

Ongoing Humanitarian Crises in Africa

July 2012

A combination of conflict, food shortages, and drought in regions of Northern Africa has resulted in a severe humanitarian crisis. In the Sahel, armed conflicts in Mali and Chad have displaced thousands and placed additional strain on overfull refugee camps. After a famine occurred last year in Horn of Africa, re-stabilization has been tenuous as conflict and protracted food insecurity threatens to undo the progress made by aid groups.

Sahel Region (Includes Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad and other countries)

- **Nearly 18 million people (including more than one million children) are in the midst of a “deepening humanitarian crisis” in the Sahel, according to the UN World Food Programme.** On June 11, 2012, UNICEF called for more funding to aid those affected by the widespread drought. To reach their goal of \$238 million, UNICEF requires at least \$146 million in additional funds.
“UNICEF Appeals for Urgent Funds amid Growing Crisis in West Africa’s Sahel Region,” *UN News Centre*, June 11, 2012.
- **Over 300,000 civilians have fled the northern region of Mali** as the country experiences an armed conflict caused by a military coup in March 2012 and an influx of fighters from Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). According to Doctors without Borders, providing water and preventing malnutrition and disease among the refugees filling the camps is vital as hundreds of thousands flee into areas already strained by droughts and overcrowding.
“Mali: Refugees in a Vulnerable Situation,” *Doctors without Borders*, June 26, 2012.
- **Over 56,000 refugees fleeing Mali have entered camps in Burkina Faso, another 61,000 have fled to Mauritania.** In both countries, the displaced persons are receiving only half the “agreed minimum” amount of water per day needed.
“Sahel: Aid Efforts Under Strain as Refugees Numbers Mount,” *IRIN*, May 4, 2012 and “Crises in Africa Showcase Complexity of Humanitarian Access in Conflict Zones,” *The Charity & Security Network*, May 16, 2012.
- **In Niger, six million people are facing imminent starvation.** 70 percent of the population lives on less than a dollar per day and one in four children dies before age five.
“Million Affected by Africa Crises,” *Belfast Telegraph*, May 23, 2012. And “Food Crisis in the Sahel,” *Canadian Foodgrains Bank*, May 2, 2012.

- **Nearly 16,000 Chadians have been displaced by joint military efforts between Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) to oust Front Populaire pour la Redressement (FPR) rebels.** Sebastien Munie, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the CAR, warned that insecurity was a concern for aid groups, noting that “If the military operation was on the whole a success, it did not completely eradicate insecurity in the region.”
“Central African Republic- Chad: Military Offensive Creating Humanitarian Problems,” IRIN, February 28, 2012.

Somalia and the Horn of Africa (Includes Eritrea, Djibouti and Ethiopia)

- **One child dies every six minutes in Somalia** according to estimates by Gerald Martone, Director of Humanitarian Affairs for the International Rescue Committee.
Gerald Martone, “IRC Briefing from the Field,” (Conference call coordinated by the International Rescue Committee, June 27, 2012).
- **1.4 million Somalis who have been displaced by conflict and food insecurity are at severe risk of entering a new hunger crisis,** according to Save the Children. Andrew Warner, emergency media manager for Save the Children warned that “there is a perception that the crisis ended...but we [anticipate] that people affected previously will be impacted again.”
“New’ Food Crisis Beckons in Somalia,” Al Jazeera, July 5, 2012.
- **Over 13 million people in the Horn have been affected by a “perfect storm” of drought, civil war and rising food prices.** The UN referred to the famine as the “worst humanitarian disaster in the world” during the height of the crisis in the summer of 2011. **Already in 2012, an estimated 13,000 Somalis have become displaced.**
“New’ Food Crisis Beckons in Somalia,” Al Jazeera, July 5, 2012 and Gerald Martone, “IRC Briefing from the Field,” (Conference call coordinated by the International Rescue Committee, June 27, 2012).
- **The population of Dadaab, the world’s largest refugee camp, has increased by a third in the past year to over 460,000 Somalis.** Funding shortages will cause 130,000 of the refugees to be without adequate shelter.
“Kenya: Emergency Funds Running Dry in Dadaab, World’s Largest Refugee Camp,” Oxfam International, July 12, 2012.
- **The terrorist group Al-Shabaab has been responsible for numerous attacks on aid workers attempting to provide relief for civilians affected by the food crisis.** The group has also required steep monthly “security fees” to be paid by NGOs operating in areas under Shabaab’s control.
“Crises in Africa Showcase Complexity of Humanitarian Access in Conflict Zones,” Charity and Security Network, May 16, 2012.