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### HIGHLIGHTS

- Food security improving across Sahel, but millions are still in need of assistance.
- Nearly 3 million people in the Lake Chad region are facing severe food shortages.
- Clashes between herders and farmers in Côte d'Ivoire displace over 6,000 people.
- Between January and April, DRC reports 5,757 cholera cases.
- Ebola resurfaces for the third time in Liberia, Guinea sees its first flare-up.



## Rising food insecurity across Lake Chad Basin

Food insecurity triggered by the ongoing conflict in the Lake Chad region is expected to deepen as families exhaust their reserves and the lean season progresses. Nearly three million people in the regions worst-affected by Boko Haram violence are currently facing severe food shortages.

Markets have been disrupted and food prices increased. Transhumance and livelihoods have been hamstrung, and in certain regions, the lean season has started earlier than usual. The majority of the food insecure people are in Nigeria's north-eastern Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states. Some 2.3 million people in these three states are in crisis phase and need humanitarian assistance, according to the March analysis of the Cadre Harmonisé. In Borno, around 217,000 people are in the emergency phase of food

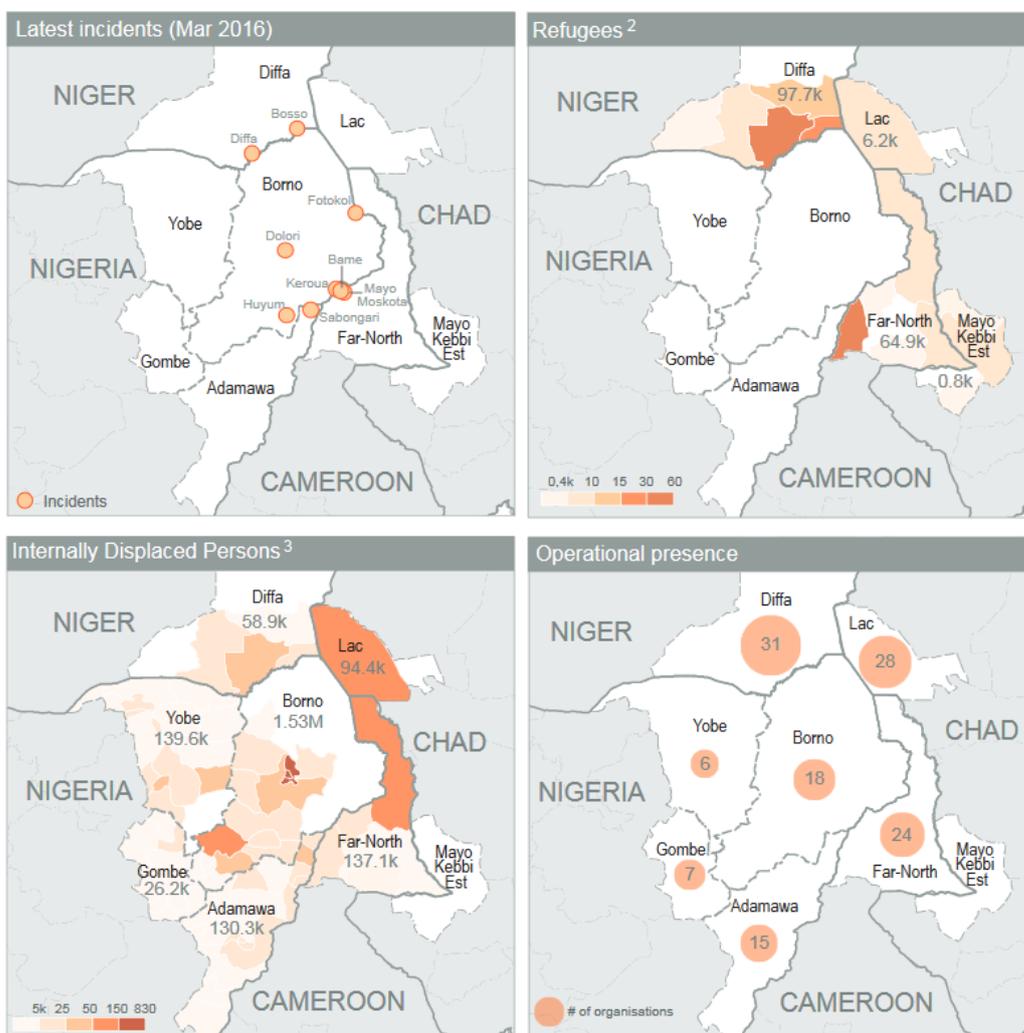
### Population movement and violent incidents in the most affected areas

### KEY FIGURES

People displaced in Lake Chad Basin	2.4M
Severely food insecure people in Lake Chad Basin	2.9M
People facing crisis level of food insecurity in the Sahel	6.7M

### SAHEL FUNDING

US \$1.9 billion requested in 2016
12% funded



insecurity and need immediate assistance. Interagency needs assessments are currently taking place in newly accessible areas that point to larger numbers of people in urgent need.

Households in Chad's western Lac region have mostly depleted their cereal stocks from the last harvest, as they have had to share food, homes and other resources with those forced to flee their villages due to attacks. In turn, families are now dependent on the markets for cereals, but where supply shortages have been reported, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) observed.

The influx of displaced people in Cameroon's Far North region has also exerted pressure on households hosting them. The region is one of the most impoverished in the country and residents often grapple with recurrent food shortages. Currently, 170,000 people are displaced, a seven per cent increase compared to four months ago. The displacement, conflict and disrupted livelihoods have left some 203,000 people severely food insecure.

Niger's southern Diffa region, which hosts some 100,000 displaced people, is expected to see the highest levels of food insecurity in the country in the coming months. Already, 143,000 are severely food insecure in the region. As in the other conflict-hit areas, the adversity of the conflict has stocked hunger among the local communities and the displaced people.

### Dysfunctional markets

Suicide bombers suspected to be deployed by Boko Haram have struck several markets in the region, forcing their closure. Authorities have also ordered market closures to minimize the risk of suicide attacks in populated areas and to head off possible economic advantages for the armed group. Border closures and attacks have forced traders to seek alternative routes whenever possible. This has pushed up commodity prices in certain markets, but depressed them in supply areas.

Many markets in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe are operating at below-average levels due to insecurity, although major markets in urban areas are open and have enough supplies to meet household demand, according to FEWS NET.

The closure of Nigeria's Damassak market has choked off supply to Diffa, in neighbouring Niger. Niger is structurally dependent on Nigerian markets for grain supply. Closure of border crossings have also pared back trade, an inter-agency Lake Chad market assessment in March found. Border markets in Cameroon have also been closed due to insecurity, while in Chad some markets in the Lac region are functioning normally, but others are difficult to access.

### Restricted transhumance

Conflict and insecurity have restrained the seasonal herder migration around Lake Chad. Livestock health is expected to deteriorate as pasture and water points diminish with the dry season. Cattle deaths are likely to be higher than usual in the coming months and families depending on livestock for sustenance will incur losses that will impact income and access to food.

The risk of livestock disease is also heightened as herds have been hemmed in certain areas unable to migrate as usual. This concentration may in turn trigger conflicts with farmers when the planting season begins.



A displaced family in Chad's western Mellia area. Conflict around Lake Chad has driven up food insecurity. OCHA/Ivo Brandau

*Many markets have shut down or are operating at below-average levels due to insecurity*

*The risk of livestock disease is heightened as herds have been hemmed in certain areas unable to migrate as usual*

*In Nigeria's Borno and Yobe states, some 333,000 people will be in an emergency food insecurity situation from June to August, according to the Cadre Harmonisé*

## Food security outlook

FEWS NET foresees the current food insecurity persisting in Diffa until at least September, particularly in the areas around Komadougou River - a natural border between Niger and Nigeria - due to insecurity. In Chad, there will be a steadily growing household demand on local markets with the heavy dependence of households on markets, particularly in areas reporting large shortfalls in cereal production and in the western Lac region.

In Nigeria's Borno and Yobe states, some 333,000 people will be in an emergency food insecurity situation and in need of immediate assistance and around 2.7 million will be facing crisis stage of food insecurity from June to August, according to the Cadre Harmonisé.

## Sahel food insecurity remains worrying

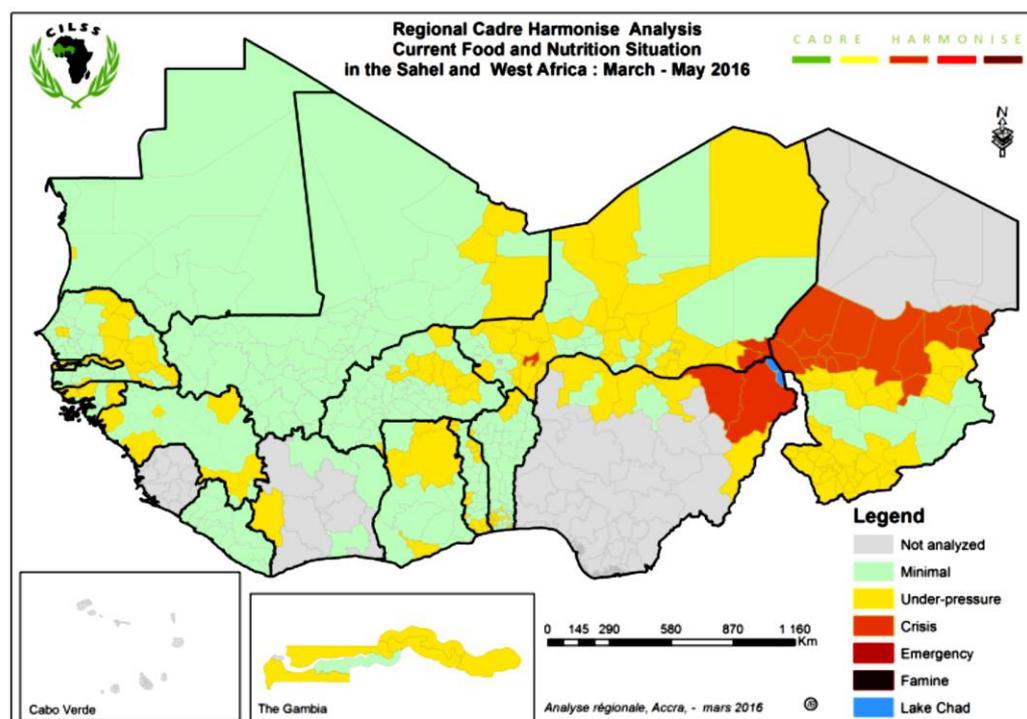
Good rainfall in the last season has slightly improved overall food security in the Sahel and West Africa region. The number of people facing crisis levels of food insecurity (Phase 3 - 5 of the Cadre Harmonisé) has been decreasing since 2014. However, a huge number of people still require assistance.

Around 6.7 million people are already facing crisis levels of food and nutrition insecurity in the region, according to an April analysis by the Réseau de Prévention des Crises Alimentaires (RPCA), an inter-Governmental body monitoring food security in the Sahel and West Africa. The number is expected to rise to around 9.4 million unless appropriate measures are taken in time. Of those, eight million live in the Sahel.

## High vulnerability in Lake Chad Basin

Nigeria, Chad and Niger alone account for three quarters of the population facing severe food insecurity, with particular concerns noted for communities in north-western Chad, where those facing crisis levels of food insecurity has more than doubled compared to the

*Nigeria, Chad and Niger alone account for three quarters of the population facing severe food insecurity*



same period last year. Pockets of very high levels of vulnerability persist among communities in Niger and Nigeria affected by violence across the Lake Chad Basin, where an estimated 350,000 people are anticipated to fall into emergency levels of food insecurity (Phase 4 of the Cadre Harmonisé) during the lean season. At the same time, in

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comparison to March 2015, the number of people affected by severe food insecurity has significantly decreased in Senegal and Mauritania.

### **Six million children acutely malnourished**

Malnutrition remains a cause for concern, with an increase in levels of acute malnutrition - above the warning or emergency thresholds - in parts of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. Almost six million children under the age of five are at risk of acute malnutrition this year of whom a third faces the severe form and risk dying if measures are not taken.

### **Better harvests, markets generally stable**

Following good harvests in the 2015 - 2016 season, food production has improved across the region, with the total cereal production estimated at 64 million tons, marking a 5 per cent increase over the previous year and a 13 per cent increase over the five-year average. However, where rainfall was poor, cereal production has fallen, particularly in Chad (-9 per cent), Mauritania (-8 per cent) and Burkina Faso (-7 per cent).

Food consumption is currently acceptable in most areas of the region, except in the conflict-hit areas of the Lake Chad Basin. Markets continue to function adequately, with prices of the main cereals generally stable in areas unaffected by the violence.

### **Early lean season for pastoralists in Niger and Chad**

Despite better feeding and watering conditions than last year, a deficit in animal feed has brought an early lean season for pastoralists in Niger and Chad, which risks deteriorating due to the depletion of fodder stocks and the shortage of water. Transhumance remains unhindered in most parts of the region, except for pastoralists in the Lake Chad Basin, where violence and insecurity are severely affecting movements.

### **Immediate mitigation measures needed to prevent crises**

Gathering in Paris on 13 - 15 April, 150 Government representatives from the Sahel and West Africa, together with development and humanitarian organizations, called for the immediate implementation of emergency livestock programmes to prevent crises in Chad and Niger; the setting up of integrated resilience-strengthening activities for communities affected by the conflict in the Lake Chad Basin; enhanced monitoring, prevention and treatment of malnutrition, with a particular focus on structural causes; and permanent monitoring of the regional market to detect early signs of malfunction.

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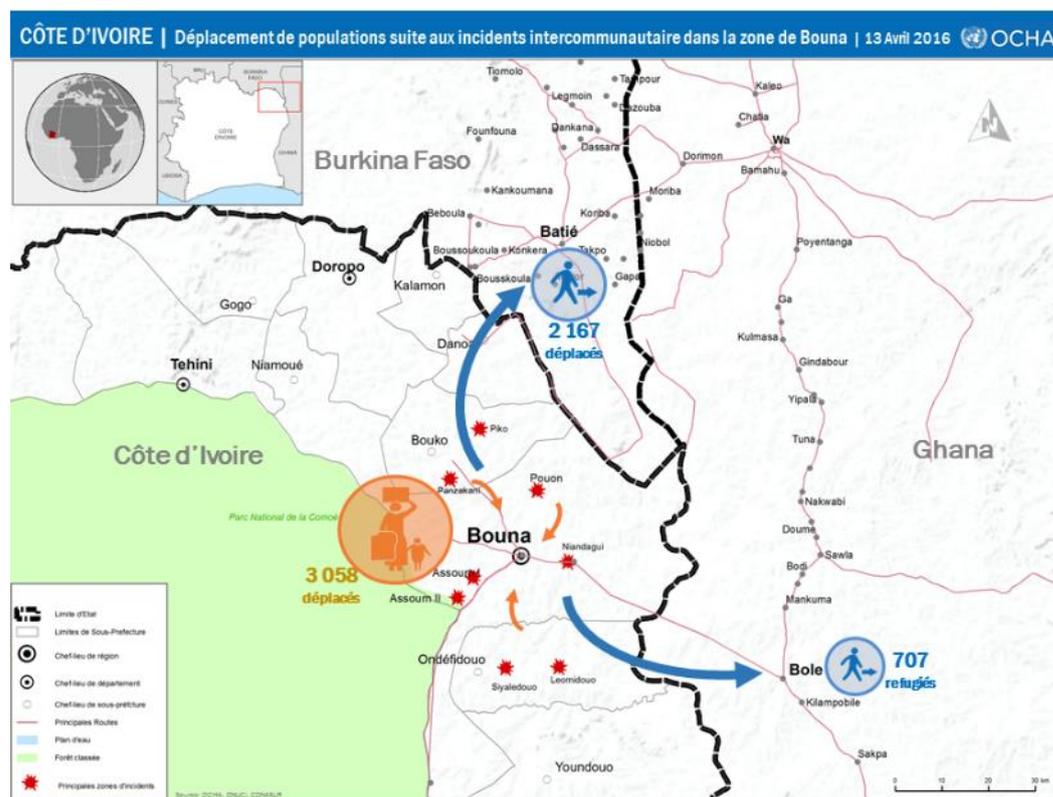
A father and his son fish on Lake Chad. The family is struggling to survive after being displaced by Boko Haram violence. OCHA/Ivo Brandau

## Farmer-herder clashes displace over 6,000

Recent clashes between herders and farmers in Côte d'Ivoire's north-eastern Bouna area have displaced more than 6,000 people, half of whom have sought refuge in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Ghana. The violence first erupted in early February between Fulani - or Peulh - and Malinke herders on the one hand and farmers from the Lobi community on the other.

Ivorian forces have deployed in Bouna and efforts are ongoing to reconcile the rival sides. Humanitarian organizations are providing assistance to the 3,058 people who have settled in various sites in the area. Some 2,167 people have found refuge in Burkina Faso's southern Batie town, where the authorities are providing assistance, while more than 700 others have fled to Ghana.

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### Herd and displacement

The displaced pastoralists have also brought along their cattle, risking farm encroachment in agricultural areas. In Burkina Faso, where those displaced are mostly nationals who had settled in Côte d'Ivoire, they have brought along around 8,000 heads of cattle and left behind more than 10,000.

On the other side of the Black Volta River in Bole, the Ghanaian local community refused to let the Fulani in the country with their cattle so the men stayed back with them while the women, children and the elderly crossed the river to Ghana.

### Tension remains high

Although the violence has largely fizzled out and the situation has been brought under control, tension is still high in Bouna. Assessments of the affected populations across the three countries show their willingness to return home provided that their security will be guaranteed and that Lobi chiefs and youth be associated in the reconciliation meetings so that their return can be sustainable.

In Bouna, humanitarian organizations plan to continue delivering assistance to reduce vulnerabilities and save lives by supporting the efforts of the authorities until conditions are met to enable the return of the displaced.

## Recurrent conflict

Farmer-herder conflicts are not uncommon in the region. The violence in Bouna is the latest illustration of the complex cohabitation between the Fulani and other ethnicities of West and Central Africa.

Beyond the struggle over resources, ethnic and religious differences as well as environmental degradation and climate change are drivers of the recurring conflicts. For instance, Nigeria has seen a resurgence of inter-communal violence between Fulani and farmers over the last few years. Most virulent in north central and north eastern Nigeria as well as inland of the Niger delta, the violence has affected five of the country's 36 states, with over 489 attacks between 1997 and 2016, causing at least 4,000 casualties over the last six years<sup>1</sup>.

## Economic costs

In addition to the costs incurred in terms of human lives, the Fulani-herders conflict has both humanitarian and economic consequences. According to global humanitarian aid agency Mercy Corps, Nigeria could gain up to US\$13 billion annually in total macroeconomic progress in a scenario of peace between farmers and pastoralists in four of Nigeria's five conflict-affected states alone<sup>2</sup>.

Existing coping strategies of communities experiencing farmer-herders conflict can negatively impact both short and long-term growth. Pastoralists tend to adapt by modifying their patterns of movement, which can reduce their ability to earn a living, moving through grazing routes more quickly to avoid conflict, adversely affecting animal health and contributing to an increased number of food insecure or malnourished people. The violence is also forcing the population to flee their homes: in February 2016 alone, the incidents between Fulani herders and farmers caused the displacement of 7,000 persons in Nigeria's east central Benue state<sup>3</sup>.

## Ebola flare-ups test epidemic surveillance

Despite the declaration of end of epidemics in high risk countries, Guinea and Liberia saw new cases of the virus. Guinea confirmed a new Ebola case on 17 March as it was about to complete a 90-day surveillance phase after transmissions had been declared over. The new case was a woman from the southern Nzérékoré Prefecture. However, it is likely that three people who had died three weeks earlier, including the woman's husband, also succumbed to Ebola. This raises questions about the surveillance system, particularly at the community level, and highlights the continuing reticence to report suspected cases by individuals and communities.

## Rapid response and case management

Following the flare-up, rapid response and case management teams swiftly reactivated emergency protocols and measures. The Ebola treatment centre in Nzérékoré was up and running again in less than 24 hours. Case investigation and contact tracing teams were deployed to the epicentre of the outbreak. A mobile radio station was also relocated to Koropara area in Nzérékoré in a few days to broadcast prevention messages.

## First flare-up in Liberia since January

These measures nonetheless did not prevent the outbreak from being exported to Liberia. Despite a temporary border closure on the Liberian side, a woman managed to travel to Monrovia under a false Liberian name and died in hospital on 31 March, becoming Liberia's first Ebola case since the virus was declared over in January. She also brought along her two sons who tested positive and have been undergoing treatment.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.acleddata.com>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/economic-costs-conflict-nigeria>

<sup>3</sup> [www.vanguardngr.com/2016/02/7000-persons-displaced-in-fulani-herdsmen-agatu-farmers-clash-in-benue/](http://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/02/7000-persons-displaced-in-fulani-herdsmen-agatu-farmers-clash-in-benue/)

*It is hoped that the chain of transmission has been stopped as the last confirmed case was reported on 6 April in Guinea's Macenta*

*Between January and April 2016, 5,757 cholera cases including 94 deaths were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

As of 19 April, seven confirmed cases had been reported in Guinea and three in Liberia. Over 1,200 people have been vaccinated in Guinea and more than 1,400 contacts have been monitored in both countries. It is hoped that the chain of transmission has been stopped, with the last confirmed case reported on 6 April in Guinea's Macenta Prefecture.

### **Countries remain on high alert**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has reiterated that more flare-ups are expected in the months to come largely due to virus persistence in some survivors, and that the three countries must remain on high alert and ready to respond.



An IOM Ebola check point near Koropara in Guinea's Nzerekore region. UNDP/ Marc Wajnszok

## **Regional update on epidemics**

The West African region continues to face numerous public health challenges including recurrent epidemics such as cholera, meningitis, Lassa fever and measles.

### **Meningitis outbreak**

From January to March 2016, 7,896 suspected cases of meningitis, including 639 deaths have been recorded. Thirty-seven districts in Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria and Togo have reached the epidemic threshold, while 74 districts in eight of the countries have hit the alert level.

In Ghana, mass meningitis vaccination campaign was conducted in the three districts of Jirapa, Nadowli and Nandom in the Upper West region in March, with 136,000 people aged 2 to 29 vaccinated, representing 98.6 per cent of the target population. In Togo, two rounds of vaccination in different districts have been conducted. A total of 436,683 people from 2 to 29 years, representing 98 per cent of the target population, were immunized. A third round is underway in other districts.

### **Lassa fever outbreak**

Benin, Togo and Nigeria are facing Lassa fever outbreaks. As of 10 April, 309 cases and 174 deaths were reported. Lassa fever is endemic in Nigeria, currently the most affected country with 254 cases. The disease has considerably decreased in Nigeria and in Togo, while in Benin the outbreak has so far been reported in 21 townships in eight of the country's 12 regions, and is still spreading into new townships. Health authorities are reporting challenges in the implementation of infection prevention and control activities at community level.

### **Cholera outbreak**

Between January and 3 April, 6,030 cholera cases including 96 deaths were reported in Benin, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Nigeria. Ninety per cent of the cases are from the DRC with 5,757 cases and 94 deaths. Cholera cases are higher this year compared to the same period in 2015, but remain low compared to 2013 and 2014.

## Humanitarian news in brief

### Flooding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

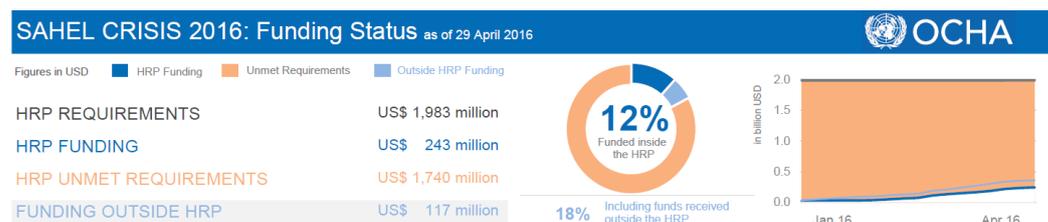
DRC has been particularly impacted by above average rains from October 2015 to March 2016 along the Congo River Basin, in Haut Uélé and South Kivu provinces. Experts consider this could be an indirect impact of El Niño. The rains and subsequent flooding have caused the destruction of thousands of homes, vital food stocks and crops, and public infrastructure with an estimated 550,000 people affected as of early March. OCHA and partners have validated a response plan to floods in the affected provinces.

### Political unrest in the Congo

The re-election of President Denis Sassou Nguesso for a fifth term took place on 20 March 2016 in a tense political environment. His main opponents claimed that the elections were unfair and lacked transparency. The European Union and the International Organisation of the Francophonie did not send observers on the ground, saying they had doubts over the electoral process. Sassou Nguesso was declared the winner with over 60 per cent of the votes during the first round. Heavy gunfire rocked Brazzaville following the result of the election, displacing an estimated 17,000 people. The situation in the capital returned to normal although access to the Southern Pool region where military operations are reported is still restricted by the Government.

## Sahel Funding Status Overview

### 2016 Sahel Appeal funded at 12 per cent



As of 29 April, the US\$1.983 billion Sahel Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) had received \$243 million, representing 12 per cent of the year's requirements. In addition, funding to humanitarian activities recorded outside the Response Plan was at \$117 million, bringing the total funding to 18 per cent. The top three donors are the European Union, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Japan.

To date, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Mali are the best funded appeals, while Chad, Gambia and Mauritania are the least funded. The most funded sectors are Nutrition, Logistics, and Shelter & Non-Food Items. Food security, Protection, Early recovery, Health and Multisector are the least funded sectors so far.