

Fighting famine: 'unprecedented crisis' putting 20 million people at risk, warns UN agency

14 August 2017 – Twenty million people risk dying of hunger in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and the north-east of Nigeria, including 1.4 million children suffering from severe malnutrition, the United Nations food relief agency said, spotlighting today its worldwide campaign to fight famine.

Famine is declared when there is evidence of extreme conditions regarding food access, child malnutrition and an increase in the death rate, stated the UN World Food Programme (WFP), while launching in Spain a global [Fighting Famine](#) campaign in Spain to warn about this unprecedented food crisis.

Commending the intense response mounted by the humanitarian community, WFP said the famine declared in two counties of South Sudan in February had been overcome and, to date, Somalia, Yemen and northeast Nigeria have averted it.

Nonetheless, the agency cautioned, the situation is still critical.

WFP pointed out that apart from Yemen, the other three countries are entering the lean season – the time of year when the previous season's harvest has run out and food stocks are at their lowest. Also, the rains are making access by land difficult, and even impossible. While air transportation may sometimes be possible, it costs up to seven times more.

The severe food crisis in Yemen is caused by the consequences of armed conflict devastating the country, according to the UN agency.

WFP has implemented emergency response mechanisms that include food airdrops in remote areas in South Sudan and trucking in supplies to areas where people have fled from Boko Haram in Nigeria.

In June, agency assisted 11.8 million people in the four famine-facing countries, underscoring that almost half of them are in Yemen, where lack of funding has meant that WFP has been forced to make the difficult decision to reduce the amount of food each person in order to stretch resources further.

To shine a spotlight on the unprecedented food crisis, WFP is taking part in a worldwide #FightingFamine campaign.

The UN agency noted that in Spain, Mastercard and MediaCom have donated resources and advertising space so that the initiative is channeled through press, online media, digital screens and street furniture.

WFP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions, and with this campaign, it urges the private sector and individuals to take action to help prevent a looming humanitarian disaster.

As WFP depends on the generosity of donor governments, supporters and partners to quickly deliver food to affected people in these four countries, it urgently needs \$900 million to meet immediate needs and avoid the spread of famine for the period of August to January 2018.

[UN chief Guterres condemns terrorist attack in Burkina Faso](#)

14 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has condemned the terrorist attack carried out yesterday in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso.

The Secretary-General stresses that there can be no justification for such acts of indiscriminate violence, [said](#) his Deputy Spokesperson, Farhan Haq, in a statement.

Further to the statement, Mr. Guterres extended his heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Burkina Faso and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

Media reports suggest that gunmen killed nearly 20 people and wounded several others during an overnight attack on a restaurant in Burkina Faso's capital.

The Secretary-General reiterated the UN's support to Burkina Faso in its fight against violent extremism and terrorism.

He also reaffirms the Organization's commitment to the countries of the G5 Sahel as they scale up efforts to tackle multiple security challenges in order to promote peace and development in the sub-region, [concluded](#) the statement, referring to the so-called Group of Five (G5) countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – that have deployed a joint force to tackle the threat of terrorism, as well as the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime in Africa's restive Sahel region.

Amid soaring food insecurity in DR Congo, UN agencies call for food aid, supplies

14 August 2017 – More than one in ten people living in rural areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are hungry due to escalating and prolonged conflict and displacement, United Nations agencies today reported, warning that the situation will worsen unless urgent support comes in time.

“7.7 million people face [acute hunger](#) – a 30 percent increase over the last year,” said the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) and the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) said.

In a new report, the UN agencies said that between June last year and June this year, the number of people in “emergency” and “crisis” levels of food insecurity – levels that precede “famine” – rose by 1.8 million, from 5.9 million to 7.7 million.

[The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) analysis](#) released today also notes that the humanitarian situation has worsened due to the spread of fall armyworm infestations, and cholera and measles outbreaks.

In conflict-ridden areas, over 1.5 million people are facing “emergency” levels of food insecurity according to the IPC report, which means people are forced to sell everything they have and skip or reduce their meals.

“In conflict-ridden areas, farmers have seen their villages and fields pillaged. They have not been able to plant for the last two seasons. There is a lack of local markets providing for their food needs,” said Alexis Bonte, FAO Representative ad interim in DRC.

“The situation is set to get worse if urgent support does not come in time.”

Farmers, especially those displaced – the majority of whom are women and children – are in urgent food aid, as well as in need of tools and seeds so that they can resume farming, the UN agencies said.

In several areas, people only eat once a day. The meal is often based on corn, cassava or potatoes, which does not meet their daily nutritional and calorie needs.

“In some cases, diets are limited to starches and leaves,” FAO and WFP said.

Chronic malnutrition affects 43 per cent of children under five – more than 7 million – in DRC, according to the report.

The situation is particularly difficult in the Kasai region, where growing insecurity has worsened the poverty and food insecurity.

FAO and WFP call for an urgent increase in the provision of lifesaving food and specialized nutrition assistance to combat malnutrition as well as seeds and tools so that farmers can plant again and regain their livelihoods, the UN agencies said.

Yemen's cholera epidemic surpasses half-million suspected cases, UN agency says

14 August 2017 – More than 500,000 people in Yemen are suspected of having cholera, the United Nations health agency today said, warning that the disease is spreading quickly due to a lack of clean water or health access.

Yemen's cholera epidemic, currently [the largest in the world](#), has spread rapidly due to deteriorating hygiene and sanitation conditions and disruptions to the water supply across the country, the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) said in a statement.

Nearly 2,000 people have died since the outbreak began at the end of April, the UN agency added.

It blames a collapsing health system, a lack of clean water, and a build-up of human waste, which is not being collected in major cities.

Shortages in medicines and supplies is persistent and widespread, WHO said, adding that health workers have not been paid in nearly a year.

Yemen's health workers are operating in impossible conditions, said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. These doctors and nurses are the backbone of the health response without them we can do nothing in Yemen. They must be paid their wages so that they can continue to save lives.

The UN is supporting partners to set up cholera treatment clinics, rehabilitate health facilities, deliver medical supplies, and support national health response efforts.

In his statement, Mr. Tedros called for a political solution to the conflict in Yemen.

[Congratulating Kenyan people on peaceful elections, UN chief stresses dialogue to ease tensions](#)

12 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres congratulated today the people of Kenya for their peaceful participation in the presidential elections, and, stresses the importance of dialogue to defuse tensions, called on the political leaders to send clear messages to their supporters urging them to refrain from violence in the wake of the polls.

A statement issued by UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said the Secretary-General has [taken note](#) of the provisional results of the presidential election in Kenya, and of the announcement by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta as President-elect.

“He calls on those political leaders disputing the elections results to address election-related disputes through the relevant constitutionally mandated institutions,” said the Spokesman, adding that Mr. Guterres also called on the political leaders to send clear messages to their supporters urging them to refrain from violence.

According to the statement, the UN, in close collaboration with the African Union and other multilateral and bilateral partners, is fully engaged with Kenya’s political leadership and relevant stakeholders to facilitate the successful conclusion of the electoral process.