

Early Warning Early Action Report

IASC Inter-Agency
Standing Committee

April – September 2013
Submitted by the IASC Sub-Working
Group on Preparedness

The IASC Early Warning and Early Action Report provides anticipatory warning for risks of concern, backed by evidenced rationales, and matched with country, regional and global level preparedness actions recommended by the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness. The Report is produced bi-annually as an inter-agency effort by the IASC SWG member agencies.

This edition of the Report highlights the four most serious risks for the next six months, i.e. highest probability of impact, as identified by the SWG Analytical group and not already in emergency response mode or the focus of preparedness efforts. Also noted are a number of on-going risks for which awareness is already high, and a list of risks that have lower perceived probability of impact but will still be regularly monitored by members of the IASC.

For questions, comments or further information please contact the co-chairs of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness, Mr. Michel Le Pechoux (UNICEF) at mlepechoux@unicef.org, and Mr. Anthony Craig (World Food Programme) at anthony.craig@wfp.org.

SUMMARY

COTE D'IVOIRE

Political violence

GUINEA

Political violence along ethnic lines around the electoral process

IRAQ

Sectarian violence

LEBANON

Factional fighting between Sunni and Shiite groups



Risks of Concern
Early Warning Report -
Sub Working Group on Preparedness

April – September 2013

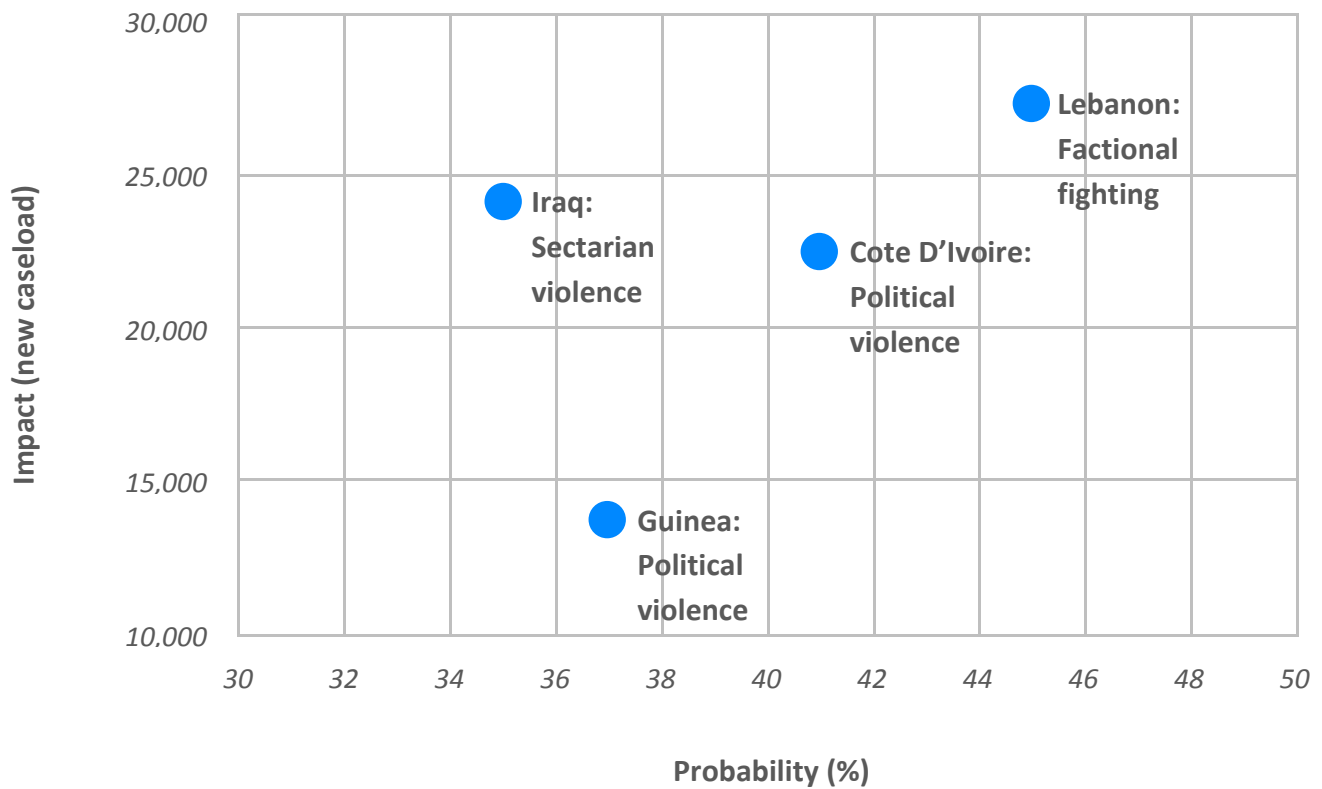


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GRAPH – RISKS OF CONCERN

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This table reflects the average probability-of-impact assessments of the participating agencies of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness.

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CHART AND METHODOLOGY EXPLANATIONS

All charts illustrating probability of impact assessments in the document are the averages of individual assessments made by each participating agency, using numerical probabilities.

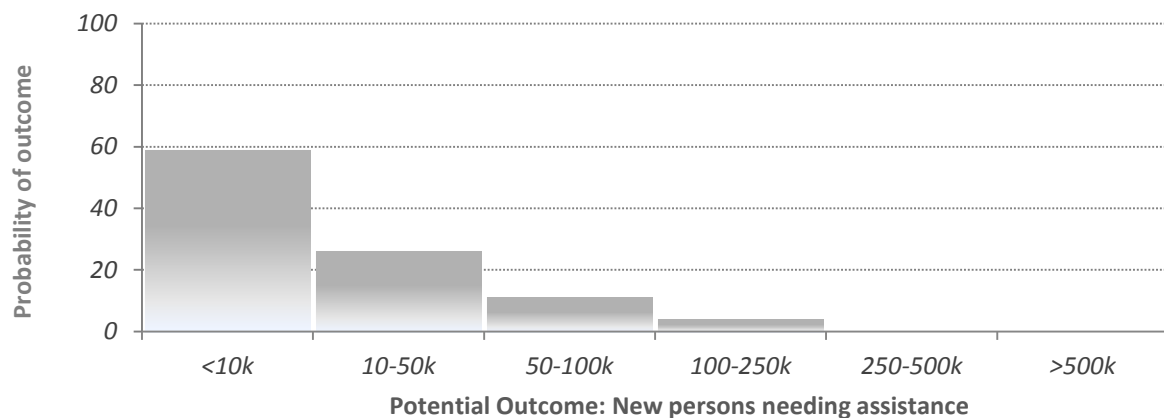
Probability of Impact

Each risk is analysed for the probability that it will have different levels of impact in the next six months, with impact measured by the number of people likely to require humanitarian assistance in that time. This is done because every risk (e.g. “Flooding in Country X”) has multiple possible outcomes depending on its scale (e.g. how high water levels rise). The probabilities always add up to 100% - the situation must get better, stay the same or get worse to some degree.

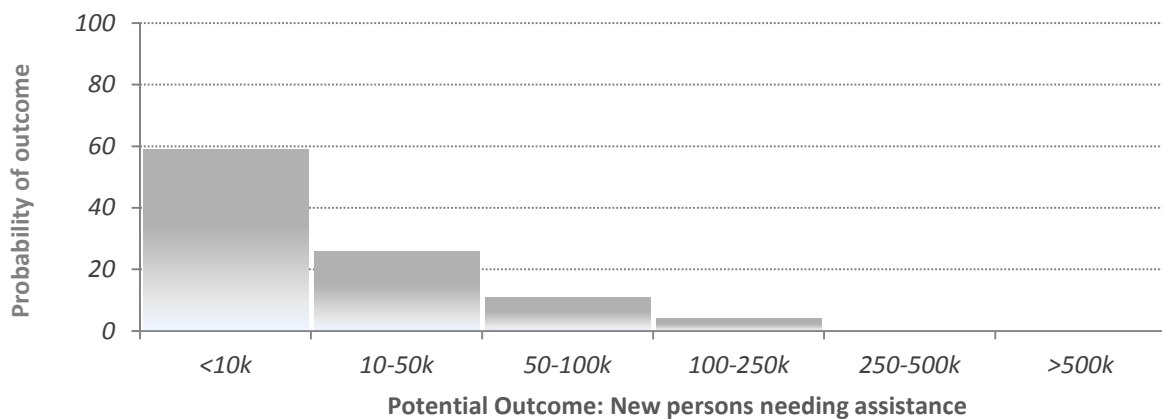
- The horizontal axis shows impact ranges, with numbers of persons who may require humanitarian assistance in the next six months.
- The vertical axis shows probabilities from 0 – 100.
- The grey columns on the graph show the probability of the risk having each level of impact.

The general shape of the graph is more important than the actual numbers.

- A graph with most of the probability on the left (as below) represents relatively low perceived seriousness, i.e. more probability of low impact, or no impact at all.
- As the bulk of the probability pushes right, this implies increased perceptions of seriousness.
- Probability distributed equally across the graph means that the analysts are unable to pick any one outcome as being more likely than any other, suggesting a very volatile - and rare - situation where “anything could happen”.



COTE D'IVOIRE: Political violence



A resurgence of violence between supporters of Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara in Cote d'Ivoire poses a moderate risk in the next six months. The report's drafting team sees new caseloads of less than 10,000 people as being the most likely outcome in the next six months, but with considerable uncertainty as reflected in the chart above. This uncertainty is the rationale for preparedness, with the inter-agency consensus suggesting a significant likelihood of 10,000-50,000 new persons requiring humanitarian assistance and some potential of up to 100,000 persons. The most likely location to experience conflict is the already volatile western region.

Political power struggles divide supporters of Ouattara and his *Rassemblement des républicains* (RDR), and partisans of Gbagbo and the *Front populaire ivoirien* (FPI). The political divide, which also reflects regional and ethnic splits, is worsened by socioeconomic tensions, land access and property issues, an inefficient reconciliation process, hate speech and the slow and incomplete reintegration and demobilisation of fighters from the 2010-2011 conflict.

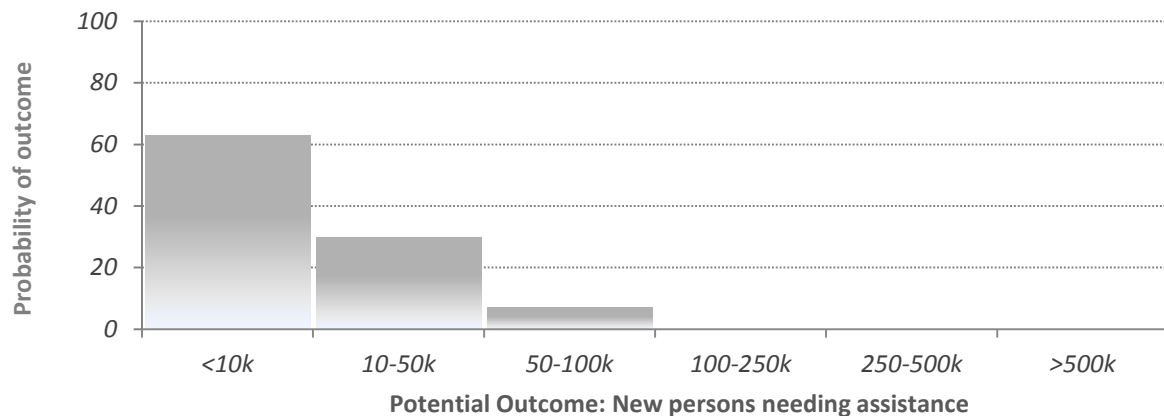
On the one hand, supporters of Alassane Ouattara aim to consolidate and retain power, and therefore have an interest in the status quo because violence could destabilise gains already made. On the other hand, supporters of Laurent Gbagbo would like to regain power. In the absence of trust in the democratic process and lack of peaceful options, violence may be seen as the most effective way forward.

The security apparatus remains divided along the same lines and the government's control is challenged, particularly in the west. At the same time, Gbagbo supporters in exile have been reportedly plotting coups d'état and funding mercenaries to destabilise Cote d'Ivoire. Additional information about their capacity remains limited. However, a critical obstacle undermines pro-Gbagbo capacity: Gbagbo is in custody at the ICC and his supporters lack a strong and clear leadership to replace him. Ouattara continues to have the military upper hand and enjoys wider national and international support.

Readiness Recommendations

- HCT to conduct training at sub-national, including on assessment methodology;
- HCT to undertake review of secondary data including to identify likely national and sub-national 'hot spots' (with support from Geneva based organisations as required);
- HCT to develop / agree upon a common HCT integrated advocacy strategy for use by humanitarian actors, regarding humanitarian space and engagement with stakeholders;
- HCT to undertake a simulation to train/test/review readiness for humanitarian response.

GUINEA: Political violence along ethnic lines around the electoral process



Violence in Guinea poses a moderate risk over the next six months, with a significant chance of new caseloads in the range of 10,000 to 50,000 persons and some potential to reach 100,000.

Legislative elections scheduled for 12 May 2013 and considered to be an important step in Guinea's political transition have been repeatedly delayed since 2007. Guinea's politics, and social and ethnic groups, are increasingly polarised due to the electoral process and growing tension could translate into violence during the assessment period.

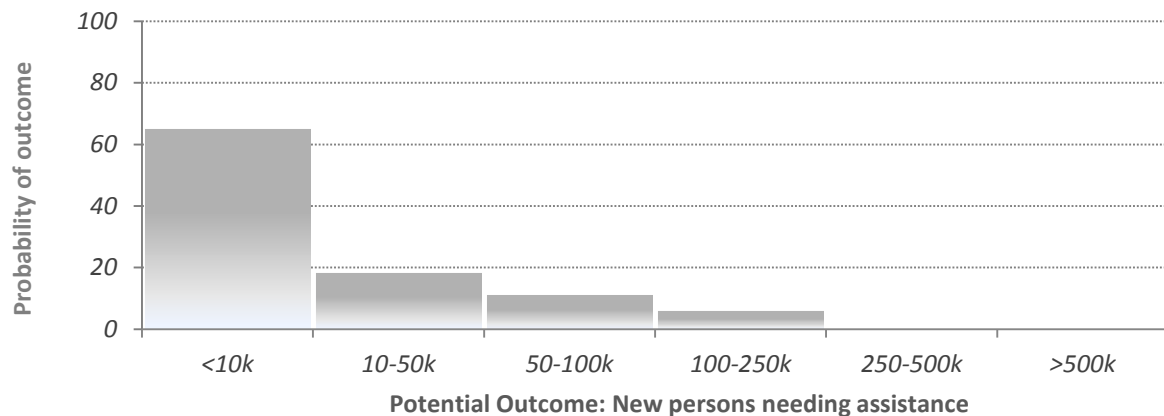
The political spectrum is split between supporters of President Alpha Condé's *Rassemblement du peuple de Guinée* (RPG) and followers of the two main coalitions of opposition parties, the *Alliance pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* and the *Collectif des partis politiques pour la Finalisation de la Transition*, together with the *Collectif des Républicains*. The opposition discredits the president of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and accuses him of fixing the election date without broad consultations. It also protests technical issues and a lack of transparency in the revision of the electoral register which it believes favours the RPG. The governing majority has indicated its intention to call for elections without thoroughly addressing the opposition's outstanding claims. The opposition will intensify protests if the regime persists with the electoral schedule. The risk of instability posed by the elections is compounded by ethnic divisions. The RPG is perceived as representing Malinké rights and Alpha Condé is accused of favouring this ethnic group while the opposition demands greater representation for the Peule ethnic group.

Free and fair elections are a priority for the opposition, which lacks other channels to contribute to the political process in Guinea. The President and his majority have relied on executive powers to govern Guinea for the past five years and this strategy would be threatened by the opposition's victory at legislative elections. Direct talks between the two sides have been proposed but continue to be boycotted by main opposition figures and are not likely to produce tangible results. Weak rule of law allows the security forces to operate with impunity. Security forces are also affected by ethnic and partisan disputes and could thus contribute to violence from both sides. The ability of both the government and opposition to mobilise the population is however not certain at this point. Violence is therefore likely to remain contained or limited to isolated incidents.

Readiness Recommendations

- HCT to consider political unrest scenario stemming from the legislative elections in the revised contingency plan, and include a focus on protection risks and strategy;
- HCT to undertake review of secondary data to identify likely national and sub-national 'hot spots' (with support from Geneva based organisations as required);
- HCT to develop / agree upon a common HCT integrated advocacy strategy for use by humanitarian organisations (e.g.; use of military assets, code of conduct with Non-State Actors).

IRAQ: Sectarian violence



Demonstrations in Iraq's western Anbar province against Prime Minister Maliki and his Iraqiya coalition government are likely to continue over the coming period, posing a moderate risk. There is some potential for protests to become increasingly violent, and in a worst case trigger clashes between militias attached to the various communities, such as the al-Mukhtar Army, Iraqi Free Army, and the Kurdish Peshmerga. Thus, while those affected and requiring international humanitarian assistance are most likely to number less than 10,000 based on current evidence, there is considerable potential for the number to reach up 100,000 persons.

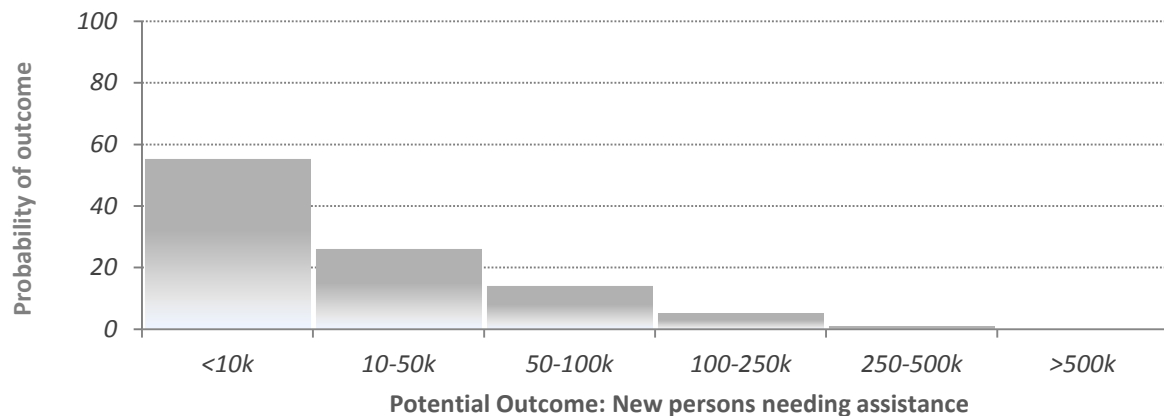
While not strictly sectarian, recent protests have seen minorities, including large numbers of Sunnis, gather to denounce the current Shia-led Government of Iraq (GoI), which some Sunnis believe does not provide enough Sunni representation and associated power-sharing. This belief stems in part from the Anti-Terrorism Law, the Accountability and Justice Commission (de-Ba'athification) and the question of an amnesty, which some sectors of society (predominantly Sunni) believe are being used to single them out and persecute them. In this vein, Sunni parties and supporters tend to support the implementation of power-sharing deals, the halt of "de-Baathification", and inclusion in state service as well as fair employment procedures in the short term. Additionally, if the Iraqi President approves a law passed by the Iraqi Parliament limiting the term lengths of the Prime Minister, tensions may decrease. Clashes with security forces and calls for the government's overthrow suggest similarities with political protests that have toppled governments elsewhere in the region in recent years. At the same time, but not directly related, frequent but generally small-scale bombings appear to be targeting specific ethnic and religious groups, including Kurdish villages and political offices. Responsibility is not certain, but extremist elements such as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) are reportedly involved.

Iraqi militias on all sides retain their organisational structure and weapons from earlier fighting. Sectarian bombings are often intended to provoke retaliatory strikes. While there are no clear indications of militias readying themselves, the current highly politicised atmosphere holds potential for tit-for-tat escalation, and this could spiral to a point where targeted killings and open fighting emerge again. The situation will be closely watched for indications of qualitative changes, including increased hate-speech, delayed 2013 provisional elections, targeted assassinations of key officials, and a noticeable increase in armed attacks and clashes between rival communities and their militias.

Readiness Recommendations

- HCT to factor the above-identified risk into the current contingency plan revision and include a sub-national analysis;
- HCT to undertake review of secondary data, including on community level conflict profiling and vulnerability analysis (with support from Geneva based organisations as required);
- HCT to review / update IA assessment tool and methodology;
- Global clusters to support strengthen of country level clusters .

LEBANON: Factional fighting between Sunni and Shiite groups



Fighting between Sunni and Shiite groups in Lebanon, related to on-going violence in Syria, is a moderate risk for March until August 2013. The inter-agency assessment suggests strong potential for new caseloads of between 10,000 and 100,000 persons. Although current mainstream priorities for the Lebanese population focus on economic stability, there are a number of trends with the potential to upset the status quo.

Tension between Sunni and Shiite communities is fundamentally over power, although an influx of Sunni extremists from Syria could heighten the importance of religious differences. Parliamentary elections in June will likely be divisive, particularly between the rival 8th March and 14th March coalitions, though PM Nijab Miqati, backed by Hizbullah, has a high chance of retaining power given that his moderate political tendencies are popular with many people in Lebanon. Clashes between Sunnis and Shiite Alawites in Tripoli have increased in recent months, though this has mainly been limited to small scale fighting in Jabal Mohsen and Bab al-Tabbaneh, two neighbouring districts comprised largely of Alawites and Sunni populations respectively. The clear alternative to fighting is to rely on the Government of Lebanon (GoL) and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) for security. Thus far however, the LAF has controlled the clashes, but its capability to suppress more severe fighting would be tested. Fighting outside of Tripoli's divided neighbourhoods into other major population centres such as Beirut, Saida, or Tyre would represent significant escalation.

Strains between rival sects, both Lebanese and Syrian, may also become inflamed in economically challenged border regions such as Akkar or the Bekaa Valley, where resentment is likely to grow over humanitarian and economic assistance provided to Syrian refugees. Both areas host tens of thousands of Syrian refugees. If fighting were to start between Syrian refugee communities and host Lebanese communities, it could draw in other Lebanese sects, such as the Druze or Christians. Additionally, tensions inside Palestinian refugee camps are likely to increase as poor Syrians and Lebanese seek low-cost shelter in these already overcrowded camps. The camps are outside the control of the LAF and thus Palestinian groups inside are heavily armed. Should large scale fighting erupt between rival armed Palestinians or Syrian groups as a consequence of existing tensions within the camps coupled with the spill-over effect of events from Syria, this could force thousands of families to flee.

Readiness Recommendations

- HCT to place specific emphasis on conflict analysis in the IA contingency planning exercise for Lebanon, drawing on technical support from the regional IASC hub and IASC agencies
- Advocate for and support UNDP / BCPR and Framework Team engagement with HCT on conflict analysis to identify specific interventions to mitigate impacts of a potential deterioration

RISKS WITH POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL IMPACT

The following risks are not considered likely to have major impact in terms of new caseloads, but could significantly impact existing humanitarian operations should they occur.

Increased presence and activities of militant groups in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania

There is a strong potential for heightened insecurity for humanitarian actors operating in eastern Mauritania, northern Burkina Faso, western Niger, and Mali owing to increased militant activities and cross-border movements in the context of the conflict in northern Mali. This could lead to a significant increase in current operational constraints on humanitarian organisations, affecting their activities in relation to current and future humanitarian caseloads.

Civilian disturbances in urban centres in Jordan

Small-scale, rather peaceful and localised protests are likely to continue in Jordan without transforming into significant civil disturbances. Nevertheless, the situation should be closely monitored should new elements and triggers modify the current balance in favour of greater opposition to the government. Significant deterioration could have a major impact on the international community's operations in response to the Syrian crisis.

Continued Unrest in Bangladesh

Unrest in Bangladesh associated with the International Crimes Tribunal's verdicts against leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami party for their alleged roles in atrocities during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence has left some 80 people dead since the end of January 2012. The unrest, whilst most visible in Dhaka, has spread to other cities and towns across the country. The humanitarian community has a sizable presence in Bangladesh, and operations face potential business continuity challenges as the protests, sporadic bombings and accompanying security restrictions make movement of goods and staff increasingly difficult.

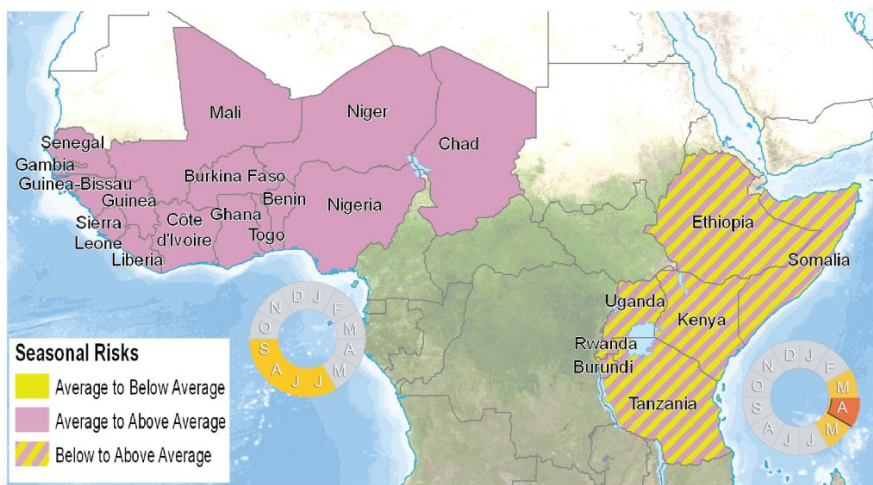
There is no clear indication at present of how the unrest will evolve. Potential risks that require close monitoring include increasing violence by Islamist extremists against opposing groups, including religious minorities (in particular the Hindu community which has regularly been targeted in recent weeks) that could cause displacement and significant damage to livelihoods, and the emergence of a more military form of opposition to the government by elements of the Jamaat-e-Islami party and its supporters. Tensions are high the Awami League and ruling Bangladesh National Party. Potential precipitating events for significant change in the situation include the legal dissolution of the Jamaat-e-Islami party by the court or government, which would significantly reduce political options for its supporters, or a coup by the military.

Climate Summary

Conditions are expected to remain ENSO neutral, with a slight bias towards La Niña for April, May and June, and a slight bias towards El Niño from July, August and September. During ENSO neutral years, the ENSO signal is weaker, and other more subtle global patterns influence the weather. As a result, precipitation amounts can vary widely across a region and within a country. New forecast will be issued as updated seasonal data become available and models precision improves.

East Africa

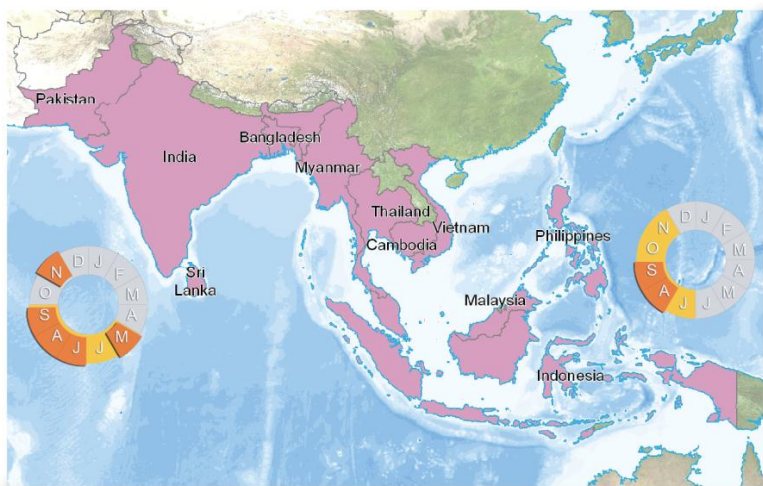
The long rains season (March to May) across the Horn of Africa is critical to agriculture and pastoral activities. Precipitation is expected to be average with a tendency towards below average (although interior regions could experience above average rainfall). Due to the varied distribution of rainfall, drought will be possible in some regions, while flash floods and mudslides will be likely elsewhere. Below average precipitation is expected from July, August and September after the conclusion of the long rains season.



[Kenya Meteorological Department, Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF), ECMWF, IRI]

Western Africa

The 2013 rainy season (June through September) is expected to be about average to slightly above average. As the region is still recovering from above average precipitation in 2012, above normal precipitation could leave the region vulnerable again. A recent assessment has indicated that flood damage was more severe than initially thought, and flood affected families have not been able to fully recover yet. [Reliefweb, FEWSNET, ECMWF, GFS]



Southern Asia

The monsoon season generally occurs across southern Asia from mid-May through September, but varies widely across the continent. There is currently some disagreement among the models on the intensity of the monsoon, but there is a general indication of an average to above average monsoon season across the region, which could result in localized flooding. Currently models are indicating that the number of tropical storms will be below average from April to September. [IRI, ECMWF]

South-East Asia

An average to below average tropical cyclone season is expected to impact southeast Asia countries that border the Pacific Ocean. [ECMWF]



Caribbean

Models are indicating that precipitation will be below average during the rainy season (May through September). The tropical cyclone season is expected to be above average. [FEWSNET, IRI, ECMWF]

Central America

The rainy season generally begins at the end of May and lasts through September, but can vary depending on location. Currently, models are indicating that precipitation will be near average, but with a slight dry bias during the rainy season. Although drought conditions were occurring across Central America in early 2013, they have been mitigated by recent rains. [FEWSNET, IRI, ECMWF]

EXCLUDED RISKS

The following risks were reviewed by the inter-agency group that drafted this report, but considered “high awareness”¹:

1. Afghanistan: Insurgency
2. CAR: Insurgency
3. DRC: Fighting between government and M23
4. DRC: Fighting between armed groups and with the DRC army in eastern DRC
5. Kenya: Electoral violence
6. Mali: Ethnic violence involving Arabs, Tuaregs and other ethnic groups in Mali
7. Mali: fighting between French/government forces and Islamist rebels
8. Myanmar: Ethnic violence involving Rohingya and Rakhine communities in Myanmar
9. Myanmar: Fighting between Government and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Kachin State
10. Somalia: Fighting between government and supporting forces, and insurgents
11. Sudan (Darfur): Fighting between Malian militants and armed groups in Darfur
12. Sudan: Fighting between government and SPLM-N / SRF
13. Sudan/South Sudan: Fighting between Sudan and South Sudan in the border areas
14. Syria: Civil war

The following risks were discussed by the inter-agency group that drafted this report, but were assigned lower probability of impact scores for the coming six months by participating agencies, based on current information. The Analyst group will continue to watch these risks in the coming six months and share with the SWG management any change in perceived seriousness:

1. Burkina Faso: Ethnic unrest combined with refugee influx in Burkina Faso
2. Egypt: Civil unrest in Egypt
3. Guinea-Bissau: Electoral violence in Guinea Bissau
4. Madagascar: Electoral violence in Madagascar
5. Nepal: Electoral violence in Nepal
6. Niger: Ethnic unrest combined with refugee influx in Niger
7. Nigeria: Religious-political violence in eastern and central Nigeria
8. Pakistan: Fighting between government and Taliban/insurgent forces in Pakistan
9. Philippines: Violence in Mindanao
10. Tunisia: Civil unrest in Tunisia

¹ Any one of the following criteria are sufficient for inclusion on the high awareness list:

- a. Prominence in the international media
- b. Already having inter-agency contingency plans in place
- c. Escalations of current emergencies within the same scale of magnitude.
- d. Having a level of preparedness that is sufficient to cover foreseen risk.