



# GIEWS Update

## Burkina Faso

### Food security situation deteriorating in northern areas due to heightened violence

#### Highlights:

- In northern areas, an upsurge of violence by armed groups since early 2019 is severely damaging rural livelihood systems and driving widespread internal displacements.
- The number of displaced people is currently estimated at about 220 000, almost five times the caseload in late 2018, and is expected to further escalate in the coming months.
- Severe insecurity is significantly affecting livelihood and market activities constraining food availability and access, and the food security situation is rapidly deteriorating.
- Urgent life-saving and livelihood support to vulnerable households is needed to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the humanitarian situation.

#### Overview

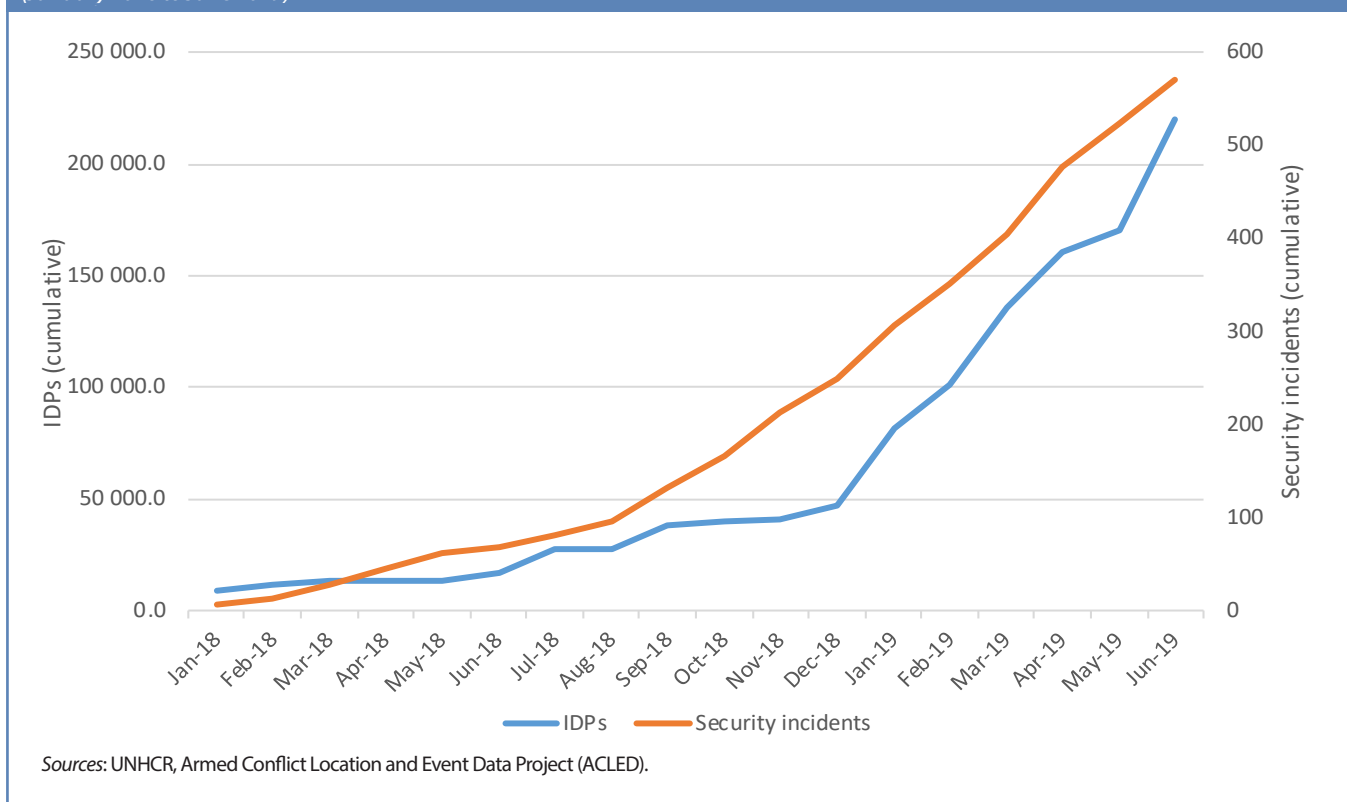
The country's northern areas, including Sahel and Centre-Nord regions as well as neighbouring provinces, are experiencing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. In Mali, long-standing inter communal tensions have escalated in 2018 and spread into northern Burkina Faso, where an increase of violence against the civilian population in 2019 has resulted in widespread and increasing displacements. The number of displaced people is currently estimated at about 220 000, almost five times the caseload in late 2018, and is expected to further escalate in the coming months. The upsurge in violence is hindering crop and livestock production, food transport and trade, and hampering other livelihood activities, severely constraining food availability and access, with an ensuing deterioration of the food security situation. According to the March 2019 "Cadre Harmonisé" analysis, about 346 000 people were estimated to be in need of food assistance in June August 2019 in the Sahel

and Centre-Nord regions. However, the current food insecure caseload is likely to be substantially higher due to the severe impact of the escalating violence on livelihoods and trade. A timely response is urgently needed to support the displaced households and host communities in conflict affected areas to avoid the continuing deterioration of the food security situation.

#### Insecurity and population displacements

The region of Liptako Gourma, overlapping Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, has been affected by an upsurge of violence since the beginning of 2018. In Mali, long-standing tensions between Dogon (pastoralist farmers) and Fulani (nomadic herders) communities over access to land and water points escalated into violent clashes in 2018. The conflict, exploited by armed groups to strengthen their presence in the region, has subsequently spilled over into both Niger and Burkina Faso, where an upsurge

**Figure 1: Burkina Faso - Security incidents and displacements (cumulative)**  
 (January 2018 to June 2019)



of violence has been reported in 2019. Burkina Faso's northern Sahel and Centre-Nord regions as well as neighbouring provinces are the areas most affected by the increasing civil insecurity. Between January and June 2019, the number of security incidents has been estimated at 320, more than five times the number recorded in the corresponding period of 2018. Frequent acts of violence are characterized by killings, destruction of property (trading posts, cattle raiding) and abductions of civilians. Civil insecurity is resulting in increasing displacements, with the Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) caseload estimated in June at about 220 000 people, almost five times the caseload in late 2018 (see Figure 1). About 95 percent of the displaced population is located in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions and in neighbouring Loroum provinces of Nord Region and Gnagna and Komondjari provinces of Est Region. Only 3 percent of them reside in IDP camps, with the vast majority of the displaced forced to shelter in the bush, on bare lands, or in host communities in villages or small towns. According to FEWS NET, in the communes of Djibo, Arbinda, Kelbo (Soum Province), Barsalogho, Dablo and Pensa (Sanmatenga

Province), IDPs account for 10-30 percent of the total population, putting a strain on the communities already affected by extreme poverty. Several displaced households have moved along with their livestock, thus intensifying the competition with hosting communities for resources, mainly water.

### Livelihood activities and source of income

Civil conflict is causing a significant slowdown of economic activities in the Sahel and Centre-Nord regions and in neighbouring areas. The disruption of economic activities is critically constraining livelihood activities and incomes for large segments of the population. Consistently with the latest weather forecasts by the Regional Climate Outlook Forum for Sudano-Saharan Africa (PRESASS), which point for average to above-average June to September seasonal rains across the country, the rainy season in the Sahel Region had a timely onset in late May and cumulative rainfall volumes as of end June were average. However, insecurity is severely disrupting agricultural activities, hindering access

to fields and constraining purchases and application of agricultural inputs. As a result, agricultural labour opportunities and wage rates have sharply decreased, with a negative impact on incomes of the poor households depending on this livelihood activity. Pastoral livelihoods have also been severely affected by insecurity, which is resulting in restricted animal access to pasture and water points and in episodes of cattle raiding. Gold mining, an important livelihood activity contributing to about 40 percent of incomes in these areas, has also been severely disrupted as most mining sites have become inaccessible due to insecurity. Similarly, sales of fodder, wood and charcoal and petty trade activities are reported to be significantly reduced. Livelihood disruptions and income declines are having a severe negative impact on food access of vulnerable households, mainly IDPs and poor and market-dependent households in host communities.

## Market activity, trade flows and food prices

In the conflict-affected areas, food markets are either closed or characterized by a reduced attendance by traders, sellers and buyers, with the most severe reduction in market activity reported in the Soum Province of the Sahel Region. Road ambushes and looting of trucks are disrupting trade flows between the country's main western cereal producing areas and the northern conflict-affected areas, characterized by a structural cereal deficit. Despite trade disruptions, adequate stocks from the 2018 above-average harvest and Government-led humanitarian interventions have offset upward price pressures. Prices of cereals were reported in June to be mostly stable at low levels in several markets in conflict-affected areas and only 10 percent higher than their year-earlier levels in Gorom-Gorom and Markoye markets, located in

**Table 1: Burkina Faso (conflict-affected areas) - Changes in sources of income for poor households, 2019**

Source of Income	Change in 2019 <sup>1</sup>	Explanation
Gold mining	▼	Local small scale independent miners have drastically reduced their activities due to movement constraints related to the ongoing conflict.
Remittances	►	Transfer of money from outside conflict-affected areas remained almost similar to the average.
Farm labour	▼	Farm labour opportunities and income are declining due to the risk of attack while working in the fields.
Labour migration	►	Labour migration trends, mostly to Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou), remain stable.
Sales of animals/milk	▼	Disruption of normal transhumance patterns have affected the sales of animals and milk on local markets. In June, animal sales was low due to reduced number of buyers in some markets.
Wood/charcoal/fodder sales	▼	Household movements to fields and bushes are constrained due to threats from armed groups.
Temporary local labour	▼	Demand for local labour for brick building and house construction has drastically declined due to the persisting civil insecurity hampering economic activities.
Humanitarian assistance: Cash-for-Work	▲	The Government has scaled up its social safety net programmes by prioritizing households in the affected areas.

<sup>1</sup> Increasing (▲), Unchanged (►), Decreasing (▼).

the northernmost Oudalan Province of the Sahel Region. However, as the lean season has just started, local cereal stocks have been exhausted, most households will highly depend on markets to cover their food needs until the start of the 2019 harvest in September. As a result, disruptions in cereal trade flows from surplus producing regions and major assembly markets (Ouagadougou, Pouytenga and Ouahigouya) to wholesale and retail markets located in remote areas is likely to result in significant food price increases in the coming weeks, with a negative impact on food access.

## Humanitarian access

The protracted civil insecurity is also hampering humanitarian assistance operations as violence against civilians often affect humanitarian operators. Constraints to humanitarian access are often resulting in irregular and reduced food assistance operations. In addition, the usual programmes for the prevention and management of malnutrition are becoming increasingly limited in conflict affected areas. FAO is targeting about 14 300 households in the Centre

Nord and Sahel regions, providing support in terms of improved seeds, fertilizers, Cash for Work activities and unconditional cash transfers. These activities aim to mitigate the vulnerability of the conflict-affected households and enable them to increase their level of agricultural production.

## Food security outcomes

The slowdown of economic activities and widespread displacements in the areas affected by the upsurge of violence have caused a sharp reduction of livelihood activities, employment opportunities and purchasing power for vulnerable households. The food security situation of IDPs and host communities across the Sahel and Centre Nord regions as well as neighbouring areas has deteriorated to critical levels. According to the March 2019 “Cadre Harmonisé” analysis, in Sahel and Centre-Nord regions, about 346 000 people were estimated to be in Phase 3: “Crisis” and above levels of food insecurity between June and August 2019. However, the current food insecure caseload is likely to be substantially higher, as recent displacements

**Table 2: Burkina Faso (Centre-Nord and Sahel regions) - FAO humanitarian interventions**

Region	Province	Area of intervention	Activity	Number of household beneficiaries
Centre-Nord	Bam, Namentenga, Sanmatenga	Agriculture	Food production support composed of seeds of improved varieties and fertilizers.	3 453
		Unconditional cash	Two tranches of XOF 52 500 in unconditional cash.	3 550
		Cash-for-Work	One tranche of XOF 2 400 for Cash-for-Work activities, for the development of market gardening and PFNL (non-woody forest products).	2 000
Sahel	Seno, Soum, Oudalan	Agriculture	Food production support composed of seeds of improved varieties and fertilizers.	2 256
		Unconditional cash	Two tranches of XOF 52 500 in unconditional cash.	3 050

have been causing significant livelihood damages, with an ensuing decline in food availability. In addition, as the lean season is about to peak, and households are relying on market purchases for their food requirements, the disruption of trade flows and the low market activity due to the persisting

conflict is leading to critical food access constraints. As a result, the already critical food situation is likely to deteriorate until the 2019 harvest will begin in September. Urgent life-saving and livelihood support interventions are needed to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the humanitarian situation.

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