile areas, hitting, among others, a Sunni Islamic seminary in Peshawar, the Tirah Valley adjacent to the Afghan border, the Ibrahimzai area of Hangu district in northwest Pakistan, and the province of Baluchistan, including its capital Quetta. The attacks killed over 30 people and wounded at least 90 others.

In late 2013, sectarian violence against Shi'ite Muslims, who comprise a fifth of the country's 180 million population, intensified. According to observers, attacks against Shi'ite targets are largely due to Sunni militias such as the Taliban and the Punjabi Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and the violence is worst in the western province of Baluchistan. Human Rights Watch reported that over 400 Shi'ites were killed in 2013.

Military Operations

Following the breakdown of tentative peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban in mid-February, Government troops have intensified military operations against militants' bases in the FATA, targeting mainly areas bordering Afghanistan, between South Waziristan and North Waziristan, where armed Islamist groups have allegedly established training centres used to prepare suicide bombers, according to Pakistani security sources. Local reports indicated that some of the camps were effectively run by foreign, Uzbek and Turkmen, fighters. In January, the Pakistani military had already extensively bombed militants' strongholds in the FATA.

On 25 February, Government's troops launched renewed air strikes against militant strongholds in the FATA. The latest air strikes took place in the remote Shawai Valley and Dattakhel areas of North Waziristan, reportedly hosting militants' training facilities and compounds. According to security sources, at least 30 militants were killed. On 24 February, at least 38 insurgents were killed in air strikes also in North Waziristan according to security sources, adding to the at least nine people killed in helicopter attacks in Hangu district, in western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the previous day. To date, access to the area remains heavily curtailed and no report from an independent source is available, making it impossible to assess civilian casualties or levels of displacement. Local sources however reported that a significant number of people had been displaced.

According to security sources, attacks against militants' hideouts have been ongoing since 20 February when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif personally authorized the military operation – a possible sign that the Pakistani authorities have eventually given in to pressure from the military for tougher action against the Taliban after the peace talks broke down. According to security reports, the first wave of strikes targeted mainly the Mir Ali area in North Waziristan, killing an estimated 40 people.

In late January, Government forces conducted a first major military operation against Taliban militants in the North Waziristan region that resulted in over 40 militants’ killed. Local sources also reported that dozens of civilians have also died in the air strikes with the information being impossible to ascertain. As of 31 January, local sources reported that up to 70,000 people may have left their homes following fighting in North Waziristan, although reports indicate that, as of early February, half of them may now have returned home. Local sources also reported that the assault flattened several houses and sent villagers fleeing from their homes. The military operation followed two high-profile TTP attacks on 19-20 January, respectively targeting Pakistani troops in the northwestern city of Bannu and a market next to Pakistan’s military headquarters in Rawalpindi.

In mid-December, Pakistani troops pounded suspected militant hideouts for several days. Insurgents responded by attacking the military in the North Waziristan district on the Afghan border. According to local sources, over 50 were killed, including a number of civilian casualties, in the incident.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As reported by OCHA in November, an estimated 4.2 million people were in need across Pakistan. These people include one million IDPs in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1.61 million registered Afghan refugees, 185,000 affected by the Baluchistan earthquake, and 1.5 million people affected by recent floods.

Access
In January 2014, OCHA reported that 13 attacks against aid workers were reported in Pakistan, 11 of them in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the rest in Sindh province. The attacks killed 11 people and injured four.

In early December 2013, OCHA reported that 91 attacks against aid workers had been recorded since the beginning of the year, including 29 people killed, 41 injured, and 21 kidnapped as of 30 November. Following a surge in attacks in September-October, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains the most affected province recording 37 attacks, including 20 people killed, followed by the FATA with 21 attacks, and Sindh with 20 attacks. Attacks on polio vaccination teams are recurrent, and armed groups have killed more than 30 polio workers and troops protecting them in recent years. On 17 February, gunmen abducted a six-member polio vaccination team in Ping village at the border of South Waziristan, northwest Pakistan. A day before, a bombing targeted a polio team in Peshawar, killing a policeman. On 21 January, three polio vaccinations workers were killed in a targeted attack in Karachi. On 22 January, seven people were killed and 11 injured in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province's Charsadda district after a bomb exploded near a police van used to provide security for a polio vaccination drive. Throughout 2013, several deadly attacks on polio vaccination teams were reported in FATA.

As of mid-November, OCHA reported that INGOs continued to face delays in the renewal of their Memoranda of Understanding, four-month interim permissions to work in Pakistan, visas, and project implementation permits.

Aid response to the earthquakes that hit Baluchistan in September has been complicated by the remoteness of the region and the presence of separatist insurgents who fear that the army, which is overseeing aid operations, may take advantage of the crisis to move more forces into the area. Attacks on helicopters carrying aid workers were reported in September. On 10 October, new attacks by Baluch militants against security forces and government officials engaged in relief operations were reported.

Displacement

IDPs

Although no figures are yet available, large-scale internal displacement has been reported in North Waziristan in the FATA as a result of an ongoing large-scale military offensive conducted by Government troops against the militants’ in the area since February. In late January, up to 70,000 people had fled the region and took shelter in schools, private homes and veterinary clinics in the usually peaceful areas of Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan on the edge of the FATA, following a first military operations by Pakistan military. As of 15 February, UNHCR indicated that, as a result of the protracted conflict, an estimated one million people were now internally displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA and in need of assistance. In November, local sources suggested that up to 1.6 million IDPs from FATA and from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were located in the Peshawar area. Since mid-March, government military operations against the Taliban and clashes between militant groups in the Tirah Valley in Khyber Agency have led to large-scale population movement to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to UNHCR, in 2013, an estimated total of 140,000 people were displaced across Pakistan, the majority in the FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The UN reported on 15 February that almost 110,000 people had returned to the FATA in 2013.

As reported by OCHA, 90% of IDPs live with relatives or in rented houses. Most IDPs are subsistence farmers, but displacement has forced them to leave their farms and relocate to the Peshawar area where employment and livelihood opportunities are limited. At present, many IDPs have switched to irreversible coping strategies, taking on debt and selling assets to pay for food.

Refugees

The exact numbers of Afghan refugees in Pakistan remain difficult to ascertain. According to UNHCR and IOM, as of 31 December, there were an estimated 2.9 million Afghan refugees and illegal migrants, including up to one million undocumented Afghans, in Pakistan. Most of the Afghan refugees, with the majority being located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, required humanitarian assistance.

This summer, the authorities agreed not to expel Afghan refugees who had permission to stay in the country until June, with Kabul and Islamabad also agreeing, at an UN-backed meeting, to continue efforts to solve the protracted refugee situation. National media reports that the presence of Afghan refugees is triggering tensions in host provinces.

Food Security

Food insecurity is at emergency levels with an estimated 58% of Pakistan’s population considered food insecure as of November 2013, as reported by OCHA quoting a National Nutrition Survey. Seven districts face IPC phases 3 (Crises) and 4 (Emergency). Inflation, rising fuel prices, and stagnating domestic productivity are pushing up food prices. Prices of wheat and wheat flour have steadily increased since June 2012, underpinned by higher producer support prices.

As of mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.21 million people, almost exclusively IDPs (living both in and outside camps) and returnees, were in critical need of food assistance and were therefore key targets for food distribution.

Health and Nutrition

OCHA reported in mid-February that an estimated 1.21 million people were in need of health assistance. Needs include the provision of basic health services, quality maternal and child health services and health care to treat acute respiratory diseases now the winter season has started. Priority targets included over 508,000 IDPs and returnees in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Dengue

The WHO said that between 1 and 4 January 2014, thousands of cases of dengue fever had been confirmed across various regions, notably: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 9,402; Sindh 5,765; Punjab 2,676; and Baluchistan 42. The disease is currently affecting areas that do not usually fall into the traditional endemic belt for dengue fever, marking a significant difference from the usual patterns of cyclical dengue outbreaks. In 2013, dengue fever cases were also reported from less endemic areas, according to WHO.
**Polio**

On 28 August, health officials warned of a polio outbreak after the disease was detected in North Waziristan, a tribal district where militant groups have banned vaccinations. In mid-January, health officials in the FATA hailed the success of a three day anti-polio drive. This success however comes against the background of the persistent threat of militant attacks on polio workers. A number of polio vaccination workers had previously refused to operate in the area because of security concerns before being persuaded otherwise. According to WHO, the current polio outbreak in Syria is related to a strain of the virus from Pakistan.

According to health officials, the number of polio infections is rising, with 91 cases reported in 2013 compared to 58 in 2012. To date, most cases have been recorded in the FATA, followed by northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, eastern Punjab, and southern Sindh provinces. As of 15 February, the number of new polio cases reported in 2014 stands at 11, including 10 in North Waziristan in FATA, and one in Bannu in KP. Humanitarian partners warned that displacements from North Waziristan could result in the spread of the virus to neighbouring districts.

Children are especially at risk of polio contamination, with most children affected being <5. Pakistan is one of the only countries in the world where polio is still endemic. According to authorities, over 240,000 children in North and South Waziristan are at risk with a Taliban ban on vaccination exacerbating the serious polio outbreak.

**Measles**

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

**Malnutrition**

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

In late January, local media quoted a December WFP survey as expressing concern about malnutrition in remote Neelum valley in the mountainous north of Pakistani-administered Kashmir. An estimated 21% of children – which is high above the national average – were found to be malnourished in the region.

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.59 million people are in need of nutrition assistance, including almost 55,000 moderately acutely malnourished children, an estimated 17,000 severely acutely malnourished children and over 46,000 pregnant and lactating women who are priority targets.

**Shelter**

As reported by OCHA in mid-February, 540,000 people across the country are in need of NFIs, such as blankets, quilts, shawls, kitchen sets, sleeping or plastic mats, jerry cans and solar lamps to cope with the harsh winter forecasted this year. To a large extent, the humanitarian caseload includes returnees, IDPs in the FATA and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, as well as people recovering from earthquakes and floods in Baluchistan, Punjab and Sindh.

**Protection**

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 1.08 million people, largely IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the FATA, were in need of protection. Specific needs include specialized protective services and referral assistance for children, women, older persons and persons with disabilities in displacement/return areas.

**WASH**

In mid-February, OCHA reported that an estimated 690,000 people, largely among off-camp IDPs and returnees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the FATA, were in need of assistance on access to safe drinking water and improved knowledge of household water treatment.

Updated: 25/02/2014

BANGLADESH INTERNAL UNREST, CYCLONE

**KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

23 February: Local sources reported an attack by gunmen on a prison van carrying militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a banned Islamist movement, to a courthouse. The attack resulted in the killing of one policeman and in three militants being freed according to security sources. To date, little additional information is available.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones which cause extensive damage and floods.

- An estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims refugees from neighbouring Myanmar are living in official camps, and some 200,000 refugees residing in unofficial camps or villages, where they receive little or no humanitarian assistance.

- Due to frequent natural disasters and civil unrest, the level of food insecurity is rising. An estimated 40% of the population is considered food insecure, especially in the western parts of the country.
- In 2013, 507 people died as a result of political violence making it the deadliest year since the country's independence. Most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters during a time of major political crisis in late fall. It is unclear whether civil unrest will ease following the contested victory of the ruling Awami League at the last elections.

Politics and Security

Political Context

In 2011, the ruling Awami League (AL) scrapped a caretaker government, a system in which neutral leaders take over the leadership three months before elections and oversee the ballot. In mid-October, the AL refused to step down by 24 October, as should have happened ahead of the 5 January elections. Several critics have argued that the AL is trying to stay in power up to the elections to influence their outcome. The move set the stage for an ongoing political crisis that ended with the opposition boycotting the elections. No agreement on how to bring an end to the protests was reached between the authorities and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The election standoff has sparked ongoing daily violence since late October.

On 6 January, the day after the AL victory in an election which was boycotted by the BNP. On 6 January, the head of the BNP accused the government of being involved in the killing or disappearance of more than 300 activists around the time of the country's election. According to Begum Khaleda Zia, an estimated 22,000 had been arrested in late December and early January. According to observers, such accusations are relatively common in the intense rivalry, and often violent confrontations, of Bangladesh's politics while the presented numbers remain extremely difficult to verify.

According to various reports by international human rights organizations, nearly 150 people were killed and thousands injured in election-related violence in recent months as the country experienced a major political crisis marked by repeated strikes, or hartals, staged across the country by the BNP. Local monitoring organizations have indicated that the death toll might be as high as 180 people.

The elections were branded as flawed by international observers and mocked as a farce by the BNP. To date, the political crisis has not been fully resolved and the impasse between the two dominant parties is fuelling concerns about economic stagnation and further violence in Bangladesh.

On 12 January, the country’s new government was sworn in following the contested elections of the previous weekend and Sheikh Hasina began a third term as Prime Minister. Meanwhile the leader of the BNP, Begum Khaleda Zia, reiterated that she considered the government illegitimate after being released after two weeks of virtual “house arrest”.

On 6 January, the day after the AL victory in an election which was boycotted by the BNP and the rest of the opposition and accompanied by deadly clashes, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated that a new election would only be held if the opposition put an end to violent clashes. The ruling AL won more than two-thirds of the seats in a contest that was shunned by international observers as flawed and derided by representatives of the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). To date, the opposition continues to denounce the elections that were also marked by a very low turnout of voters. Hasina said that she had no doubts over the legitimacy of the AL victory.

Violence erupted on the night of the 25 November after the Election Commission announced that elections would be held on 5 January. The opposition was demanding the prime minister’s resignation, the establishment of a non-party government prior to the elections and the suspension of the announced election date. In August, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) – the country's main Islamic party allied to BNP – has called for a strike, with only minimal BNP support, to protest a Bangladeshi court ruling that declared JI illegal on 1 August, largely forbidding it to take part in the general elections. The JI eventually boycotted the elections on 5 January.

Political Crisis and Civil Unrest

According to estimates by the local NGO Ain of Salish Kendra (ASK), a total of 507 people were killed in political violence in Bangladesh in 2013, making it the deadliest year since the country's independence. ASK said most of the deaths occurred during clashes between security forces and opposition protesters during a time of major political crisis in late fall and were largely fuelled over disputes over war crimes judgments. However, an alternative account from the news agency, AFP based on local police reports claimed that 278 people – about half the total cited by ASK – died in 2013, many in clashes with the police.

It remains unclear how the situation will evolve in Bangladesh following the AL contested victory at the last elections. On 15 January, the opposition alliance conducted another dawn-to-dusk strike in the sub district of Gabtali, part of the northern Bogra district. The opposition are protesting against the authorities whom they accuse of filing fake legal cases against 52 of their leaders and activists.

Several protest strikes that resulted in businesses closing and transport routes being blocked have been staged by the BNP in December and January, amidst widespread violence that resulted in casualties. On 5 January, the Election Day itself has been marred by violence with local media reporting that at least 18 people were killed and hundreds of polling stations attacked by opposition supporters. To date, observers remain concerned that the ongoing political crisis will further damage the country’s economy, especially the $22 billion garment industry that accounts for 80% of exports.

In 2006, prolonged clashes between the two main parties resulted in dozens killed and an intervention of the military establishment that cancelled elections and set up a military-backed caretaker government.

As reported by OCHA in late January, political disturbances in January led to attacks on religious minorities, mostly Hindus, and a number of smaller indigenous groups in Bangladesh. On Election Day, attacks on Hindus were reported in the Jessore district in southwestern Bangladesh. Similar incidents have been reported from other minority communities, mostly in the southwestern and northern districts, including Satkhira, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh, Chittagong, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Dinajpur.

On 23 February, local sources reported an attack by gunmen on a prison van carrying militants of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), a banned Islamist movement, to a
The attack resulted in the killing of one policeman and in three militants being freed according to security sources. To date, little additional information is available.

Security Context – Labour Protests

Aside from the political crisis, Bangladesh has been hit by a wave of protests in mid-November by garment sector workers demanding a pay raise. According to reports, workers took to the streets, blocked major roads, and attacked factories in the Ashulia industrial belt, on the outskirts of Dhaka. Although information remains limited, over 50 people, including security forces, have been wounded. In spite of the fact that Bangladeshi garment factory owners agreed to an increase of the minimum wage following mediation by authorities on 14 November, protests continued for another day with workers demanding a bigger increase while an estimated 200 factories remained shut down in the country.

The Bangladeshi garment sector has already been seriously affected by the several hartals called by the BNP during the political crisis with AL over the past weeks. The mounting violence and strikes are a continuing threat to the country’s garment export industry, on which the impoverished country heavily relies. It employs an estimated four million people, mostly women. Against this background, the garment industry has already been disrupted by several industrial accidents that have killed more than a thousand workers in the last year alone and have triggered widespread protests.

Security Context – 1971 War Trials Protests

Since the beginning of 2013, tension between Islamic groups and secular activists, and between the authorities and the opposition, have run high. Over the year, Bangladesh has seen recurrent hartals called by JI or the BNP to protest against the arrest and conviction of senior party officials for committing offences during the 1971 War. The hartals have caused significant disruption to business and losses to the economy.

On 13 December, at least four people were killed in renewed violence after the execution of the JI Islamist leader Abdul Quader Mollah. The execution – the first ever to be held following a conviction for war crimes – triggered lootings, blockades of roads and clashes between supporters of the opposition, including Islamist groups, and supporters of the AL as the country is still facing a political deadlock. The decisions to execute Mollah drew condemnation from various international human rights organizations.

On 3 November, a Bangladesh war crimes court sentenced to death in absentia two men accused of committing offenses during the country’s 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. As both men are currently not in Bangladesh, the sentence may further fuel the ongoing political crisis. Since the beginning of 2013, the tribunal has brought down eight convictions, with six defendants sentenced to death, including senior members of the BNP and the JI. In October, two senior members of the BNP were sentenced, one to death and one to life imprisonment, causing only limited protests across the country. In September, national hartals were enforced after a senior leader from JI was handed the death sentence, overturning a previously imposed life sentence.

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

According to humanitarian partners, the current political crisis is already significantly affecting operations in Bangladesh with both international missions and local field trips being cancelled, while stakeholders struggle to oversee and implement programmes.

Displacement

Bangladesh is currently hosting a large number of Rohingya Muslim refugees, an ethnic religious and linguistic minority subjected to exclusion and discrimination in Myanmar. The majority of Rohingyas are denied refugee status by the Bangladeshi authorities, and as of late November, observers expressed concerns over the government’s recent announcement of a “Rohingya strategy”, which allegedly plans for a survey to be conducted across the country in order to identify and register all Rohingyas living illegally in Bangladesh. While humanitarian organisations hope that the national strategy will aim to provide the displaced with a legal status, or at least a temporary one, very limited information is available and officials have so far declined to comment on the content of the document.

As of September, according to humanitarian partners, an estimated 30,000 Rohingya Muslims living in official camps were being assisted by aid agencies. A further 200,000 refugees residing in unofficial camps or villages said they were receiving little or no humanitarian assistance and almost no protection from abuses.

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

Disaster

Bangladesh is considered to be one of the world’s most hazard-prone countries, and is hit every year by cyclones which cause extensive damage and floods.

In late January, the authorities reported that an estimated 270,000 people had been affected by waterlogging in the southwest of the country, with the sub-districts of Keshobpur (Jessore), Tala, Satkhira Sadar, Kolaroa (Satkhira) being the worst affected. The disaster has also reportedly damaged local infrastructure as well as up to 10,000 houses. Priorities needs for those affected include shelter, livelihood assistance and WASH.

In early January, the Government carried out relief efforts in response to a cold wave across parts of the country, notably the northwest. Although cold temperatures are a regular occurrence in the country, the last relatively mild cold wave affected people in...
areas where households are generally very poor and have limited coping capacity.

### Food Security

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

Local authorities said the country’s annual inflation rate rose to 7.15% in November, up from 7.03% in October, ending a declining trend since July. As reported, higher prices have been registered for both food and non-food items in what may be seen as the first indication of the tangible impact of the ongoing civil unrest on the country’s economy. According to observers, economic growth is expected to slow in Bangladesh to less than 6% in the year until June 2014 from 6% in 2013 following the current unrest.

### Health and Nutrition

As reported by ECHO in late February, an estimated 500,000 Bangladeshi children suffer from severe malnutrition annually. Among children under five years of age, 48% are stunted and 13.5% are acutely malnourished, with 3.4% of these, suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

**Updated: 28/02/2014**

### POLITICS AND SECURITY

- **Syrian refugees**

  Jordan is hosting the second largest number of Syrian refugees after Lebanon. According to the UNHCR on 25 February, over 577,7086 Syrian refugees have registered with UNHCR in Jordan. In December 2013, the average number of daily arrivals rose to 374 arrivals per day and the rate decreased to an estimated 276 per day in January.

  The continuous arrivals have swelled Jordan's population size by almost 10%, placing enormous pressure on public services, particularly considering that most Syrian refugees have settled in impoverished rural areas in the north, where they exacerbate the already weak economic situation of the Jordanian population by increasing competition for jobs in the informal market and contribute to rising costs of housing.

  Around 19% of Syrian refugees live in camps, the rest in local communities. The vast majority of refugees are residing in northern areas near the Syrian border, e.g. Irbid, Mafraq, Irbid, and Zarqa, as well as in Amman.

  The winter season is exacerbating the situation for many Syrian refugees in Jordan. Snowstorm Alexa, the worst winter storm in 20 years, struck Jordan on 11 December, bringing snowfall to higher areas and rain elsewhere. Unexpected shortages of gas cylinders in Mafraq disrupted aid agencies' winterization activities.

  Nearly 11,000 have been recorded by UNRWA, which provides cash assistance for vulnerable PRS, who constitute the vast majority of the PRS population. About 200 Palestinians from Syria are held in the Cyber City facility, from which they are restricted from leaving. The GoJ has restricted entry of PRS and those who manage to enter the country are subject to a number of protection issues, including refoulements. About 30% of PRS households are headed by women.

    **Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS)**
Camps

Za'atari is the second largest refugee camp in the world and is equivalent of an entirely new city in Jordan. Thousands of them have left the camp through both official and unofficial channels to move toward urban centers in Jordan. The lack of security in certain parts of Za'atari camp impedes access to services, particularly for women and girls. Security incidents and protests in Za'atari camp are frequent.

About 4,000 Syrians live in the Emirates Jordan Camp (EJC). Known as the ‘five-star’ camp due to its high living standards and extensive support, primarily from the UAE Red Crescent, the camp provides 3 hot meals each day and caravans for all residents. Despite the improved living standards, a significant number of refugees have also left EJC camp for urban areas or to return to Syria.

An estimated 2,000 defectors from the Syrian military are being held at Jordanian military premises in Mafraq. The GoJ has not permitted UNHCR to conduct status determination for this caseload.

Non-Syrian refugees

Due to the conflict in Anbar province in neighbouring Iraq, UNHCR reported that the number of Iraqis seeking UNHCR protection increased fivefold to 1,300 in December 2013 and the demand persisted in early 2014. Additionally, the number of Sudanese asylum seekers continues to increase in 2013. Over 2,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, Somalia and other countries currently reside in the country.

Food Security

In 2012, the Jordanian Government gradually removed fuel subsidies, putting additional pressure on prices, with “fuel and lighting” increasing by almost 20% year-on-year. In 2013, the average total inflation rate reached 5.6%, however the Government agreed to introduce a set of structural reform, allowing for example to keep wheat bread fully subsidized. Additionally, the conflict in neighbouring Syria is disrupting trade between the two countries.

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

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

Aid agencies report that some Syrian refugees are donating to poor Jordanians or selling them food received from aid agencies at a discounted price. Northern 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 provided by the international community are for sale on the black market.

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

To accommodate the spike in water demand, Jordan is drawing on additional water resources, including buying water from private wells. The extra demand on water and sanitation services will cost the government over $220 million dollars per year, even as some Jordanians receive less water per capita.

Health and Nutrition

Cases of water-borne and water-related diseases have appeared in Za’atari camp on a weekly basis, including diarrhea, scabies, leptospirosis, rotavirus, and hepatitis A. Other communicable diseases related to hygiene conditions have been reported, including acute jaundice syndrome, chicken pox, lice, and measles.

Polio

In Jordan, the response to the recent polio outbreak in Syria began with polio vaccinations in Za’atari refugee camp, as part of a national campaign providing measles, rubella and polio vaccinations, as well as vitamin A supplement distribution. In January 2013, it was reported that immunization campaigns have reached 88% of the registered Syrian refugee population.

Updated: 26/02/2014

LEBANON CONFLICT, INTERNAL UNREST

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

24 February: An Israeli airstrike targeted the eastern Lebanese – Syrian border area of Janta near the village of Nabi Sheet where Hezbollah has military training camps and sizeable military posts. According to a local security source, the attack was aimed at two trucks suspected of transferring missiles and a missile launcher.

23 February: A suicide bomber detonated a car bomb at an army checkpoint in Hermel, north Lebanon. The Lebanese branch of the extremist Islamists group Jabhat al Nusra claimed responsibility for the attack fuelled by anger over Hezbollah’s support for Assad’s Government in Syria. The extremist group, who have claimed responsibility for 3 other bombings, declared that any areas considered as pro-Hezbollah would be legitimate targets.
20 February: A senior official of the Lebanese Alawite Arab Democratic Party, which backs the Government of Syria, was gunned down in the northern town of Tripoli. The assassination sparked renewed clashes between Alawites in the Jabal Mohsen district and Sunnis in the neighbouring Bab al-Tebbaneh district. Insecurity and violence have been rife in Tripoli, with sectarian clashes regularly flaring up.

KEY CONCERNS

- The ongoing conflict in neighbouring Syria is polarising Lebanon, which is witnessing a rise in insecurity and sectarian tensions, with regular bomb attacks, sporadic clashes and almost daily shelling from Syria into the north and eastern border areas.

- At the end of February, 938,392 Syrians had registered as refugees and nearly 48,000 were still awaiting registration. An additional 130,000 persons are reportedly unwilling to register (UNHCR).

- Intensified fighting in the Qalamoun area of Syria has displaced some 12,800 refugees into Arsal between 9 - 20 February. The recent arrivals bring the total refugee population in Arsal to more than 50,800, exceeding the number of resident Lebanese. Services are insufficient to provide for the growing numbers.

- The continuous influx of Syrian refugees is increasing pressure on the health and education systems, housing, employment opportunities, and food prices and creating tensions between the host and the refugee population. On average, 12,000 refugees enter the country per week.

Politics and Security

International Context

On 9 February, the Hezbollah leadership publicly renewed its vow to continue fighting in Syria alongside President al-Assad’s Government forces. The involvement of the group alongside Syrian Government troops in the offensive against the opposition-held stronghold Qusayr previously prompted the Free Syrian Army and Jabhat Al Nusra to independently warn that their fighters could start fighting Hezbollah inside Lebanon. On 10 July, the UN Security Council called on Hezbollah to end all involvement in the Syrian conflict.

The first major clashes between Lebanese Hezbollah fighters and Syrian opposition fighters inside Lebanese territory were reported in June. 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.

Lebanon – Israel

On 24 February, an Israeli airstrike targeted the eastern Lebanese – Syrian border area of Janta near the village of Nabi Sheet where Hezbollah has military training camps and important military posts in the area. According to a local security source, the attack was aimed at 2 trucks transferring missiles and a missile launcher. While Hezbollah has refrained from commenting on the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that Israel was doing all that was “necessary” to ensure its security.

On 29 December, the Israeli military fired a barrage of shells into southern Lebanon, in response to rockets which hit the Jewish state. The leader of the Al Qaeda-linked extremist group responsible for several of the bomb attacks in Lebanon was charged with firing rockets into Israel after being apprehended by security forces in January. Tension between Israel and Lebanon had spiked in mid-December, when a shooting took place between the Lebanese military and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in the vicinity of the Blue Line border demarcation separating the two countries at Naqura, along the southern border.

National Political Context

A new government was formed on 15 February after 10 months of political stalemate amid exacerbated sectarian tensions. The new government brings together the powerful Shia movement Hezbollah and its allies with the Sunni-led Future Movement bloc, who back opposing sides in the Syria war. The agreed compromise ensures neither side has veto power over the other.

Security Context

The conflict in Syria has polarised Lebanon and increased sectarian tensions, with regular bomb attacks, sporadic clashes and almost daily shelling in the north and eastern border areas.

On 25 January, a statement by an unknown Lebanon-based Jihadist figure announced the creation of a Lebanese branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is the most active Sunni militant group in Iraq, and has also seized large swathes of rebel-held territory in neighbouring Syria. Although the authenticity of this specific claim could not be verified, several developments indicate a rise of alleged Al Qaeda-affiliated currents of thought in different parts of Lebanon. The pledge appeared to come from the largely Sunni populated northern city of Tripoli, which has seen frequent battles pitting Sunni militants against Alawites, an offshoot of Shi’ite Islam. While Lebanon’s powerful Shiite Hezbollah movement has reportedly sent troops to Syria to back Damascus’ regime, Lebanese Sunni Islamists are said to mostly support the Syrian opposition. The announcement came a day after Lebanon’s former Prime Minister denounced violent sectarian attacks across the country, and said that the country’s Sunni Muslims refuse to be a part of any conflict between Hezbollah and Al Qaeda.

In a further development, Al Qaeda’s general command officially broke all links with ISIL on 3 February, in a move that can be seen as a clear attempt by Al Qaeda to reassert control over fragmented Islamic fighters in Syria, by bolstering the Al Qaeda affiliated Al Nusra Front, following months of tensions with ISIL. It remains unclear how this shift will impact on the situation of ISIL in Iraq and Syria, and on its reported newly-founded branch in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, a fresh round of shelling was reported across the border with Syria, and in the...
areas of Hermel and Masharia Al Qaa in the Bekaa valley without causing any casualty.

On 3 February, a suicide bomber detonated a bomb inside a passenger van headed towards the southern suburbs of Beirut. He was the only fatality though 2 others were seriously injured.

On 21 January in Beirut, a bomb attack killed four people and injured 35 in the Shia-dominated Haret Hreik area. This is the sixth attack targeting areas considered Hezbollah strongholds since the group announced on April 30 that it was sending fighters to support President Bashar al-Assad in neighbouring Syria, and it is also the third in a month. The blast occurred in a library close to other government and residential buildings, and was shortly claimed by the group Jabhat al-Nusra in Lebanon, believed to be a branch of Syria's al-Qaeda faction. On 16 January in the Bekaa Valley, a bomb attack targeted a predominantly Shi’ite Muslim area of the town of Hermel, killing three people and wounding 36.

On 17 January, shells fired from Syria killed seven people, including five children in the border town of Arsal, in the eastern Lebanon Bekaa Valley. The Sunni-dominated city hosts thousands of Syrian refugees who have fled the violence in their country, and has been bombed several times by Syria’s air force, most recently in December in a raid which prompted the Lebanese army to hit back in retaliation.

On 2 January, four people were killed in a bomb blast in a southern Beirut stronghold of the powerful Shiite Hezbollah movement, which has sent fighters to Syria to fight alongside Assad. This occurred less than a week after the assassination of former finance minister Mohammed Chatah, a Sunni Muslim who was a vocal critic of Syria and Hezbollah. The attack took place on 27 December, and killed eight people and injured at least 70 in central Beirut, close to the government’s headquarters and parliament. Both Hezbollah and Damascus rejected accusations that they were behind the blast.

On 17 December, a car bomb exploded near a base of the Shiite movement Hezbollah in eastern Lebanon, killing one person and wounding 10 others. In recent months, several attacks have targeted Hezbollah-controlled areas and convoys in the capital Beirut and in the Bekaa valley in the east of the country. On 19 November, a twin suicide attack targeted the Iranian embassy in southern Beirut, killing 23 people, and was believed to be linked to the involvement of Tehran-backed Shiite militants in Syria’s war.

In a similar incident in mid-August, a car bomb in Beirut’s Ruwais district killed 27 and wounded over 330 people. A previously unknown group, the Battalion of Aisha, claimed responsibility for the attack, accusing the movement of sending fighters to help the Damascus regime.

In a separate development, repeated inter-sectarian strife were reported in the northern city of Tripoli over the last months, raising fears that the Syrian conflict may become a regional one between Shi’ite and Sunni Muslims.

Between 18-23 January, sectarian clashes killed 10 people and wounded 60 in Tripoli, in the latest wave of fighting between the Sunni neighbourhood of Bab Tabbaneh and the Alawite neighbourhood of Jabal Mohsen. Troops were reportedly deployed on the frontline separating the two areas, and a ceasefire, which was agreed at an emergency meeting on 23 January, appears to be holding. The violence has reportedly caused hundreds of families to flee the neighbourhoods. On 5 January, sniper fire killed one person and wounded eight in Tripoli. The victims came from both the Alawite neighbourhoods of Jabal Mohsen and Bab Tabbaneh, whose residents support the revolt in neighbouring Syria. This incident caused people from the two neighbourhoods to flee their homes for safer areas across the city. In early December, a Lebanese soldier was killed and six others wounded when pro- and anti-Syrian regime supporters clashed, breaking an army-imposed truce.

### Humanitarian Context and Needs

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

### Access

Security in Tripoli, Wadi-Khaled and the North of the Bekaa Valley remains volatile with rockets and shelling hitting a number of towns, impeding humanitarian access, and restricting activities, and the availability of services. Additionally, access to unregistered Syrians detained in Lebanon remains challenging.

### Displacement

As of 26 February, the UNHCR reported that the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon stands at 938,392 including nearly 48,000 awaiting registration. According to UNHCR, an additional 130,000 persons are reportedly unwilling to register. Some 12,800 Syrian refugees arrived in Arsal between 9-20 February coming from towns in the Qalamoun district which has undergone an intensified military in the past few weeks. The recent arrivals bring the total refugee population in Arsal to more than 50,800, exceeding the number of resident Lebanese. The key challenge is shelter. Approximately 11% of the new arrived refugees are setting up tents in areas beyond the Lebanese army checkpoints where the authorities cannot ensure the safety and security of refugees or humanitarian workers. There is an urgent need for improvement of waste management to avoid potential hazardous consequences to the health of the refugees and the host community.

In addition, an estimated 160,000 Lebanese returned from Syria since the beginning of the crisis. Along with host communities – which represent an estimated 200,000 people, they are said to receive limited support and assistance, which increases inter-community tensions.

With no formal camps, refugees are spread across 1,500 locations of which 400 are informal settlements. Vulnerable Syrian families are settling in communal areas - highway underpasses, green spaces between major roads, etc.; 69% of refugees stay in rented
accommodation including unused shops, worksites and tents in makeshift settlements, half-finished buildings, and cramped apartment blocks, often in unhygienic conditions and with little access to food, water, and medical care.

Reports of informal settlements being dismantled by the local authorities are on the rise. It is extremely challenging and urgent for these refugees to find alternative accommodation considering the onset of winter, especially in elevated areas in north Lebanon and in the Bekaa, which shelter an estimated 64% of the refugees.

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

Food Security

According to a World Bank assessment, the continuing refugee inflow will increase national vulnerability. Should the rate of refugee inflow continue at the same rate, more than 170,000 additional Lebanese could fall into poverty by 2014, due to competition with refugees for unskilled labour. Currently, one million Lebanese live in poverty. The study estimates that the unemployment rate in Lebanon could double, exceeding 20% and affecting 320,000 people. An estimated US$1.6 billion will be needed to restore quality and access to health, education, and social safety nets to pre-crisis levels. According to the Vulnerability Assessment for Syrian Refugees conducted in May 2013, 70% of Syrian refugees and Lebanese affected by the refugee influx – 909,000 and 200,000 people respectively, are in need of water support, and 29% in need of sanitation assistance. The number of people requiring food assistance continues to increase, straining existing resources.

Health and Nutrition

The continuous influx of refugees has vastly increased the workload in the Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs), overstretching their capacity to provide healthcare to all those in need. Physical access to healthcare centres is a challenge for some refugees who live in remote locations. Access is further limited by short working hours and the lack of trained health personnel. Refugees are charged the same medical fees as Lebanese nationals. Despite contributions by the UNHCR and other partners in health centres supported by the humanitarian community, many refugees still find it difficult to cover the costs of medical treatment. Some providers require upfront payment of costs not covered by UNHCR. According to UNHCR, the current supply of medicines for acute and chronic diseases is insufficient to cover the rising demand. Additionally, prevention of disease control and outbreaks presents a challenge, in view of already crowded living conditions, poor water and sanitation.

According to UNICEF, the increasingly volatile situation in the Bekaa (especially in Arsal and Hermel), North Lebanon (Wadi Khaled and Tripoli), and Beirut due to shellings, bombings and increasing tensions between Syrian refugees and the host community, has heightened the psychological distress experienced by refugee children as well as children in host communities. Psycho-social well-being is often not seen as a priority and may go unsupported.

Child malnutrition

Malnutrition screening began in October 2013, since which time 391 children have been treated for malnutrition by UNICEF and partners. 159 of these cases were in January. As malnutrition treatment was uncommon in Lebanon prior to the crisis, some hospitals continue to face difficulties with the malnutrition treatment protocol. According to WFP, nutrition status among children <5 has generally deteriorated in Lebanon, with significant differences existing among regions within Lebanon. The lowest rates were found in Beirut and Mount Lebanon with 4.3%, while the Bekaa valley and North Lebanon have the poorest nutritional status in the country with 8.9% and 6.7% respectively. Cases of severe acute malnutrition were also found in these areas.

Polio

Lebanon launched a massive public health initiative on 8 November to vaccinate all children <5 against polio, following a confirmed outbreak in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate in neighbouring Syria. Due to poor immunization rates in some parts of neighbouring Syria, the recent outbreak of polio represents a risk for Lebanon, especially considering the continuous influx of displaced. The November campaign reached nearly 590,000 children under five, for a 99.4 percent coverage rate. UNICEF is preparing for two further campaigns in March and April.

WASH

According to local authorities and humanitarian partners in December 2013, 27% of the Syrian refugees and Lebanese affected by the refugee influx – 909,000 and 200,000 people respectively, are in need of water support, and 29% in need of sanitation assistance. The refugee population currently resides in over 1,500 locations across Lebanon, 400 of which are in informal settlements. This number is expected to increase with ongoing new arrivals. Many settlement locations lack adequate sanitation and access to water, and are located in flood-prone areas, which raises the risk of water-borne disease. There have been low levels of rainfall in Lebanon in recent months. It was reported that in Beirut, that the average rainfall up to 20th January of last year was 455mm while the general average in the past 30 years was around 440mm. But this year’s average so far is a mere 238mm.

Updated: 26/02/2014

PHILIPPINES CONFLICT, FLOODS, TYPHOON

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late February: OCHA reported that all IDPs in Maguindanao province in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, have now returned home after having been
displaced by a government offensive in the area. In Pikit, North Cotabato, most people displaced by the fighting have also returned although local authorities say that over 5,400 people still remained displaced.

**Late February:** The Protection Cluster reported that, following the September armed unrest in Zamboanga city, 50,000 IDPs were still registered as living with host families and over 26,000 IDPs were hosted in government-supported evacuation centres and transit locations. According to the Protection Cluster, there are ongoing tensions over food, water and electricity in communities hosting IDPs.

**Late February:** OCHA said that a nutrition assessment integrated with an immunization programme nearly two months after the Bohol earthquake, showed a deteriorating situation regarding levels of malnutrition in 17 municipalities. With aggravating factors such as damaged and destroyed water, sanitation and hygiene systems and health facilities, acute malnutrition in Bohol has reached emergency threshold level with between 8% and 15% GAM.

**24 February:** OCHA reported that, in addition to food, water and emergency shelter, the highest priority needs of the populations affected by Typhoon Haiyan included tools and materials to rebuild housing, and livelihoods support.

**21 February:** The Department of Health in Eastern Visayas reported that it was monitoring dengue, measles and Chikungunya, three diseases that had reportedly increased in the areas affected by Typhoon Haiyan in the region, particularly in the city of Tacloban.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- The Philippines authorities are currently finalizing a peace deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – the biggest Muslim insurgent movement in the southern Island of Mindanao, to end decades of conflict in the area. The area is however still plagued by attacks from various armed groups who wish to derail the talks.

- The Philippines remains one of the most hazard-prone countries in the world, experiencing several large-scale natural hazards a year.

- In November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan has affected over 14.1 million people, including 4.1 million people who are still displaced (OCHA). In January 2014, a tropical depression and a storm affected some of the areas previously hit by Haiyan, hampering humanitarian access and reconstruction efforts.


Political and Security Context

Mindanao Island has been plagued by a long-term insurgency waged by Muslim groups. The original Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), from which the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) later sprang, fought a 25-year guerrilla war for independence, until the signature of a peace treaty in 1996 granted it limited self-rule in the southern Muslim area.

**Peace Talks in Mindanao**

On 29 January, Philippines’ President Benigno Aquino officially swore to crush militants opposed to the recently achieved peace deals in Mindanao. After the government wrapped up peace talks with the MILF, Manila swiftly deployed its military against a hardline splinter faction, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

On 25 January, in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, the Philippines authorities agreed the final chapter of peace talks with the representatives of the MILF, the country’s largest Muslim separatist group. The deal on the Annex on Normalization, the fourth and last part of a peace roadmap that was set out in October 2012, eventually opens the way to an historic agreement to end four decades of rebellion that had killed some 150,000 people. In December, the two parties had already signed an annex dealing with power sharing. Two other annexes on transitional arrangements and sharing of revenues were signed earlier in 2013.

The expected Comprehensive Peace Agreement will allow the MILF to administer an expanded autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao by 2016, in return, among other things, for decommissioning its weapons. Over the years, several armed groups – mostly splinter groups from the MNLF or the MILF – have tried to derail the peace talks by conducting attacks in Mindanao. Most of them believe that the 12,000-strong MILF has compromised too much in the peace process.

**Government Military Operations in Mindanao**

Despite the conclusion of peace talks between the authorities and the insurgent Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) – the main Muslim insurgent group active in Mindanao – on 27 January, Government forces are still battling splinter insurgent groups on the main Mindanao Island, as well as across several small nearby islands.

On 10 February, it was reported that Government forces killed six rebels from the Islamic Abu Sayyaf insurgent group in the jungle area near Talipao town on Jolo Island, adjacent to Mindanao Island. According to local reports, Abu Sayyaf is still holding a dozen hostages, including two Europeans, in Sulu province, an autonomous island province located in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

On 21 February, security sources confirmed that the two Filipino-Algerian filmmakers, kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf some eight months ago, were released by the militant group. According to the authorities, as military operations are ongoing, there are still an estimated over 300 Abu Sayyaf fighters who have survived years of government offensives.

On 28 – 29 January, a military offensive was launched against the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), a hard line MILF splinter faction, which numbers a few hundred fighters. The clashes occurred in and around remote southern farming villages in Datu Piang and Shariff Saydona municipalities in Maguindanao Province, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. At least 53 people were killed and, according to OCHA, over 11,000
displaced in five days of fighting. The authorities reported that three child soldiers were among the people killed while several civilians have also been injured in the fighting. Observers say the clashes should end quickly due to an arrangement with the MILF. In late January, the MILF has cooperated with the authorities in the operations against the BIFF by holding back their own forces and not letting militants seek refuge in MILF territory.

In September – October, fighters belonging to another splinter faction of the original MNLF led by Nur Misuari, assaulted the southern city of Zamboanga in western Mindanao Island, igniting three weeks of fighting. Zamboanga is a city with a mixed Christian and Muslim population. The attacks were largely seen as an attempt to sabotage the peace talks between the authorities and the MILF.

According to official estimates, fighting in Zamboanga had left an estimated 202 were killed, including over 160 militants, and an additional 324 injured in the violence, and displaced over 140,000 people as reported by UNHCR. To date, a significant part still remains displaced while heavy fighting have left entire neighbourhoods razed to the ground. As reported by Human Rights Watch, Philippines security forces and Muslim rebels have committed serious abuses during fighting in Zamboanga.

**Militants Attacks**

On 2 February, five people were injured after unidentified men threw a grenade into a Roman Catholic Church in Zamboanga, a southern city in Mindanao. On 13 January, an improvised explosive device exploded and injured 24 people, some critically, in Arakan, in the southern island of Mindanao.

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Access**

Insecurity in parts of Mindanao Island and nearby areas is still limiting humanitarian access. In addition, the several concurrent disasters experienced by the Philippines over the past weeks have also been hampering aid delivery for populations affected by Typhoon Haiyan and the Bohol earthquake.

**Displacement**

As of 30 January, OCHA reported that over 11,000 people had been displaced following a major offensive against MILF rebels in Mindanao. As of late February, OCHA reported that all IDPs in Maguindanao province in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao have now returned home after having been displaced by a government offensive in the area. In Pikit, North Cotabato, most people displaced by the fighting have also returned although local authorities say that over 5,400 people still remained displaced.

In late February, the Protection Cluster reported that, following the September security crisis in Zamboanga city, 50,000 IDPs were still registered as living with host families and over 26,000 IDPs were hosted in government supported evacuation centers and transit locations. OCHA reported in mid-January that the most pressing needs of the affected populations included food, nutrition, WASH, health and protection. According to the Protection cluster, there are ongoing tensions over food, water and electricity in communities that host IDPs.

**Disasters**

*(For Typhoon Haiyan, please refer to a separate section below)*

Tropical storm Kajiki, locally known as Basyang, struck the Philippines archipelago on 31 January. As of 14 February, the storm, which was of relatively low intensity had affected at least 47,000 people, including over 5,600 displaced, across 9 provinces of regions Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and CARAGA. Typhoon Haiyan had previously affected these areas in November. Needs related to WASH and Shelter assistance were reported among the affected population.

In mid-January, tropical depression Lingling, locally known as Agaton, caused floods and landslides across the south of the archipelago, affecting 16 provinces in Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN, Caraga regions and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. As of 31 January, at least 70 people had been killed, with an additional 9 being still missing, and 86 injured in the disaster. As of 31 January, the authorities reported that 1.14 million people were affected by Lingling, including over 49,000 people who were displaced. Over 3,400 houses had been damaged by the disaster. As reported by UNICEF in early February, the last two-weeks of torrential rains brought on by Tropical Depression Agaton over Eastern Samar has also caused damages on shelters in areas affected by Haiyan.

On 15 October, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the southern Philippines, southeast of Manila near the town of Carmen in Bohol province. Authorities have reported 223 people dead, eight missing, 975 injured, and 1.25 million people affected across six provinces of Central and Western Visayas regions. The earthquake damaged the homes of over 367,000 people, destroying or damaging over 76,000 houses, 41 bridges, and 18 roads, as well as causing power cuts across affected areas. As of late February, OCHA reported that significant needs in shelter, early recovery and health services remained in the affected areas.

As of late February, an estimated 364,000 people remained displaced following the disaster, with only 1,900 people staying in official evacuation centres that are scheduled to close by the end of March, and the rest staying in makeshift tents outside ECs or with host communities. In late January, OCHA also reported that 300,000 of the worst affected people are in need of food assistance.

As reported by OCHA, although Typhoon Haiyan did not cause significant damage in Bohol, it directly impacted the response capacity of partners. Many government and international humanitarian organizations shifted resources from Bohol to the Haiyan affected areas.

**Health and Nutrition**

In November, OCHA reported that congestion in the evacuation centres hosting IDPs in Zamboanga remains a significant problem. The WASH cluster reported that 53% of water samples collected from storage tanks and jerry cans in evacuation centres tested positive...
for bacteria (coliform). As of late February, a large number of people displaced by the crisis in Zamboanga are still hosted in evacuation centres.

**Dengue**

According to the Department of Health, 1,528 dengue cases were reported in the first quarter of 2013 in Soccoksargen region, of whom 669 (41% of cases) were children <10. In Korondal city, South Cotabato province, the municipal government declared a state of calamity on 27 June after a dengue outbreak was declared in the town. According to authorities, 239 dengue cases had been recorded as of 8 June, more than the 159 cases recorded in 2012.

In the first half of 2013, 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.

**Malnutrition**

An increasing number of children in evacuation centres following the crisis in Zamboanga are suffering from malnutrition in southern Philippines, according to the UN. According to the last assessment reported in December, SAM was detected in 9.4% of children, an increase of one percentage point from two weeks ago, while cases of MAM had risen to 11.5% from 11.1% among children under five across several surveyed camps. Although the SAM rate is still under the 10% threshold, humanitarian actors report it as a major concern.

In late February, OCHA reported that a nutrition assessment integrated with immunizations for children, had been affected by Typhoon Haiyan. As of 24 February, 4.1 million people, including 5 million children, were still displaced. The majority of the IDPs (97%) are located in Eastern and Western Visayas region while shelter materials are still reportedly needed. BIFF armed group in Mindanao continues to actively recruit and train child soldiers.

**Typhoon Haiyan**

On 8 November, Category 5 Typhoon Haiyan, locally known as Yolanda, made landfall on the east coast of the Philippines. Haiyan, reportedly one of the strongest storms in recorded history, is the third major disaster to hit the country in the past two months.

Latest figures on 14 February estimated that 6,201 people were killed as a result of Typhoon Haiyan and that over 28,600 were injured. The government also confirmed that 1,785 people are still missing. OCHA estimated that 14.1 million people, including 5 million children, had been affected by Typhoon Haiyan. As of 24 February, 4.1 million people remained displaced, with the majority sheltering outside evacuation centres.

According to December assessments, the areas affected by the disaster were Central Visayas region with 5.9 million people reported affected – 30% being considered poor, Eastern Visayas region, with 3.87 million people reported affected – 46.6% being considered poor, Eastern Visayas region with 3.8 million people reported affected – 28% being considered poor, MIMAROPA region with 466,000 people reported affected – 32% being considered poor, and Caraga with 70,000 people reported affected – 25% being considered poor.

On 24 February, OCHA reported that, in addition to food, water and emergency shelter, the highest priority needs of the affected population included tools and materials to rebuild housing, and livelihoods support. Seeds for farmers, displacement management, disease outbreak prevention and nutrition intervention were also reportedly immediate priorities. In January, OCHA reported that many households affected by the typhoon have either limited or no purchasing power for shelter materials or agricultural tools and equipment. Meanwhile, as of early January, humanitarian partners indicated that some isolated communities in highland areas, especially in Panay Island and northern Negros Occidental, have received only limited assistance so far. There is a possibility that food security will further deteriorate in these areas.

As of 12 January, the authorities reported that over 1.14 million houses had been damaged by the typhoon. The number includes over 550,000 houses that were completely destroyed. Earlier assessments also reported extensive damage to infrastructure and public buildings, including the destruction of a large number of elementary schools, across the affected areas and especially in Tacloban. According to first governmental estimates, the cost of rebuilding houses, schools, roads and bridges in typhoon-devastated central Philippines could reach $5.8 billion, potentially forcing the Manila to seek cheap loans from international development agencies.

**Access**

As reported by OCHA in early December, humanitarian access to people affected by Typhoon Haiyan has improved, despite remaining logistical constraints and ongoing debris clearance in most affected areas. Extensive damage to local infrastructure, notably roads, is hampering the delivery of aid.

**Displacement**

As of late February, OCHA and UNICEF confirmed that almost 5 million people, including 1.7 million children, were still displaced. The majority of the IDPs (97%) are located in Eastern and Western Visayas region while shelter materials are still reportedly needed. Over 98% of the IDPs are hosted outside evacuation centres.

**Food Security and Livelihood**

As reported by FAO in late January, food security in the Philippines is considered satisfactory except in areas that have been affected by several storms last year, especially the areas affected by Haiyan. The disasters caused significant damages to housing and infrastructure, including irrigation and storage facilities. Losses to the stored crop at household level and in warehouses are likely to be high. In addition, FAO reported that heavy losses of staple food crop rice, other high value crops such as, sugarcane, coconut, fruits and vegetables, as well as of livestock, poultry and fisheries were expected across the affected areas. High winds, heavy rains and localized floods also resulted in the
loss of stored paddy production and seeds.

As of 6 December, WFP reported that a multi-cluster initial rapid assessment was conducted and supported the initial estimate that 2.5 million people are in need of food assistance. As reported by OCHA on 3 December, an estimated 3 million people were in need of life-saving food assistance following the passage of Typhoon Haiyan. On 16 December, OCHA reported that overall 5.6 million people, including people not yet food insecure, were in need of support to prevent food insecurity and restore agricultural and fishing livelihoods.

Livelihood

According to OCHA, at least 5.9 million workers were affected by the typhoon, with their livelihoods and sources of income being destroyed, lost or disrupted. This number was increased from earlier assessments that reported that 5.6 million people across 36 provinces had lost their livelihoods as a result of the typhoon. In mid-December, OCHA estimated that 2.2 million were engaged in risky forms of employment.

In addition, around 65% of fishing communities in the affected areas lost their productive assets, and 28,000, mainly small-scale, fishing vessels were destroyed. As reported by OCHA on 7 January, the Philippines Department of Agriculture indicated that an estimated 400,000 people (distributed approximately among ¼ farming and ¼ fishing households) had been directly affected by the typhoon.

On 5 February, the NGO Oxfam reported that, despite the huge humanitarian efforts after Haiyan, some sectors of the population had been left out of the recovery effort. Oxfam said that the poorest coconut farmers, traders and fisher people had been severely affected across the areas hit by the Typhoon and were still in need of support. These groups, including the over 1 million families living in typhoon-hit areas reliant on the coconut industry, are still reportedly in need of livelihood support.

Health and Nutrition

A need for treatment of chronic conditions in areas affected by Haiyan was reported. OCHA, WHO and UNICEF indicated that the risk of outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases and measles remained of concern in affected areas given the lack of safe water and sanitation, displacement and overcrowding, and sub-optimal vaccination coverage. As of February, communities are also reportedly in need of nutrition and clean water in order to prevent a further spread of acute respiratory infections in the coming months. As of late February, WHO reported that acute respiratory infection was still most common cause (30%) for consultations in areas affected by Haiyan.

On 21 February, the Department of Health in Eastern Visayas reported that it was monitoring dengue, measles and Chikungunya, three diseases that had reportedly increased in typhoon-affected areas in the region particularly in the city of Tacloban.

Dengue and Chikungunya

Between 1 January and 18 February, 470 suspected cases of dengue fever with two deaths were reported in Eastern Visayas by local authorities.

On 10 January, OCHA reported that dengue continues to rise in and around Ormoc City, where 78 cases (eight of them international aid workers) have been reported since November. In addition, there are also reports of Chikungunya fever, another viral infection transmitted by mosquitoes. In mid-February, the Health Cluster said the number of Dengue cases in the area was declining.

Measles

Between 1 January and 18 February, 180 cases of measles with two deaths were reported in Eastern Visayas by local authorities.

Typhoid Fever

The Health Cluster reported that they are investigating an outbreak of typhoid fever with 10 reported probable cases, including one death, in Aguiting in Eastern Visayas – the area affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Malnutrition

On 7 January, the Nutrition Cluster reported that current priorities included the protection and promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding for 250,000 pregnant women and caregivers. Supplementary feeding for 145,000 children; micronutrient supplementation for 100,000 children, and treatment of acute malnutrition in 27,000 children were also identified as priorities. On 10 December, the Nutrition Cluster indicated that up to 12,000 boys and girls aged 6-59 months suffered from severe acute malnutrition in seven severely affected provinces alone.

WASH

As of 7 January, the WASH Cluster confirmed that household level sanitation was still a serious challenge for IDPs waiting for shelter. In addition, it was reported that vector control and solid waste management needed to be strengthened to curb public health risks.

As of 9 December, water supply continues to improve in parts of the affected areas – notably Leyte and Busuanga, but rationing is still ongoing and concerns remain regarding sanitation. According to the Health cluster, as of 30 November, sanitation, access to potable water and waste management are currently a major concern in affected areas. Local health authorities reported that population displacement and overcrowding in settlements represent a significant threat to public health condition, and OCHA reported that a number of water systems have tested positive for faecal coliform, raising fears of potential waterborne disease outbreaks.

Shelter

Before the start of rainy season, OCHA stressed in January the acute need for short and medium-term shelter solutions. Earlier reports indicated that the largest shelter gaps in Eastern Visayas were in Tacloban City and along the west coast of Leyte. As of early February, a significant need of shelter was still reported from affected areas.

Updated: 28/02/2014
FLOODS, FOOD

INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Late February: North Korean authorities reported an outbreak of foot-and-mouth, a highly contagious livestock disease. The disease was first reported from a pig farm in a suburb of Pyongyang and has now been spreading to other areas in the capital and to an adjacent county, leading to the culling of thousands of pigs. The outbreak may further heighten food insecurity in the impoverished North Korea.

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

KEY CONCERNS

- Massive human rights infringements, including against prisoners in prison camps who face starvation and torture, continue to be reported from North Korea. Humanitarian access to the country remains extremely limited (UN).

- Information on the food security situation in DPRK remains limited. As of August, an estimated 16 million people (almost 65% of the country’s population) are chronically food insecure and an estimated 2.4 million people need food assistance (OCHA).

- As of August, the malnutrition rates – notably in the northwest – remained extremely high with Global Chronic Malnutrition (stunting) standing at almost 28% and Global Acute Malnutrition (wasting) at 4% among children under five in the country (OCHA).

- North Korea is also a very disaster prone country, regularly experiencing seasonal flooding that, for instance, affected over 800,000 people in summer 2013 (OCHA).

Politics and Security

Human Rights’ Situation

On 18 February, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights urged world powers to refer North Korea to the International Criminal Court (ICC) after a UN report documenting crimes against humanity. The UN team conducting the report also recommended targeted UN sanctions against DPRK civil officials and military commanders suspected of the worst crimes. The report provides also evidence of widespread and systematic human rights violations in the country.

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

North Korea – South Korea Dialogue

On 12 February, Seoul and Pyongyang held their first high-level talks in seven years on their fortified border at the Panmunjom truce village, exploring ways to mend ties while the South and the US prepared up for military exercises that have infuriated the North. According to reports, although no pre-arranged agenda was set, the two sides discussed a range of issues including reunions of families separated during their 1950-53 Korean War.

On 5 September, North Korea agreed to restore a cross-border military hotline with South Korea, in a sign of easing tensions between the rival states. The line had been shut down in early spring. Earlier, in September, North and South Korea reopened the joint industrial park in Kaesong after a series of talks concerning this rare bilateral economic cooperation. Kaesong remains a rare source of hard currency for North Korea. In April, Pyongyang pulled its 53,000 workers out of the park at the height of tensions with Seoul and Washington over its nuclear military programme.

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

Humanitarian Context and Needs

Access

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

On 24 February,

Disasters

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

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

Food Security

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

The results from a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) released in late November similarly indicate that, despite a slight increase in cereal production this year, the majority of households in DPRK have borderline or poor food consumption, with consumption being limited both in terms of quantity and quality. Specifically, WFP reports that 25% of households have acceptable food consumption while 45% and 30% have borderline and poor food consumption respectively.

The overall food production for 2013/2014 is estimated to increase by 5% compared to last year, according to WFP/FAO, allegedly resulting in the smallest cereal deficit since at least the early 2000s. Nonetheless, as reported by WFP/FAO, the food system in DPRK remains highly vulnerable to shocks and key gaps exist particularly in the production of protein-rich foods. According to OCHA, the lack of agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser and plastic sheets) remains the main challenge for food production.

In late February, North Korean authorities reported an outbreak of foot-and-mouth, a highly contagious livestock disease. The disease was first reported from a pig farm in a suburb of Pyongyang and has now been spreading to other areas in the capital and to an adjacent county, leading to the culling of thousands of pigs. The outbreak may further heighten food insecurity in the impoverished North Korea.

In 2011, the entire Korean peninsula was hit by an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease that led to the culling of more than three million livestock in the South alone.

Health and Nutrition

Rates of child under-nutrition in DPRK, measured through stunting, wasting and underweight, has declined over the past decade. However, the rate of chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children <5 remains, amounting to almost 28%, remains of alarming public health importance according to international standards, according to WFP/FAO as of late November. Stunting is also cited as a major underlying cause of maternal and child mortality. Meanwhile, the prevalence of wasting (4%) is now within the normal range according to international thresholds.

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incidents around schools in Cap Haitien. According to a local NGO, more than 170 people were reportedly killed by gunfire in Port-au-Prince between July and September whereas in October only, 65 killings were recorded in the city, reflecting a potential increase in gun crime in urban areas.

Late November, thousands of young Haitians demonstrated in several cities demanding the resignation of President Michel Martelly. In Port-au-Prince, demonstrators from multiple neighbourhoods converged on the US embassy to denounce what they claimed was US interference in the country. Riot police and UN peacekeepers blocked access leading to the embassy. No incidents were reported but tear gas was fired to prevent the demonstrators from reaching the diplomatic building. Demonstrations took place in other cities as well, such as Cap-Haitien in the north.

Haiti was to have held legislative and local elections in 2011, but infighting among various government branches has delayed the vote until now.

Humanitarian Context and Needs

As a result of previous disasters and emergencies, and in a context of extreme fragility, an estimated three million Haitians continue to be affected by the results of both chronic and acute needs. They face displacement, food insecurity and malnutrition. Of these, an estimated 817,000 people in 35 priority communes, out of 140 in the country, remain in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

Natural Disasters

Haiti ranks as one of the countries with the highest exposure and vulnerability to multiple hazards including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, landslides and droughts. Although no major hurricane has hit the country in over a year, an estimated 5,500 people were affected by floods and heavy rains in 2013. Moreover, the resilience of Haiti’s population and its capacity to cope with new crises is extremely low.

In January, local media reported that a drought is currently affecting the southern Nord-Ouest region, resulting in damaged crops and food shortages and a weakening of the already fragile food situation.

Torrential rains caused by Hurricane Sandy in October 2012 led to severe flooding, affecting 1.5 million people. Ouest, Sud-Est, Nippes, Grand’Anse, and Sud were the most severely affected areas. As of early April 2013, 72,000 people affected by Hurricane Sandy still needed humanitarian assistance, according to OCHA.

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

Displacement

IDPs

On the four year anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, the IOM estimated that 146,000 IDPs were still living in 271 camps, representing a 10% of the initial caseload and indicating a decrease of approximately 90 per cent in IDP population. This also indicated an 83 per cent decrease in the number of IDP sites compared to 2010 when internal displacement in Haiti was at its height in July 2010 with a peak of 1.5 million.

The majority of IDPs live in the three communes of Delmas, Port au Prince and Carrefour. Delmas still hosts almost 57,000 IDP individuals or 39 per cent of the total, and Carrefour and Port-au-Prince approximately 16,000 and 27,000, respectively. The three communes together account for 68.3 per cent of the remaining IDP individuals in Haiti as of December 2013.

However, most people who have been relocated from camps have not moved into permanent housing and continue to live in dire conditions and at risk of diseases such as cholera. A lack of adequate shelter makes them vulnerable to flooding and other adverse weather conditions, especially during the hurricane season. According to OCHA in December 2013, an estimated 80,000 people in 67 camps were still considered to be at particularly high risk of flooding.

According to Amnesty International, forced evictions are also one reason why camp numbers have fallen. In January 2014, IOM said that about a third of the total number of IDPs (58,000 people) is at risk of being forcibly evicted in some 100 camps. Amnesty International reported in February that approximately a hundred families have been forcibly evicted from an informal settlement in Canaan, Port-au-Prince, in continuation of an illegal eviction process which started in December 2013.

Refugees/Migrants

Haitian children could be affected by a September 2013 ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican ordering authorities to strip citizenship from children of illegal immigrants dating back to 1929, even if they were born in the country and previously held Dominican documents. If this sentence is effectively applied, it means up to 300,000 people of Haitian origin could become stateless. Without documents, they would be unable to access health and education services, get married, or own property. The decision sparked outrage within Haiti, the diaspora, and human rights circles and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights denounced the decision, arguing that beyond discriminatory, it deprives Dominican-born Haitians a nationality. However, despite international pressure, the Dominican government has maintained it is not willing to revisit the ruling, which cannot be appealed.

Food Security

Haiti continues to face huge structural challenges, which leave the country very exposed to recurrent food security crises. The prevalence of poverty, the high degradation of the environment and limited government capacities to monitor, prevent and respond are factors contributing to the fragility of the situation.

According to a report by the National Coordination for Food Security (CNSA) as of October 2013, three million Haitians were reported to be food insecure. Of these, 2.4 million live in moderate food insecurity and 600,000 face severe food insecurity (compared to 1.5 million identified earlier in 2013). This figure indicates a significant improvement in the food security situation in the country, although 13 communes remain in a food crisis situation.
and 106 communes in food stress.

The prevalence of both severe and moderate food insecurity has reached levels similar to mid-2012, just before shocks stroke Haiti. These shocks include a long period of drought affecting large parts of the country, the passage of tropical storm Isaac in August and of hurricane Sandy in October, which resulted in 1.5 million people living in severe food insecurity and to 5.2 million people facing moderate food insecurity. 44 communes across the country were considered at high risk of food insecurity. Haiti was spared from major shocks affecting food security in 2013, which has facilitated a significant recovery.

According to FEWSNET as of mid-February, food availability has improved significantly throughout the country since August 2013 due to the good performance of the spring agricultural production in the most productive areas and relatively well distributed rains. However, stocks made from this production remain below the five-year average, especially in deficit areas, and will likely be exhausted by end February as the 2014 lean season will be extended 1-2 months due to an expected late start of the spring season. Spring harvests (June-August) are expected to lessen food insecurity throughout the country.

Although food availability has improved and prices of local products appear to decline, weak demand for labour reduces the purchasing power of many poor rural households. Some of them are currently experiencing phase Minimal Acute Food Insecurity (IPC Phase 1) while others are facing Stress (IPC Phase 2) due to the lack of income.

The early end of the rainy season at the end of October in the Northwest Peninsula and in some municipalities in the North and North-east has led to a loss of sorghum, beans and corn crops. As a result of surface water scarcity and premature and extended lean season, poor households in these areas are likely to face Crisis levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) between March and June.

Health and Nutrition

Cholera

Despite a significant decrease in the overall number of cholera-related deaths, Haiti continues to host half of the world’s suspected cholera cases. Cholera in Haiti remains an epidemic and a humanitarian crisis.

In the first six weeks of 2014, the WHO recorded 2,536 cholera cases including 18 deaths (the cumulative case-fatality rate for 2014 is so far 0.7%). The weekly average of cases has now reached 422 with 3 deaths; this is considerably lower than those registered in 2013. Despite an increase in cholera cases during the rainy season at the end of 2013, there has been a decrease in the number of reported cases and deaths in the first six weeks of 2014, with a weekly average of 1,140 cases and 9 deaths.

In 2013, 58,608 suspected cholera cases and 601 deaths were reported, bringing the total number of people affected since the outbreak of the epidemic in October 2010 to 699,197 suspected cholera cases as of 18 February 2014, with 8,549 reported deaths. The cumulative case-fatality rate remains 1.2%, with variations ranging from 4.5% in the department of Sud Est to 0.6% in Port-au-Prince. A further 45,000 are expected for the year 2014, according to OCHA.

Four departments (Artibonite, Centre, Nord and Ouest) have registered a higher number of cases than average and two (Artibonite and Ouest) account for 52% of the total registered cases of 2013. Contamination of rivers, unhygienic conditions, and inadequate sanitation are the principal causes for the spread of cholera. Some 42% of the population does not have access to clean water.

Human rights lawyers reported that they plan to seek compensation for Haitian victims of a cholera epidemic they blame on UN peacekeepers. The decision to file suit in New York comes after the UN said earlier this year that it would not pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation claimed by cholera victims in impoverished Haiti.

Malnutrition

In Haiti, nearly a quarter of children <5 are suffering from chronic malnutrition, according to UNICEF. According to OCHA as of 12 December, the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) among children <5 has increased from 5.1% in 2012 to 6.5% in 2013. According to UNICEF in November 2013, 100,000 children <5 are affected by GAM, of whom 20,000 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Rural children are especially affected. The prevalence of poverty, the high degradation of the environment and limited government capacities to monitor, prevent and respond are factors contributing to the fragility of the situation.

Reviewed: 25/02/2014

BOLIVIA DROUGHT, FLOODS, FOOD INSECURITY

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

18 February: Bolivian authorities said that heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding had now affected an estimated 299,400 people (59,882 households) in 146 municipalities across all nine departments of the country, and led to the death of 57 people since the beginning of the rainy season last October. The areas most affected by the flooding are Cochabamba (101,300), Chuquisaca (53,230), La Paz (44,450), Beni (38,790), Potosí (25,210) and Santa Cruz (24,200) and to a lesser extent Pando and Tarija. The rainy season began early this year after heavy rainfall during the end of October and beginning of November. In addition, the 2013-2014 growing season was better than average in most parts of the country compared to previous years.

Caribbean

Malnutrition

According to UNICEF in November 2013, 100,000 children <5 are affected by GAM, of whom 20,000 with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). Rural children are especially affected. The prevalence of poverty, the high degradation of the environment and limited government capacities to monitor, prevent and respond are factors contributing to the fragility of the situation.
season in Bolivia usually lasts until March.

**KEY CONCERNS**

- An estimated 299,400 people have been affected by heavy rainfall and flooding across most of the country. Evacuation and delivery of food and non-food items supplies is underway by the government and UN agencies. On 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosi and Pando were officially declared to be in a State of Emergency. Dengue and malaria outbreaks are of growing concern as the rains continue (Government and OCHA).

- Bolivia is prone to natural disasters including earthquakes, floods, and droughts. The impact of 2013’s drought and the onset of severe frost are still being felt in many areas having affected over 340,000 people and damaged around 87,000 hectares of crops (Government).

**Humanitarian Context and Needs**

**Disasters**

A series of natural disasters have affected Bolivia since the beginning of the rainy season in November and had a severe impact on livelihoods and food security.

**Heavy Rainfall and Floods**

Heavy rains continue to affect Bolivia, causing floods and landslides across the country. On 18 February, the Bolivian authorities said that heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding had now affected an estimated 299,400 people (59,882 households) in 146 municipalities across all nine departments of the country, and led to the death of 57 people since the beginning of the rainy season last October. At least 11 others are still missing. Officials also reported that over 43,000 hectares of arable lands have been damaged by the heavy rains. Authorities estimate that agriculture is the primary income generating activity of 40% of affected families.

As of 18 February, the areas most affected by the flooding were Cochabamba (101,300), Chuquisaca (53,230), La Paz (44,450), Beni (38,790), Potosi (25,210) and Santa Cruz (24,200) and to a lesser extent Pando and Tarija. In terms of flood-related deaths, the worst affected province is Cochambamba (18) followed by Chuquisaca (12) and Beni (11).

Evacuation and delivery of food supplies by the government agencies are underway. On 15-16 February, an aircraft chartered by the Government of Bolivia left Panama to Beni with more than 1,500 tents. The shipment was sent by the United Nations and the International Federation of the Red Cross.

On 28 January, the government of Bolivia declared a state of emergency but and said resources in the country were sufficient to deal with the emergency. However, the situation has slowly worsened, and on 10 February, the six departments of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Beni, La Paz, Potosi and Pando were officially declared to be in a state of emergency.

Rainfall is expected to continue over the coming weeks and the current rainy season will continue until March. According to reports from previous years, the most affected regions during the rainy season are typically in the north of La Paz and south Andean plateau of the Lake Titicaca.

In March 2013, several southern departments were severely affected by 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.

**Frost**

On 3 December, local authorities reported that an estimated 21,725 persons (4,345 families) from four regions of Cochabamba in central Bolivia have been affected by frost and hailstorms that occurred in the last two months. The adverse weather has also damaged crops in eight municipalities of Cochambamba, with a total of 664 hectares affected. The city of Sacabamba in the high valley is among the worst hit with some 2,500 people (500 families) having lost their food stocks. Local authorities have declared a state of emergency. Several regions in Bolivia are being affected by snow and hail with some of these zones, such as Cochabamba, having suffered drought as well as floods this year.

**Drought**

Following the drought that occurred during the first quarter of 2013, the government declared a national emergency in June. The affected population is mainly indigenous subsistence farmers. On 22 November, WFP reported that it would provide humanitarian assistance to an estimated 50,000 people (about 10,000 families) in 12 municipalities in the four most affected departments of Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, Tarija and Santa Cruz for a period of six months in response to the severe drought that has affected the country. As of 15 October, an estimated 340,000 people were affected by drought, according to government sources.

**Earthquake**

On 15 October, a chain of several earthquakes in the eastern region of Bolivia affected up to 2,200 people (440 families), but no casualties were reported. According to the Observatory of San Calixto based in La Paz, most damage occurred in three Guarani communities (namely Cotoca, Las Cutas, and Yateirenda) of the municipality of Cabezas, in the province of Cordillera, belonging to the department of Santa Cruz. The eastern regions of the country are particularly vulnerable since they are regularly affected by drought, floods, and earthquakes.

**Food Security**

In mid-December, FAO reported that the aggregate maize production (main and secondary seasons) was estimated to be 875 000 tonnes, 13% below 2012’s figure. This decline was attributed to lower harvest yields due to prolonged dry weather at the beginning of the season and frosts in July and August. The impact was particularly felt in the departments of Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz, Tarija, and Chuquisaca. The cold wave during July and August also damaged potato crops and affected a large number of rural households. In
response, the government distributed food packages and animal feed in September and October.

The wholesale prices of potatoes in La Paz and Cochabamba decreased by 23% and 17% respectively in December, but were still above their levels of a year earlier. In the main producing areas of Chiquisaca and Tarija, potato prices were almost 10% higher than in December 2012, reflecting the 2013 reduced productions. Similarly, rice and maize prices in December remained one-third above their year-earlier levels, although were relatively unchanged from the previous month.

Drought in the first quarter of 2013 continues to negatively impact crop production in Bolivia. Crop failure has been especially severe in the regions of the Chaco and the South Cone of Cochabamba. As of 15 October, an estimated 87,000 hectares of crops had sustained damage. The department of Tarija is the worst hit with around 44,000 hectares of crops estimated to have been lost. Santa Cruz recorded the highest number of affected cattle with approximately 29,400 dead. In Cochabamba, 24,800 hectares in some 600 communities reported damage during the first half of 2013. The most serious damage was caused by flooding (51%), drought (33%), and other lower-impact weather events. On 25 October, the Bolivian Civil Defence reported that it had begun the distribution of 300 tonnes of food to 120,000 families in 15 municipalities affected by drought in the department of Cochabamba. Water tanks, pipes, and other material support were also delivered.

Results of a multi-sectoral national assessment from August 2013 confirmed a deterioration of the food and nutrition security situation of the drought-affected households. Many families have significantly reduced the frequency and quantity of food consumed. Many workers have migrated from their communities in search of casual labour. The affected households are not expected to recover until the next harvest in April/May 2014.

Health

Malaria/Dengue

At the beginning of the year, the Bolivian Health Authorities issued an alert for dengue and malaria in the flood-affected regions. In Beni alone, health authorities reported 430 suspected cases of dengue on 19 February, of which 60 were confirmed.

Cases of diarrhoea and skin and respiratory infections were also reported. The Ministry of Health sent some 195 doctors to the affected zones to attend to the victims and prevent outbreaks of illnesses.

Updated: 25/02/2014
Introduction to the Global Emergency Overview Update

The Global Emergency Overview is a weekly update that provides a snapshot of current humanitarian priorities and recent events. The Global Emergency Overview collates information from a wide range of sources, including Reliefweb and media sources, and displays this information in a manner that allows for quick comparison of different humanitarian crises. The primary objective of the Global Emergency Overview is to rapidly inform humanitarian decision makers by presenting a summary of major humanitarian crises, both recent and protracted. It is designed to provide answers to four questions:

1. Which humanitarian crises currently exist? (World map)
2. What has happened in the last seven days? (Highlights and Snapshot)
3. What is the situation in the country affected by a crisis? (Highlights Box and Narrative)
4. Which countries could be prioritised in terms of humanitarian response? (Prioritisation)

The Global Emergency Overview consists of three main sections:

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

The priority levels are assigned on the basis of:

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

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

Second, the snapshot briefly describes what has happened in the last seven days from the date of publication, by outlining the crises that have occurred in the different highlighted countries.

Third, narratives for each country included in the Global Emergency Overview reflect major developments and underlying vulnerabilities of a country over the last months. Narratives are written based on secondary data. For each country, a specific highlights box is also added to put emphasis on the major developments that happened over the past 10 days.

The Global Emergency Overview is a mobile application.

To download the mobile application for Android phones click here.

To download the mobile application for iOS phones click here.

Update

The Global Emergency Overview will be updated once a week and the results will be available every Monday before midday (Central European Time/Central European Summer Time). In case of major new humanitarian events or an escalation of an on-going crisis which triggers a change of prioritisation, the Global Overview will be updated on an ad-hoc basis.

Disclaimer

While ACAPS has defined a methodology striving to ensure accuracy, the information provided is indicative and should not be used in isolation from alternate sources of information for any decision making. ACAPS is not responsible for any damage or loss resulting from the use of the information presented on this website.