dignity. At the same time, security in the Sahel region is rapidly deteriorating and there is a possibility that Malian refugees will spontaneously relocate to safer areas.

Refugee acute food insecurity deteriorated significantly between 2018 and 2019 with the percentage of households with inadequate food consumption increasing from 20 percent in 2018 to 38 percent in 2019 (WFP, 2019).

**FACTORS DRIVING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY**

**Conflict/insecurity**

The security situation deteriorated as violence spread from the northern regions to eastern parts. A state of emergency in 14 provinces – declared in December 2018 – was extended until January 2020 (ACAPS, December 2019).

The number of violent incidents in 2019 was almost three times higher than in 2018, while reported civilian deaths in the first half of the year were four times higher than the total for 2018 (ACLED, January 2020). The severity of the conflict contributed to the displacement of 560,000 people as of December 2019, up from 47,000 in January (UNHCR, December 2019). In conflict-affected areas, agricultural activities decreased by 20-70 percent, while land cultivation dropped by 50 percent compared to 2017-2018. Difficulties in accessing fields, the destruction of production infrastructure, and looting and loss of livestock disrupted market functioning and households’ livelihoods (FAO, October 2019).

Consequently, displaced populations faced a major deficit in the quality and quantity of food consumption since they were unable to resort to other coping or adaptation strategies (RPCA, November 2019). Conflict cut off humanitarian access to a number of camp areas and IDP-hosting areas, particularly in the Sahel region, where a large number of IDPs and the majority of Malian refugees were located (UNHCR, May 2019).

**Economic shocks**

Conflict constrained access to markets in the Sahel region and vulnerable households were obliged to rely on host communities and humanitarian assistance (AVI, November 2019). Insecurity disrupted normal livestock market functioning (RPCA, November 2019), particularly in northern regions. However, livestock prices remained stable or declined by 5-10 percent relative to the average (FEWS NET, November 2019). Although weak cereal prices ensured favourable terms of trade for livestock owners as of November 2019, a rapid deterioration was forecast in areas suffering from limited fodder resources due to insecurity (RPCA, November 2019).

Incomes from cash crop production and sales were expected to remain below average because of localized declines in production (FEWS NET, December 2019).