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of the United Nations Security Council

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Spotlight on Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Haiti,
Lake Chad Basin, central Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger),
Somalia and South Sudan

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“This update conveys the bitter news that large numbers of people remained trapped in acute food insecurity in 2019. With the scale of human need so high – primarily due to conflict compounded by the effects of climate events – the importance of proactively helping those relying on farming, fishing, and forests to become more resilient, is clearer than ever.”

Qu Dongyu

FAO Director-General

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“This report highlights how the lives of millions are still being devastated by conflict and hunger. But there are reasons for hope: for the first time since 2011, barges have sailed over the border between South Sudan and the Sudan, bringing life-saving humanitarian supplies to communities scarred by conflict. Let’s use the new decade to step up our efforts to build a more peaceful and stable world.”

David Beasley

WFP Executive Director

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Contents

Acronyms	iv
Executive summary	v
Rationale	viii
Methods	ix
Humanitarian access constraints	x

Country briefs

Afghanistan	1
The Central African Republic	3
Haiti	5
Lake Chad Basin Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), the Niger (Diffa) and northeastern Nigeria (three states)	7
Central Sahel Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger	10
Somalia	13
South Sudan	16
Bibliography	19
Annex	24

Acronyms

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ALPS	Alert for Price Spikes, WFP
CH	<i>Cadre Harmonisé</i>
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FSIN	Food Security Information Network
FSNAU	Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
IDP	Internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
LGA	Local Government Area
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USD	United States Dollar
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

This seventh update, jointly prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), covers five countries (Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan) and two regions (the Lake Chad Basin and central Sahel) that are currently experiencing protracted conflict and insecurity and in which, according to latest figures, almost 30 million people need urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance.

It provides new 2019 data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) for five of the countries that were included in the August 2019 update to the UNSC as well as the addition of one country (Haiti) and one region (central Sahel) because of the severity of food insecurity driven by conflict/political unrest in these territories.

For the first time in four years, the number of violent conflicts in the world has risen (OCHA, 2019). Unsurprisingly, therefore, this update gives little cause for optimism. The analysis indicates a worsening of the food security situation in Somalia and persisting high levels of food insecurity in Afghanistan and the Lake Chad Basin. Although the numbers of acutely food insecure people in South Sudan showed a downward trend, the analysis was carried out before the country was hit by devastating floods. The Central African Republic experienced a slight improvement thanks to the above-average harvest and improved security in some areas. Acute food insecurity levels in Haiti and central Sahel, which were not in the previous update, are extremely concerning and forecast to deteriorate.

At the beginning of 2019, there were 41 active highly violent conflicts, an increase from 36 at the start of the previous year (OCHA, 2019). These conflicts, which are mostly happening in already poor, fragile and food insecure areas, are causing immense suffering and a huge need for humanitarian assistance, which has been vital in preventing a worsening of food crises in many countries covered in this update. And yet, distribution of relief assistance, assessment of needs and monitoring of beneficiaries are being increasingly constrained by lack of humanitarian access, fighting and violence against humanitarian workers as well as high fuel prices, checkpoints, landmines and explosive remnants of war, damaged roads and difficult terrain, in all the countries and regions profiled in this update.

Summary of the situation in each country (in alphabetical order):

Afghanistan

Just as households were beginning to recover their livelihoods after the devastating 2017/18 drought and March/April floods, conflict and political instability intensified in mid-2019 with an unprecedented number of civilian casualties from July to September. It disrupted access to labour opportunities, markets and other essential services, prevented farmers from accessing their fields and pasturelands and hindered humanitarian workers from reaching people in need.

Over 380 000 people abandoned their homes between January and late November, mainly as a result of conflict, and faced difficulty generating an income. At the onset of the winter lean season, between November 2019 and March 2020, some 37 percent of the country's population or 11.3 million people were expected to be in need of urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance – Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse. Of them, 2.7 million faced Emergency (IPC Phase 4) conditions. This is a rise of 1 million people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse since the August–October period.

The Central African Republic

The main harvest in October was expected to be above the five-year average. Thanks to this and slightly improved security in some areas, the number of people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or above fell from 1.8 million in May–August 2019 to 1.6 million in September 2019. However, the implementation of the February 2019 peace deal is extremely patchy. A more extreme level of violence against civilians in several areas, particularly in eastern and southeastern prefectures, as well as heavy rains and flooding, disrupted farming activities, livelihoods, market functioning and the delivery of food assistance.

Food prices remained high as a result of unauthorized taxes, damaged roads and armed groups demanding transport costs for food and disrupting harvesting activities. Over 600 000 Central Africans (around 13 percent of the total population) were internally displaced with limited access to livelihoods and humanitarian support. The number of acutely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or worse) in the May–August 2020 lean season is projected to increase to 2.1 million people (47 percent of the population).

Haiti

From October 2019 to February 2020 acute food insecurity is projected to be more severe than during the same period of the previous year, with the number of people in need of urgent action in rural areas – facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse – increasing by almost 600 000, reaching 3.7 million people at national level, of these more than 1 million were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Spiralling food and fuel prices and the depreciation of the national currency constrained economic access to food, while socio-political unrest and deteriorating security rendered many main roads impassable, further restricting physical access to markets and reducing market supplies. The 2018 drought that lasted into the first half of 2019 had already caused an estimated 12 percent drop in cereal production in 2018/19 compared to the previous year. Food security is projected to deteriorate between March and June 2020, with more than 4.1 million people (39 percent of total population) forecast to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse.

Lake Chad Basin

The Lake Chad Basin region faced an intensification of Boko Haram-related armed violence in northeastern Nigeria, an upsurge in attacks in neighbouring countries as well as flooding that destroyed homes, crops and livestock. As a result, from October to December 2019, acute food insecurity levels were significantly worse than during the same period in 2018 and almost as high as during the 2019 lean season, with some 3.3 million people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance (CH Phase 3 or worse). The majority – over 2.9 million – were in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states in northeastern Nigeria, which accounted for nearly all the 0.4 million people in Emergency (CH Phase 4) as well as 262 000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in need of urgent assistance in nine formal camps in Borno. However, some areas were not accessible in Borno state during data collection, therefore likely underestimating the food security needs in that period.

Cameroon's Far North had the next highest number of people facing Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse with 233 000 people, followed by the Niger's Diffa region with 81 000 people and Chad's Lac region with 51 000 people.

Deteriorating security, especially in Borno, led to new displacements in the second half of 2019. As of October 2019, there were 2.6 million IDPs across the region with 1.8 million in the northeastern Nigeria states.

Central Sahel

The central Sahel region is in the midst of a worsening humanitarian crisis as violence and insecurity have spread from the north of Mali to the central and western regions and across the border of the Liptako-Gourma areas into the Niger and Burkina Faso. It has driven a massive increase in displacement since the beginning of 2019 especially in Burkina Faso (up from 47 000 in January to 486 000 by the end of the year). At the same time many communities in the region continue to struggle with frequent extreme climate events whereby drought and floods destroyed crops, pastureland and livelihoods throughout the year.

The number of people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance trebled from 1.1 million people in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse in October–December 2018 to 3.3 million in October–December 2019, reaching 1.2 million people in Burkina Faso, close to 1.5 million people in the Niger and 0.6 million people in Mali. During the projected period, June–August 2020, the number of food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance is expected to increase to 4.8 million.

Somalia

Southern Somalia produced its lowest cereal harvest since 1995 following the late 2018 drought and poor rains in the April–June *Gu* season, resulting in cereal prices above the five-year average and depressing household income due to low demand for agricultural labour. Consequently, the number of acutely food-insecure people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse increased by 75 percent since July–September, reaching 2.1 million by October–December.

By mid-November flooding had affected 547 000 people, destroying farmland, infrastructure and roads and disrupting livelihoods. Conflict and insecurity, including clan disputes and Al Shabaab attacks, continued to disrupt livelihoods, forcing Somalis to abandon fields and productive assets. In the first 10 months of 2019, an additional 665 000 people abandoned their homes bringing the number of IDPs to over 2.6 million. Urgent treatment and nutrition support were required for more than 1 million children under the age of 5 years, likely to face acute malnutrition through June 2020.

South Sudan

In 2019, after six years of civil war and alarmingly high levels of hunger and acute malnutrition, South Sudan was beginning to show tentative signs of recovery with people returning to their livelihoods, improved market access

and crop availability. Thanks to this, the number of people in acute food insecurity has decreased to 4.5 million (39 percent of the total population), compared to the record of almost 7 million in May–July. No populations were expected to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

However, the devastating late 2019 floods reversed most of these gains, leading to new displacements,

crop and livestock losses, disruption of food trade flows and humanitarian assistance delivery. The political situation also remained tense and an increase in inter- and intra-communal violence continued to displace people. Food prices remained exceptionally high, driven by currency weakness and high costs of production and transport.

Rationale

This is the seventh biannual update on acute food insecurity in countries affected by conflict that the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have jointly produced for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members since June 2016.

This issue of *Monitoring food security in countries with conflict situations* covers five countries and two regions that are experiencing protracted conflict and insecurity and extremely grave levels of related hunger. The five countries are: Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Somalia and South Sudan. The two regions are: the Lake Chad Basin and central Sahel. The analysis of the Lake Chad Basin region includes the subregion of the four countries affected by that conflict: northeastern Nigeria (three states), the Diffa region of the Niger, Far North Cameroon and the Lac region of Chad. The analysis of central Sahel covers Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

For each of these countries/regions this update provides UNSC members with the latest (late 2019) figures on the numbers of acutely food-insecure people. It highlights the worst-affected areas within these countries/regions, how the situation has changed since the last comparable period and, where possible, identifies the most vulnerable population groups. It reports on developments in these conflicts and examines ongoing hunger–conflict dynamics including inter-related drivers of acute food insecurity, such as climate shocks, economic destabilization and population displacement.

By highlighting the severity, magnitude and drivers of acute food insecurity in this group of countries/regions, this update seeks to reinforce the urgent need for all parties, including governments and humanitarian and development agencies, to target efforts towards resolving conflict to end the current trend in rising numbers of acutely hungry people reliant on humanitarian assistance.

In May 2018 the UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 2417 which, among other things, condemned the unlawful denial of humanitarian access to civilian populations in need of urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance.

This update also provides a global overview of humanitarian access constraints and a more detailed national/subnational analysis of the factors that have constrained humanitarian actors' efforts to reach food insecure populations in need of urgent action in the latter half of 2019 in the countries and regions of focus of this update.

The update is part of a series of analytical products facilitated by the Food Security Information Network (FSIN) and produced under the Global Network Against Food Crises with support from the European Union. The series includes the annual *Global Report on Food Crises* and other products that inform the Global Network Against Food Crises.

Methods

Selection of countries

This issue of the UNSC update includes four countries and one region that were selected for the previous issue n°6 published in August 2019. However, it omits four of the countries that were included in the August update – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan and Yemen – because there was no updated late 2019 acute food insecurity data available for them.

Unlike issue n°6, which focused on the worst conflict-related food crises as identified in the *Global Report on Food Crises 2019*, this update includes Haiti and central Sahel. In Haiti, a recent Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis showed that socio-political unrest and deteriorating security conditions had greatly reduced access to food for the poorest households. In central Sahel, a recent *Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) analysis showed that rising armed conflict, deteriorating security and massive population displacement had driven high levels of acute food insecurity across Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

Data sources

The data for the five countries (Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Haiti, South Sudan and Somalia) comes from the latest IPC analyses, which provide a ‘common currency’ for classifying food insecurity into different phases of severity. IPC analyses use international standards that allow for comparisons of situations across countries and over time.

This update includes the numbers of people in the three most severe phases considered – Crisis (IPC Phase 3), Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) – and who are in need of urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance. Populations in Stressed conditions (IPC Phase 2) are also indicated where relevant, although they require a different set of actions – ideally more long-term resilience-building and disaster risk reduction interventions to protect livelihoods.

For countries in the Sahel and West Africa (Lake Chad Basin and central Sahel), the data comes from the latest CH analyses, which uses similar standards to IPC to classify acute food insecurity. IPC and CH share the same phase scales and descriptions, see Annex 1.

For the analysis of drivers of food insecurity in each of these countries, the authors have employed a wide range of secondary data sources to support the information provided in the IPC/CH analyses themselves. These include situation reports and country briefs from agencies

such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and *Médecins Sans Frontières*.

The data sources also include food security and crop prospect outlooks from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), various WFP bulletins, situation updates and surveys, the independent humanitarian analysis unit Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

Humanitarian access constraints

This analysis looks at some of the profound challenges civilians face in accessing aid and the major impediments humanitarian workers experience in providing it.

In 2019 many more people needed humanitarian assistance than forecast, largely because of conflict and extreme climate events. Nearly 149 million people in 58 countries (were estimated to be in need (OCHA). But these needs outstripped funding available. An estimated USD 27 billion was needed to provide emergency food security, shelter, health care, education, protection or other basic assistance to those in need, but in the first 11 months of the year donors had only provided USD 16 billion. Aid groups reached 64 percent of the people targeted to receive aid through Humanitarian Response Plans in 22 of the countries for which data were available (OCHA, 2019).

In 2020, nearly 168 million people – one in 45 on the planet – are estimated to need humanitarian assistance and protection, requiring funding of USD 29 billion (OCHA, 2019).

In addition to shortcomings in funds, various other humanitarian access constraints inhibit the ability of affected populations to receive adequate assistance in numerous conflict situations. ACAPS' latest *Humanitarian Access Overview* published in October 2019 stated that since May 2019 access had deteriorated in five countries: Bangladesh (Rohingya crisis), Cameroon, Mali, the Niger and the Sudan. Access constraints were worst (classified as 'extreme') in three countries (Eritrea, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen), 'very high' in 14 further territories and 'high' in nine others (ACAPS, 2019).

Intensification of military offensives and/or inter- or intra-communal hostilities

In countries/regions including the Sahel, Afghanistan, Cameroon and South Sudan an upsurge in violence prevented people in need from accessing markets and from moving to seek the assistance/basic services they required in 2019. Insecurity and conflict and associated road closures also stopped humanitarians from reaching these populations. In Afghanistan after overall civilian casualty numbers declined in the first six months of 2019, they reached record-high levels in the third quarter. From 1 July to 30 September casualties were 42 percent higher than the same period in 2018 (UNAMA, 2019).

It is not only violent armed conflict that creates humanitarian access challenges. Socio-political tensions, generalized insecurity, protests and fuel shortages can

force organizations to suspend operations or prevent people from accessing basic services. For instance, in Haiti, since mid-September, the volatile security environment combined with fuel shortages hampered WFP's efforts to implement its school feeding and emergency food assistance distribution programmes.

Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets

According to the ACAPS report, violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets was of particular concern in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Mali, for example, there was an increase in incidents targeting aid actors included kidnappings, injuries and looting.

But violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets was not limited to these countries. Ongoing violence from Boko Haram in Cameroon threatened humanitarian workers, while in South Sudan attacks and ambushes on humanitarian convoys were common. In the Central African Republic attacks against humanitarian workers and facilities increased in the summer of 2019 with armed groups ambushing and robbing aid convoys and kidnapping staff of several organizations for ransom. Between July and September there were an average of 30 attacks against humanitarian workers a month in the country (FEWS NET, 2019).

OCHA reported there were globally 791 attacks against health workers and health-care facilities in the first nine months of 2019, resulting in 171 deaths. According to the Aid Worker Security database in the first 11 months of 2019, 78 aid workers were killed, 91 injured and 82 kidnapped. The overwhelming majority of victims were nationals. The database shows that most of the victims were in South Sudan, followed by the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Somalia and Yemen.

Unexploded ordinances, improvised explosive devices and landmines

Contamination by unexploded ordinances, improvised explosive devices and landmines, particularly in populated environments, poses serious operational challenges for humanitarian workers. This was a particular concern in Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Mali, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen, according to ACAPS. For instance, in Mali, the United Nations Mine Action Service reported 138 incidents since the start of 2019.

Bureaucratic/administrative constraints

International humanitarian law requires all parties to take steps to facilitate humanitarian relief for civilians in need. But bureaucratic/administrative constraints prevent or delay humanitarian actors from reaching affected populations. For instance, in the north of Yemen, Ansar Allah-affiliated have imposed formal and informal directives that at times overlap or contradict each other, so it can take around 100 days for projects to be approved (OCHA, 2019). In northeast Nigeria, field offices of some international aid organizations were shut down in September, forcing them to suspend their activities. Although, the Federal Government lifted the suspensions on these organizations, the shut-down had severe implications on ongoing response (OCHA 2019). In South Sudan, civilian authorities and security forces continued to interfere and impose bureaucratic restrictions on NGOs.

In some countries, such as the Sudan, the economic crisis resulted in a lack of fuel and hard currency that hampered delivery and access to aid.

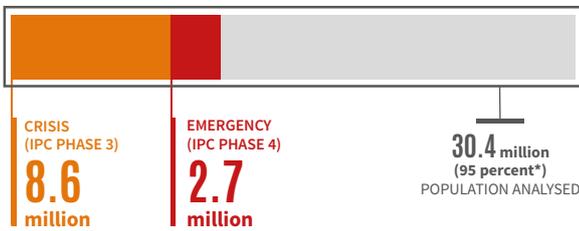
Difficult terrain and poor infrastructure

In many of the world's conflict crises, remoteness and poor road conditions pose a major logistical obstacle to reaching populations in need. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) remains essential for reaching areas in need. In the latter half of 2019, heavy seasonal rains, flooding and landslides cut off aid to populations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, the Niger, northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and the Sudan. Climate-related events also cause displacement, complicating the ability of people in need to access assistance.

Afghanistan



11.3 million people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in November 2019–March 2020



*TOTAL POPULATION: 32 million (Source: IPC)

- ▶ In the corresponding period last year (November 2018–February 2019), 47 percent of the rural population were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity, while this year 37 percent of the total population were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse.
- ▶ Badakhshan, Balkh, Hirat, Kabul and Nangarhar had the highest numbers in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above while six provinces (Badakhshan, Daykundi, Ghor, Nimroz, Nuristan and Uruzgan) were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

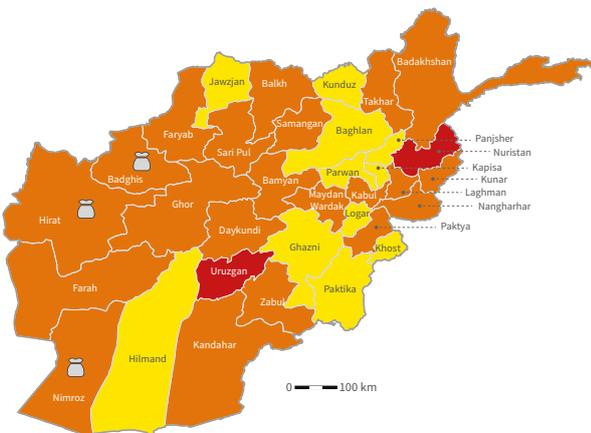
As households struggled to recover their livelihoods after the devastating 2017/18 drought and March/April 2019 floods, an upsurge in conflict and political instability in mid-2019 continued to prevent farmers from accessing their fields and pasturelands. It disrupted already constrained access to labour opportunities, markets and other essential services, prevented humanitarian workers from reaching people in need and drove increasing numbers to abandon their homes.

- Between August 2019 and March 2020, the number of acutely food insecure people in need of urgent humanitarian action is expected to increase from 10.2 million people to 11.3 million people with the onset of the winter lean season. One fourth of these people were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

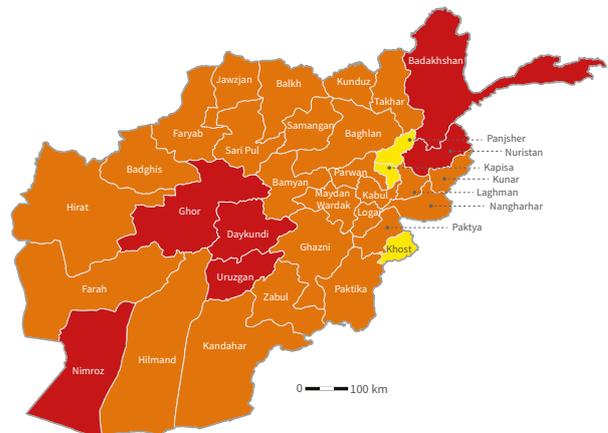
- Populations continued to flee their homes as a result of widespread insecurity and faced difficulty generating an income. Most of the over 380 000 new displacements in 2019 were conflict-related.
- Casual work opportunities, already lacking, were expected to drop further as winter sets in and competition for employment was bound to intensify as migrants continued to flow back from Iran. In the year to mid-November there were 445 000 returnees, 89 percent of them from Iran.
- Livestock owners were yet to replenish their herds following the devastating losses in the 2017/18 drought, keeping the purchasing power of pastoral and agropastoral households low.

Afghanistan | IPC acute food insecurity situation

August–October 2019



November 2019–March 2020



IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

- 1 – Minimal
- 2 – Stressed
- 3 – Crisis
- 4 – Emergency
- 5 – Famine
- Areas not included in the analysis
- Areas with inadequate evidence

- At least 25 percent of households meet 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
- At least 25 percent of households meet over 50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance

Source: IPC Afghanistan Technical Working Group, August 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Livelihoods disrupted by intensifying conflict

From July to September 2019, UNAMA documented an unprecedented number of civilian casualties, 42 percent higher than the same period in 2018. From August to mid-October, there was a further uptick in conflict, with the largest number of events near Kabul, Helmand and Kunduz provinces. According to ACLED data, there were over 50 500 fatalities from January to late-October 2019, the highest number since ACLED started collecting conflict-related data on Afghanistan in 2017. The Taliban reportedly controls more of Afghanistan than at any time since it was ousted 18 years ago (ACAPS, 2019).

Despite generally favourable pastoral and livestock conditions in the third quarter of 2019, in some areas pastureland was inaccessible. In areas of protracted conflict, farmers were unable to access their land, preventing them from preparing for winter wheat planting (FEWS NET, 2019). However, the area planted for winter wheat was likely to be above average thanks to the 2018/19 climate conditions and more households engaging in agriculture. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, preliminary 2019 wheat production totals were above both the 2018 average and five-year average.

Depressed household income

Daily wage labour rates, which have generally been decreasing since the withdrawal of NATO forces began in 2014, were below the two-year average, leading to an overall decrease in household purchasing power. Labour opportunities were likely to decrease further in the winter months, while competition for employment opportunities was likely to be heightened by the increasing number of migrant returnees. At the end of 2019, demand for construction labour was projected to be half of usual peak seasonal employment and agricultural labour opportunities were anticipated to be down by 80 to 90 percent (FEWS NET, 2019). Worsening economic conditions in Iran, the high number of returnees and the devaluation of the Iranian rial against the afghani were depressing remittances, an important income source.

According to the Seasonal Food Security Assessment, of the 63 percent of households that experienced shocks, the main ones were loss of employment (29 percent) and reduced income (25 percent), followed by natural disaster (12 percent) and an increase in food prices (9 percent). The lingering effects of the drought continued to have an impact in Badakhshan, Ghor, Nimroz, Uruzgan, Nuristan and Daykundi provinces. Despite average to above-average livestock prices, purchasing power was

below average for pastoral and agropastoral households because of below-normal herd sizes following the livestock losses during the 2018 drought. Pastoral households with medium (100 to 500 livestock) and large (500+ livestock) herds lost nearly 50 percent of their stock and had recovered about 20 to 30 percent through births and purchase. Poorer agropastoral households with only a few livestock (1 to 10) lost 60 to 70 percent of their animals. Unable to afford to buy livestock, they were dependent on births to regenerate their herd (FEWS NET, 2019).

High numbers of newly displaced

By mid-December 2019 conflict had newly displaced 406 484 individuals (OCHA, 2019). In areas with frequent conflict events, IDPs remained displaced and faced difficulty establishing livelihoods or finding new income sources. Many of the displaced, especially in urban areas, had no short-term prospect of returning to their areas of origin either because of ongoing conflict or because they lacked the resources to do so.

Through mid-December, almost half a million individuals returned to Afghanistan – 445 000 from Iran, 25 000 from Pakistan and 26 000 from other countries (OCHA, 2019). Returning after several decades abroad to an economy that is producing few job opportunities, returnees tend to face greater economic difficulties than they did as refugees. Those who do not settle in their province of origin move to relatively urban areas in search of safety, services and jobs, where they lack the social ties that play an important role in finding work (World Bank & UNHCR, 2019).

Heightened insecurity constrained humanitarian access

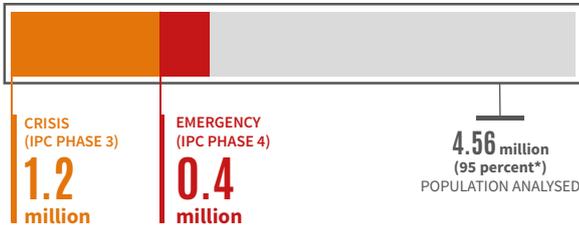
Increased insecurity caused by weakening political stability further constrained humanitarian access. Attacks by the Taliban and Islamic State Khorasan targeted civilian infrastructure and foreign NGOs. Access to non-government-controlled areas was volatile, with threats and expulsions causing agencies to suspend operations. Military offensives in contested territory led to road closures and displacements, disrupting access to services, limiting local populations' freedom of movement and constraining humanitarian operations. Remote and mountainous terrain and severe damage to infrastructure caused by decades of conflict further restricted humanitarian access (ACAPS, 2019).

On 4 December, six people including the head of an international NGO were killed when their vehicle was fired upon in Jalalabad city. Before this attack, 32 aid workers had been killed, 41 injured and 57 abducted in 2019 (OCHA, 2019).

The Central African Republic



1.6 million people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in September 2019–April 2020



*TOTAL POPULATION: 4.8 million (Source: IPC)

- ▶ The number of severely food insecure people decreased from 1.8 million in May–August 2019 thanks to the harvest and slightly improved security in some areas.
- ▶ Food insecurity was most severe among the displaced and in areas affected by insecurity where people could not move freely or access their livelihoods.

After five consecutive years of conflict and reduced agricultural outputs, the 2019 aggregate agricultural production was estimated to be above the five-year average. However, in eastern and southeastern prefectures, in particular, insecurity and conflict limited agricultural activities and caused shortages in market supply, which resulted in high staple food prices. More than one in three Central Africans, a total of 1.6 million people, were acutely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or worse) in the 2019 post-harvest period (IPC, 2019).

- From September 2019 to April 2020, despite planned food assistance, eight sub-prefectures (Obo, Zémio, Bria, Ndjoukou, Ippy, Kouango, Batangafo and Kabo) were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), while 47 other sub-prefectures were in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).
- The number of acutely food insecure people

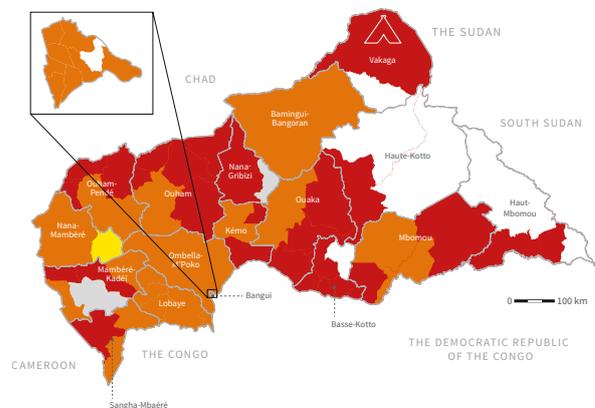
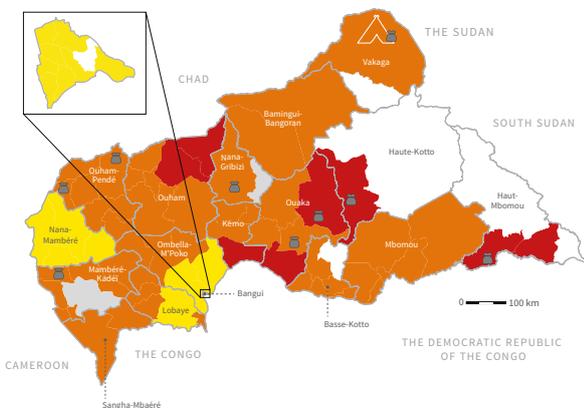
(IPC Phase 3 or worse) in the May–August 2020 lean season is projected to increase to 2.1 million (47 percent of the population), with over 675 000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Without urgent food assistance, an estimated 29 out of 65 sub-prefectures analysed were forecast to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) during the lean season and most of the remaining sub-prefectures in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

- The main harvest which began in October, seasonally improved food availability, but heavy rains, flooding and insecurity continued to restrict farming activities and delivery of food assistance and to disrupt market functioning.
- Insecurity and violations of the peace deal persisted, affecting both residents and delivery of humanitarian assistance. Over 600 000 people were internally displaced.

The Central African Republic, IPC acute food insecurity situation

September 2019–April 2020

May–August 2020



IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

- | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 – Minimal | 3 – Crisis | 5 – Famine | Areas not included in the analysis | At least 25 percent of households meet 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance |
| 2 – Stressed | 4 – Emergency | Areas with inadequate evidence | IDPs/other settlements classification | At least 25 percent of households meet over 50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance |

Source: IPC Central African Republic Technical Working Group, November 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Persistent insecurity and conflict and new sources of tension

Following the signing of the peace deal in February 2019, the number of security incidents fell, amounting to 137 in February–November 2019 (ACLEDA, 2019), a third less than the number reported in the same period in 2018 (Institute for Security Studies, 2019). Despite a decrease in direct clashes between armed groups there was a more extreme level of violence against civilians in several areas, including attacks in villages (OCHA, 2019).

From July, violence between armed groups in Haut-Mbomou, Nana-Gribizi, Mbomou, Basse-Kotto and Vakaga prefectures disrupted livelihood activities and made it difficult for poor households to access wild foods or fields (FEWS NET, 2019). More than 24 000 people were displaced following armed clashes in Birao (in Vakaga prefecture) at the beginning of September (OCHA, 2019). Armed clashes in October prompted population displacement towards Bria, increasing humanitarian needs in Haute-Kotto, where IDPs represent 106 percent of the population, and in Haut-Mbomou, where they represent 68 percent (FEWS NET, 2019). In total more than 600 000 people, 13 percent of the population, was internally displaced. A similar number of refugees from the Central African Republic were displaced in neighbouring countries, mainly in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad (UNHCR, 2019). More than 24 000 people were displaced following armed clashes in Birao at the beginning of September. IDPs in Vakaga, Haute-Kotto, Basse-Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou were the most vulnerable to food insecurity as they had limited access to livelihood activities and humanitarian organizations.

Transhumance movements remained difficult in some northwestern areas, generating tensions between pastoralists and farmers, exacerbating existing intercommunal tensions and affecting livestock herding and production (FEWS NET, 2019).

Conflict and flooding lowered agricultural production in some areas

The relative improvement in security conditions, especially in central and western areas, afforded households with greater access to fields and allowed the return of some IDPs to their places of origin, prompting an increase in the area under cultivation. As a result and with generally favourable weather conditions during the growing period, aggregate 2019 agricultural production was expected to be above the previous five-year average. However, persisting violence, especially in eastern areas, continued to constrain agricultural activities and the 2019 output was still expected to fall short of the pre-crisis average (FAO, 2019).

Cassava production was estimated at 17–37 percent below average in Basse-Kotto, Mbomou, Haute-Kotto and Ouaka prefectures (FEWS NET, 2019).

Reduced production was also forecast in areas where floods reduced access to fields or caused harvest losses. Households affected by flooding lost food stocks and became entirely dependent on markets and food assistance programmes (FEWS NET, 2019). As of 22 November, around 100 000 people were affected, a third of them in Bangui and Bimbo.

High food prices

Household food stocks and market supplies were buoyed by the main harvest, lowering food prices in central and western prefectures in the third quarter of the year. However, food prices remained generally high as a result of unauthorized taxes, damaged roads and armed groups demanding transport costs for food items. In eastern areas, conflict, poor road access during the rainy season and disruptions to harvesting activities pushed up prices (FEWS NET, 2019).

The heavy October rains in some areas disrupted drying and stocking of newly harvested cereal crops, prompting higher prices. In October, in the main reference markets of Bangui, Bambari, Bria and Bangassou, the price of cassava was on average 60 percent higher than in October 2018 and maize 50 percent higher (FEWS NET, 2019). In November, the price of a bowl of corn or cassava was 25–50 percent higher than in November 2018 in the main urban reference markets (FEWS NET, 2019).

Humanitarian access constraints remained very high

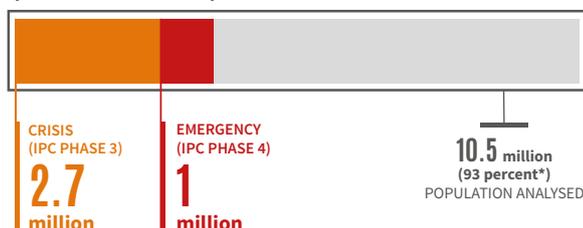
While humanitarian access to people in Alindao (Basse-Kotto) and Bangassou (Mbomou) improved, renewed violence in Birao in September impeded humanitarian operations. In addition to the activities of armed groups in the East and South East, inadequate road infrastructure hampered access to remote areas, so emergency relief had to be delivered by air bridges. The August heavy seasonal rainfall and flooding further disrupted the delivery of humanitarian assistance (ACAPS, 2019). Access to humanitarian aid was particularly limited in Haute-Kotto, Basse-Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou (FEWS NET, 2019).

The security situation for humanitarian staff remained dangerous. After attacks against humanitarian workers and facilities declined during the first half of 2019, the summer saw an increase in incidents, especially in Bambari, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro, Batangafo and Bangui (ACAPS, 2019). There was an average of 30 attacks a month between July and September (FEWS NET, 2019).

Haiti



3.7 million people requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in October 2019–February 2020



*TOTAL POPULATION: 11.3 million (Source: IPC)

- ▶ The already critical food insecurity situation further deteriorated since the same period last year, with the number of people in need of urgent action (IPC Phase 3 or worse) in rural areas increasing by almost 600 000.
- ▶ The situation was worst in the Nord-Ouest department and the very poor districts of Cité Soleil commune in Port-au-Prince metropolitan area. Rural areas in the Nord-Ouest, Artibonite, Nippes and Grand'Anse departments were among the most affected, with the highest percentage of people in need of immediate assistance.

Spiralling food prices and the depreciation of the national currency in the second half of 2019 constrained Haitians' economic access to food, while socio-political unrest and deteriorating security conditions rendered many main roads impassable, further restricting physical access to markets and reducing market supplies. The 2018 drought that lasted into the first half of 2019 had already caused an estimated 12 percent drop in cereal production in 2018/19 compared to the previous year.

- Deteriorating food insecurity was widespread with one-third of the food insecure population facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) conditions. Most areas were classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) while rural areas in lower Nord-Ouest and the very poor urban districts of Cité Soleil were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Only six better off urban districts were in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

- Food security is projected to continue to deteriorate between March and June 2020, with more than 4.1 million people forecast to be in need of urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance during the lean season with 2.2 million in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and almost 1 million in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).
- In the second half 2019, food access was limited by high inflation and the depreciation of the Haitian gourde against the US dollar – estimated at 35 percent of its year-on-year value as of October. Insecurity also constrained circulation of goods and people and limited access to food.
- Barricades, insecurity and increases in fuel prices hampered the free movement of people and goods, limited market supplies, shut down businesses and schools, prevented the poorest people from earning an income and severely constrained humanitarian access.

Haiti, IPC acute food insecurity situation

October 2019–February 2020



March–June 2020



IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

1 – Minimal (light green), 2 – Stressed (yellow), 3 – Crisis (orange), 4 – Emergency (red), 5 – Famine (dark red), Areas with inadequate evidence (grey), Areas not included in the analysis (white)

Source: IPC Haiti Technical Working Group, October 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Socio-political unrest disrupted economic activities

From mid-September, violence escalated as Haitians blocked roads and highways, set fires, attacked property and looted businesses in protests against the government as well as deepening fuel shortages, inflation, lack of employment and food scarcity. By December, 42 people had been reportedly killed and over 86 injured (ACAPS, 2019). Most businesses and schools were closed, which negatively affected economic life in Port-au-Prince and other urban centres (OCHA, 2019). Barricades, insecurity and increases in fuel prices also hampered the free movement of people and goods across the country and contributed to limited market supplies between September and October. The income-generating activities of the poorest (petty trade, rural migration, etc.) were disrupted. Poor households were forced to sell seeds and intensify the sale of charcoal among other strategies to maintain their basic food consumption (FEWS NET, 2019).

Consecutive seasons of reduced harvests

In 2018 and 2019, the El Niño phenomenon resulted in prolonged dry spells, which constrained yields in June–August and affected the main season maize crop. In 2019, severe rainfall deficits affected the main producing areas in Ouest, Sud and Sud-Est departments. Early season dryness in March and high prices of agricultural inputs (linked to increasing inflation) curtailed 2019 planting. As a result, the 2018/19 annual aggregate cereal production (maize, rice and sorghum) was forecast to be about 12 percent lower than the previous year (IPC, 2019). Households also had low carryover stocks from a reduced 2018 third season maize crop. Those directly or indirectly reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods faced reduced incomes and had to resort to negative coping strategies, including spending savings, selling productive assets or selling land plots, resulting in further deterioration of their livelihoods (IPC, 2019).

High food prices curtailed access to food

In September, retail prices of maize meal were about 60 percent higher than those of a year earlier due to the reduced main season output, fuel shortages and higher production costs, underpinned by the weakness of the Haitian gourde, which lost about 35 percent of its year-on-year value against the US dollar as of October (FAO).

Haiti is heavily dependent on food imports, making the country vulnerable to inflation and price volatility in international markets. In particular it imports 83 percent of the rice consumed (WFP). Prices of rice in September

were more than 10 percent higher on a yearly basis despite sustained imports in the third quarter of 2019 and improved supplies from the summer harvest.

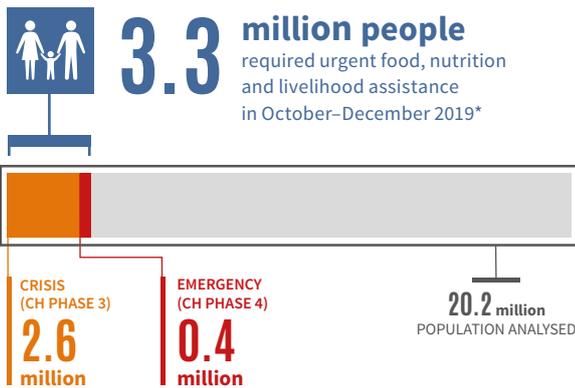
The most vulnerable segments of the population, including households who faced unemployment or were employed in unskilled jobs, were particularly affected by the increase. In mid-November 2019, the prices of rice, black beans, maize and cooking oil, which are among the most important food items for poor and middle-income households in Haiti, were still well above the previous year and the five-year average in main markets (FEWS NET, 2019).

Protests, roadblocks and lack of fuel restricted humanitarian access

The ongoing socio-political challenges, including security incidents and roadblocks, restricted humanitarian access, with some organizations, such as WFP, forced to suspend their operations due to insecurity and lack of fuel. Protests also hampered people's access to basic services, including health and education. Hospitals were forced to close due to insufficient availability of medicines, materials and staff. Nearly 2 million children were unable to attend school during the reporting period (ACAPS, 2019).

Lake Chad Basin

Cameroon (Far North), Chad (Lac), the Niger (Diffa) and northeastern Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno, Yobe)



* This includes 262 000 IDPs in CH Phase 3 and above

- ▶ The situation deteriorated significantly since the same period in 2018 when 1.8 million people were food-insecure and in need of urgent action across conflict-affected areas in Chad, the Niger and Nigeria. Note: the prevalence of people in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse increased from 12 to 19 percent across the three subnational areas. Cameroon was not analysed a year ago while it contributes to some 233 000 people of the 3.3 million in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse.
- ▶ Between October and December 2019, urgent assistance was needed for:
 - Over 2.9 million people in **northeastern Nigeria (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe)**, including almost 0.4 million in Emergency (CH Phase 4), as well as 262 000 IDPs in Borno, representing 39 percent of the state's IDP population
 - 51 000 people in the **Lac region of Chad**, including 3 000 in Emergency (CH Phase 4)
 - 81 000 people in Crisis (CH Phase 3) the **region of Diffa in the Niger**, including 2 000 refugees
 - 233 000 people in **Cameroon's Far North**, including around 19 000 in Emergency (CH Phase 4)

In the final quarter of 2019, acute food insecurity remained almost as high as during the lean season (June–August) due to persisting insecurity in northeastern Nigeria, an upsurge in Boko Haram attacks in neighbouring countries and flooding that destroyed homes, crops and livestock. Insecurity severely constrained livelihoods, trade and humanitarian access and led to new population displacements in the past six months.

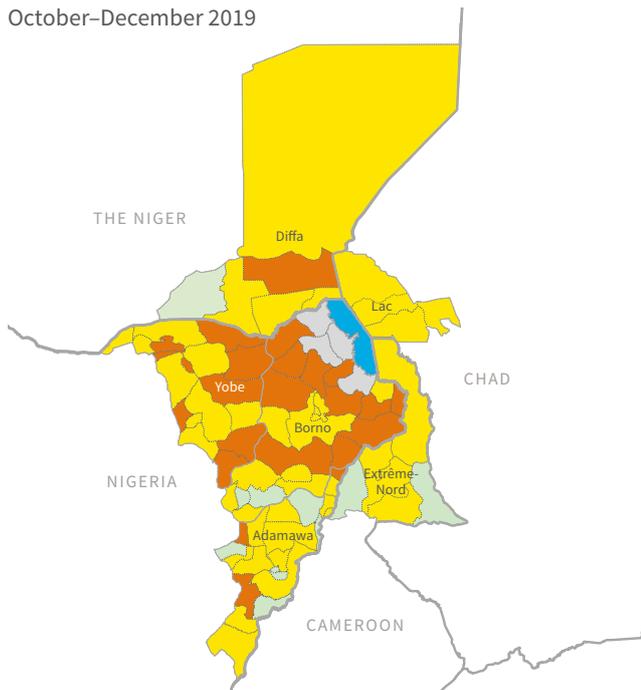
- The number of acute food-insecure people is projected to increase to 4.1 million during the 2020 lean season (June–August) compared to 3.6 million people during the 2019 lean season.
- Within the Lake Chad Basin region, northeastern Nigeria remains the most food insecure area. Borno state alone accounted for over 1.1 million people in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse, as well as 262 000 IDPs located in nine formal camps throughout the state. However, in Borno state some areas were not accessible during data collection, therefore likely underestimating the food security needs in that period.¹ Yobe state also accounted for around 1 million people in acute food insecurity.

- The Boko Haram insurgency continued to severely affect the livelihoods of millions of people in the region. A resurgence in attacks and lack of security led to new displacements in the second half of 2019. As of October 2019, there were 2.6 million IDPs across the region – including over 1.8 million in northeastern Nigeria – and around 240 000 Nigerian refugees.
- Severe weather also affected food security. Floods displaced around 21 000 households in Nigeria's three northeastern states in August and had a disastrous impact on more than 40 000 people in Cameroon's Far North in October 2019.

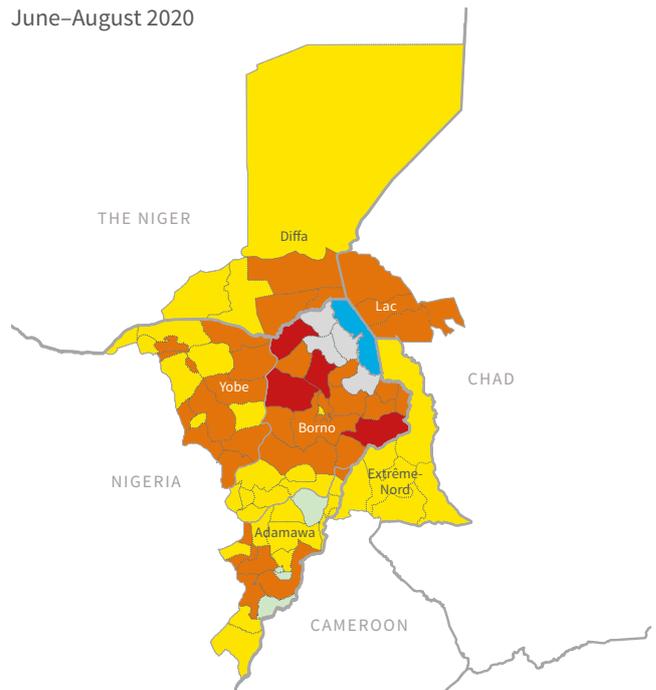
¹ Four Local Government Areas (LGAs) were not accessible for security reasons. In comparison, there were two LGAs not accessible in October–December 2018, five in March–May 2019 and four in the projection for June–August 2019.

Lake Chad Basin, CH acute food insecurity situation

October–December 2019



June–August 2020



CH acute food insecurity phase classification



Source: *Cadre Harmonisé*, December 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Northeastern Nigeria:

Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states

More than 2.9 million people were food insecure and in need of urgent assistance between October and December 2019 (CH, 2019) – although some areas were not accessible in Borno state during data collection, therefore likely underestimating the food security needs in that period. This represents a 70 percent increase since the same period in 2018 when 1.7 million people were facing Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse conditions in the three northeastern states and a relative stability compared to the 2019 lean season. A decade of conflict has severely affected food production systems, with the worst affected states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe experiencing high displacement (FAO, 2019), with over 2 million IDPs recorded by August 2019, the majority of them (1.5 million) in Borno state (IOM, 2019).

The conflict has limited pastoralists' access to natural grazing areas and veterinary services. Security measures, such as restrictions on circulation of goods and people, and use of fertilizers have constrained agricultural production. In August 2019, the government of Nigeria closed its borders to foreign goods in an effort to curb insecurity and to protect the local economy. However, prices remained higher in the northeast compared to the rest of the country mainly as a result of insecurity (FEWS NET & WFP, 2019) and floods. The flash floods in August led to losses of livestock and farmland

and to the displacement of an estimated 21 000 households across the three northeastern states (FAO GIEWS, 2019) and particularly affected IDP camps in Borno state. Health shocks were considerable as the northeast faced a cholera outbreak in Borno and Adamawa in November with 22 suspected cases (NCDC, 2019).

Chad: Lac region

The region accounted for 51 000 people in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse between October and December 2019 (CILSS, 2019). This marks a significant decrease since the June–August lean season when 145 000 people were in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse, but an increase from 25 000 since the same period last year. An increase in attacks between April and September led to new displacements. Around 169 000 IDPs and 46 000 returnees were located in the region as of October (IOM, 2019), in addition to around 12 000 Nigerian refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR, 2019). Most of the displaced depend on humanitarian aid or on agriculture and fishing incomes, which were below average in October due to the large numbers of workers available. Pastoralists also experienced reduced purchasing power because Boko Haram attacks and cattle raiding disrupted trade. The conflict ensured food prices remained high in the second semester of 2019 (FAO, 2019), even though decreases were reported in August and October because of low demand and favourable levels of supplies (FEWS NET, 2019).

The Niger: Diffa region

About 81 000 people were food insecure and in urgent need of assistance between October and December, including 2 000 refugees in the Sayam Forage camp (RPCA, 2019). This number increased by 50 percent compared to the same period last year, although some localities became inaccessible in 2019.² Persisting insecurity disrupted trade as well as livelihoods, and populations were forcibly displaced in the last six months of 2019. The area accounted for over 260 000 displaced people at the end of October – including around 120 000 Nigerian refugees, 109 000 IDPs and around 30 000 returnees – which represents a four percent increase compared to July 2018 (UNHCR, 2019). As of October, a state of emergency was implemented in all departments of Diffa (OCHA, 2019). Pastoralists lost access to grazing lands and faced kidnappings and thefts on the border with Nigeria (FAO GIEWS, 2019). Accessible grazing lands were also in poor condition because of lack of vegetation and pest invasions so livestock was concentrated in some areas, further increasing land degradation, risking conflict with agropastoralists and theft. As a result of the closure of the border with Nigeria and the decrease in exports, livestock prices were decreasing, as of October, to the detriment of livestock traders. Moderate millet price increases were also reported because of trade disruption, attacks and limited market supply compared to a year earlier (FEWS NET, 2019).

Cameroon: Far North region

The food security situation was poor between October and December with about 233 000 people classified in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse (CILSS, 2019). The security situation worsened in 2019, with the number of Boko Haram incursions increasing by about 45 percent compared to 2018, which continued to constrain agricultural production and trigger population displacements (FEWS NET, 2019). As of 31 October, the Far North hosted more than 270 000 IDPs and around 107 000 Nigerian refugees (UNHCR 2019). Although the 2019 aggregate agricultural output was above-average thanks to overall favourable weather conditions, localized production shortfalls occurred in conflict-affected areas. Thefts and destruction of people's productive assets were commonplace (FEWS NET, 2019), and farmers and fishermen were sometimes abducted and forced to work for armed groups. Localized floods affected over 40 000 people in Logone-Chary and Mayo-Dany in September–October. Given the level of crop destruction and the depleted stocks at the end of the lean season, the impact on food security was significant (OCHA, 2019). The floods further limited humanitarian access to vulnerable populations, led to new displacements and aggravated the already serious humanitarian situation that resulted from the Boko Haram insurgency. Flooding also increased health risks in areas

affected by cholera. Since the outbreak in the Far North region in October 2018, 265 suspected cases and 12 deaths were reported as of mid-October 2019 (WHO, 2019).

Increasing violence blocked humanitarian access

Increasing violence associated with Boko Haram in Cameroon, Chad and the Niger has dire implications for the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin and stabilization efforts in the region (ACLED 2019). In northeastern Nigeria humanitarian access in Borno state was severely limited by the volatile security situation, movement restrictions and poor road infrastructure. People living in areas outside of military control could hardly be reached. Over 800 000 people were reported to be outside of humanitarian reach in late 2019 (ACAPS 2019). In September, non-state armed groups executed an aid worker who had been held in captivity since July. The subsequent closure of Action Against Hunger and Mercy Corps by the Nigerian Armed Forces had severe implications on the ongoing response, leaving up to 400 000 people without access to aid (OCHA 2019). On 30 October, the Federal Government lifted the suspensions on these organizations along with a seven-point agenda to strengthen coordination and partnership between the humanitarian community and the Government of Nigeria in the northeast (OCHA 2019).

In some areas of Chad's Lac region, local populations were not able to access humanitarian assistance because of the volatile security situation (ACAPS 2019). By September, over 1 000 security incidents had been reported since the beginning of the year, including abductions, homicides, robberies and looting (OCHA 2019). Humanitarian actors have been targeted by violence, with two humanitarians killed, resulting in activities being disrupted and suspended. Organizations faced challenges due to control by armed groups and lack of government control. Interference into humanitarian activities also remained a concern and lengthy registration and visa processes continued to impede access (ACAPS, 2019). In the Diffa region of the Niger, movements were restricted and humanitarian agencies required armed escorts to carry out their work. Humanitarian operations were temporarily suspended during peaks in insecurity (ACAPS 2019). While protected humanitarian areas fostered safe access and delivery of aid to displaced populations, attacks against civilians were recurrent and jeopardized humanitarian access. Improvised explosive devices were a major concern for local populations and humanitarian partners (OCHA, 2019). In Cameroon's Far North, inadequate infrastructure limited access to communities during the rainy season and the presence of Boko Haram posed threats both to humanitarian workers and the population. Flooding restricted access to villages within the Zina commune of Logone-et-Chari, where boats were used to reach communities (ACAPS, 2019).

² The Diffa department was not accessible for the *Cadre Harmonisé* analysis of November 2019 (RPCA, 2019).



3.3 million people required urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in October–December 2019*

THE NIGER	BURKINA FASO	MALI
1.37 million** CRISIS (CH PHASE 3)	1.19 million CRISIS	0.61 million CRISIS
0.09 million*** EMERGENCY (CH PHASE 4)	0.03 million EMERGENCY	0.04 million EMERGENCY

* POPULATION ANALYSED: 63.9 million

** This includes 14 895 refugees in refugee camps in the Niger

*** This includes 2 587 refugees in refugee camps in the Niger

▶ This marks an alarming deterioration since the same period last year when 1.1 million people were reported to be in Crisis (CH Phase 3) or worse. The prevalence of acute food insecurity has increased fourfold in Burkina Faso, more than twofold in the Niger and more than threefold in Mali.

▶ Between October and December 2019, urgent assistance was needed for:

- 1.2 million people in **Burkina Faso**, including about 28 000 in Emergency (CH Phase 4)
- 1.5 million people in **the Niger** (of whom 17 482 are refugees), including nearly 89 000 in Emergency (CH Phase 4)
- 0.6 million in **Mali**, including around 39 000 in Emergency (CH Phase 4)

The central Sahel region is in the grips of an escalating humanitarian crisis stemming from violence and insecurity spreading from the north of Mali to the central and western regions, and across the border of the Liptako-Gourma area (particularly isolated and disinherited areas across the common borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger) into Burkina Faso and the Niger. Even without the exacerbating impact of insecurity, the Sahel is at the forefront of climate change, with many communities having to adapt to an unpredictable climate amid entrenched poverty.

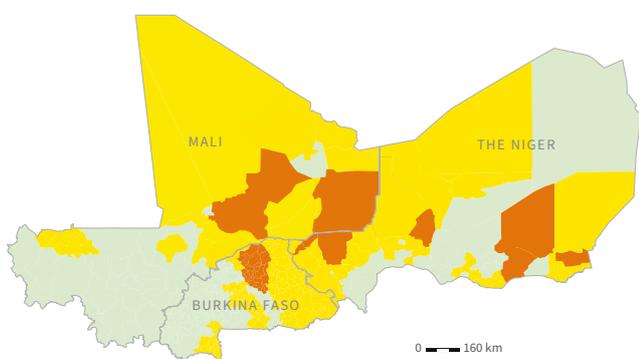
- The number of food-insecure people in need of urgent assistance is expected to increase to 4.8 million in June–August 2020. The population in Crisis (CH Phase 3) and Emergency (CH Phase 4) is projected to rise to 1.8 million in Burkina Faso, 1.1 million in Mali and 1.9 million in the Niger.
- Between October and December 2019, 14 areas were classified in Crisis (CH Phase 3) in the three

countries – three in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions of Burkina Faso, three in the Gao and Timbuktu regions of Mali and eight in the Niger, mainly in the Tillabéry and Tahoua regions.

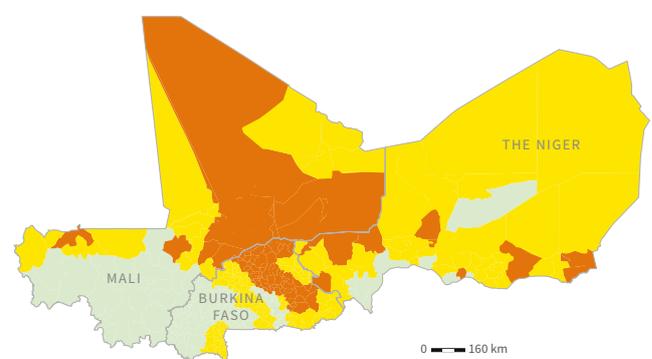
- Conflict represents the primary driver of acute food insecurity in the region. It has destroyed crops and livelihoods, made millions reliant on humanitarian assistance and prevented humanitarian workers from accessing zones in need of aid.
- Conflict and insecurity have driven a massive increase in internal displacement since the beginning of last year and created large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers across the region. The number of IDPs in Burkina Faso has risen from 47 000 in January to 486 000 by October while the number in Mali has increased from 120 000 to 200 000 during this time. The Niger hosted around 219 000 refugees mostly from Nigeria and Mali.

Central Sahel, CH acute food insecurity situation

October–December 2019



June–August 2020



CH acute food insecurity phase classification

1 – Minimal 2 – Stressed 3 – Crisis 4 – Emergency 5 – Famine Areas with inadequate evidence Areas not included in the analysis

Source: *Cadre Harmonisé*, November 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is grappling with an unprecedented humanitarian emergency due to a sudden escalation of violence stemming from attacks from Ansaroul Islam and the Support Group to Islam and Muslims (JNIM). Conflict has spread to a third of the country and the number of attacks in the first half of the year surpassed total attacks in 2018, while reported civilian deaths were four times higher than the total reported in 2018 (WFP, 2019). This has led to a massive increase in the number of IDPs – from 47 000 in January to 486 000 by the end of the year (UNHCR, 2019). Conflict has had a profound impact on food security, given that four out of five people in Burkina Faso rely on farming for their livelihoods (WFP, 2019). In conflict affected areas, agricultural activities have decreased between 20 to 70 percent, while land cultivation has dropped 50 percent compared to 2017/18 (FAO, 2019). Farmers have been obliged to abandon their land and crops, leaving them with little or no means of providing for their families, while conflict has further limited access to markets and humanitarian assistance, particularly in the areas of Soum, Oudalan and Seno (FAO GIEWS, 2019). Although food access and availability was relatively stable in most of the country thanks to favourable cropping conditions during the main season, conflict in the Sahel region affected the transport of grain, making households largely reliant on humanitarian agencies for their cereals (Afrique Verte International, 2019).

The Niger

In the Niger, armed conflict along the border with Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, and conflict between armed opposition groups and government forces have constrained food security conditions for local populations and displaced inhabitants. The regions of Tillabéri and Tahoua were particularly affected by the insecurity spreading from northern and central Mali, while the Diffa region was still in the grips with the Lake Chad Basin crisis (FAO GIEWS, 2019) – see specific section on Lake Chad Basin. The high number of attacks disrupted livelihoods, particularly for pastoralists who were unable to access grazing lands due to the threat of violence (FAO, 2019). As of September 2019, 78 000 people were displaced in Tillabéri and Tahoua, and over 109 000 were displaced in Diffa, in addition to 218 000 refugees, mostly from Nigeria (161 000) and Mali (56 000) (UNHCR, 2019). Despite these challenges, food access remained satisfactory in Agadez, Zinder, Maradi, Tillabéri and Dosso due to the availability of new harvests in the markets, and prices remained stable (Afrique Verte International, 2019).

Mali

In Mali, violence between communities, armed groups, and militias is concentrated in the central and northern part of the country, where about 199 000 people have been displaced, the overwhelming majority (95 percent) of them in Mopti, Gao, Segou, Menaka and Timbuktu (UNHCR, 2019). Conflict and subsequent displacements led to severe localized food insecurity, threatened livelihoods and necessitated growing levels of food and humanitarian assistance (USAID, 2019). Conflict has also placed constraints on food availability in markets in Gao, Timbuktu and pockets of Mopti, although new harvests were expected to help improve the situation in Mopti (Afrique Verte International, 2019).

The region faces severe and destructive weather events

In Mali, the 2019 agricultural campaign was characterized by insufficient rains in several regions, particularly in Kayes and Koulikoro, which contributed to limited grazing areas for livestock and localized shortfalls in cereal production (Afrique Verte International, 2019). In all departments of the Niger's Tillabéri region, drought at the end of the 2019 agricultural campaign prompted the government to support off-season crop irrigation to reduce a potential cereal deficit (Afrique Verte International, 2019).

Forage deficits in parts of Mali (Kayes region), Burkina Faso (Sahel region) and the Niger (Tillabéri and Diffa regions) posed severe challenges for pastoralists. This situation was compounded by armed and community conflicts, theft and banditry, which disrupted the mobility of herds and access to fodder and water resources. Reports from the field noted a concentration of animals in some more secure areas in Mali, Burkina Faso and the Niger with the risk of aggravating conflicts between farmers and herders (RPCA, 2019).

Heavy rains from June to October led to flooding and flash floods in Mali and the Niger, culminating in a loss of farmland, destruction of food reserves and homes, and displacement, thereby exacerbating food insecurity. Flooding in Mali affected an estimated 78 000 people in Gao, Mopti, Segou, Koulikoro and Sikasso, including IDPs and other conflict-affected populations, and led to crop losses (USAID, 2019). In the Niger, the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and National Civil Protection reported that over 211 000 people were affected, with two-thirds of them in Mardi, Agadez and Zinder regions and that 13 300 houses and 4 700 hectares of cropland were destroyed (WFP, 2019).

Humanitarian access declined in Mali and the Niger

In **Mali**, ACAPS reported that poor infrastructure, the continuous presence of armed groups and military operations in the northern and central regions, intercommunal conflict in Mopti region, and an increase in incidents targeting aid actors severely constrained humanitarian access to vulnerable populations and threatened the safety of relief workers. It reported 70 security incidents involving NGOs between May and October 2019 with ten aid workers kidnapped and five injured. It also pointed out that looting of humanitarian organizations and the danger posed by improvised explosive devices limited operations. Between late July and early August, the UN reported multiple robberies in Menaka and Tombuktu and had to suspend activities in Taoudenit and Timbuktu regions (USAID, 2019).

In **the Niger**, access to vulnerable populations in Tillabéri and Tahoua was constrained by continuous insecurity and infrastructure damage, with humanitarian actors often targeted, spikes in violence causing periodic

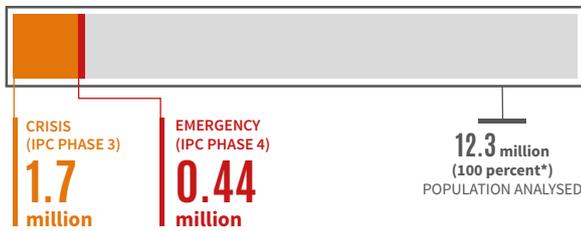
suspension of humanitarian operations and humanitarian organizations having to employ armed escorts. WFP could not directly access 12 500 Malian refugees and 7 800 IDPs in September (WFP, 2019). Armed groups have increasingly used improvised explosive devices and landmine incidents remained frequent in western areas (ACAPS, 2019).

In **Burkina Faso**, humanitarian agencies were facing severe challenges in accessing IDP and refugee populations in northeastern parts gripped by insecurity. The fate of people living in the northeastern border town of Djibo, including 7 000 refugees in the Mentao camp, was of particular concern to UNHCR. Access to the town was cut in early November after a series of militant attacks (UNHCR, 2019). Insecurity and violence forced the closure of 71 health centres. Some 881 000 people had limited or no access to health care. The situation was worsened by movement restrictions due to curfews and other security measures by the authorities in Est and Sahel regions, leaving people in insecure areas with no access to medical assistance (OCHA, 2019).

Somalia



2.1 million people required urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in October–December 2019



*TOTAL POPULATION: 12.3 million

- ▶ The number of acutely food-insecure people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse increased by around 30 percent compared with 1.6 million in the February–June 2019 analysis and by 75 percent compared with 1.2 million in July–September 2019.
- ▶ Northern, central and some of the southern parts of the country have the highest levels of acute food insecurity, particularly without sustained humanitarian assistance.

The year 2019 was another tumultuous period for Somali farmers after drought conditions during most of the *Gu* season (April–June) resulted in one of the lowest cereal harvest in decades (OCHA, 2019). A scale-up in food assistance from May to August 2019 was critical to mitigating food gaps for many poor households, but acute food insecurity levels were expected to increase through the end of 2019 following the slow recovery from recurrent drought in central and northern pastoral areas combined with river flooding and flash floods in late 2019 in riverine and low-lying southern and central agropastoral areas, and protracted conflict and displacement.

- Through December 2019, 2.1 million people (17 percent of the population) were acutely food insecure (IPC Phase 3 or worse). In addition, 4.2 million were in

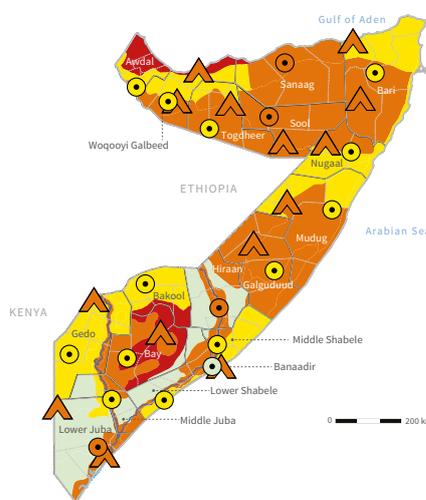
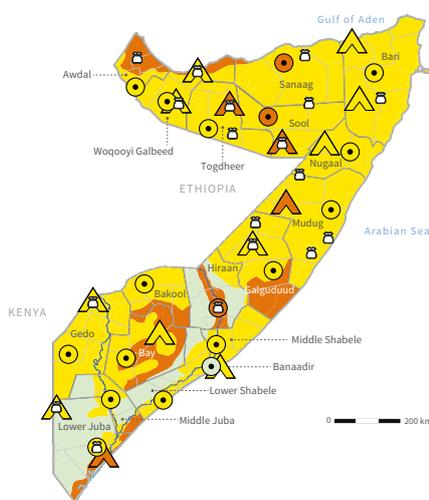
Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security conditions.

- New and recurrent internal displacements due to weather-related shocks and insecurity resulted in limited livelihood opportunities and vulnerability to illness and malnutrition for IDPs sheltering either in settlements with poor sanitation or in host communities already facing poverty. Floods, conflict and drought forced an additional 665 000 people to abandon their homes in the first 10 months of 2019. The total number of IDPs remained high at over 2.6 million.
- Urgent treatment and nutrition support was required for more than 1 million children under the age of 5 years, likely to face acute malnutrition through June 2020, with 178 400 of them severely malnourished.

Somalia, IPC acute food insecurity situation

July–September 2019

October–December 2019



IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

- 1 – Minimal
- 2 – Stressed
- 3 – Crisis
- 4 – Emergency
- 5 – Famine
- Areas with inadequate evidence
- Areas not included in the analysis
- Urban settlement
- IDPs/other settlements classification

Source: IPC Somalia Technical Working Group, September 2019
*conforms to the UN Global Map, 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Consecutive seasons of drought and flooding

Drought conditions from late 2018 were exacerbated by poor 2019 *Gu* rains (April–June), which began late and finished early in most of Somalia, causing drought conditions to persist through mid-May. Rainfall in most central and southern areas was 25–40 percent below average. The 2019 *Gu* cereal harvest in southern Somalia was the lowest since 1995 and 68 percent below the long-term average for 1995–2018 (IPC, 2019).

In pastoral areas, the impact of the drought on livestock led to a sharp decline in milk availability, and many poor households accumulated large debts while struggling to feed their families and rescue their remaining livestock. In northern and central pastoral areas, where livestock losses were high during the 2016/17 drought, the availability of saleable animals remained low, constraining the ability of poor households to feed their families and purchase water for their animals (IPC, 2019).

Rains were exceptionally heavy from October to December, with parts of the Horn of Africa and southern Somalia receiving the highest volumes since the 1980s (FEWS NET, 2019). The Shabelle and Juba rivers in southern Somalia overflowed, and flash floods were widespread following torrential rains in several southern regions, central Galgaduud, Mudug, Nugaal regions and in northern Sool region (OCHA, 2019). By mid-November flooding had affected 547 000 people, with 370 000 displaced. Farmland, infrastructure and roads were destroyed, and livelihoods disrupted in some of the worst-hit areas (OCHA, 2019). The floods were expected to result in a substantially reduced *Deyr* harvest in January 2020 (FAO GIEWS, 2019), but the abundant rains improved pasture and water availability in pastoral areas (FEWS NET). As a result, livestock body conditions, which had declined after two consecutive poor rainy seasons, had improved (FAO GIEWS, 2019).

Escalating insecurity, displacement and loss of livelihoods

Clan disputes, protests, the weakness of the national forces, the gradual withdrawal of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Islamic State and continuing Al Shabaab attacks continued to cause insecurity and instability, disrupting livelihoods and forcing Somalis to abandon fields and productive assets (ACAPS, 2019). According to ACLED data, the number of security incidents including violence against civilians, armed clashes, explosions and riots, remained alarmingly high in 2019 (despite a slight overall decline

compared to 2018). In the first nine months of 2019, an average of about 190 security incidents each month was reported (ACLED, 2019).

In several southern and central regions, there was reportedly an escalation in armed confrontations between insurgents and federal troops supported by AMISOM, with most occurring in the Shabelle, Juba, Gedo and Bay regions. Inter-clan conflict in Lower Shabelle and central Somalia also resulted in loss of life and displacement (FEWS NET, 2019).

Displaced people encountered difficulties in accessing labour opportunities and faced vulnerability to illness due to inadequate sanitation in IDP settlements (FEWS NET, 2019). An estimated 2.65 million people across Somalia were internally displaced in 2019 – with floods, conflict and drought being the primary causes. There were 665 000 new displacements in the first 10 months of the year with 340 000 of them attributed to floods (most of them during October), 176 000 to conflict and insecurity and 136 000 drought-related (UNHCR, 2019).

Low household purchasing power

In October, prices of locally produced maize and sorghum, were up to twice their year earlier values in several markets due to a tight supply situation following the poor 2019 *Gu* harvest (FAO GIEWS, 2019).

Low demand for agricultural labour during the 2019 *Gu* season and the subsequent crop marketing season depressed household income. Labour-to-cereals terms of trade remained low or declined from June to September in most agropastoral areas of southern Somalia (FEWS NET, 2019).

Households in urban areas in Sool, Sanaag and Hiraan regions faced food consumption gaps driven by the high cost of living and limited income-earning opportunities (IPC, 2019).

Increasing levels of acute malnutrition

Acute malnutrition among children under 5 years is widespread based on the nutrition surveys conducted in June and July 2019. At national level, the median prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) remained Serious (10–14.9 percent) over the past three seasons. A Critical (15–29.9 percent) prevalence of GAM was observed in 10 out of the 33 population groups surveyed,

with more areas forecast to deteriorate from Serious to Critical between August and October 2019. A Critical (4–5.6 percent) prevalence of Severe Acute Malnutrition was observed in the Riverine livelihood of Beletweyne district and in urban Beletweyne (IPC, 2019).

One contributing factor to consistently poor acute malnutrition is the incidence of measles as well as acute water diarrhoea/cholera outbreaks, due to unsafe water use and poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) practices. The October flooding and contamination of water sources were likely to increase the incidence of waterborne diseases (FEWS NET, 2019).

Very high humanitarian access constraints

Although humanitarian access improved between May and August 2019 (ACAPS, 2019), insecurity, logistical issues, improvised explosive devices and violent incidents continued to compromise the response. Conflict- and

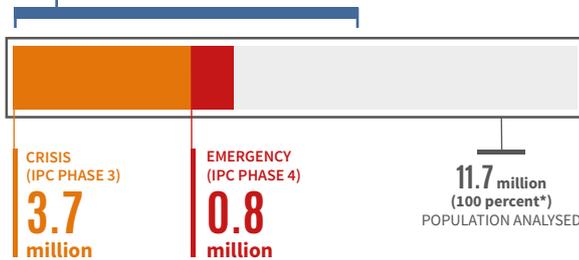
climate-related displacement hindered the ability of people in need to access assistance (ACAPS, 2019). Insurgents constructed road blockades, which restricted trade flows and humanitarian access to most rural settlements in south/central Somalia (FEWS NET, 2019).

Although the control of al-Shabaab was predominantly concentrated in rural areas, attacks on public infrastructure in cities remained a threat. Some areas under al-Shabaab control were completely inaccessible for humanitarian operators, particularly in the already hard-to-reach rural areas of the south and central regions of the country, where needs are high.

According to OCHA, humanitarian agencies and their partners reached at least 105 000 flood-affected people by mid-November, but significant gaps remained in the provision of assistance because of restricted humanitarian access and impassable roads.

South Sudan

4.5 million people required urgent food, nutrition and livelihood assistance in September–December 2019



*TOTAL POPULATION: 11.7 million

- ▶ There are 2.4 million fewer people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity compared to the record of 6.96 million in May–July 2019. This 35 percent decrease is mainly attributed to seasonal crop availability but does not capture likely impact of serious flooding that took place after the analysis period.
- ▶ The former states of Jonglei and Upper Nile had the highest number of people in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) of acute food insecurity. In Jonglei and the former state of Unity more than half of the population were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) conditions.

In the six years since the start of the civil war, South Sudan has faced alarmingly high levels of hunger and acute malnutrition driven by conflict and insecurity, climate shocks, a deepening economic crisis and insufficient agricultural production (FAO, 2019). After the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018, the country started to show some signs of recovery, with access to livelihoods, markets and humanitarian aid improving. However, the devastating floods that hit the country in late 2019 reversed most of these gains, leading to new displacements, significant crop and livestock losses, disruption of food trade flows and humanitarian assistance delivery.

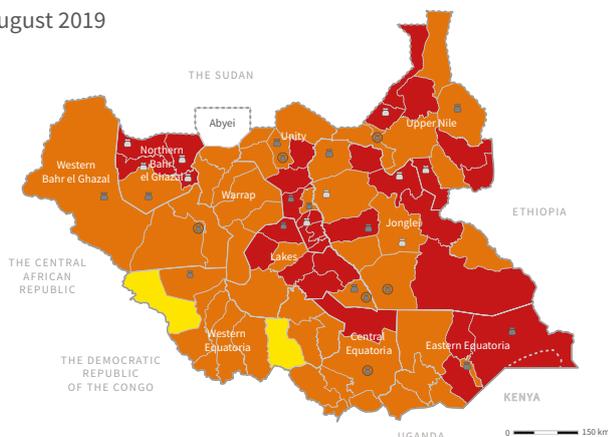
- In September–December 2019, 4.5 million people (39 percent of the population) were acutely food insecure compared to almost 7 million in May–July.
- The food security gains were likely to be reverted by

heavy flooding in late 2019, and the number of people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse is expected to substantially increase to 5.5 million people in January–April 2020.

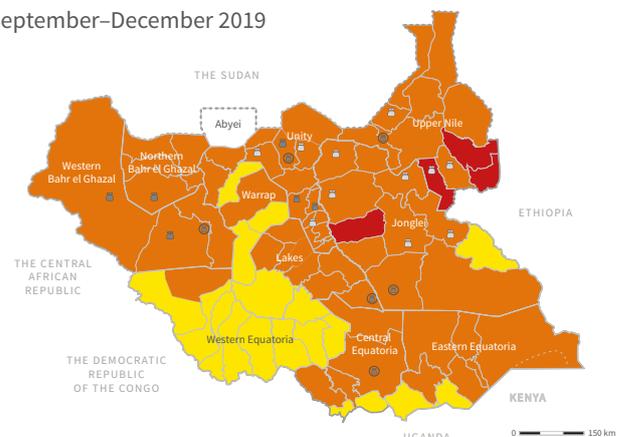
- In August 2019, former Jonglei state had the highest number of people in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse followed by former Upper Nile state. Yirol East of former Lakes state had an estimated 10 000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). In September–December 2019, no populations were expected to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) while Emergency (IPC Phase 4) conditions were expected to persist in Duk county in former Jonglei state and Longochuk, Maiwut and Ulang counties in former Upper Nile state.
- Around 1.3 million children ages 6 to 59 months required treatment for acute malnutrition as of August 2019, the largest number recorded since South Sudan gained independence in 2011 (UN).

South Sudan, IPC acute food insecurity situation

August 2019



September–December 2019



IPC acute food insecurity phase classification

- 1 – Minimal
- 2 – Stressed
- 3 – Crisis
- 4 – Emergency
- 5 – Famine
- Urban settlement
- Areas not included in the analysis
- Areas with inadequate evidence

- At least 25 percent of households meet 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance
- At least 25 percent of households meet over 50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance

Source: IPC South Sudan Technical Working Group, August 2019
*conforms to the UN Global Map, 2019

Factors driving food insecurity

Persisting insecurity

Major armed confrontations in South Sudan have declined since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018. Improved security increased access to livelihoods and markets and facilitated humanitarian access in hard-to-reach areas (IPC, 2019).

However, lack of political consensus and resource constraints have challenged the implementation of the ceasefire (OCHA, 2019). Poor rule of law and easy access to arms resulted in an increase in inter- and intra-communal violence that continued to displace people (UNHCR, 2019). Cattle raids were a common source of tension, particularly between agropastoralist communities (ACAPS, 2019).

In the first six months of 2019, 135 000 people were newly displaced as a result of conflict (IDMC, 2019) and increasingly inter-communal clashes (OCHA, 2019). In October 2019, there were 1.46 million IDPs, 12 percent of whom were staying inside six UNMISS Protection of Civilians sites (UNHCR, 2019).

Despite UNHCR's non-return advisory, some refugees and IDPs cautiously headed home, encouraged by the improved security, to cultivate their land and increase their own food production. But most were deterred by lack of livelihoods, basic services, political solutions, safety and security, and education. Of the 2.3 million South Sudanese refugees in the region (mainly in Uganda and the Sudan), over 213 000 returned between November 2017 and October 2019 (OCHA, 2019). Meanwhile, insecurity in neighbouring countries prompted over 297 000 persons to seek protection in South Sudan, the overwhelming majority of them (92 percent) from the Sudan (UNHCR, 2019).

Devastating floods

In late October, the Government of South Sudan declared a state of emergency in 30 counties after abnormally heavy seasonal rains – ongoing since July – brought devastation to northern and eastern parts, including areas already experiencing high levels of conflict-related vulnerability. The flooding submerged entire communities and destroyed or rendered inaccessible basic services and markets. By early November, 908 000 people were estimated to have been affected and an estimated 420 000 were reported to have been displaced by late October (OCHA, 2019).

Humanitarian needs were particularly high in Pibor and Maban counties, which is home to over 150 000 refugees

(OCHA, 2019). According to WFP, 755 500 people were in need of food and nutrition assistance as a result of the floods.

Significant flood-induced crop losses, especially in former Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Warrap, Upper Nile and Jonglei states, partly offset the favourable impact on crop production of an increase in planted area compared to last year due to security improvements, and of high yields in areas not affected by floods, due to favourable rains, especially in the Greater Equatoria region. As a result, according to the preliminary results of the 2019 joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission, the 2019 aggregate cereal production is estimated to be higher than the poor 2018 output, but still below the previous five-year average (FAO & WFP, forthcoming).

OCHA reported that the flooding and crop losses would result in a lean season starting as early as January 2020, three months earlier than is typical (OCHA, 2020).

The floods also killed livestock (with some households losing 80 percent of their stock), trebled livestock disease alerts and limited availability of forage by submerging pastures. Livestock productivity and milk production were forecast to decrease significantly.

More than 60 percent of the flood-affected counties were classified as facing extreme levels of acute malnutrition (OCHA, 2019). IPC estimated 58 counties – mainly from Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria states – facing Serious or Critical (IPC Acute Malnutrition Phase 3 or 4) situation during the last quarter of 2019 (IPC, 2019).

Exceptionally high food prices

Household food and income sources are inadequate to cover most households' minimum food needs, due to the depletion of productive household assets over the course of the protracted conflict (FEWS NET, 2019) and reduced employment opportunities due to the economic crisis. Limited cereal supplies, the lingering impact of conflict on trade and agriculture, high transportation costs and a weak local currency have kept the prices of main staple foods exceptionally high. In November, maize, sorghum, wheat, groundnuts and cassava prices in the capital Juba were up to 80 percent higher year on year and more than 10 times above July 2015 levels, when they started to surge as a result of depreciating currency (FAO, 2019). According to WFP's Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) indicator, 4 out of the 12 monitored markets reached crisis level in the third quarter of 2019.

Humanitarian access constraints remained very high

According to FAO South Sudan, “The only thing standing between the people of South Sudan and widespread starvation right now is massive humanitarian assistance.” Since the signing of the 2018 peace accord humanitarian access has improved and mitigated more severe outcomes in several areas in 2019, including Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar counties of Unity and Rumbek North of Lakes (FEWS NET, 2019).

However, South Sudan still faced very high access constraints according to ACAPS. There was an average of 44 incidents against humanitarian workers a month in the first 10 months of 2019, consisting mainly of bureaucratic impediments including local authorities demanding additional documentation and extortion from NGOs, as well as violence against personnel, looting of assets and restriction of movement (OCHA, 2019). Attacks and ambushes on humanitarian convoys were common.

At least 115 aid workers have been killed since the start of the conflict in December 2013 (OCHA, 2019). On 27 October, three IOM volunteers were killed in a crossfire during clashes that broke out between armed groups – the first killing of aid workers reported in South Sudan since 2018 (OCHA, 2019). IOM subsequently suspended Ebola virus disease screening at five sites along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and put on hold its support to health facilities in the area.

Harassment and looting of relief material and cash were common. Since December 2018, humanitarian imports were disrupted, following a presidential decree on custom exemptions (ACAPS, 2019).

Damaged roads and floodwaters obstructed the delivery of aid to people affected by flooding, including to refugee camps.

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