ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY OVERVIEW

Between October and December 2019, around 648,000 people were in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above), including 39,000 people in Emergency (CH Phase 4). Three out of four of these people – including all populations classified in Emergency (CH Phase 4) – were in the northern regions of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao. In addition, 2.9 million were facing Stressed (CH Phase 2) conditions and at risk of slipping into Crisis (CH Phase 3) were they to face an additional shock or stressor. Three areas were classified in Crisis (CH Phase 3) in Gao and Timbuktu, and 15 others were in Stressed (CH Phase 2), mainly in Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Kayes (CILSS-CH, 2019).

The number of food-insecure people continued increasing throughout 2019, rising from about 336,000 people in Crisis or worse (CH Phase 3 or above) in March–May to 554,000 in June–August. The number of people in Stressed (CH Phase 2) also increased overall, from around 2.5 million in March–May to 3.2 million in June–August (CILSS-CH, 2019). The central and northern regions were consistently the most affected.

FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY

Conflict/insecurity

Increasing insecurity was characterized by cattle raids, destruction of food stocks and abandonment of pastures, markets, villages and fields in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Ségou. Despite above-average 2019 cereal production prospects, there were localized shortfalls in Kayes and Mopti. Pastoralists in these areas faced insecurity and limited access to pastures, particularly during the pastoral lean season from April–July (FEWS NET, May 2019). As a result, unusual movements of herds were reported in the centre and north and in neighbouring countries – Mauritania, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Côte d’Ivoire – as well as cattle raids and thefts (Ministry of Agriculture, November 2019). Most economic activities, including fishing, were affected by insecurity in the inner delta of the Niger River (FEWS NET, October 2019).

As of late November, around 199,000 people were internally displaced, which represents a 140 percent increase since early March 2019, mostly due to violence in Mopti, Gao and Ménaka, and in the bordering areas between Mali and Burkina Faso. In addition, the country hosted around 27,000 refugees mostly from Mauritania, Burkina Faso and the Niger. Around 562,000 IDPs and 74,000 refugees have returned to their homes since the crisis broke out in 2012, (UNHCR, December 2019).