Early Warning Report

IASC — Inter-Agency Standing Committee

October 2012 – April 2013

Submitted by the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness

As an IASC early warning tool, the primary purpose of the report is to provide early warning, backed by evidence/rationale, of high risk/high impact/higher probability/situations. The management of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness (SWG) uses the report to inform recommendations for early action at country, regional and global level. The report also lists situations as being "On Watch" where significant signals are available but probability is currently low or where impact may be high but more evidence is required. The risks classified as "On Watch", in particular their related indicators, will be monitored by the SWG analysts and Humanitarian Country Teams and their probability assessed regularly. Warnings will be issued if "On Watch" risks become "Warning".

This report is produced bi-annually as an inter-agency effort by the SWG for IASC member agencies. In addition to collaboratively assembling the report the SWG works to improve collective efforts of the humanitarian system particularly in the fields of early warning and early action.

SWG members may share the Report with relevant people within their own agencies, but the Report should not be shared externally or publicly posted.

WARNING SUMMARY

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
- Escalated Fighting between Government and M23 in North Kivu, DRC

KENYA
- Electoral Violence in Kenya

MALI
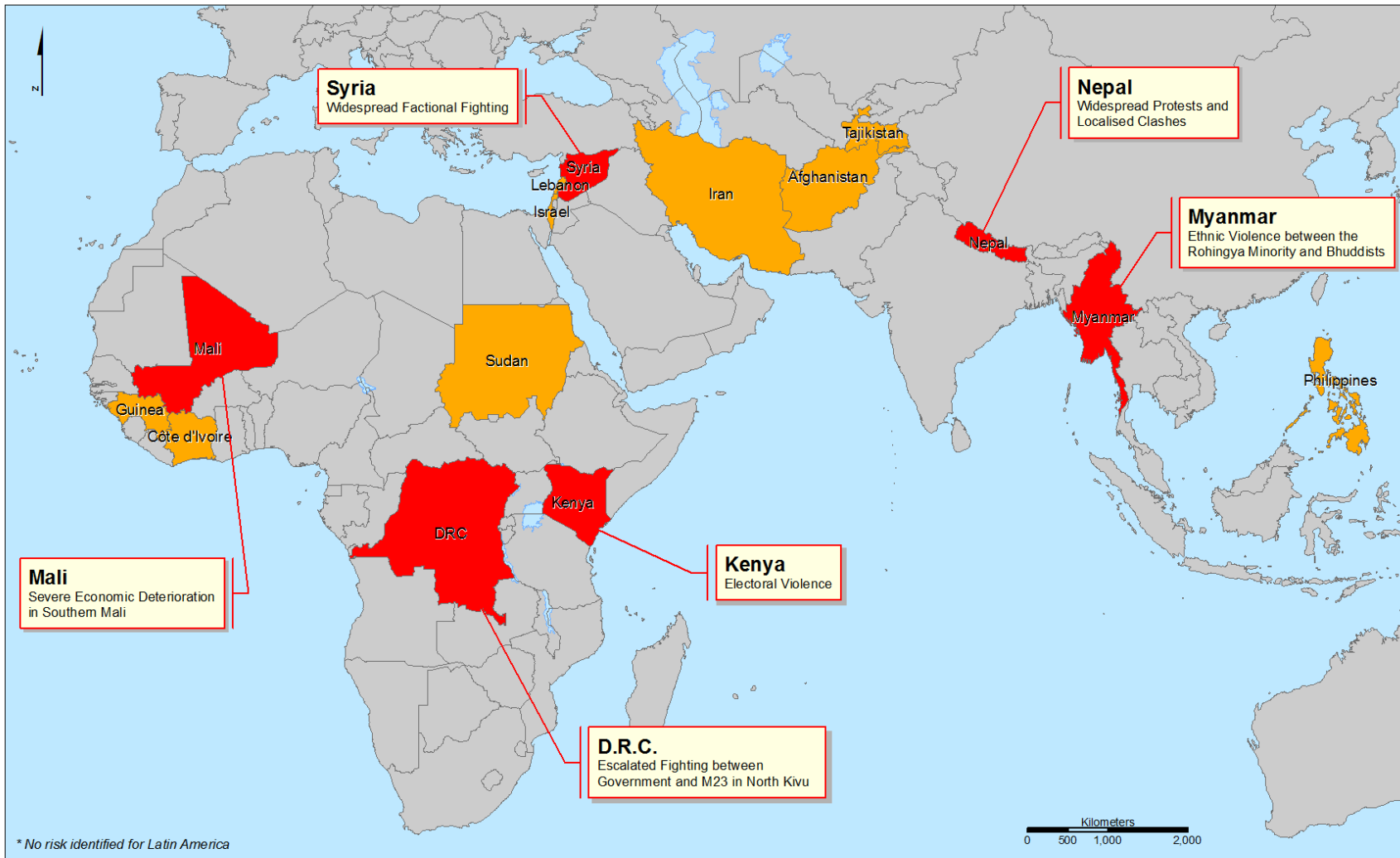- Severe Economic Deterioration in Southern Mali

MYANMAR
- Ethnic Violence between the Rohingya and Rakhine Communities in Myanmar

NEPAL
- Widespread Protests and Localised Clashes in Nepal

SYRIA
- Widespread Factional Fighting in Syria

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

October 2012 - March 2013

Legend:
- Warning (red)
- On-Watch (orange)

IASC
Inter-Agency Standing Committee

WFP
wfp.org

Syria
Widespread Factional Fighting

Nepal
Widespread Protests and
Localised Clashes

Myanmar
Ethnic Violence between the
Rohingya Minority and Bhuddists

Mali
Severe Economic Deterioration
in Southern Mali

Kenya
Electoral Violence

D.R.C.
Escalated Fighting between
Government and M23 in North Kivu

* No risk identified for Latin America

Map labels: Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Nepal, Myanmar, Philippines, Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Kenya

Kilometers
0   500   1,000   2,000

Date Created: 15-OCT-2012
Map Number: WFP_WLD_002_A4L
Coord. System/Datum: Projected/ World Mercator
Data Sources: UNGIWG, WFP, GLCSC, ESRI
The names and the designations used on this map
do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by
the United Nations.
hq.situation.room@wfp.org

2

CONTENTS

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Preparedness – Early Warning Report October 2012

AFGHANISTAN

Impact Baseline

About 500,000 persons are currently displaced inside Afghanistan, and some 5.5 million Afghani citizens are refugees (2.9 million in Pakistan, 2.4 million in Iran, 200,000 elsewhere). 7.6 million persons are considered food insecure, and human rights abuses and violations are severe in many parts of the country. The threat of attack places heavy constraints on humanitarian operations. For example, in August 2012, 14 incidents of direct and indirect attacks against humanitarian workers were registered, including IED detonations against humanitarian vehicles, abduction, threats and intimidation and theft.

ON WATCH: Increased Attacks on the UN in Afghanistan

Expected New Impact

If it occurs, this risk will manifest itself as an increased number of small-scale IED attacks, light weapons attacks, and potentially large scale explosive and invasion attacks against UN compounds. Such an environment would likely limit access to vulnerable populations. Targets could also include national staff separating from UNAMA.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

The United States has removed the last of its "surge" troops, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is increasingly handing security responsibility over to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and some member countries will withdraw their forces in the coming months. Military support to the UN in case of attack may be qualitatively different than in previous years. Insurgent infiltrations of the ANSF may also have an effect.

As winter approaches and rural areas become inaccessible insurgents will likely follow similar patterns to past years and concentrate attacks in urban areas, where the UN has the strongest presence. Insurgents in recent months also appear to be pursuing a strategy of concentrating attacks on political rather than military targets, potentially increasing focus on the UN.

Conflict issue

The current war in Afghanistan is a struggle for power. At least some elements of the insurgency conflate the UN with ISAF, meaning that while UN agencies perceive themselves as neutral this is not necessarily the view from the other side.

Key actor analysis

Insurgents seek to cleanse Afghanistan of international influence, dissolve the current government, and take power themselves. In this context, the priority of attacks on the UN is contingent upon how closely insurgents connect the UN with ISAF and the Government of Afghanistan, and whether the distinction between humanitarian and political wings of the UN is apparent or taken seriously. Past statements indicate that at least some insurgent groups view the UN as directly supporting government and ISAF objectives.

The two main insurgent groups that threaten the UN are the **Taliban** and the **Haqqani Network**, which work together to some extent but maintain separate command structures and territories. The Haqqani Network has a stronger track record of mounting complex and sustained attacks against foreign interests. Insurgents have limited options beyond force to

drive international groups out of the country, in particular humanitarians. Direct violence is the one tool that typically suppresses humanitarian operations.

ON WATCH: Escalated Fighting between Insurgents and ANSF/ISAF in Afghanistan

Expected New Impact

Escalated winter fighting is unlikely to create large scale displacement as snow will make it very difficult for people to flee urban centres. However, fighting could make humanitarian operations increasingly difficult, and create new caseloads of 20,000 to 50,000 persons.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

The Afghan state is fragile, with a fractious government, uncertain popular support, and a military troubled by problems with quality and loyalty. International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) are drawing down and increasingly handing responsibility for security to the still-training Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Insurgents appear to be pushing a new strategy of attacking high-profile political targets, seeking to destabilise the government and weaken popular support for the war both in Afghanistan and abroad.

The primary obstacles to this risk occurring in the monitoring period are seasonal patterns of fighting which usually bring a relative slowdown in the winter, the fact that the Afghan state continues to function despite its challenges, and the position of the Taliban that grows stronger the longer they wait and the further the ISAF withdrawal progresses, reducing incentives to escalate now. Seasonal factors are unlikely to change; winter blocks access to much of the country and provides a relative advantage to ISAF and the ANSF because of their better equipment, including air power. However, serious political crises or widespread defections from the ANSF could stir the Taliban to try to seize the initiative, triggering increased fighting in urban areas.

Conflict issue

The current war in Afghanistan is a struggle for power and political control over Afghanistan. Complicating factors include disagreements between combatants about the degree to which Afghanistan should be based upon Western conceptions of the state and individual rights, and disagreements about how Afghanistan should engage with the outside world.

Key actor analysis

The **Government of Afghanistan (GoA)** seeks to expand its authority over the entire country, or, as a bottom line, maintain authority that it currently has. For the government and to a lesser extent the individuals it comprises, this is an existential issue. The Karzai government is interested in peace talks, but it faces a strong northern Tajik/Uzbek opposition that is decidedly against compromise and limits Karzai's flexibility. The general contempt in which the Taliban, the main insurgent body, holds Karzai also reduces the likelihood of negotiations producing meaningful results. The ANSF comprises over 300,000 soldiers and armed police, but its ranks suffer from poor training, questionable loyalty and generally uncertain effectiveness. In the short term, while ISAF can still provide air, artillery and infantry support the ANSF should be able to prevent the insurgency from making gains via conventional fighting, but if the force suffers large scale desertions and defections this could change.

The **Afghan insurgency, including the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and other actors**, seeks to become the government in Afghanistan, and many elements seek to impose varying degrees of Islamic law. The fact that they have fought to this end for over a decade suggests

very high priority. Insurgent commitments to peace talks are unclear. On the one hand, the Taliban has issued public statements that it is interested in peace talks and has taken steps such as basing some of its members in Qatar for the purpose of negotiations. Some reports also indicate that the Taliban is willing to accept rather moderate outcomes. On the other hand, the insurgency is not monolithic, and it is unclear what proportion of its composite groups is committed to publicly stated positions. Many groups retain substantial autonomy, and at least one critical actor, the Haqqani Network, is on the USA's list of terrorist organisations, effectively excluding it from talks. Also, the insurgent position is almost certain to get stronger as ISAF leaves, meaning that the longer the insurgency waits the better a deal it can probably get. This does not favour a quick settlement. The real fighting strength of the various insurgent groups is not known with certainty. Estimates suggest perhaps 50,000 men, although not all of these are likely to be in the field at one time.

COTE D'IVOIRE

Impact Baseline

165,000 Ivoirians were displaced as of late August 2012, including an estimated 81,500 IDPs and nearly 83,000 refugees across West Africa (58,000 in Liberia).

ON WATCH: Fighting between Ouattara and Gbagbo Supporters in Côte d'Ivoire

Expected New Impact

Armed attacks against civilians and fighting between Gbagbo supporters and government or other security forces would likely displace 50,000 to 100,000 people.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Recent reports that exiled supporters of former President Laurent Gbagbo are plotting a destabilisation campaign in the run-up to partial regional and local elections in February 2013 increase the likelihood of escalated fighting. If this campaign can gain momentum by exploiting local land grievances the scale could exceed that of on-going attacks by militias, presumably Gbagbo supporters. These attacks have targeted army and police facilities and IDP camps with increasing frequency since June 2012 against the backdrop of a country deeply divided by the 2010/11 post-electoral violence, and preceded a wave of arrest of Gbagbo supporters. However, a strong UNOCI presence alongside government armed forces could still be a stabilising factor.

The exclusive focus of the Ivorian judiciary on Gbagbo supporters, and Gbagbo's trial at the ICC that started in June, have exacerbated long-standing enmities and underlying ethnic conflicts. Events in 2011 demonstrate that a small number of people can create a major humanitarian emergency. The disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process of an estimated 110,000 informal combatants has never gotten up to speed, and security sector reform is similarly weak, representing untaken opportunities to foster reconciliation.

Conflict issue

The conflict is about distribution of power and access to resources, aggravated by ethnic enmities. Both Ouattara and Gbagbo camps are defined primarily along ethnic lines: as a member of the Bété ethnic group Gbagbo is strongly supported by the southern Christian population and has a stronghold in the west, while Ouattara's principle support comes from

northern Muslim ethnicities. Overlap between political and ethnic affiliation are aggravated by long lasting tensions over land access and property.

Key actor analysis

The **pro-Ouattara camp** emerged victorious from the post-electoral crisis in 2010/11 and their high priority aim is to maintain power. Options to appease the pro-Gbagbo camp include bringing forward the stalled DDR and reconciliation process, but politicians are currently paying mere lip service to these efforts. In light of their victory in 2011 and the subsequent dispersal of pro-Gbagbo forces as well as their control over state weaponry, it can be assumed that pro-Ouattara group have greater military capacity is higher than their opponents. UNOCI has supported pro-Ouattara forces since post-electoral violence broke out in 2010, including on the Liberian border.

The **pro-Gbagbo camp** seeks to liberate their leader, detained in The Hague and charged with war crimes by the ICC. Its agenda also includes returning to power and retrieving from aboard comrades who fled fearing retaliation and war crimes charges. Targeted attacks on government forces may be a prelude to worse violence associated with partial regional and municipal elections in February 2013. The options of the pro-Gbagbo camp include accepting defeat and waiting for the next elections to challenge Ouattara's rule peacefully. Showing disinterest in these options, several pro-Gbagbo groups have kept their weapons and occasionally attack government or security forces in the capital and regions bordering Liberia and Ghana. They are allegedly supported by mercenaries in neighbouring countries and generally benefit from the widespread availability of small arms in Cote d'Ivoire.

Indicators and Triggers

- Emergence of strong opposition leadership and external financial support to Laurent Gbagbo loyal forces.
- Municipal elections in February 2013, as well as regional elections not completed in the previous round
- Partial UNOCI withdrawal (the UN said that it would responsibly withdraw some forces after close evaluation of the situation).
- First sentences against Gbagbo supporters in on-going pre-election violence trials (started in early October).
- Developments in Laurent Gbagbo's ICC trial (A hearing to confirm charges scheduled for August 2012 was postponed due to health concerns)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Impact baseline

2.3 million persons are displaced in DRC. Violence in North Kivu since April 2012 has internally displaced 390,000 persons, and over 60,000 have fled into Rwanda and Uganda.

WARNING: Escalated Fighting between Government and M23 in North Kivu, DRC

Expected New Impact

Between 200,000 and 500,000 additional people could be affected in the Kivus by an increase in the range, scale, frequency and duration of fighting, including displacement and disruption of livelihoods.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

The status quo is unsustainable. Although fighting between the March 23 (M23) rebel movement and DRC Government forces (FARDC) has subsided since early August, volatility prevails in eastern DRC due to the activity of armed groups. Without a political settlement, which is unlikely, there is a high likelihood of a government offensive to retake rebel-held areas or an M23 effort to expand its territorial control. The DRC government faces internal political pressure and serious reputational risk if it does not restore its territorial integrity. The M23 is trying to establish alliances with rebel groups in South Kivu and there are reports of defections from the FARDC to the M23 and other armed groups. The "neutral military force", proposed in July 2012 by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and aligned with the DRC government despite its name, is unlikely to materialise given uncertainty over who will provide troops and money. Neutrality in this context means excluding from the force soldiers from states with a direct interest in the conflict. However, should such a force come into being, intervention will precipitate a wave of fighting as it takes on multiple armed groups in eastern DRC.

Conflict issue

The DRC-M23 conflict is related to the government's failure to integrate former rebels of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) into the army as mandated by peace accords signed in 2009, but has evolved into a battle over territory and resources in eastern DRC. Since the rebellion began in April, M23 has set up parallel administrative structures in the parts of Rutshuru Territory in North Kivu that it occupies. Territorial control means access to valuable mineral and timber resources, and speculation continues about Rwanda's backing for M23. A July 2012 UN Experts report suggested that the endgame could be secession of the Kivus and perhaps even Ituri.

Key actors analysis

The Government of DRC's objective is to regain control of territory that M23 holds, and end rebellions by M23 and several other militia groups in the east of the country. This objective is a top priority for the government because its inability to manage the crisis is costing it credibility and attracting damaging criticism from the opposition. President Joseph Kabila refuses to negotiate with the rebels, claiming that they are a Rwandan proxy and that he will thus speak only with the Kigali regime. The government enjoys support from MONUSCO. However, despite the FARDC's superiority to the M23 in numbers and equipment, difficult geography and low army morale and discipline have left the government unable to defeat the rebellion as yet.

M23 rebels accuse the DRC Government of breaking its promises made in the 23 March 2009 peace deal to integrate former members of the CNDP rebel group into the army. An additional unstated objective is maintaining territorial control that allows M23 to loot resources and extort taxes. The rebels claim to favour a negotiated settlement and have made several overtures to the government but it is unlikely that the group would relinquish territories it controls even if the government agrees to fully implement the 2009 agreement. The group, which uses both voluntary and forced recruitment, has demonstrated capability to fight and at times defeat FARDC troops. It is likely to try and expand its territorial control to new areas of North Kivu and possibly South Kivu. Territorial control and the threat of expansion would give it leverage with the government if negotiations do happen.

Indicators and Triggers

- Firm troop and funding commitments to a military force as discussed by the ICGLR
- M23 alliances with other rebel groups

Expected New Impact

Between 100,000 and 200,000 people could be affected in Katanga and Ituri if this risk occurs, including displacement and livelihood disruption. Much of the displacement is likely to be short term.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Redeployment of FARDC forces to fight the M23 rebel movement in North Kivu has created a security vacuum. Existing militias are increasing their activities and new ones are forming in eastern (Ituri) and southern (Katanga) DRC. If the government returns its attention to the area increased fighting as well as predations by all actors would cause significant impact.

Conflict issue

Numerous rebel groups, most claiming to protect their villages or ethnic group from rival militias, operate in eastern and southern DRC, causing chronic insecurity by massacring civilians, looting, and destroying property. In reality, while some groups fight for independence, most conflicts relate to land and resources and some follow ethnic lines. A security vacuum is an enabling factor; the government is unable to monopolise violence.

Key actor analysis

The Government's main objective is to quell the insurgencies that plague east and south DRC and establish its authority and military force is the only option it sees as viable. The army has superiority in numbers and equipment but has been unable to pacify the region. This failure is costing the government credibility, but its current priorities focus on settling the M23 issue in the Kivus. The government is trying to integrate some rebel groups into the army, for example the FRPI rebel group in Ituri, but progress is unsteady. Ex-fighters dislike leaving their home territories, and integration without proper vetting weakens force cohesion.

The rebel groups want territory and resources therein and physical survival is often at stake. Absent an effective state to mediate local disputes, self-help in the form of armed force is the only option, creating security dilemmas for local communities. Most militias are quite small and have only light weapons, and are thus not individually a strategic threat to the government. As a group however they seriously undermine its legitimacy, and if a sufficient number were to band together they could create a much more potent force.

Indicators and Triggers

- Alliances among rebel groups could increase their capability and make them a bigger threat to the government.
- At the same time, the resumption of military operations against armed groups that were halted to address the threat posed by the M23 would likely reduce the operational capacity of armed groups.
- Any military operation will lead to an escalation of fighting and have a significant impact on the civilian population, including in terms of displacement.

GUINEA

Impact Baseline

IASC agencies are not presently providing emergency humanitarian assistance to Guineans in Guinea.

ON WATCH: Violence between Government and Opposition Supporters in Guinea

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs 20,000 to 50,000 persons could be displaced, mainly internally.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Legislative elections scheduled for December 2010 have been repeatedly postponed, in part owing to a lack of consensus on key issues. In particular the time-table for elections, the composition of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and the electoral register are contentious. On 27 August 2012, following the violent repression of a banned demonstration demanding greater transparency in the electoral process, the opposition withdrew its representatives from government as well as the transitional institutions and rejected the President's decision to partially change the composition of the CENI. Although the composition of the CENI has since been amended and the ban on demonstrations lifted, tensions and distrust amongst the parties persist and any (perceived) delays are likely to quickly lead to frustration, manifested through protests that may turn violent within a short time-span. There is therefore a risk that violence will increase in the run-up to the elections unless the government clearly demonstrates its intention to hold credible elections as soon as technically possible. When elections will actually be is unclear. President Condé has suggested hope for 2012, but this seems unlikely. The delays are part of the problem, as noted above.

Given the stakes in terms of access to power, there is a continued risk of violence in the run-up to and aftermath of the elections with each party having the ability to mobilise significant numbers of people, for example for mass protests, particularly by drawing on core ethnic support.

Conflict issue

The ethnicisation of politics witnessed during the 2010 presidential elections further suggests that the legislative elections are being framed in terms of access to power for one of the four major ethno-regional groups. As one of the few elected bodies in the context of an incomplete transition process, the National Assembly may circumscribe government action to some extent as the government has been operating largely without checks and balances since its election in December 2010 owing to the temporary status and uncertain future of most other institutions. Accusations that the government is employing delaying tactics in the knowledge that its prospects in the legislative elections are bleak should therefore be understood in this context.

Key actor analysis

The current Condé regime is intent on maintaining the status quo. It has little incentive to work towards consensus on outstanding issues related to the holding of the legislative elections, or to organise these elections as soon as possible as it is likely to lose influence should elections take place. Further delaying tactics should therefore be expected. At the

same time, although the government may take repressive measures to stifle dissent, it is likely to make concessions and back down in the face of widespread opposition in an attempt to retain power and legitimacy.

For **opposition parties**, the organisation of credible legislative elections is a top priority as a means of imposing checks and balances on the executive and accessing power and resources. Opposition parties will continue to apply pressure on the government to resolve outstanding technical election issues by consensus and to hold elections at the earliest possible time. Agreement over outstanding issues may pave the way for free and fair elections to be held in a peaceful environment. However, frustration among many opposition supporters, in particular of Peul ethnicity, is growing against the backdrop of a perceived privileging of President Condé's Malinké ethnic group.

Environment

Current developments should be seen against the backdrop of the 28 September 2009 massacre, when more than 150 people were killed by state forces and a large number of women subjected to sexual and gender-based violence at a banned demonstration by opposition supporters against the candidacy in elections of the then president. The current regime was then in the opposition.

The legislative elections are foreseen in the 15 January 2010 Ouagadougou Agreement that provides a roadmap for the political transition of Guinea to democratic rule and constitutional order after fifty years of authoritarian rule.

Growing popular discontent with the government over rising insecurity, a deteriorating socio-economic situation and a slow pace to carry out expected reforms are contributing to existing tensions.

There is a growing suspicion from the Peul ethnic group against members of the current President's Malinké ethnicity, who are perceived as receiving preferential treatment. These politico-ethnic tensions are linked to the 2010 elections and allegations that the elections were rigged in favour of Condé, which led to clashes and the temporary displacement of up to 20,000 people,.

Successful coups have recently been carried out in Guinea-Bissau and Mali, two of Guinea's neighbours, and Guinea itself has a history of coups.

Indicators and Triggers

- Prolongation of the status quo (failure to make progress on outstanding issues related to the elections; failure to set election dates)
- Setting of a date for legislative elections
- The imposition and enforcement of a ban on demonstrations
- Signs of mobilisation/organisation by political parties
- Further violent crackdown by Government forces on opposition protest

IRAN – ISRAEL

Impact Baseline

There are currently no humanitarian emergency operations by IASC agencies targeting Iranians in Iran, or Israelis in Israel.

Expected New Impact

Depending on the form that the war takes (attacks on military zones only, attacks on civilian areas, involvement of regional actors such as Hezbollah and Hamas), up to 1 million persons could be affected in Iran, Israel, and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

The probability of Israel attacking Iran remains low for the time being, especially after the speech by Israeli Premier at the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2012 suggesting that any preventive strike is not likely to happen until the summer 2013. But an Israeli decision to launch a strike could be based on last minute intelligence confirming that Iran is on the verge of entering a zone of immunity – the point beyond which nuclear weapons would be too widely disbursed and well-protected to be destroyed by Israel. In this scenario, war becomes likely. In absence of international support to an Israeli assault, and as long as negotiations continue and sanctions hit Iran's economy and society, a negotiated solution remains viable and probable.

Conflict issue

Israel believes that Iran is developing nuclear weapons which could threaten its very own existence. Iran maintains that its nuclear facilities are for civilian purposes. Israel could strike Iran to destroy its nuclear facilities and pre-emptively protect itself. Iran would retaliate for violation of its territory and sovereignty by targeting civilian targets within Israel.

Key actor analysis

Israel's objective is to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. Official and military Israeli statements over the past months suggest that preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons is a high priority, as an Iranian nuclear bomb could threaten Israel's existence. However, Israel and its allies still have the option of continuing to exert pressure through diplomacy, targeted assassinations, and sanctions in order to halt or delay Iran's accession to nuclear power. A military operation is seen as an option of last resort. Israel has sufficient capabilities to launch a war, but might need US assistance with bunker-busting bombs to be able to destroy Iran nuclear storage facilities, given Iranian high capacity to hide and protect its programme.

Iran's objective is to acquire civil nuclear power and possibly nuclear weapons and defend its territory and sovereignty against an Israeli assault. Iran has been working on nuclear power for a while and has struggled with sanctions and international isolation to reach what it claims to be civil nuclear energy, suggesting that this objective is a high priority. However, the mounting economic distress and growing civil dissatisfaction suggest that international pressure might be working and Iranian leaders can opt to accept a negotiated solution which could re-assure Israel and its allies that they would access civil nuclear power without developing bombs. Iran has sufficient capabilities to respond to attacks, and has reportedly been improving its ballistic missiles which could reach Israel as well as US bases in the Gulf.

Indicators and Triggers

- International and specifically US statement of support.
- Collapse of negotiations.
- Confirmed intelligence about Iran's nuclear capacity (entering zone of immunity).

IRAN

Impact Baseline

There are currently no humanitarian emergency operations by IASC agencies targeting Iranians in Iran.

ON WATCH: Widespread Violent Protests in Iran

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs 20,000 to 50,000 people could require humanitarian assistance.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

The international economic sanctions against Iran are starting to be felt by the population through rising commodity prices and energy costs and falling employment. The rial has plunged against the dollar and other foreign currencies, leading the authorities to censor exchange tracking websites in Iran and to crack down on money dealers and businessmen. This may lead to further political instability and a stand-off between the executive and legislative pillars of the Government. Protests could turn violent as the situation starts to affect livelihoods.

Conflict Issue

The present population/government conflict stems from a dispute over the function of the Iranian state, i.e. whether it is doing enough to promote the wellbeing of its citizens. Although currency traders are protesting the narrow issue of being forced to exchange money at artificial government set rates, the unrest is occurring against a wider backdrop of average citizens paying a steep price for the sanctions imposed against their government.

Actor Analysis

For the **Government of Iran** staying in power is its top priority, and maintaining social order is instrumental to this objective. It does have peaceful or semi-peaceful options to achieve these objectives, including deterring protests through threats and shows of force, nipping protests off before they can grow, and subsidising citizens to dull the pain of sanctions. The last option of subsidies is becoming increasingly untenable as sanctions stretch the government's own finances thin, although oil and gas reserves are still high and can hold for a couple more years. The government has a large and multi-layered security apparatus that demonstrated its loyalty and effectiveness in suppressing protests associated with the 2009 election. This capability makes it highly unlikely that protests of a similar scale to those of 2009 could topple the government.

The **Iranian population** wants economic stability and to realise a decent standard of living, but these objectives are of secondary priority to staying alive. Until the population reaches a state of "nothing left to lose" priority will be a major obstacle to a widespread uprising. Options to change the government's course of action are limited, at least until President Ahmadinejad leaves office. The population's lack of organisation is also a significant block to large scale unrest. In the absence of structured opposition movement, protests would have to be spontaneous and coordination challenges will be difficult to overcome.

Indicators and Triggers

- Continued hyperinflation in Iran with deep fall of the rial exchange rate

- New sanctions against Iran
- Major street protests, e.g. tens of thousands
- Protester calls for regime change
- Championing of protests by significant opposition figures

KENYA

Impact Baseline

Approximately 300,000 people are currently internally displaced within Kenya due to natural disasters and localised conflicts.

WARNING: Electoral Violence in Kenya

Expected New Impact

Electoral violence in Kenya could displace up to 400,000 people between October 2012 and April 2013. This figure includes temporary displacement that may not require humanitarian assistance. Fighting will likely include inter-communal violence, gender-based violence, human rights violation and abuse, and disruption of basic services.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Although some structural reforms were implemented in the aftermath of the 2007-2008 post-electoral violence, these are likely insufficient to prevent a resurgence of ethnic and political violence during the upcoming election process. Polls on 04 March 2013 to elect the President, Senators, County Governors, Members of Parliament, Civic Wards and Women County Representatives will be the first since the new constitution, passed by referendum in 2010, that altered political boundaries and increased the power of the local governors. These changes have significantly raised local stakes, as demonstrated by an increase in clashes between different communities at the local level. These conflicts relate to water, land and grazing rights, and politicians are accused of inciting the violence to build political bases ahead of the elections. This could result in more violence than occurred in 2007, with a wider distribution in rural areas. Tensions prior to and after the elections will likely be further exacerbated by the start in April 2013 of the International Criminal Court trial of four Kenyans, including presidential candidates Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, for crimes against humanity during the 2007-2008 violence. Given the risk of violence, IDPs who have not resettled since the 2007-2008 post-election violence will be particularly vulnerable.

Conflict issue

Elections in Kenya are a key to political power that enables leaders to distribute resources to their supporters, excluding opponents in the process. This zero-sum approach to politics creates a fundamental conflict. The new provisions in the constitution that give more power to local governors raise the stakes of the upcoming polls.

Key actor analysis

Political fault lines in Kenya run along complex ethnic divisions, with groups too numerous to discuss in individual detail in this document. However, two main classes of actors that cut across opposing groups are political leaders and ethnic groups themselves.

Some politicians might use violence as one of their tactics inciting and instigating violence to gain votes and, in some cases, displace their supporters' opponents. Capabilities to rouse

followers vary between individuals, but violence in 2008 did show clear signs of organisation. Candidates/parties may supply weapons and support militias to foment inter-tribal clashes. The run up to the elections will likely see numerous alliances between parties as the elections draw closer.

Members of the various tribal communities tend to cast their ballots along ethnic lines, counting on their representatives to distribute the spoils of power. Poverty makes this a high priority, perhaps more so this time than in previous elections as the new constitution is devolving power to local authorities that direct affect people. Communities have recurrently skirmished over land and water and now control over these resources is an election issue. Ethnic groups have the option of peacefully competing in elections and stoically accepting the results, but suspicions of fraud make this very difficult. Capabilities vary between groups, but some have organised and relatively well armed militias. The Kenyan Government announced on 23 August that it will conduct a countrywide operation to disarm all communities known to be in possession of illegal weapons. However, many of the fighters use traditional weapons, and it is unclear that the government will have much success.

Indicators and Triggers

- Disputed High Court's decision on candidates eligibility (19 October 2012), including determination on eligibility of Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta and Eldoret North MP William Ruto to contest for presidency
- Issuing of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission report, expected in November
- Disagreements over Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's decisions
- Submission of party membership list (4 January 2013)
- Devolution and competition for representation at county level
- Hate speeches during election campaigning
- Completion of dispute resolution resulting from parties' nominations (25 January 2013)
- General elections (4 March 2013)
- Presidential run-offs (11 April 2013)
- Opening of ICC trials (10/11 April 2013)

LEBANON

Impact Baseline

IASC agencies do not currently provide emergency humanitarian assistance to Lebanese persons living in Lebanon.

ON WATCH: Sectarian Fighting between Sunni and Shiite Groups across Lebanon

Expected New Impact

Approximately 1 million people live in zones of tension in Beirut and its suburbs, the Beqaa, and smaller areas in Southern Lebanon. 100,000 to 200,000 people would likely need assistance if this risk occurs.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Tensions between Sunni and Shiite communities have deepened since 2005. Clashes between Sunnis and Shiite Alawites in Tripoli have increased in recent months. The Lebanese

government has maintained authority thus far, but its capability is limited. The conflict in neighbouring Syria is increasingly sectarian, and Sunnis and Shiites in Lebanon support opposing Syrian factions. Extremist elements are gaining strength in Lebanon's Sunni community, presenting a challenge to the relatively dominant Shiites. The critical path to wider conflict in Lebanon includes increased Sunni military capability, and stronger alliances between mainstream and extremist Sunni groups.

Conflict issue

Sunni and Shiite factions in Lebanon compete for power, and ideology is a motivating force. Some Sunnis, empowered by Sunni Islamist successes in the region, want to challenge the political and military dominance of Shiite groups.

Key actor analysis

Shiite groups (Hezbollah, Amal) seek to maintain political and military power in Lebanon, and this objective is high priority. However, their status quo position means that they value government stability. They can presently use institutional power to reach their objectives but the Lebanese state is weak, and a serious Sunni challenge could cut off this option. Shiite groups currently have greater military capability than their Sunni counterparts.

Traditional Sunni groups (Future Movement and allies) aim to maintain political and economic power, with high priority. An existing dialogue with Shiite opponents provides a peaceful option to manage their interests that supports their economic goals. It is doubtful that traditional Sunni groups alone could defeat Shiite forces militarily. Capability and peaceful options are thus blocks to conflict.

Extremist Sunni groups are ideologically motivated to increase Sunni influence in Lebanon and fight with Alawite and other Shiite populations that they consider apostate. This is a high priority, and peaceful options to achieve it are scarce. Limited capability relative to Shiite groups is currently an obstacle to widespread violence, but there are indications that Sunni extremists are reaching out to regional allies and support networks for money and weapons, while Jihadist fighters in Syria could infiltrate Lebanon if needed.

Environment

The Lebanese government is weak and would be unable to control the situation if mainstream groups abandoned peaceful options. High levels of criminality and the conflict in Syria increase uncertainty in Lebanon. Foreign actors including Iran, Israel, and Syria all have interests in Lebanon that sometimes conflict, potentially destabilising the situation.

Indicators and Triggers

- Infiltration of Jihadist Islamist fighters from Syria into Lebanon
- Increase in availability of weapons in Syria and traffic into Lebanon
- Significant increase in number of Syrian refugees that might include fighters and upset local balances because most refugees are Sunni
- Violent incidents between Sunnis and non-Alawite Shiites in Beirut and Eastern regions of Lebanon
- Government crisis indicating that traditional political parties abandoned dialogue
- Abandoning of conciliatory political speeches and spread of violent accusations between different parties
- Military intervention in Syria
- Al-Qaeda style attacks targeting Shiite areas
- Kidnapping of Shiite/Sunni Lebanese by other Lebanese

MALI

Impact Baseline

In 2012 fighting has reportedly displaced over 300,000 people from northern Mali's Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao regions. 83,000 persons have fled to Mali's south while 35,000 remain displaced in the north. 208,000 refugees are reported to have entered Mauritania, Niger, and Burkina Faso, but registration confirmations will likely reduce this number. 4.6 million people are believed to be food insecure in Mali, with 2.97 million in the south and 1.67 million in the occupied north.

WARNING: Severe Economic Deterioration in Southern Mali

Expected New Impact

Severe disruption of livelihoods will likely impact access to food despite projected availability for 300,000 – 500,000 additional people. Operational concerns include increased criminality and potential unrest in southern Mali leading to warehouse looting and restrictions on humanitarian access.

Likelihood Rationale

A protracted absence of effective governance and strong leadership in Bamako, coupled with the Islamist takeover in the north, has degraded Mali's economy and is edging it toward a crisis. Faced with economic decline the government is adopting a restrictive budgetary policy with potential negative consequences.

Following the March 2012 coup most donors froze budget support upon which Mali depends heavily. At the same time, political turmoil, inefficient administration and corruption stalled the economy leading to decreased domestic revenues. The IMF estimates that Mali faces a 4.5% drop in GDP in 2012 with a strong recession in almost all sectors. Growth will remain weak in 2013. If the government cannot raise revenue, find new donors or get traditional backers to re-open their purses public sector salaries may go unpaid in the coming months, even as the private sector sheds jobs and lowers wages. These dynamics will reduce purchasing power.

Significant public spending cuts are expected to follow 08 September 2012 recommendations from Mali's Budgetary Monitoring Group, with cuts of 94% to water spending, 92% to debt relief, 84% to transport, and 70% to agriculture. Those adjustments might reduce services to IDPs, their host communities, and poor rural and urban populations. Economic decline has already elevated population vulnerability.

Looking forward, there is risk that food and other basic commodity subsidies will be slashed. Subsequent leaps in prices, already high, could seriously impact the food purchasing power of vulnerable populations. Although Mali's harvest outlook is promising this season, food access remains a challenge.

There is a moderate risk that locusts could appear in cropping areas in the centre and west of the country during October and November. This would coincide with harvest periods.

Economic crisis is likely to lead to urban riots, particularly if food access is severely compromised. Such unrest is unlikely to create significant humanitarian need in its own right, but it could have security implications for humanitarian operations. This risk is also potentially linked to the risk "Factional Fighting in Southern Mali" discussed below in this report. Protracted economic challenges could be a contributing factor to more organised factional fighting that could cause substantial displacement.

Indicators and Triggers

- Food subsidy cuts and other cuts in public spending
- Continuing high food prices, even after the 2012 harvests have reached the markets, or food price increases
- Crop damage
- Public statements by donors refusing to re-start funding

ON WATCH: **Government Offensive Against Insurgents in Northern Mali**

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs up to 400,000 people could be newly displaced, comprising 100,000 IDPs and 300,000 refugees to Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. Fighting would also place further restrictions on already limited humanitarian space in northern Mali, disrupt markets and transport networks, and destroy infrastructure.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Mali's interim leaders want to regain the north from Islamist militants who hijacked a temporarily successful Tuareg rebellion in spring 2012, and this is a critical matter of territorial integrity. However, the Government of Mali (GoM) is politically divided after the March 2012 coup and it is too weak militarily to take on the insurgents alone. The Malian army would need assistance from a strong international military force to retake the north. Likelihood of this risk occurring would increase if the Islamists try to push further south (low probability in the short term), or if significant ECOWAS forces deploy into Mali.

Conflict issue

The conflict is over territorial control. Islamist movements affiliated to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) seized much of northern Mali after they commandeered the Tuareg rebellion. Since then Mali has *de facto* been split in half with the Islamists holding the north and the GoM in the south hoping to reunify the country.

Key actor analysis

For the **Government of Mali** reuniting the country is a priority second only to the necessary first step of consolidating its control in Bamako. Political infighting is a major distraction. Negotiations with Ansar Dine, perceived to be more moderate than other Islamists, remain an option but will not likely lead to a satisfactory outcome for the GoM. The Malian army could deploy some 5,000 troops; about half are in Niger and Mauritania, and half south of the dividing line with northern Mali. However, the army is poorly equipped, suffers low morale due to its defeat in the north, and is riven with factions exacerbated by the March 2012 coup. Until it receives substantial training and backing by an international force or other actors (Tuareg fighters, local militias), the Malian army's limited capacity to engage the

Islamists is currently the primary obstacle to violence. Whether the GoM can really mobilise local militias that have their own allegiances, agendas, and grievances remains uncertain.

In late September 2012 **ECOWAS** and the GoM agreed in principle on the deployment of a 3,000 man international military force to Mali. While an actual ECOWAS deployment would increase GoM capacity its troops would face language divides and problems merging equipment, and most would have no experience in desert fighting. The UN is discussing the request but key member states are divided by concerns about regional spillover, ECOWAS strength, and the Malian state's ability to capitalise on military gains. On 12 October 2012, the UN Security Council passed a resolution requesting "detailed and actionable recommendations" with regard to an international military intervention from Bamako and ECOWAS within 45 days. The GoM and ECOWAS are both moving slowly, and the process will likely drag on through the coming months.

The **Islamist movements (Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM)** occupying northern Mali aim to maintain control over territory and associated trafficking networks, and to impose Sharia. These objectives are top priority; control over Mali is an unprecedented opportunity. As yet these groups have not tried to expand their area of control further south or to neighbouring countries. The status quo seems to work well. Combined, Islamist groups reportedly number 5-7,000 fighters, most of them used to the desert conditions of northern Mali. More foreign fighters are arriving and groups are recruiting locally. Their relative strength makes these groups unlikely to compromise in negotiations. Current demands including Sharia across Mali are non-starters for the GoM, making peaceful reconciliation unlikely.

Remaining **Tuareg rebels (MNLA)**, ousted from northern Mali towns by the Islamists, will likely abandon their long-term objective of independence in favour of regaining influence in northern Mali. MNLA leaders have offered the GoM an alliance in exchange for autonomy for northern Mali, recognition of rights, and amnesty for its uprising. No concrete GoM response has been reported. In early 2012 the MNLA numbered several thousand fighters, including 2,000 to 4,000 seasoned men with weapons from Libya, and it also took large Malian army weapon caches early this year. MNLA's current strength is unknown but presumably much lower than before. Several MNLA factions have reportedly joined Ansar Dine, Islamists have seized many weapons, and other fighters have most likely joined refugee flows out to the country, leaving a rump force in the desert.

Algeria and Mauritania have expressed concern about an ECOWAS force being deployed close to their borders and have advocated for negotiations. Among other factors, Mali's neighbours fear that a GoM/ECOWAS offensive could push militants into their territory.

Indicators and Triggers

- A concrete mandate for ECOWAS troops with UN endorsement, matched by firm troop and funding commitments
- Deployment of an actual ECOWAS force into southern Mali
- Agreements between the GoM and factions of the MNLA or local militias to fight against the Islamists
- Islamist movements towards the GoM-controlled south

Expected New Impact

If there is significant factional violence in southern Mali 200,000 – 300,000 people could be displaced.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Mali is at an impasse with no legitimate leadership, weak governance, and continuous military intervention in political affairs. The country faces a security vacuum. Cracks within the army and police force are growing. Political and military power is spread out over several actors, with each faction trying to increase its share, and without elections or an effective judiciary there is no institutionalised way to mediate these disputes. Deep and longstanding popular dissatisfaction with the government is combining with current fault lines of support and opposition to the proposed ECOWAS intervention and anger over economic problems, potentially making factional recruitment easier. Small arms are readily available.

The situation described above is problematic but Mali does enjoy a number of stabilising factors as well. First, the Islamists in the north are a common enemy for almost all factions in the south. Memory of the March 2012 coup is a potent reminder of the costs of political disorder, and the Islamist threat should help concentrate minds and promote unity. Second, the basic problems in the previous paragraph have persisted since March with no serious breakdowns. Southern Mali has been peaceful for a long period of time, indicating a certain level of societal resilience. Third, there are no indications that political parties or faction are organising themselves or the population for violence.

The primary fear for southern Mali is that the longer hard times drag on the more susceptible to serious breakdowns the society will become. Rioting and urban unrest are likely in response to economic and political frustration, but insofar as this is "spontaneous" humanitarian impact will be minimal. However, there are two main pathways to organised violence with significant humanitarian impact. First, military factions could fight over power, perhaps linked to competition between individual politicians or parties, and this could spread to violence amongst segments of the population. Second, opportunistic politicians could come to see violence as useful to their own interests and provide necessary organisation. Small incidents could quickly spiral out of control, and army groups could become involved. Information from Mali is limited and vague. At present there are no clear individual risks visible, i.e. prospects of violence between defined actors in particular places, but the situation deserves careful monitoring for signs of trouble. The possibility of military factions fighting is the strongest of those under consideration.

Key actor analysis

Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, leader of the March 2012 coup, wants to maintain the influence he has gained in the past months and has the most to lose from elections, given that these would install persons with greater legitimacy in government. He and his men may face trials for human rights violations. Sanogo is against an ECOWAS force that would dilute the importance of the Malian military. He leads the **Green Beret** army faction – probably less than 1000 men – based outside Bamako in Kati. At the time of the coup Sanogo enjoyed political support from a political umbrella group called COPAM that comprises politicians formerly opposed to Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT), the President ousted by the March coup; how close these links are now time is unclear.

The **Red Beret military faction** remained loyal to ATT and led a counter-coup against Sanogo on 30 April 2012. A number of Red Berets were killed in the failed operation and the entire unit was disbanded. Former Red Berets have reportedly not received any pay for several months, and several of them have been arrested and remain detained by the former junta. The Red Beret camp in Bamako reportedly still houses more than 500 paratroopers. Their present leadership, political alliances, and objectives are unclear.

Several **senior army officers**, some appointed by Touré, resent the junior officers who formed the junta. Their relative power, alliances and objectives are unknown.

Malian army field commanders may also hold the Bamako junta responsible for their defeat in the north, and have direct control over most of the country's fighting forces. Colonel al-Hajj Gamou (Tuareg) was reported in June to have 600 pro-state Tuareg soldiers at a military base near Niamey, Niger. Colonel Ould Meydou (Arab) reportedly has 1,000 men in Mauritania near Nema. Colonel Didier Dakuo (a southerner) has 2,000 regulars in Sévaré, Mopti Region. The ethnicities of these commanders and their men speak to the main ethnic divisions in the army. Loyalties and objectives are unknown.

Pro- and anti-junta groups within the police have disputes over favouritism and promotions. A shooting incident took place recently in Bamako, but reportedly tensions have declined since junta-awarded promotions were nullified by government decree. The size of each faction is unknown, as are goals, alliances, and leadership.

Militias training in the south reportedly number several thousand persons in aggregate, but few if any groups (there are reportedly 10 to 20 main factions) have more than 1,000 fighters alone and their actual capacities are questionable. One militia has recently been dissolved by the Malian authorities, but others are reportedly receiving government support. Bamako hope that these fighters will make up a substantial part of a force sent to retake the north, but how much control the government has is debatable. Most militias are organised on ethnic and local lines, and some have a track record of fighting against each other and their associated communities, along lines of tension between southerners, Arabs, and Tuaregs. There is little indication of significant ethnic tension in the south. Alliances between militias and politicians are unclear, if they exist at all.

President Dioncounda Traoré, formerly the Speaker of Parliament, named interim President in an agreement mediated by ECOWAS. A compromise candidate, Traoré is relatively unknown and does not have a deep support base. Traoré supports an ECOWAS intervention and sent Mali's request against Sanogo's wishes. His long term goals are unclear, as are his views on elections in which he is forbidden to run.

Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra is the son-in-law of former Malian President General Moussa Traoré (1979-1991). He has more visibility and influence than the president, but as a perceived newcomer who started his political career after an international career in science he also lacks a strong popular base. Diarra played a leading role in creating a new ministry for religious affairs in Bamako and seems to be supported by Islamic associations under the Haut Conseil Islamique. This has raised worries about growing religious influence in the political sphere. Diarra appears to favour the ECOWAS intervention although ECOWAS is not on his side, but his views on elections are unclear.

Other political parties and leaders (not listed individually) are jostling for power, but at present no single individuals or groups stand out as being particularly powerful or as potential catalysts of violence. These actors will be watched for signs of greater cohesion.

Parts of the **Malian population** have divided by the ongoing political stalemate and continued crisis in the north. The March 2012 coup and a possible ECOWAS intervention provide points of definition. To date there is no clear evidence of large blocks of the population aligning with opposing politicians. Street level unrest is likely in the coming months.

Indicators and Triggers

- Coup attempts by any military faction, successful or not (could spark fighting between military factions)
- Agreement on military intervention in the north (could cause backlash from opponents)
- ECOWAS deployment to southern Mali (could cause backlash from opponents)
- Protracted economic crisis
- Unrest linked to social/economic situation (could be exploited by politicians)
- Emergence of better defined political factions
- Arming or other forms of military organisation by factions
- Elections (could increase tensions between politicians and their supporters)

ON WATCH: Fighting between Islamists and Local Armed Groups in Northern Mali

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs 20,000 to 50,000 people will likely need humanitarian assistance. Fighting would also place further restrictions of humanitarian space in northern Mali, disrupt markets and transport networks, and destroy infrastructure.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

Armed Islamist groups have occupied northern Mali for several months and started to apply Sharia. While some people seem to be adjusting to their new rulers – who do provide some services, and are in some cases less violent than was the MNLA – others appear to be preparing to fight back. Capabilities, however, are low, and uncoordinated local uprising are unlikely to oust the Islamists or even prove more than a minor nuisance. Without coordination or outside support – including possible partnership with a government offensive – significant humanitarian impact unlikely.

Conflict issue

The conflict is about the distribution of power and territory as well as political identity. Islamist militants have occupied the northern part of Mali and have started imposing *sharia* law on the local population, which had been practicing a moderate interpretation of Islam prior to occupation.

Key actor analysis

Various **civil-resistance militias** have been reported in northern Mali and in IDP communities in the south. They aim to restore a situation in which they can live their lives without undue restrictions imposed by Islamist movements. Ideally, this would mean kicking the Islamists out of their cities. Priority, however, appears mixed with ambitions to simply stay alive.

Some militias comprise Tauregs, including remnants of the MNLA. Several other northern self-defence militias have fought against past Tuareg rebellions on the government side but details about their military capacity are scarce. They do not seem strong or coordinated, and this represents a critical obstacle to violence.

The **Islamist movements (Ansar Dine, MUJAO, AQIM)** occupying northern Mali want to hold territory and trafficking networks, and to impose Sharia. These objectives are top priority; control over Mali is an unprecedented opportunity. Combined, Islamist groups reportedly number 5-7,000 fighters, most of them used to the desert conditions of northern Mali. More foreign fighters are arriving and groups are recruiting locally. Their relative strength makes these groups unlikely to compromise with local groups.

Indicators and Triggers

- Local groups training or increasing coordination to oppose the Islamists in more than localised responses.
- Military deployment from the south.
- Increasingly violent suppression of protests in the north by Islamist militants.

MYANMAR

Impact Baseline

72,000 Rohingya and 3,000 Rakhine people were displaced within Myanmar during the June – August 2012 violence

WARNING: Ethnic Violence between the Rohingya and Rakhine Communities in Myanmar

Expected New Impact

Up to 800,000 people, i.e. the entire Rohingya population in Myanmar, could require humanitarian assistance if violence between the Rohingya and Rahkine communities transpires.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Further sectarian violence is likely between the stateless Muslim Rohingya minority and ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in Rakhine state. Discrimination against the Rohingya is deep-rooted and long-standing and security and socio-economic conditions for the Rohingya are deteriorating in the country. The sectarian violence from June to August 2012 left nearly 90 individuals dead and 75,000 displaced (72,000 Rohingya, 3,000 Buddhists). The fighting only abated after the two communities were physically segregated in IDP camps. This physical separation has further exacerbated the vulnerabilities of the Rohingya, resulting from discriminatory legislation and state policies, by severely limiting their access to services, education, health-treatment and income.

Attacks in Bangladesh on 29 September against Buddhists - allegedly with the involvement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar - have heightened tensions further and will ensure this conflict issues remains a high priority. Relatively minor incidents will continue to have the potential to trigger wide-spread sectarian and ethnic violence. Security forces, which were allegedly involved in human rights violations against the Rohingya during the last spate of violence, may be unable and possibly unwilling to contain such violence. Prospects for a

Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Preparedness – Early Warning Report October 2012

long-term solution for the estimated 800,000 stateless Rohingya, and therefore for peace and stability, appear bleak in the absence of political will to address the root causes of the violence and widespread popular support for the Rohingya to be resettled in a third country.

Conflict issue

Tensions between the Rohingya and ethnic Rakhine Buddhist are linked to deep-seated discrimination at the national level against the Rohingya who are not recognised as an ethnic nationality. These tensions are exacerbated at the local level owing to competition over resources in the context of widespread unemployment and poverty in the resource-rich state.

Key actor analysis

The majority of the population, including ethnic Rakhine Buddhists, appear intent on ensuring that the estimated 800,000 stateless Rohingya do not become citizens or benefit from resources in the resource-rich state. This objective is a high priority in the context of the ongoing reform process in the country and will remain a critical issue for civilian authorities and military institutions. Further conflict appears unavoidable given the widespread popular support for the Rohingya to be resettled to a third country and the absence of an option at the regional level or of international support for such a proposition.

The Rohingya community, which has suffered severe and long-standing discrimination by the Myanmar authorities, is seeking to live in harmony, as equal citizens. This will remain the main priority for the group, particularly given the ongoing physical insecurity and deteriorating socio-economic conditions, both of which are likely to be further exacerbated following the sectarian violence in Bangladesh. In the absence of political will by the Myanmar authorities, the Rohingya will be unable to bring about a peaceful solution. Instead, there is a risk that the community will radicalise and seek support from Muslim extremist groups in the region.

Environment

Countries in the region have failed to provide long-term solutions for the Rohingya community. During the violence from June to August, Bangladesh reportedly returned more than 1,300 fleeing Rohingya and banned humanitarian aid to more than 200,000 Rohingya refugees already in the country.

The situation of the Rohingya in both Bangladesh and Myanmar is likely to worsen further following the attacks on Buddhist monasteries, temples and villages in Cox Bazaar, Bangladesh, on 29 September, allegedly with the involvement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.

In July 2012, the UNHCR representative reportedly rejected a suggestion by President Thein Sein that the UN resettle the Rohingya in another country.

On 22 and 23 September, the government organised a national conference on Rakhine state with the participation of donors, the UN, NGOs, various government departments as well as members of the local community to propose a medium to long-term plan for sustainable socio-economic development in Rakhine state (linking early recovery and development); security and the rule of law; relief and humanitarian assistance; as well as the temporary resettlement and rehabilitation, reconciliation and social harmony.

The Government-led reform process continues in the wake of the April 2012 by-elections that saw Nobel Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi enter Parliament. At the same time, the military continues to retain considerable powers during this transition process, a factor that is likely to affect the government's stance towards minority groups, including the Rohingya, who have traditionally been discriminated against by the military.

Indicators and *Triggers*

- The findings and recommendations of the investigative commission established by the President in August to look into the violence in Rakhine state are due on 17 November. The report of the investigative commission, and any follow-up thereto, may serve as a mitigating or exacerbating factor
- Follow-up to the investigative commission's report (e.g. prosecution, reparation, change in government policy, etc)
- Dismantlement of the IDP camps in Rakhine state
- Criminal incidents that may deteriorate into wide-spread sectarian and ethnic violence
- Muslim-Buddhist violence in other countries in the region, in particular Bangladesh

NEPAL

Impact Baseline

There are currently no humanitarian emergency operations by IASC agencies targeting Nepalese persons in Nepal.

WARNING: Widespread Protests and Localised Clashes in Nepal

Expected New Impact

The caseload of persons affected will vary depending on whether the impact is predominantly economic – owing to widespread sustained mass protests locking down Nepal - or also conflict-related – leading to possible displacement and civilian casualties.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

On 28 May 2012 the Constituent Assembly of Nepal and the Legislature Parliament were dissolved following a failure to abide by the most recent extension of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) deadline for the promulgation of a new constitution. As a consequence, key issues linked to the peace process remain unresolved, in particular agreement on a federal structure. Lack of consensus on these issues and the perpetuation of structural discrimination and marginalisation based on caste and ethnicity have raised tensions and, based on past experience, the possibility of violent protests by marginalised groups, in particular the Madheshi of the southern belt, Tharus in the Far and Mid-West regions and other indigenous groups.

Conflict issue

Political parties and ethnic groups are vying for influence to ensure that their model of a federal structure prevails, in particular with regard to the criteria used to determine the number and delineation of federal states. This will in turn significantly impact their access to power and resources, both locally and nationally.

Key actor analysis

Political parties have been in a deadlock over issues related to the federal structure of the state of Nepal since the establishment of the Constituent Assembly in 2008. In the absence of consensus, state restructuring remains the top political priority for the country as well as for individual parties. The issue has significant symbolic resonance in the country as it was one of the demands of the Maoists during the insurgency. It also is of strategic importance to political parties as it will determine the distribution of state power at the local level in the future. Agreement between the political parties will eventually have to be reached but may be preceded and accompanied by clashes as parties mobilise their supporters nation-wide to try to position themselves and establish political alliances, including with ethnic-based parties like the Madheshis.

Indigenous, ethnic, and to some extent caste-based groups, have mobilised along and across party lines on the issue of federalism. Groups that feel they have traditionally been discriminated against and marginalised consider state restructuring to provide a critical opportunity to demand their rights and ensure that through the delineation of federal states they gain power, both locally and nationally. The stakes are particularly high for groups in disputed areas where the delineation of states will determine whether they constitute a minority or a majority in the given state which determines their degree of influence at the national level. While some groups are likely to enter into political alliances with one of the major national parties, others are likely to radicalise further and to increase their agitation in an attempt to influence the outcome of negotiations. This is particularly likely for groups with a strong regional base, such as the Madheshis in the southern belt, or those groups whose members are concentrated in specific geographic locations, such as the Limbus in the north-east or the Tharus in the west. Inter-ethnic clashes and the localised imposition of total shut-downs (*bandh*) are likely to increase in the agricultural lean season (January to March) and/or in the run-up to Constituent Assembly elections, expected in the spring of 2013. Agreement amongst the political parties on the federal structure may also spark protests and unrest as any settlement will fail to satisfy all.

Environment

The peace process is stagnant pending consensus on the federal structure of the state and on the way forward to address the current institutional and constitutional deadlock. Government institutions remain relatively weak and/or lack legitimacy. Political uncertainty continues with four prime ministers since the Constituent Assembly elections in April 2008. The formation of a new Maoist party, the CPN-M, by a hard-line break-away faction of the UCPN-M, as well as the heightened sense of frustration among those former Maoist combatants - not being integrated in the Nepal Army - have the potential to lead to further political instability.

The issue of federalism has polarised opinion, radicalised indigenous, ethnic and caste-based groups, and led to significant civil unrest. Mass protests, in particular total shut-downs (*bandh*), have become a hallmark of the transition process and usually led to restrictions on freedom of movement, the delivery of and access to basic services, including health and education, and in some instances, to increases in the price of food and basic commodities. The 1.8 million food-insecure people currently receiving international humanitarian assistance are likely to become even more vulnerable.

Indicators and Triggers

- Continued status quo
- Date for constituent assembly elections set or significantly delayed

- Agricultural lean season
- Organisation by indigenous, ethnic and/or caste-based groups
- Shift in political alliances

PHILIPPINES

Impact Baseline

47,000 people are currently displaced in Central Mindanao, Philippines.

ON WATCH: Fighting between the Philippine Army and BIFF in Mindanao, Philippines

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs an estimated 50,000 – 200,000 people will likely need humanitarian assistance. Numbers will depend on the tactics that the government applies, which could include airstrikes.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) militant group strongly opposes the peace deal nearing conclusion between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) which will provide autonomy for the new political entity of Bangsamoro rather than the absolute independence that BIFF demands. While the plan was being negotiated, BIFF attacked both the GRP and MILF to derail the process. Although BIFF currently has a low military capability, cooperation with other armed groups such as MNLF, New People's Army and Abu Sayyaf or a surge in popular support could provide the ingredients for significant fighting.

Muslim rebel groups have been fighting for independence or autonomy in Mindanao since the early 1970s. The MILF, the largest and most important rebel group, and GRP, have just concluded negotiations in Kuala Lumpur for a Framework Agreement for the creation of the new political entity of 'Bangsamoro'. A preliminary peace agreement was signed in Manila on 15 October, and both parties are to work out details of a more comprehensive peace agreement before the end of the year. After MILF declared it would concede to 'autonomy' rather than the original call for 'independence' from the Philippines, Ameril Umbra Kato defected from MILF and started the *Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement* (BIFM), of which BIFF is the armed wing.

Conflict issue

The issue at stake is the creation of an independent Muslim State in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago.

Key actor analysis

MILF's original aim was to create an independent Islamic state for the 13 Muslim tribes (collectively known as the Moro) in Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago in the southern Philippines. After an apparent lack of progress in this regard, an alternative goal of establishing a semi-autonomous entity was pursued, and its leaders will presumably want a share of post-deal power. Signing a peace agreement could provide MILF with political legitimacy and increase their powerbase. Options to prevent BIFF from being effective spoilers include buying off its membership. With some 12,000 hardened fighters MILF is

much stronger than BIFF, but the deal with the GRP includes clauses calling for demobilisation, so its strength may not last long.

The **GRP** seeks to maintain territorial integrity, enforce its authority and ensure a tight grip on resources. It is not willing to allow secession of an Islamic state in the South, but has signed a Framework Agreement with MILF allowing autonomy. Peaceful options for dealing with BIFF are limited given the BIFF's demands, but targeting economic incentives to fighters could rob the organisation of strength, and ensuring economic improvement for the population would limit future recruitment. The Philippines Army receives significant assistance from the US military, and has shown capability to contain insurgent activities if not crush rebel groups outright. At the moment the Army also has support from its former opponents in the MILF, providing valuable local intelligence and combat resources.

BIFM/BIFF has vowed to not settle for anything less than an independent Muslim state. BIFF does not have any credible non-violent options to achieve this goal, and the fact that it has already begun to pursue it through violence suggests very high priority. Although BIFF has agreed to a temporary cease-fire at the request of MILF, it clarified that the group will return to its 'offensive status' after the talks, and has in fact already announced that it will not recognize the Framework Agreement.

Estimates suggest BIFF has only 200 to 1000 fighters and its leader Ameril Umbra Kato suffered a stroke in 2011. Furthermore, there have been recent reports of BIFF troops returning to the MILF fold or to the MNLF. On its own BIFF is unlikely to be more than a nuisance to MILF or the GRP. However, MILF or MNLF members dissatisfied with peace process and demobilisation programs may join the BIFF in the coming months, strengthening its hand. At the end of August 2012, the MILF insinuated that the Moro National Liberation Front MNLF aided the BIFF in its fight. MNLF strongly contested the alleged cooperation. Groups that split from the MNLF including the New People's Army and Abu Sayyaf, might also offer support to BIFF. Now that the Agreement is due to be signed, local politicians, civil society, community groups and representatives of displaced persons may enter the picture either for or against the agreement. Some may claim additional human rights guarantees, justice and reparations, and the return of IDPs as soon as possible during the agreed transition period. Serious opposition by political groups could serve to boost the BIFF's ability to recruit.

Indicators and Triggers

- Signing of a final agreement between GRP and MILF
- Agreements between MNLF and BIFF or other rebel groups such as New People's Army or Abu Sayyaf.
- Signs of popular discontent with the provisions agreed upon by the MILF and the GRP, for either going too far or not far enough (*inter alia* the provisions in the framework agreement strengthening Shari'a and providing basic human rights guarantees).
- Politicians from the region showing support for BIFF

SUDAN

Impact Baseline

1.6m people are presently affected by fighting in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, including persons internally displaced. There are over 173,000 refugees from the two states in South

Sudan and over 38,000 in Ethiopia. There are no humanitarian operations in rebel held areas because access is denied.

ON WATCH: Escalated Fighting (SAF and SPLM/A-N) in South Kordofan and Blue Nile, Sudan

Expected New Impact

If this risk occurs 100,000 to 200,000 persons would likely be newly affected, and for the vulnerable population the already dire humanitarian situation would get worse. Displacement, civilian casualties, sexual and other forms of violence would likely increase.

Likelihood Rationale

Conflict issue

The conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile is fundamentally over the structure of Sudan and power distributions therein. In this context the SPLM/A-N wants to topple the Khartoum regime, and the Government of Sudan (GoS) wants to abolish the SPLM/A-N. These incompatible objectives make a peaceful solution between the two parties unlikely.

Why now?

On 27 September 2012 the GoS and Government of South Sudan (GoSS) signed agreements including security arrangements that the GoS hopes will split the GoSS from the SPLM/A-N. Current talks do not address South Kordofan and Blue Nile, putting pressure on the SPLM/A-N to keep their cause high on the political agenda. The GoSS cares less about the fate of the Transitional Areas than peace with Sudan enabling economic improvement, but it is unlikely to completely abandon the SPLM/A-N. However, the GoSS will have to decrease military support to fulfil its agreements with the GoS, at least on the surface since it has committed to a 10km demilitarized zone along the border. This means that the SPLM/A-N has an incentive to strike out now while it is still strong relative to its possible future position, and while there is still an opportunity to influence talks on the Transitional Areas.

The start of the dry season in October will ease logistical constraints for military operations, likely leading to increased fighting, and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) coalition appears to be solving problems with merging troops and equipment. Growing operational links between Darfurian and SPLM/A-N rebels also threaten to spread fighting to a wider Darfur-Kordofan-South Sudan triangle.

A peace deal is unlikely, and absent a settlement fighting will probably go on. The GoS and the SPLM/A-N cannot agree on narrow issues of humanitarian access to rebel-controlled areas, underlining the difficulty of finding a durable broad solution. Negotiations are stalled as the GoS and the SRF trade accusations of obstructing an agreement they signed on 4 August 2012 on an initiative proposed by the AU, UN and Arab League to enable humanitarian access to rebel-held areas. The GoS insists that it will talk with the SPLM/A-N only if totally disengages from South Sudan. This is unlikely because the GoSS is the rebels' best source of assistance.

Key actor analysis

The **SPLM/A-N** wants regime change in Khartoum, a reunited Sudan, to be acknowledged as political party, and for the ousted Governor of Blue Nile, Malik Agar, and Deputy Governor of South Kordofan, Abdul Aziz al Hilu, to be reinstated. In this context gaining political and territorial control is a high priority because the GoS is an existential threat. The SPLM/A-N will only negotiate under the SRF umbrella, a coalition formed with Darfurian JEM, SLA-MM

and SLA-WW rebel groups in late 2011. The Government of Sudan (GoS) is unlikely to accept this condition as it has a greater interest in keeping the Darfur and Transitional Areas issues apart (*see below*). The SPLM/A-N has no credible option other than force to pursue its objective of regime change. The group has about 30,000 fighters, enough to increase its attacks against the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF).

The **Government of Sudan** wants to defeat the SPLM/A-N and preserve the Transitional Area status quo where it enjoys full control of land and resources after having driven away parts of the population which fought for South Sudan in the civil war. The GoS's entrenched habit of attempting to settle disputes forcefully, and the fact that after South Sudan's secession losing any more territory could mean the end of the Bashir regime, means that it will probably not try to negotiate a compromise. Even if negotiation were an option the GoS will probably not talk with the SRF umbrella group because it would have a stronger position in a series of bilateral arrangements. The GoS has substantially greater conventional military capability than the SPLM/A-N. However, despite bombing rebel-controlled areas with its air force the SAF has been unable to put down the rebels.

Indicators and Triggers

- Failure to reach a ceasefire allowing humanitarian access to rebel-controlled areas
- Spread of fighting into Southern Darfur and South Sudan border areas
- GoSS formally abandoning SPLM/A-N and stopping support
- Improved logistical and operational coordination among SRF rebel groups

SYRIA

Impact Baseline

As of 11 October 2012, 308,535 Syrian refugees have fled the country, 1.2 million persons are internally displaced within Syria, and 1.5 million people are receiving food assistance. Human rights abuses and violations are a significant problem, and the population faces severe economic challenges.

WARNING: **Widespread Factional Fighting in Syria**

Expected New Impact

400,000 new refugees are expected to leave Syria by end of 2012. Continuing violence and human rights violations, including sectarian attacks, might trigger additional displacement inside or outside of Syria of entire communities.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

The conflict between the Assad regime and various rebel groups shows no sign of abating. Divisions in the international community, fragmentation amongst Syrian opposition groups, and the mutual determination of the government and opposition to achieve a military solution to the conflict makes a comprehensive peace deal unlikely. The collapse of the rule of law and government institutions, combined with the existential threat that some communities perceive from others, will likely increase fighting amongst armed groups.

Conflict issue

The basic conflict is over political power, but this is linked to access to resources, and for some elements, existential concerns.

Key actor analysis

Syrian opposition armies include the Free Syrian Army (a fractious umbrella group of around 40,000 persons), the Syrian Liberation Army (32,000 persons mostly located in Idlib), and Liwaa al-Ummah (6,000 to 10,000 persons). These primarily Sunni groups are main actors in the current conflict and they intend to have a major role in Syria's future through control of military and political bodies, as well as ensuring the survival of their communities. Given their sacrifices in the fight these goals are of very high priority. Peaceful means to their attainment are very limited. The collapse of government instructions has created a self-help environment without a facility to mediate competing interests.

Sunni jihadist groups include the Mujahideen, Ahrar al-Sham (500 persons in Aleppo), al-Nusra Front (500 to 1,000 persons), al-Qaeda (1,000 to 10,000 persons), and Fatah al-Islam (200 persons). The top priority of these groups is their ideologically driven goal to make Syria a strongly Islamic state. Syria's traditionally secular social fabric gives them no option other than force to reach this goal.

Alawite armed groups comprise some 50,000 members including the 3rd and 4th brigades of the Syrian Army and the Republican Guards, and Alawite militias such as the Shabbiha. Increasingly the Assad government is becoming one faction among many. Given the increasingly sectarian character of the current fighting and the fear of future retribution and reprisals, some Alawites may have to fight not only to maintain political, military and economic privileges but also for their very survival. Survival is a top priority which if threatened leaves few options other than fighting.

Kurdish groups now control their own areas and will fight to keep this control or expand it. Kurds form roughly 10% of the population of Syria. Important organised elements include the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD). There are also reports that limited numbers of members of the Kurdistan's Worker Party (PKK) are present in Syria.

Some **Christians** have reportedly started arming themselves to protect their community and will likely be further dragged into the conflict to ensure their political and social rights are respected. Christians make up approximately 10% of Syria's population but have minimal military organisation at present.

The **Druze community** is about 3% of the Syrian population, but has very limited military capability.

Environment

External support is creating diverging allegiances, making factional fighting more likely as internal actors feel the pressure to "pay back". In addition, external allies are boosting the capacity of most factions. Furthermore, some of the groups that are currently consolidating power in specific geographic locations will likely fight to maintain their control and to keep a form of *de facto* regional autonomy.

Indicators and Triggers

- Failure to adopt a comprehensive peace plan
- Failure of the political opposition to unite

- Failure of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to control diverse armed factions on the ground
- Continuous increase in number of weapons
- Increase in number of foreign Islamist militants
- Attacks against specific communities and religious minorities and their institutions

ON WATCH: Foreign Military Intervention in Syria

Expected New Impact

Humanitarian needs created by an intervention would depend on its form. Airstrikes aimed at establishing a no-fly zone and protecting humanitarian corridors could affect 20,000 to 50,000 new persons, although this number would be hard to disentangle from current fighting. Foreign intervention could also have an intensifying effect on factional fighting as described in the risk in this report "Widespread Factional Fighting in Syria", pushing that risk's impact upwards.

Probability Rationale

Why now?

The international community has debated military intervention in Syria for more than a year. The complexity of the conflict in Syria, the potential regional repercussions of an intervention, the deadlock at the UN and the projected costs of a military operation have deterred most western states, including the US which is critical for its military power. The fragmented nature of the opposition, and the fact that it includes many groups whose goals do not align with those of possible interveners, also me that there is no clear and credible on-the-ground partner with which a foreign force could work.

The absence of a UN mandate is a critical obstacle to intervention occurring. Russia and China have blocked action through the Security Council. Some members of the international community, including the United States, have declared use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government a trigger for intervention. However, no influential countries presently seriously champion an intervention. Until this situation changes the likelihood of international military action will remain low. A NATO-led intervention has been floated, but the idea is not moving at present.

Conflict issue

This conflict is part of the debate about state versus international responsibility for basic human welfare, against a background of the interests of regional and powerful international actors in who rules Syria. Direct objectives of an international use of force against Syria could include establishing humanitarian corridors or safe zones, pushing for regime change, or securing chemical weapon stockpiles.

Key actor analysis

The Arab League and a majority of Arab states want regime change in Syria and have indicated that this is a priority by supporting the opposition, as well as economic and diplomatic sanctions. Nevertheless, these actors have options to military intervention that at less costly and less risky, including increased support to the opposition. No Arab state has the individual strength to impose its will in Syria, and as a group they lack a history of well-coordinated action. Collaboration with Western militaries is possible, but the most valuable support Arab states could provide is political approval and logistical backing.

Russia and China formally oppose foreign military intervention, citing respect for Syrian sovereignty. This is Chinese policy doctrine, but Russia also has long-standing ties to Syria, its sole remaining Middle Eastern ally. Both states complained that the Libyan international intervention overstepped its mandate, and this background is likely influencing their current position. Their commitment to protecting the Syrian government from international sanctions and interference since March 2011 suggests that they will likely block any UN Security Council action authorising the use of force in Syria. Neither Russia nor China is likely to provide direct military support to Syria in the face of a military intervention that involves the US or NATO, even if this force lacked UN approval.

The European Union (and member states) and the United States of America favour regime change in Syria and have not completely dismissed a foreign military intervention. However, all have other domestic priorities including economic problems, elections and low public support for such a risky and costly enterprise. Without their military and financial support, an intervention would not be viable. The US Air Force in particular would be critical to overcoming Syria's air defences, which include sophisticated surface to air systems. Options to military force include continued unilateral sanctions and moral condemnation, and waiting for events to decide themselves. The idea of a NATO intervention has been dismissed so far but could be raised again in the future.

Turkey has stressed the need to create buffer zones within Syria on their shared border to accommodate the growing number or fleeing Syrians. This is a high priority because Turkey sees inflows as potentially destabilising its border areas, but not high enough to pursue on its own. Such a safe zone would require military protection. Turkey is not strong enough to unilaterally enforce safe zones, but would likely be a significant contributor to a UN or NATO led intervention.

Indicators and Triggers

- Use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government, or indications that such weapons could fall into terrorist hands
- UN resolution or endorsement of intervention
- Formal Arab League call for intervention
- Call for NATO intervention by the US or other influential members
- Emergence of a unified Syrian opposition movement agreeable to the international community

TAJIKISTAN

Impact Baseline

An estimated 10,000 to 40,000 persons were affected by the July 2012 violence and needed food, water and medical supplies. People have since returned to pre-violence levels of self-sufficiency.

ON WATCH: Fighting in Tajikistan (GBAO) between the Army and Field Commanders

Expected New Impact

Around 220,000 persons live in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) and renewed fighting could easily affect more than half of the population (110,000) as access and availability of water, food, medical supplies and other basic commodities would be compromised. The extent of the impact depends on whether the local population is involved

in the fighting and whether it spread to other regions. Should it spread to Rash district, up to 1 million inhabitants could be potentially affected for instance.

Likelihood Rationale

Why now?

Tensions have been rising since the July 2012 upsurge in violence and distrust between the local population and the government is reportedly growing. Grievances related to the July military operation continue unaddressed with no independent inquiry into the violence and a questionable, fragile ceasefire. Violence could therefore easily erupt and spread at any escalation in tensions.

The central government and local field commanders have previously coexisted based on a tacit agreement on the distribution of resources and political power. Despite the government's failed attempt to modify by force the terms of the agreement, a negotiated solution continues to be likely, thus decreasing the likelihood of violence.

Conflict issue

The principle issues are political and economic control (including traffic of goods) over an autonomous territory.

Key actor analysis

The Government: under the leadership of the President wants to control economic resources and eliminate potential opposition as the President looks to be re-elected in November 2012. Its priority is to secure a maximum share of resources and power. It could achieve this objective through negotiations with local commanders and targeted political assassinations. However, when negotiations fail, it has the capacity and is likely to resort to violence as proved by the July 2012 military operation.

Field commanders from the civil war (Davlat Usmon, Mirzo Ziyoyev, and most importantly Edgor Mamadaslamov, Mamadbokir Mamadbokirov, Imomnazar Imomnazarov, and Tolib Ayambekov) want to re-establish control over resources. Since the arrest of Tolib Ayambekov and the assassination of Imomnazarov, the remaining field commanders feel threatened and are therefore likely to fight for survival. Their priority is to secure resources and survive. In the absence of an acceptable agreement, targeted attacks and extra-judicial executions are likely to continue and clashes between field commanders and government forces could resume. Warlords could band together and access unlimited supply of cheap small arms from Afghanistan to increase their capacity.

The population wants more local power and autonomy. In addition, with the onset of the winter season, it is likely to be particularly vulnerable in the event of a harsh winter and failure by the government to respond to its needs. Nevertheless, as seen in July 2012 the population has an aversion to violence given its recent experience with the civil war.

Indicators and Triggers

- The potential return of Tajik migrants from Russia to defend GBAO from the central Government could lead to further violence (and could be an indication of imminent troubles)
- Assassinations of regional leaders, government officials, warlords
- ISAF Afghanistan withdrawal
- Aga Khan reactions to events in GBAO may influence the local population

GLOBAL

Expected New Impact

While food price increases are not expected to reach to the levels of 2008 (approximately 105 million individuals pushed into poverty), increases in international wheat and maize prices have the potential of significantly affecting domestic prices particularly for countries that import these commodities to cover their consumption requirements.

Price transmission to domestic markets will depend on how much a country relies on imports and the importance of wheat and maize in the national diets and/or as animal feed. Price transmission will also depend on trade and other policy measures, market structures, infrastructure and transport costs, domestic food production and stocks levels, as well as diversification of food consumption and cross-substitution between imported and locally produced food staples. In general, low-income food-deficit countries are most vulnerable to international commodity price increases and, when these are transmitted to local markets, the urban and rural poor groups of the population are the most affected because they spend the largest share of their incomes on food.

In countries of North Africa, Near East, Central Asia and Central America wheat or maize are the main staples and mostly imported. Domestic prices of cereals have already started to rise in some of these regions. In North Africa and the Near East, extensive food subsidies in place limited price transmission to consumers, but the national cereal import bills will increase significantly putting a burden on public budgets. In Africa, countries such as Mauritania, Djibouti, Eritrea, Lesotho and Swaziland are likely to be among the most affected by higher international grain prices. (*GIEWS Global Food Price Monitor, 12 September 2012*)

ODI Food Prices Update (September 2012) identifies Eritrea, Haiti, Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Djibouti, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Tajikistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as being highly exposed to the effects of rising maize and wheat prices based on high levels of hunger and dependence on imports of maize and wheat for staple food consumption. These countries overlap with 29 at risk countries jointly identified by FAO, WFP and OCHA within *High and Volatile Food Prices: FAO support to country level contingency planning*.

Likelihood Rationale

The World Bank Food Price Watch (August 2012) reports that experts do not currently foresee a repeat of 2008. However, a variety of factors influence the degree of price increases. FAO Cereal Supply and Demand Brief (September 2012) forecasts global cereal production will be lower than in 2011 and will not be sufficient to cover fully the expected utilization in the 2012/13 marketing season. Due to this insufficiency it can be expected that international cereal prices will increase.

Indicators and Triggers

- Exporters enforcing trade restrictions
- Importers pursuing panic purchases
- Disappointing southern hemisphere crops
- Strong increases in energy prices

Likelihood Rationale

El Nino

Since July, the tropical Pacific sea surface temperature rose to a level indicative of a weak El Niño, but an atmospheric response has not yet been observed in the Pacific region. An atmospheric response is necessary for an El Niño to have global climate impacts. At present, neutral conditions (neither El Niño nor La Niña) continue in the tropical Pacific. Model forecasts and expert opinion are now split on the possibility of El Niño conditions developing during the October-December period and continuing until February 2013. Should El Niño develop, it is expected to be a weak event and also the associated impacts, displayed below by region, are expected to be reduced accordingly. (WMO, ECMWF, IRI, BOM)

Indian Ocean Dipole

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), currently positive, is likely to return to neutral values between mid-October and mid-December. Like El Niño, this phenomenon influences precipitation patterns. A positive IOD phase sees greater-than-average sea-surface temperatures and greater precipitation in the western Indian Ocean region, with a corresponding cooling of waters in the eastern Indian Ocean and associated drier conditions in the area.

Impact Analysis

Potential impacts associated with these risks are presented with accompanying maps on the following pages.

Seasonal risk

■ Dry

South East Asia
Should an El Niño event occur between October 2012 and February 2013, warmer and drier than normal conditions are likely to develop across south-eastern Asia. Below-average precipitations may occur over central Philippines and south-east Indonesia (November-March is the rainy season in Indonesia). IOD positive conditions will likely increase drier conditions on Indonesia. Potential impacts in these areas include droughts and reduced yields of secondary season rice and maize. (FAO GIEWS, BOM, IRI)
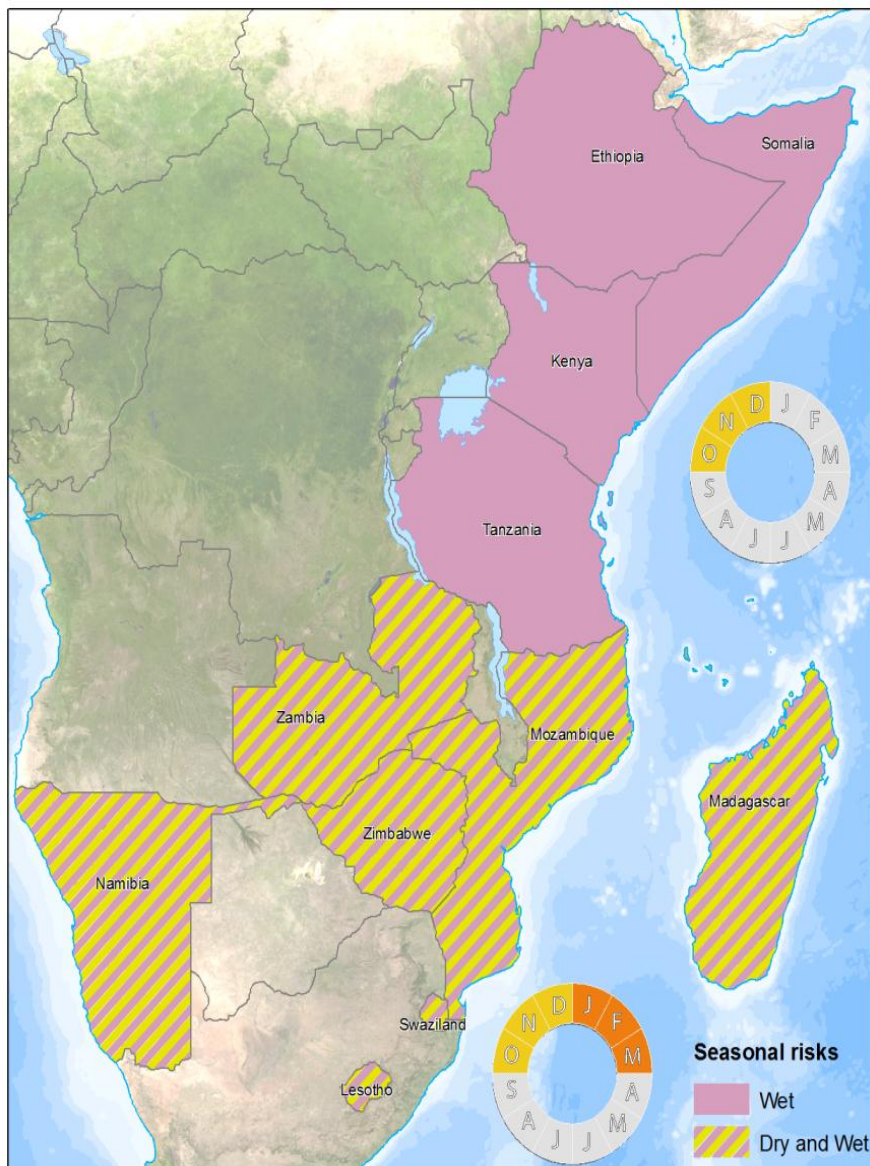
East Africa

Should an El Niño event occur between October 2012 and February 2013 and IOD remain positive, above-average precipitations are likely in East Africa Region, in particular until the end of 2012. The October to December rains are important in most of the East Africa Region and the bimodal cropping areas of western Kenya, northern Tanzania, and parts of Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi (FEWSNET). Increased rains in October to December, possibly continuing into January, would benefit crop and livestock production, increase water availability for domestic and livestock use, improve vegetation and pasture conditions, enhance availability of fish and wild foods, and improve water availability for the hydro-energy sectors. However, above-average rainfall in the East Africa Region could also have negative impacts, including soil erosion, damage to crops and infrastructure including food stocks, reduced market access caused by flooding, increased morbidity due to increases in human waterborne diseases (e.g. malaria, cholera), and increased livestock morbidity and mortality due to vector-borne diseases, including the potential for a re-emergence of Rift Valley Fever. (FAO GIEWS/EMPRES)

Southern Africa

Should an El Niño event occur between October 2012 and February 2013, drier than normal conditions are expected over southern Zimbabwe, southern Zambia, southern Mozambique, north-eastern South Africa, the western tip of Madagascar, the western tip of Namibia, the eastern half of Lesotho and Swaziland. This is supported by the Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) consensus forecast, which also indicates high probabilities of normal to above normal rainfall for the rest of the region. (WMO, IRI, ECMWF)

Reduced rainfall during the critical flowering and maturation period of cereal crops (January-March 2013), such as maize can impact crop development and output. In addition, extreme dry weather conditions affect the ability of livestock to get adequate feed, decreasing their ability to fight off even minor diseases, causing increased morbidity and mortality of the livestock populations. (FAO GIEWS/EMPRES)

Seasonal risks

- Dry
- Wet

Central and South America

Should an El Niño event occur between October 2012 and February 2013, below-average precipitations are expected in north-eastern South America, within the Caribbean areas and along the Central Pacific basin. Guidance from the Central American Climate Outlook Forum (II FCAC 2) suggests that in the case of the development of El Niño, areas of low rainfall could include parts of Honduras, eastern and central El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Dry weather conditions may also affect cereal crop production in Central America (secondary season) and north-western parts of South America (including north-east Brazil). (FAO GIEWS)

Climate models do not agree on predictions for the coming months in the western part of South America, though some models forecast increased precipitation in Bolivia, central, western and southern Brazil, northern Peru, and across Argentina. In eastern Argentina, Uruguay, southern Paraguay and southern Brazil, heavy rains may have negative impacts on wheat harvesting. (FAO GIEWS)

EXCLUDED RISKS

The following risks were discussed by the inter-agency group that drafted this report, but left out because of perceived low probability in the coming six months. A brief explanation of these perceptions is provided for each risk.

Fighting between government and Islamist insurgents in Burkina Faso, Mauritania, or Niger

Risks associated with spill-over from Mali, i.e. fighting between Islamists and government forces in neighbouring countries, were discussed but left off the On Watch list because all were agreed to be dependent on the occurrence of an at least somewhat effective international intervention in northern Mali. Such an intervention seems some time off because Mali is having difficulty making a clear and unified request for help, ECOWAS members are not rushing to supply troops, Mali's neighbours are uncomfortable with the idea, and the UN is still debating approval of a mission because of planning problems. Absent an intervention Islamist fighters currently in Mali have little incentive to leave their safe haven and attack countries that all have military forces readied at their borders. The situation in Mali will be closely watched, and in the event that an intervention does take shape these risks will be reconsidered.

Fighting between FNL (Agathon Rwasa faction) and government in Burundi

Although the Rwasa FNL faction recently declared war on the Government of Burundi, its forces appear to number only a couple of hundred fighters hiding in eastern DRC. The group is not considered sufficiently strong to create significant humanitarian impact. The situation will be monitored for signs of the FNL building capabilities.

Fighting between Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi forces in Iraq

This risk was discussed but excluded because it was agreed to be quite unlikely given the incentives for peace for all actors. Iraqi Kurds have a top priority of maintaining stability and capitalising on deals with major oil producers. They also have effective autonomy in the status quo, and pursuing outright statehood would draw harsh reprisals from Turkey and Iraq, beyond the obvious problem with Iraq. For Kurds, the status quo is likely as good as it gets for the time being. For its part, Iraq's capability to enforce its will on its Kurdish area is questionable, and it has other pressing concerns related to differences between Sunni and Shia citizens.

War between Israel and Lebanon

There is no evidence of impending war between Israel and Lebanon. The probability of such an event occurring in the next six months, while non-trivial, is lower now than at other times. Hezbollah is keeping a low profile in response to Sunni resurgence in Syria, instability in Lebanon, and cut supply lines from Iran. In this mode Hezbollah is unlikely to seek a fight with Israel. On the other side, Israel has no immediate interest in invading an explosive country at a time when regional tensions are quite high, particularly with Iran which is the chief backer of the dominant Lebanese faction. An invasion could trigger a number of unpleasant consequences, and there is little to gain relative to the do-nothing approach of simply letting Hezbollah get weaker as time goes on.

Expulsion of South Sudanese from Sudan to South Sudan

This risk appears to have been settled as part of the recent Sudan-South Sudan "Four Freedoms" agreement. Citizens from both countries have been given rights of residence, movement, economic activity, and property on both sides of the border.

War between Sudan and South Sudan in Abyei, transitional areas, and South Sudan border states

This risk was discussed but excluded because of recent progress in peace talks related to oil transport and a demilitarised zone. Although momentum is not assured the current direction is toward stabilisation of relations. Small scale clashes are likely to continue from time to time, but neither side is in a position to jeopardise oil revenues with open war. Both Sudan and South Sudan have had recent exposure to the effects of these funds being cut off and are unlikely to want to repeat the experience.

War between Ethiopia and Eritrea

The risk of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea resurfaces regularly. Concerns were high in March 2012 after Ethiopia attacked three camps in south-east Eritrea belonging to a faction of the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF). The incursions were the first that Ethiopia has admitted since the countries fought a border war from 1998 to 2000, which was triggered by similar activities. However, settling their border disputes is not a priority for either of the countries. Ethiopia is currently experiencing a stable political transition after the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on 20 August 2012 and the new Ethiopian leadership has initiated the first direct contact with rebel groups (the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF)) after 21 years. Hence, war in the upcoming 6 months is unlikely.