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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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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

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

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