

Beat: News

Burkina Faso experiencing unprecedented food crisis

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More than 3.4 million people are food insecure due to armed conflict and inter-communal violence, leading to the desertion of arable land and the decline in cereal production.

Burkina Faso: Hunger Crisis - Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) DREF Operation no. MDRBF017
Format Situation Report

Situation Analysis

Description of the Disaster

The Sahel region is experiencing a growing crisis for several years now, combining climatic effects, displacement crises, insecurity and other factors that are making humanitarian conditions and food insecurity in the Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali more complex and deteriorating daily. In the case of Burkina Faso, the Cadre Harmonisé and the January 2022 findings of the IPC placed it among the countries with the largest number of severely food-insecure population and provinces at risk of famine by July 2022.

Further highlighting the humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso, FEWSNET published on 12 May 2022 analyses of the deteriorating food security situation and the risk of famine on the projections for June to September 2022. Burkina Faso currently has more than 3.4 million food insecure people due to a multi-faceted crisis characterised by armed conflict and inter-communal violence, leading to the desertion of arable land and a large flow of people who in turn, put pressure on the production and consumption structure of the host communities, thus creating a snowball effect of the food crisis from the northern part of the country to other localities further south. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, at least 412,000 hectares of land have been abandoned or not cultivated for the month of December 2021 alone, contributing to the decline in cereal production, which is already under pressure. The humanitarian situation remains dominated by the increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), which totalled more than 1,814,283 in February 2022 and is on the rise because it is directly linked to the increasingly recurrent attacks in the Northern, Sahel and Eastern provinces.

In addition to the above, the climatic and natural factors with significant periods of drought and the progression of desertification in the northern zone, the country is currently experiencing an unprecedented crisis affecting the food capacity of thousands of households already living in precarious economic conditions. The 2021/2022 agro-pastoral season has been negatively impacted by pockets of drought, particularly in the North, Centre-North, Boucle du Mouhoun and Sahel regions, flooding (mainly in the Boucle du Mouhoun and East regions) and attacks by granivorous birds in the Sahel region. At least 19 provinces have been declared deficient according to the CSPA for this year.

These localised deficits in cereal production coupled with inflation resulting from the reduction in cross-border trade and certain supply routes into Europe of inputs and commodities (due to the war in Ukraine) as well as the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; have also largely contributed to the growing food deficit.

The vulnerable population in need of immediate assistance would be 16% of the total population. These people are concentrated in the Sahel (20%), Centre-North (17%), East (17%) and North (16%)¹ regions. In the past decade, far from abating, food crises have been increasing across the West African region, including Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mali and Nigeria. Between 2015 and 2022, the number of people in need of emergency food assistance almost quadrupled from 7 to 27 million. The Burkinabe Red Cross, whose 2021-2030 strategic plan is aligned with the IFRC's pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative, aims to provide emergency food assistance to vulnerable people.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com