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FOOD INSECURITY IN AFRICA: DRIVERS AND SOLUTIONS

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SUMMARY

● This paper explores how climate change, violent conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis combine to drive rapidly increasing levels of food insecurity. These drivers play out differently across and within regions and countries, and this paper focuses on how a combination of the drivers plays out on the African continent. It looks at four subregions—North Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and Central and Southern Africa—and several countries within these regions.

Africa is the continent with the highest proportion of people—just over 20 per cent—facing hunger. Africa also carries the heaviest burden from the impact of climate change. In 2021 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa experienced armed conflicts. The economic fallout of climate change, conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic has widened inequality and sharpened societal divisions.

Addressing the impacts of these compounding crises and breaking the vicious cycle of climate change, food insecurity and conflict requires a concerted effort by local, national, regional and global humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, governments, and donors. To this end, the paper concludes with nine recommendations on the way forward.

I. Introduction

Global food insecurity is rapidly increasing. In 2021 an estimated 29.3 per cent of the global population (2.3 billion people) was moderately or severely food insecure while 828 million people in the world (10.5 per cent of the world population) faced hunger.[1] There are significant regional disparities and Africa bears the heaviest burden. In 2021, a total of 20.2 per cent of the African population was facing hunger, compared to 9.1 per cent in Asia, 8.6 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 5.8 per cent in Oceania and less than 2.5 per cent in North America and Europe.[2] Current projections indicate that the situation will worsen in the coming years. The key drivers of the increasing levels of food insecurity are violent conflict, climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

This paper provides an overview of the impact of these four drivers on food security in Africa. Africa is host to a large proportion of the world's armed conflicts and exceptionally exposed to climate change compared to other regions. Since 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed around 40 million African people into extreme poverty.[3] The pandemic, coupled with the food and commodity price inflation triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, has generated the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation, hitting people living in or near poverty the hardest. This multidimensional crisis poses significant challenges to governments and other actors responding to the crisis. Considerable disparities exist across the continent and the paper maps how these drivers play out across four African subregions. Nine key recommendations are made on action to build resilience and contribute to the prospects for peace, which is an essential precondition for reducing hunger.

II. Linkages: Food security, conflict, climate change, Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis

Food security exists when an entire population at all times has 'physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets [its]

[1] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) et al., *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022: Repurposing Food and Agricultural Policies to Make Healthy Diets More Affordable* (FAO: Rome, 2022).
[2] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. (note 1).
[3] World Bank, 'Covid-19 (Coronavirus) response in Africa', [n.d.].

dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.[4] There are four main dimensions to this definition: the physical availability of food, economic and physical access to food, food utilization, which determines people's nutritional status, and the stability of the other three dimensions over time.[5] Each of these dimensions can be undermined by a range of factors, which are consequently drivers of food insecurity: climate change, violent conflict, Covid-19 and the rising cost of living. A combination of these four mutually reinforcing drivers has created a perfect storm, eroding the ability of governments, regional and subregional organizations, provinces, municipalities, communities and families to react.

Africa carries a heavy burden from the impact of climate change. In 2017 the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) identified Africa as the region most vulnerable to climate change.[6] Experience in 2022 has shown that many other regions are also being hard hit, with devastating droughts in China and Europe, and floods inundating one-third of Pakistan.[7] However, vulnerability is not only the result of the severe weather events resulting from global warming and climate change. It is also determined by the adaptive capacity of countries and communities, and by patterns of wealth distribution, degrees of inequality and levels of effective governance.[8] Where these are deficient, vulnerability is high.

Food insecurity and violent conflict are intrinsically linked.[9] Conflict has a detrimental effect on food production, as farmland and surrounding rural areas often become conflict epicentres.[10] Armed groups frequently attack and destroy the means of production, confiscate land and displace, injure or kill farmworkers and other food industry labourers.[11] As a result, government spending and private sector investment are frequently reduced or diverted, which has lasting effects on food security.[12] Violent conflict also

[4] World Food Summit, Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action, Rome, 13–17 Nov. 1996.

[5] European Commission and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 'An introduction to the basic concepts of food security', EC-FAO Food Security Programme, 2008.

[6] United Nations Environment Programme, 'Responding to climate change', [n.d.].

[7] Williams, A. and Bernard, S., 'Climate graphic of the week: One-third of Pakistan submerged by flooding, satellite data shows', *Financial Times*, 5 Sep. 2022; and UNICEF, 'Devastating floods in Pakistan', [n.d.].

[8] See the definition by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its *Sixth Assessment Report,* Working Group II, *Climate Change 2022 Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: Summary for Policymakers* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2022), p. 5.

[9] Delgado, C., Murugani, V. and Tschunkert, K., *Food Systems in Conflict and Peacebuilding Settings: Pathways and Interconnections* (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2021).

[10] Vos, R. et al., 'Refugees and conflict-affected people: Integrating displaced communities into food systems', *Global Food Policy Report* (International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC, 2020).

[11] Olaniyan, A. O. and Okeke-Uzodike, U., 'When two elephants fight: Insurgency, counter-insurgency and environmental suffering in northeastern Nigeria', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3 (2021); Action Against Hunger et al., 'Conflict and hunger: How the UN and member states can help to break the cycle', Briefing, 25 Sep. 2018; Koren, O. and Bagozzi, B. E., 'Living off the land: The connection between cropland, food security, and violence against civilians', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 54, no. 3 (2017); and Eklund, L. et al., 'How conflict affects land use: Agricultural activity in areas seized by the Islamic State', *Environmental Research Letters*, vol. 12, no. 5 (2017).

[12] International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Economic Outlook: Recovery Amid Elevated Uncertainty* (IMF: Washington, DC, 2019); and Bora, S. et al., 'Food security and conflict', World Development Report 2011 Background Paper, World Bank, Washington, DC, 22 Oct. 2010.

hampers the distribution and marketing of food. Elevated transport risks and related distribution delays reduce or interrupt supply.[13] Violent conflict can have lasting negative effects on food systems, not least because most countries emerging from conflict need decades to recover.

Food insecurity can also contribute to violent conflict. Research has traced the pathways by which this happens, often starting from shortages that result from the effects of climate change and other environmental stresses; when the impact of the shortages cannot be alleviated, for example by government action, grievances, disputes and conflict often ensue.[14] Research has also shown that rising food prices, specifically of basic staples such as wheat, and food price volatility are strongly associated with social unrest.[15] While food price rises can be a trigger of conflict, this is dependent on context and conditional on other, context-specific drivers. The most commonly referenced compounding factors are state capacity and response, and power dynamics in markets.[16]

Today, there is an additional factor. Many governments and central banks are being pressed to raise interest rates to curb inflation, which is accelerating in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. However, this will increase the cost of borrowing and of servicing debt, which is particularly burdensome for low-income countries with fiscal reserves that have already been depleted by the pandemic. In addition, food and energy imports will become even more expensive, causing distress for tens of millions of households, many of which will be forced to respond by eating less, selling off any productive assets or migrating.[17] As coping mechanisms, these actions tend to further exacerbate vulnerability to food insecurity, violent conflict and climate change while at the same time increasing protection needs that national governments and sub-national authorities struggle to meet. The inability of the authorities to meet citizens' needs heightens the risk of social unrest and political instability, while also providing armed groups with a recruitment opportunity.

In the face of these multiple and intersecting challenges, global leaders must not treat food security as a humanitarian matter alone. Too often, responses to food insecurity are mainly led by humanitarian agencies. Noble as the humanitarian impulse is, the result is inadequate investment in building resilient food systems. Food insecurity and its consequences are felt most prominently in conflict- and disaster-affected countries. This makes

[13] Quak, E.-J., 'Food systems in protracted crises: Strengthening resilience against shocks and conflicts', Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Helpdesk report, 25 Sep. 2018.

[14] Mobjörk, M., Krampe, F. and Tarif, K., 'Pathways of climate insecurity: Guidance for policymakers', SIPRI Policy Brief, Nov. 2020; Byg, A. and Herslund, L., 'Socio-economic changes, social capital and implications for climate change in a changing rural Nepal', *GeoJournal*, vol. 81, no. 2 (2016); Niles, M. T. et al., 'Household and community social capital links to smallholder food security', *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 5 (2021); Helland, J. and Sørbø, G. M., 'Food securities and social conflict', Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) Report R2014:01, 2014; and Hendrix, C. and Brinkman, H.-J., 'Food insecurity and conflict dynamics: Causal linkages and complex feedbacks', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2013).

[15] Hendrix and Brinkman (note 14); and Martin-Shields, C. P. and Stojetz, W., 'Food security and conflict: Empirical challenges and future opportunities for research and policy making on food security and conflict', *World Development*, vol. 119 (2019), pp. 150–64.

[16] Delgado, Murugani and Tschunkert (note 9).

[17] Estevão, M., 'For poor countries already facing debt distress, a food crisis looms', World Bank Blogs, Washington, DC, 18 July 2022.

food security a critical peace and security issue. The food crisis in Africa requires a response that is at the same time humanitarian, pro-development and peace-oriented.

This urgent need to steer the response towards building resilient and sustainable food systems corresponds with calls made in the African Common Position on Food Security prepared for the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and the vision in the African Union Agenda 2063 to build a prosperous, peaceful and secure Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.[18] Furthermore, in the 2014 Malabo Declaration, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union made a number of commitments to end hunger in Africa by 2025, focused on inclusive agricultural growth and transformation, and expressed grave concern about vulnerabilities to external factors such as climate change and global economic and political shocks.[19]

III. Overview of the linkages in Africa

The ten worst food security crises in 2021 occurred in countries affected by violent conflict.[20] These crises were disproportionately but not exclusively in Africa (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (see figure 1) and accounted for about three-quarters of all conflict-related deaths globally in the preceding decade.[21] These countries are also among the most vulnerable to climate change, which is itself a major risk to peace and stability, especially in contexts that are already prone to social tensions and conflicts.[22]

This dual vulnerability to violent conflict and climate change epitomises the intertwined nature of the challenges Africa faces—not a single problem or even two together, but the interaction of several at once. The economic hardships caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and violent conflict have widened inequalities and exposed the structural vulnerabilities of local and global food systems, hitting fragile contexts and vulnerable groups particularly hard. This economic fallout increases the risk of conflict and destabilization; around 80 per cent of protection clusters in global humanitarian response efforts report escalating conflict or political instability since the onset of the pandemic.[23]

[18] African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union Commission: Addis Ababa, 2015); and African Union and African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA-NEPAD), *Africa Common Position on Food Systems: Regional Submission to the UN Food Systems Summit* (AUDA: Johannesburg, 2021).

[19] African Union Commission (AUC) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods (AUC and NEPAD: Randjespark Midrand, 2016).

[20] Global Network Against Food Crises, *2022 Global Report on Food Crisis: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions*, 2022.

[21] Calculations by the authors based on data from the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, <https://ucdp.uu.se/>.

[22] University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), 'Country rankings', Data for 2020; and Krampe, F., 'Climate change, peacebuilding and sustaining peace', SIPRI Policy Brief, June 2019.

[23] World Food Programme (WFP), *WFP Global Response to Covid-19: September 2020* (WFP: Rome, 2020).

In 2021 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa experienced armed conflicts.[24] In 12 of these states there were more than 1000 battle-related deaths in the course of the year.[25] Climate change risks exacerbating these conflicts, in part due to growing competition for natural resources. Africa is exceptionally vulnerable to climate variability and change compared to many other regions. Almost half the population in sub-Saharan Africa lives below the poverty line. Livelihoods are based on rain-fed agriculture, herding or fishing, and therefore dependent on the climate.[26] A well-researched example of such challenges is the way that drought and erratic rainfall lead pastoralists to change their mobility patterns, taking their herds outside of traditional boundaries in search of water and pasture. This is a coping strategy for the pastoralists but can lead to inter-communal conflict over resources between them and farmers.[27] As the changing climate affects the availability of key natural resources, food and income in rural areas, disputes and grievances can emerge as conflicts over access to land; conflicts that are resolved by force.[28]

Climate change also increases the likelihood of locust plagues, which pose a serious risk to food security and livelihoods. The 2019–20 desert locust plague in East Africa, the worst of its kind in more than 70 years, was probably exacerbated by shifts in rainfall patterns and rainfall intensity, as well as heavy cyclone activity in late 2019.[29]

Violent conflict and climate change cross borders and have knock-on and indirect effects in totally different areas to where their direct impact is experienced. The war in Ukraine and the sanctions imposed on Russia by many countries have dramatically increased energy and food prices in a short period. This is particularly worrying for the 25 African economies that import at least one-third of their wheat from Ukraine and Russia, 15 of which import more than half their wheat from these two countries.[30] The impact on food prices caused by disruptions to exports from these two major food-producing countries has been exacerbated by disruption to food production elsewhere caused by climate change-related weather extremes. Furthermore, the price spikes come on top of already rocketing food prices

[24] Davis, I. and Pfeifer Cruz, C., 'Global developments in armed conflicts, peace processes and peace operations', *SIPRI Yearbook 2022: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2022).

[25] These were Nigeria, Ethiopia, the DRC, Somalia, Burkina Faso, South Sudan, Mali, Sudan, CAR, Niger, Cameroon and Mozambique. Davis and Pfeifer Cruz (note 24).

[26] World Meteorological Organization (WMO), *State of the Climate in Africa 2020*, WMO no. 1275 (WMO: Geneva, 2021).

[27] Zingg, S., 'Exploring the climate change–conflict–mobility nexus', Migration Research Series, no. 70 (International Organization for Migration: Geneva, 2021); Hegazi, F. et al., *The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace in Ethiopia* (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2022); and Abshir, S., *Climate Change and Security in the Horn of Africa: Can Europe Help to Reduce the Risk?* (Adelphi Research: Berlin, 2020).

[28] Kurtzer, J., Absullah, H. F. and Ballard, S., *Concurrent Crises in the Horn of Africa* (Centre for Strategic International Studies: Washington, DC, 2022); and Krampe, F. et al., *Water Security and Governance in the Horn of Africa*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 54 (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2020).

[29] McCabe, B. et al., Technical Paper *Desert Locust and Climate: A Weather and Bio-climatic Case Study of Desert Locust Conditions in Northern Kenya* (International Centre for Humanitarian Affairs: Nairobi, 2021); and Salih, A. A. M. et al., 'Climate change and locust outbreak in East Africa', *Nature Climate Change*, vol. 10 (2020), pp. 584–85.

[30] Estevão, M., 'For poor countries already facing debt distress, a food crisis looms', Voices, World Bank, Washington, DC, 18 July 2022.

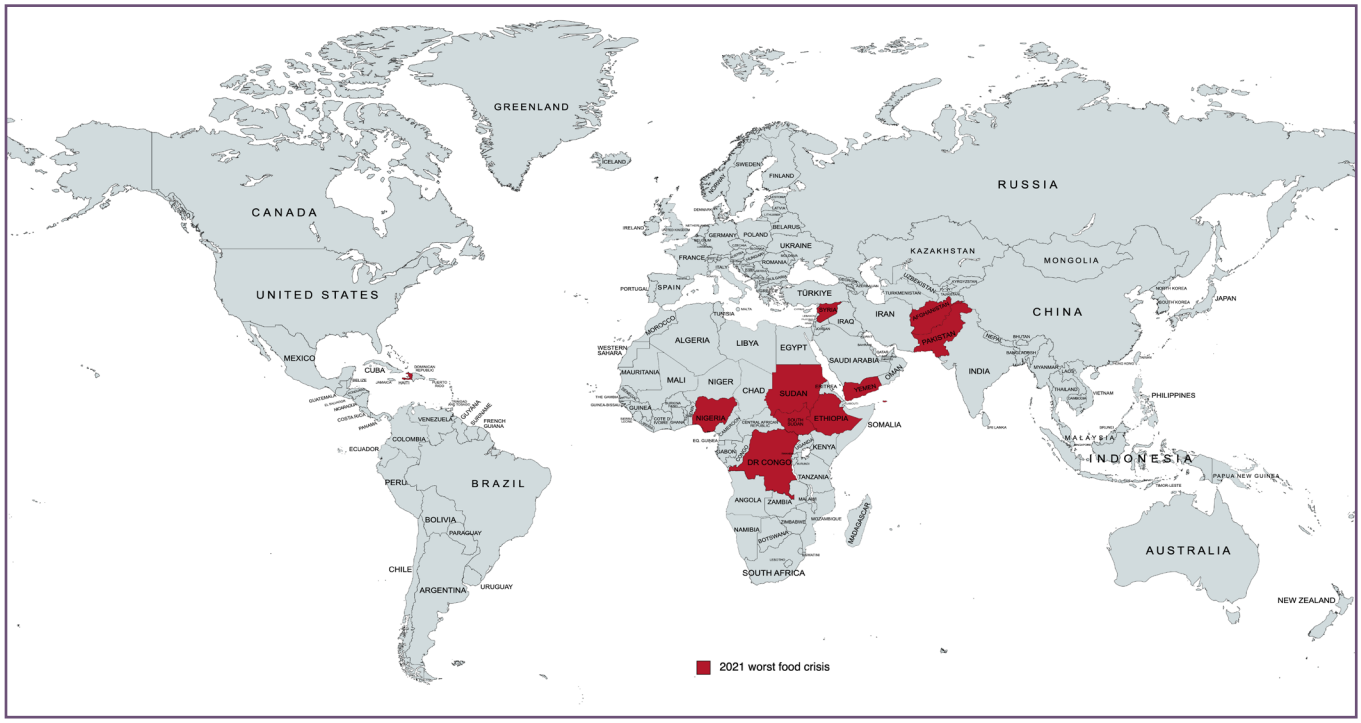

Figure 1. Map of worst food crises, 2021

due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused unprecedented chokepoints and delays in global supply chains.

Food insecurity, violent conflict and climate change have generated a steady increase in forced migration since 2011. In 2021 more than 32 million Africans were internally displaced, refugees or asylum seekers.[31] An estimated 95 per cent of those displaced remain in Africa.[32] Migration often increases pressure on resources in host areas, which can produce intergroup tensions and conflict, particularly in areas with a history of violence and pre-existing competition over resources.[33]

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, fuelling conflict that in itself worsens food insecurity. As containment measures disrupted economic and livelihood activities, gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa fell in real terms, that is, after adjusting for inflation, by 2.1 per cent in 2020.[34] Furthermore, the pandemic sharpened societal divisions, which endanger social cohesion. This has led to increased xenophobia, hate speech, scapegoating and targeting of marginalized groups.[35] In some cases, armed

[31] Africa Center for Strategic Studies, '32 Million Africans forcibly displaced by violent conflict and repression', 17 June 2021.

[32] Williams, W., 'Shifting borders: Africa's displacement crisis and its security implications', *Africa Center Research Paper* no. 8 (Africa Center for Strategic Studies: Washington, DC, 2019).

[33] Krampe, F. et al., *Water Security and Governance in the Horn of Africa*, SIPRI Policy Paper no. 54 (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2020); World Food Programme, CGIAR and Focus Climate Security, 'Assessing the relationship between climate, food security and conflict in Ethiopia and in the Central American Dry Corridor (CADC): Quantitative analysis on the impact of climate variability on conflict in Ethiopia and in the CADC countries', Final Report, 31 Oct. 2021; and De Coning, C. H. et al., 'Climate, Peace and Security: Fact Sheet Ethiopia', NUPI, Oslo and SIPRI, Stockholm, June 2022.

[34] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN Economic Commission for Africa and AU Commission, *Africa: Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition, 2021, Statistics and Trends* (FAO: Accra, 2021).

[35] Human Rights Watch, 'Covid-19 fueling anti-Asian racism and xenophobia worldwide: National action plans needed to counter intolerance', 12 May 2020; Finn, B. M. and Kobayashi, L. C.,

groups have incorporated Covid-19 into their propaganda by, for example, portraying the virus as punishment for working with Western non-believers or using it in recruitment slogans.[36] In other circumstances, there have been increased levels of repression and authoritarian backsliding from which new conflicts could emerge.[37] At the same time, the pandemic has curtailed the activities of actors and institutions that might have been able to deal with societal conflicts peacefully or at least reduce their violent impacts.[38] The increasing conflict pressures and related erosion of social cohesion linked to the pandemic have, like so much armed conflict, further compounded the challenges of food insecurity and rising hunger in Africa.

Addressing the impacts of these compounding crises and breaking the vicious circle of climate change, food insecurity and conflict require a concerted effort by local, national, regional and global humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors, governments and donors. The starting point for a joint effort must be donor governments doing better to honour their commitments. Less than half of the amount requested to fund country-specific humanitarian response plans and appeals was provided in 2022, jeopardizing the success of short-term lifesaving interventions that are the foundations on which necessary longer-term transformations are built.[39]

IV. Subregional and country-specific evidence and promising initiatives

The linkages between food security, climate change, violent conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis play out differently in different contexts, so there are significant variations in the levels of hunger and hunger trends throughout Africa. This section takes a regional and country perspective.

North Africa

Like much of the world, North Africa is grappling with a severe cost-of-living crisis that has grown out of disruptions to the global food system linked to the Covid-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the impact on food and energy prices

'Structural inequality in the time of Covid-19: Urbanization, segregation, and pandemic control in sub-Saharan Africa', *Dialogues in Human Geography*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2020), pp. 217–20; Department of Global Communications, 'Covid-19: UN counters pandemic-related hate and xenophobia', United Nations, Covid-19 response, 11 May 2020; York, G., 'Coronavirus triggers xenophobia in some African countries', *Globe and Mail*, Johannesburg, 19 Mar. 2020; and Solomon, S., 'Coronavirus brings "Sinophobia" to Africa', VOA News, 4 Mar. 2020.

[36] Columbo, E., 'Extremist groups stepping up operations during the Covid-19 outbreak in sub-Saharan Africa', Commentary, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 1 May 2020; and Chiwetalu Ossai, E., 'Crises, conflict and cooperation: The two-sided impact of Covid-19 on peace in Nigeria', *African Security*, vol. 14, no. 4 (2021), pp. 410–38.

[37] Repucci, S. and Slipowitz, A., *Democracy Under Lockdown: The Impact of Covid-19 on the Global Struggle for Freedom*, Special Report 2020 (Freedom House: Washington, DC, 2020); and International IDEA, *The State of Democracy in Africa and the Middle East: Resilient Democratic Aspirations and Opportunities for Consolidation* (International IDEA: Stockholm, 2021).

[38] De Coning, C., 'Covid-19 and the resilience of Africa's Peace and Security networks', *African Security*, vol. 14, no 4 (2021), pp. 341–69; Chergui, S., 'Peace and security in Africa amidst Covid-19', *Conflict & Resilience Monitor*, Accord, Mount Edgecombe, 27 May 2020; and Herrmann, C., 'How Covid-19 threatens peace in Africa', Deutsche Welle, 5 July 2020.

[39] Financial Tracking Service, 'Appeals and response plans 2022', as of 19 Dec. 2022.

of the war in Ukraine and related sanctions.[40] North Africa is experiencing food price inflation not seen since the Arab Spring, and countries are again vulnerable to fast escalating food costs that threaten both food security and national stability.

At the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, countries introduced restrictions in an attempt to curtail the spread of the virus. These resulted in decreased mobility and a decline in and sometimes loss of income-generating opportunities. A concomitant drop in remittances and tourism hit the economies in the region hard, particularly in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. People experienced rising levels of unemployment and income loss.[41] As the world slowly came out of Covid-19 lockdowns, demand for food and other commodities recovered faster than supply, resulting in surging prices. Global food prices in May 2021 were almost 40 per cent higher than in May 2020 and at their highest in real terms since September 2011.[42] The continuing rise in food prices has been further exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. Prices per tonne of wheat rose from US$ 271 in September 2021 to US$ 389 in March 2022.[43]

Countries in North Africa are particularly susceptible to global food price increases and fluctuations due to their dependence on food imports, particularly wheat from Russia and Ukraine. Egypt obtains nearly 85 per cent of its wheat from Ukraine or Russia, Libya 75 per cent and Tunisia 80 per cent. Algeria and Morocco are much less dependent on wheat from that region (3 per cent and 20–30 per cent respectively).[44] Nonetheless, the rise in international prices has put pressure on these countries' foreign reserves and as a result on their exchange rates. The Egyptian pound lost 17 per cent of its value against the US dollar in April 2022, the Moroccan dirham 4.5 per cent and the Tunisian dinar 3 per cent, adding to inflationary pressure on food and other commodities and services while reducing buyers' purchasing power.[45] These additional pressures are faced by governments with limited budgetary flexibility. Their efforts to buffer the impact of increased food prices during the Covid-19 pandemic imposed a heavy burden on national budgets. These governments had already been grappling with budget intensive measures, such as reducing import tariffs on food, increased subsidies and public sector salaries, and targeted cash transfers, deployed in response to the 2011 Arab Uprisings in an attempt to appease populations by increasing living standards.[46]

[40] The North Africa region comprises Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

[41] International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Food Programme (WFP), *Populations at Risk: Implications of Covid-19 for Hunger, Migration and Displacement, An Analysis of Food Security Trends in Major Migration Hotspots* (IOM and WFP: Geneva and Rome, 2020); and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), *2022 Global Food Policy Report: Climate Change and Food Systems* (IFPRI: Washington, DC, 2022).

[42] Gustafson, S., 'FAO Food Price Index continues to surge', Blog Post, Food Security Portal, International Food Policy Research Institute, 7 June 2021.

[43] Tanchum, M., 'The Russia-Ukraine war has turned Egypt's food crisis into an existential threat to the economy', MEI Policy Center, Mar. 2022.

[44] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), MENA Regional Delegation, 'The impact of the conflict in Ukraine as a crisis multiplier in the Middle East and North Africa', IFRC Rapid Assessment, 8 June 2022.

[45] Ben Hassen, T. and El Bilali, H., 'Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War on global food security: Towards more sustainable and resilient food systems?', *Foods*, vol. 11, no. 15 (2022), pp. 2301–18.

[46] Breisinger, C. et al., *Building Resilience to Conflict through Food-security Policies and Programs: Evidence from Four Case Studies* (International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI): Washington, DC, 2014); IFPRI (note 41); Ben Hassen and El Bilali (note 45); and Harrigan, J., *The*

There are similarities between today's situation and the build-up to the 2011 uprisings in the region when socio-economic frustrations and lack of political reform led to widespread unrest.[47] At the time, a global food crisis linked to sharp price increases sparked rioting in 48 countries. Net food importing countries where the majority of the population are net consumers of food are particularly susceptible to global food price spikes and fluctuations, such as those seen in 2007–2008. An increase in the price of a staple commodity tends to reduce the welfare of households that are net buyers, particularly of low-income households which tend to spend a larger proportion of their income on food. There are numerous instances throughout history of social unrest associated with rising food prices.[48] At the time, a sharp rise in food prices contributed to macroeconomic problems such as rising inflation, widening trade deficits and fiscal strain as governments tried to cushion the effects of higher commodity prices. The failure to prevent the transmission of increased global prices to increased domestic prices meant that populations suffered increases in living costs which contributed to poverty, undernutrition and other negative social welfare effects.[49] Protesters in North Africa took to the streets with slogans that demanded bread, dignity and social justice.[50]

Since 2011, only Libya and Egypt have experienced large-scale violent conflict in North Africa, while other states have faced instability or open conflict at lower levels of violence.[51] Libya has been experiencing extreme conditions of protracted armed conflict, large-scale internal displacement, political and economic crisis and water scarcity, as well as high levels of food insecurity.[52] The three-year rolling average number of food insecure people in Libya increased from 2.5 million in 2018–20 to 2.7 million in 2019–21. The lack of affordable food is a major problem in Libya due to decreased purchasing power, reduced availability of food and the abolition of subsidies, resulting in many people having to resort to negative coping mechanisms.[53] In Egypt, violence increased significantly in 2013 and 2014, and remained high until mid-2019.[54] However, the number of food insecure people in Egypt remained stable at 27.9 million in both three-year periods 2014–16 and 2018–20.[55]

By contrast, the context in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia is relatively stable but susceptible to escalation. Crisis factors include drought, political and economic turmoil and the vulnerability of migrants and refugees. The food security situation is seen as chronic.[56] Key issues today are soaring food

Political Economy of Food Security in North Africa, Economic Brief (African Development Bank: Côte d'Ivoire, 2012).

[47] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (note 44).

[48] Bellemare, M. F., 'Rising food prices, food price volatility, and social unrest', *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, vol. 97, no. 1 (2014), pp. 1–21.

[49] Harrigan (note 46).

[50] Breisinger (note 46); and Habib, A. and Bush, R., *Food Insecurity and Revolution in the Middle East and North Africa Agrarian Questions in Egypt and Tunisia* (Anthem Press: London, 2019).

[51] International Organization for Migration and World Food Programme (note 41); and International Food Policy Research Institute (note 41).

[52] International Crisis Group, 'The impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in the Middle East and North Africa', Commentary, Brussels, 14 Apr. 2022.

[53] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (note 44).

[54] Uppsala Conflict Database Program, 'Egypt', [n.d.].

[55] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FAOSTAT, Egypt, [n.d.]; and FAOSTAT, Tunisia, [n.d.].

[56] International Crisis Group (note 52).

Box 1. Explanation of IPC Acute Food Insecurity Classification

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a common global scale for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Phase 1 None/Minimal: Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income.

Phase 2 Stressed: Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies.

Phase 3 Crisis: Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition; or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.

Phase 4 Emergency: Households either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality; or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.

Phase 5 Catastrophe/Famine: Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evident.

Source: IPC Global Partners, *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Manual Version 3.1.: Evidence and Standards for Better Food Security and Nutrition Decisions* (IPC: Rome, 2021).

prices linked to the disruption to Ukrainian wheat production and export, as well as the severe impacts of sanctions imposed on Russian exports. These countries are susceptible to both drought and water scarcity, which threaten to destabilize domestic agricultural production. It is projected that agricultural yields will decline. Coupled with price fluctuations and soaring prices due to imminent crises and climate change-related shortages globally, there is an elevated risk of water shortages, hunger and malnutrition in the countries of North Africa.[57]

Promising initiatives. In response to the global food crisis in 2007–2008, Algeria, Egypt and Morocco launched initiatives that emphasized development of the agricultural sector as a key pathway to achieving food security. Egypt adopted a 'Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Development to 2030', which aims to achieve food security by modernizing Egyptian agriculture and improving rural livelihoods.[58] Morocco launched its 'Green Morocco Plan' in 2008 to promote socio-economic development by boosting production of high-value agricultural exports. It focuses on modernizing production methods and introducing climate-tolerant wheat varieties. By 2021 these efforts were paying off and Morocco was producing three times more wheat than in the drought-stricken year of 2020, and obtaining 58 per cent higher yields than the 2016–20 average.[59] While it should be noted that 2021 was an exceptional year and harvests were down again by 65 per cent in 2022, these initiatives could still be a promising route to long-term, sustainable food security. Renewed rapid global food price inflation however poses a threat to their success because both states are dependent on food imports, especially of wheat. In the short term, social protection systems will be important to cushion the effects of rising food prices on the most vulnerable households. Despite some shortcomings, Egypt, for instance, has reformed and expanded

[57] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (note 44); and International Food Policy Research Institute (note 41).

[58] Muhanzu, N. and Castel, V., *Resilient Growth and Integration, 2013* (African Development Bank Group: Tunis-Belvedere, Tunisia, 2012).

[59] Tanchum (note 43).

its social protection system since the 2011 Arab Spring, benefiting around 5.5 million citizens. Similarly, 87 per cent of the population is included in the social protection system in Libya.[60]

The Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa constitutes one of the world's most acute food insecurity emergencies in 2022.[61] Over 37 million people are estimated to be in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above (see box 1).[62] Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of food insecurity are widespread across the region. At least 213 000 people in southern and central Somalia are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 5), where households have an extreme lack of food having already fully exhausted their coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and critically acute malnutrition levels are evident in this phase.[63] Over 17 million people in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia alone need humanitarian food assistance to prevent high levels of acute food insecurity.[64]

The Horn of Africa is among the most conflict-affected regions of the world. Violent conflict and insecurity were the principal drivers of food insecurity in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan.[65] Most countries in the Horn have experienced some measure of violent conflict for decades.[66] Protracted conflict undermines development gains and restricts access to lifesaving humanitarian relief. Conflict and violence compound the effects of climatic shocks, for example, by creating additional needs.

Although current and expected climate change effects differ from one country and locality to another, the region as a whole is highly susceptible to climate-related risks of severe drought, record rises in temperature, erratic rainfall and rising sea levels.[67] The region is facing one of the worst droughts in four decades, which is having a devastating impact on agriculture. Agricultural activity, including farming and pastoralism, is the backbone of the region's economy and more than 80 per cent of the population is employed in the sector.[68] As farmers and pastoralists depend on rainfall to grow crops, and to feed and water their livestock, the region's driest areas have seen a tremendous loss of livelihoods due to crop failure and livestock deaths.[69]

[60] Barsoum, G. and Kassem, N., *Social Protection in Conflict and Conflict-affected Arab Countries: Key Challenges and Policy Recommendations* (UNESCO: Paris, 2019).

[61] The Horn of Africa region comprises Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

[62] World Health Organization (WHO), *Regional Emergency Response Appeal for the Greater Horn of Africa: July–December 2022* (WHO: Rome, 2022).

[63] Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'Unprecedented drought brings threat of starvation to millions in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia', 9 June 2022.

[64] Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'Horn of Africa', [n.d.]; FEWS NET (note 63); and Kurtzer, Absullah and Ballard (note 28).

[65] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20); Kurtzer, Absullah and Ballard (note 28).

[66] Kurtzer, Absullah and Ballard (note 28).

[67] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, *Climate Change Profile: Greater Horn of Africa* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands: The Hague, 2019).

[68] Abshir, S., *Climate Change and Security in the Horn of Africa: Can Europe Help to Reduce the Risks?* (Adelphi Research: Berlin, 2020).

[69] Breisinger (note 46); Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20); and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (note 63).

All this presents a threat not just to food security but also to local, national and regional security. Drought and erratic rainfall drive conflict between and within communities throughout the region. For instance, pastoralists are forced to change their mobility patterns, which has led to conflict over resources among pastoralists and between pastoralists and farmers.[70] At the same time, drought and other impacts of climate change are compounded by years of conflict and instability, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and rising food prices due, in part, to the war in Ukraine.[71] As of June 2022 almost 13 million people had been internally displaced within the region, fleeing the impact of climate change, conflict and insecurity.[72]

Ethiopia

People in northern, eastern and southern areas of Ethiopia are faced with high levels of food insecurity driven primarily by conflict and insecurity but also by climate change. A prolonged drought is affecting around 8 million people in the south and south-east.[73] In the conflict-affected north, 83 per cent of the population is food insecure.[74] This is exacerbated by poor macroeconomic conditions and the war in Ukraine, which led to a record annual inflation rate of over 37 per cent in May 2022.[75]

Drought and temperature extremes reduce crop and livestock productivity, and hence reduce agricultural employment. As a consequence, food insecurity, poverty and inequality have increased. Research has found that these factors correlate with a higher likelihood and intensity of conflict.[76]

One way in which pastoralists in the Ethiopian Somali region cope with drought is by changing their mobility patterns. Unfortunately, this is part of the pathway by which climate change impacts on insecurity. Drought forces pastoralists to move their herds longer distances in search of resources, which creates inter-communal conflict over competition for resources.[77] The resulting conflict, in turn, further exacerbates food insecurity, feeding into the vicious circle of climate change, conflict and food insecurity. Projected rainfall patterns for the Somali region indicate that average annual rainfall will increase by 2039. However, the location of the rainfall is projected to move in a northwesterly direction, away from Ethiopia's pastoral and agropastoral regions, leading to continued food insecurity and loss of livelihood.[78]

[70] Zingg (note 27); Hegazi et al. (note 27); and Abshir (note 68).

[71] World Health Organization, 'Drought and food insecurity in the greater Horn of Africa: Overview', 2022.

[72] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region: Internally Displaced Persons, Regional Overview, January–June 2022* (UNHCR: Geneva, 2022).

[73] Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) (note 63); FEWS NET, 'Ethiopia', [n.d.]; World Health Organization (WHO), *Greater Horn of Africa: Food Insecurity and Drought* (WHO: Geneva, 2022); and World Food Programme (WFP), 'Conflict, climate and soaring food prices push Ethiopia further into hunger while WFP funding runs out', News release, 23 June 2022.

[74] World Health Organization (note 73).

[75] World Food Programme (WFP) Ethiopia Country Office, 'Monthly market watch: Ethiopia', June 2022; and WFP (note 72).

[76] Hegazi et al. (note 27).

[77] Hegazi et al. (note 27); and Ali, A., Funnemark, A. and Rosvold, E., 'Violent conflict exacerbates Ethiopia's vulnerability to climate change', Accord, *Conflict & Resilience Monitor*, 28 July 2022; and De Coning et al. (note 33).

[78] Hegazi et al. (note 27).

Promising initiatives. There are positive initiatives that could be leveraged and built on in order to soften the impact of climate change and reduce the interplay with conflict. For example, short-term insurance payouts by the World Food Programme (WFP) support pastoralists and agro-pastoralists by protecting their assets during a drought. This allows them to maintain their herds without having to alter mobility patterns in ways that can contribute to inter-communal conflict.[79] Regular cash transfers can have a similar effect. This means that Ethiopia's extensive and long-running Productive Safety Net Programme could have a positive impact on both food security and conflict reduction if it can be extended further to reach the dispersed populations of the pastoralist lowlands.[80]

South Sudan

Food insecurity in South Sudan has reached its most extreme levels since independence in 2011. Of a population of 12.1 million, 8.3 million people are in IPC Phase 3 or above, facing crisis, emergency or famine.[81] Pockets of famine across the country have been reported.[82]

Like Ethiopia, South Sudan is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which pose critical challenges to the estimated 95 per cent of the population dependent on climate-sensitive livelihoods.[83] However, while Ethiopia is suffering severe drought, South Sudan is experiencing its worst flooding in over 60 years.[84] This has led to large-scale displacement, the destruction of livelihoods, farmland and crops, livestock deaths and contamination of water sources.[85] As a result, the few available functioning markets have much smaller food stocks, and these are not being replenished. This has forced food prices up while increases in global fuel prices and the depreciation of the South Sudanese Pound have led to further price hikes. By the end of July 2022 the prices of staple cereals such as sorghum and maize were between 35 per cent and over 200 per cent higher than in the previous year.[86]

Even in good harvest years, however, 7 million people—60 per cent of the population—suffer from food insecurity, mainly because of the continuing conflict.[87] Through intricate webs that connect the local to the national, violence is deliberately targeted at civilians and their livelihoods. Moreover, decades of civil war and protracted food insecurity have made food a

[79] Hegazi et al. (note 27).

[80] Calderone, M., Headey, D. D. and Maystadt, J.-F., 'Resilience to climate-induced conflict in the Horn of Africa', eds. S. Fan, R. Pandya-Lorch and S. Yosef, *Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security* (International Food Policy Research Institute: Washington, DC, 2014), pp. 65–74; Maxwell, D. et al. *Early Warning and Early Action for Increased Resilience of Livelihoods in the IGAD Region, Report 2. Description of Regional and National EW-EA Systems,* Feinstein International Center Working Paper, 2021; and USAID, 'Climate risks in food for peace geographies: Ethiopia', Climate Risk Profile (USAID: Washington, DC, 2020).

[81] World Food Programme, South Sudan Emergency, 2022.

[82] World Food Programme South Sudan, 'Situation update', Situation Report no. 303, 31 July 2022.

[83] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and Norwegian Institute of Public Affairs (NUPI), Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheet: South Sudan, Mar. 2021.

[84] Davies, R., 'South Sudan: Over 800,000 affected by worst flooding in 60 years', Floodlist, 15 Dec, 2021.

[85] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[86] Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'South Sudan', [n.d.].

[87] SIPRI and NUPI (note 83).

resource for exercising power and control.[88] The UN Human Rights Council's Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan has condemned various warring parties for wilfully withholding humanitarian food aid and using starvation as a weapon of war.[89]

Promising initiatives. In the light of the increasing scale, scope and complexity of civilian need, including protection needs, the Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF) offers an innovative, holistic and coherent approach to addressing many of the above challenges. The RSRTF supports several projects that together lessen the destructive drivers of conflict and create more stable conditions for achieving development and resilience objectives.[90]

Examples include community violence reduction in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, where a project seeks to enable affected communities to exercise power in non-violent ways through collaborative, consensus-building processes that lead to material improvements for communities.[91] The project is in its initial stages but has already achieved tangible results. It has, for instance, created community assets such as dykes and roads in flood-affected and isolated areas, which has ensured continued access for communities to services and markets. This is critical because floods have destroyed most of the food produced in the area. Maintaining access also allows the delivery of humanitarian food assistance, which combined with skills development opportunities and livelihood support helps people to cope without resorting to negative coping strategies in times of food shortage.

The Sahel[92]

Up to 18 million people in the Sahel region face severe food insecurity.[93] Among the countries most affected are Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, where nearly 12.7 million people are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 or above.[94] The war in Ukraine is expected to further exacerbate the situation by increasing global food prices, thereby driving an additional 7 to 10 million people into food insecurity.[95]

The Sahelian states are particularly vulnerable to climate change due to their higher dependence on natural resources, as up to 90 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture. Their weaker socio-economic indi-

[88] WFP South Sudan, 'Contributions to peace (C2P) strategy: Strategic framework, 2020–2030', unpublished.

[89] United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, A/HRC/43/56, 31 Jan 2020.

[90] United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund, 'RSRTF Jonglei and GPAA area-based programme', Annual Report, Jan to Dec. 2021.

[91] United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund (note 90).

[92] The Sahel region is defined in accordance with the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) as comprising the states of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

[93] UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), '18 million people in the Sahel face severe hunger over the next three months', Press release, New York/Geneva, 20 May 2022.

[94] World Food Programme, 'Sahel emergency', [n.d.].

[95] World Bank, 'Responding to the food crisis in the Sahel by addressing the food emergencies and structural challenges of the West African food system', Results brief, Washington, DC, 10 May 2022.

cators and higher levels of political instability than many other African countries also makes them vulnerable to climate change.[96] Temperatures in the region are rising 1.5 times faster than the global average. Rainfall is erratic and wet seasons are shrinking, yet flooding is frequent.[97] While sea-level rise threatens coastal areas in the south, millions of hectares of farmland have turned into deserts in the north.[98] Livelihoods are disappearing as harvest yields shrink and pastureland is lost.

Research suggests that there is a strong link between recent climate trends and violent conflicts in the Sahel.[99] As drought and poor water management dry up springs and streams, herders are pushed into areas where farming is prevalent, generating or exacerbating herder–farmer conflicts.[100] Livelihood loss also generates significant population displacement. Many displaced people are hosted by communities that are often themselves deprived and extremely vulnerable, as nearly 50 per cent of the population of the Sahel region lives in extreme poverty.[101] The added strain on scarce resources has in some circumstances exacerbated instability and unrest.[102] Furthermore, these kinds of inter-community conflicts have become intertwined with larger intrastate conflicts, including jihadist violence, which transcend national borders. Violence in the region has been increasing since 2010, triggering further displacement.[103]

Mali

Mali is facing its worst food and nutrition crisis in a decade. Over 1.3 million people were in ICP Phase 3 or above at the end of 2021.[104] This number was projected to rise to 1.8 million by June 2022.[105] Among the drivers of this rapid increase are erratic rainfall in 2021, violence that prevents pastoralists and herders from accessing critical grazing and cultivation areas, and exceptional price rises of staple products coupled with reduced market supply of foodstuffs.[106]

Most of the regions with high levels of food insecurity are also affected by armed conflict and the impact of climate change.[107] Satellite analyses for 2019, 2020 and 2021 show a correlation between reduced cultivable area

[96] Mbaye, A. A. and Signé, L., *Climate Change, Development, and Conflict-fragility Nexus in the Sahel*, Brookings Global Working Paper no. 169 (Brookings Institution: Washington, DC, March 2022); and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (note 93).

[97] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Human Rights, Climate Change and Migration in the Sahel* (UN OHCHR: Geneva, 2021).

[98] UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (note 97).

[99] Mbaye and Signé (note 96).

[100] Abroulaye, S. et al., 'Climate change: A driver of crop farmers–agro pastoralists conflicts in Burkina Faso', *International Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, vol. 5, no. 3 (June 2015), pp. 92–104; Cabot, C., 'Climate change and farmer–harmer conflicts in West Africa', *Climate Change, Security Risks and Conflict Reduction in Africa* (Springer: Berlin, Heidelberg, 2017), pp. 11–44.

[101] World Food Programme (note 94),'Sahel emergency'; and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Climate risk profile: Sahel', [n.d.].

[102] Mbaye and Signé (note 96).

[103] Mbaye and Signé (note 96).

[104] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[105] Action Contre la Faim et al., 'Breaking the spiral of the food and nutrition crisis in Mali', Press release, 6 Apr. 2022.

[106] Action Contre la Faim et al. (note 105); and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'Mali', [n.d.].

[107] Goldwyn, R. et al., *The World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace in Mali*, Working Paper (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2019).

compared to 2016–17 and the spread of insecurity. Mopti is one of the worst affected regions, where almost a quarter of localities experienced a reduction in cultivated agricultural land in 2021.[108] Intercommunal violence between Fulani pastoralist and Dogon farmers has resulted in Dogon community members being unable to access fields near Fulani villages.[109] At the same time, armed groups with links to the conflicts in northern Mali exploit issues related to land rights and the marginalization of Fulani herders to draw local support and recruit Fulani youth.[110]

Promising initiatives. Efforts focused on building capacities for peace and safeguarding food security at the local level have had promising results, despite the complexity of the crisis. One example is the project 'Peers for peace: Building social cohesion in the Mopti and Segou Regions', which was implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WFP and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2017–19. The intervention strengthened community-based conflict mediation mechanisms while enhancing livelihoods and community infrastructure. The severity and extent of inter-communal violence declined in some locations, such as Diankabou in Koro Cercle.[111] The project also enhanced economic interdependence between villages, as Fulani allowed Dogon to bring their animals to their village to drink from the pastoral well built through the project. Similarly, the Dogon sell vegetables to the Fulani that were grown in the market gardens supported by the project. In addition, village credit and savings groups empowered participants by providing access to small-scale credit while allowing members to build chains of solidarity and dialogue. There has also been an increase in the movement of people between villages. In this way, the project contributed to restoring the social fabric and increasing social cohesion, helping communities to become more resilient to violent conflict related to natural resource management.

Nigeria

Close to 13 million people in Nigeria were in ICP Phase 3 or above at the end of 2021.[112] Of these, 4.1 million live in the conflict-affected north-eastern states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe (the BAY states).[113] In Borno state, it is projected that around 13 500 people would face starvation or death if humanitarian and livelihood interventions were not sustained.[114]

Violence displaced approximately 7.6 million people between 2008 and 2021, of whom 4.4 million were internally displaced and 3.2 million became refugees.[115] Most displaced people in north-east Nigeria remain in the BAY states, settling in communities already facing severe vulnerabilities and need, such as widespread food insecurity, lack of basic services and limited

[108] Food Security Cluster, 'An unprecedented food crisis in Mali', 4 Feb. 2022.
[109] Goldwyn et al. (note 107).
[110] Tarif, K. and Grand, A. O., 'Climate change and violent conflict in Mali', *Conflict & Resilience Monitor*, Accord, 10 June 2021.
[111] Goldwyn et al. (note 107).
[112] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).
[113] WFP South Sudan (note 88); and World Food Programme Nigeria, Situation Report no. 72, July 2022.
[114] World Food Programme, 'Hunger Hotspots: 4 countries face famine, UN report warns', 28 Jan. 2022.
[115] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Nigeria: Overview, 2021', Updated 18 May 2022.

livelihood opportunities.[116] These conditions can foment resentment among host populations and cause tensions within communities, particularly if displacement becomes protracted.[117] In addition, restrictions on movement and public gatherings, and pandemic-related closures of businesses and markets have provided obstacles to local communities accessing basic services, livelihoods and land for farming and grazing.[118]

Against these livelihood constraints and faced with acute and rising multidimensional poverty, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities resort to coping strategies and practices that directly expose them to violence or the threat of violence.[119] These strategies and risky practices include venturing into highly insecure areas to gather food and firewood, begging, child labour and prostitution. These coping strategies are not just dangerous for individuals; they also risk undermining community relations by fomenting perceptions that IDPs cause instability. Research shows that some host community members associate increasing food prices with the influx of IDPs. Of more critical concern, in a context where people are desperately trying to survive, is that armed groups can actually impose a degree of stability. People are seeking out such groups, believing to a certain extent that they and their families will be ensured a better life and be protected. Armed groups thus take advantage of the government's inability to provide a better life or economic opportunities to gain influence and recruit members.

Promising initiatives. In the face of these challenges, humanitarian organizations are implementing small-scale interventions to enhance resilience by enabling households to cultivate food crops in the defensive trenches surrounding garrison towns in north-east Nigeria. Although most households still depend on food aid, this helps them meet their immediate needs and prevents the loss of skills from one generation to the next. It also maintains employment and contributes to a sense of community engagement. There is evidence that generating hope for better livelihoods in the area has helped to prevent recruitment by armed groups.[120]

Central and Southern Africa

Nearly 46 million people in 12 countries in Central and Southern Africa were in IPC Phase 3 or above in 2021, an increase of more than 5 million from the year before.[121] The worst affected countries are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and the Central African Republic (CAR).[122] While the situation in most countries has deteriorated in the past year, Zimbabwe is one of a few countries to have experienced an improvement since 2020, as favourable weather conditions resulted

[116] United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), *Humanitarian Response Strategy January 2019 to December 2021: Nigeria* (OCHA Nigeria, 2018).
[117] Haider, H., *Refugee, IDP and Host Community Radicalisation*, GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report no. 1162 (GSDRC: University of Birmingham, 2014).
[118] Delgado, C., *Improving the Prospects for Peace in Nigeria: Spotlight on Stabilization* (SIPRI: Stockholm, 2022).
[119] Delgado (note 118).
[120] Delgado (note 118).
[121] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).
[122] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

in increased agricultural output.[123] While better harvests in the first half of 2022 improved food security in the region, improvements are likely to be marginal and short-lived due to expected droughts and cyclones.[124] Moreover, worsening macro-economic conditions across the region will severely limit post-harvest improvements.[125] Although food prices seasonally declined during the harvest season, they remain elevated due to market pressure caused by high global food and fuel prices.[126] In CAR, the DRC and Mozambique, violent conflict was the main driver of acute food insecurity.[127]

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The DRC has the highest number of food insecure people in the world: 27 million people are in ICP Phase 3 or above, of whom 6.7 million are in IPC Phase 4 emergency.[128] Violent conflict and widespread insecurity are the main drivers of food insecurity. Other causes are extreme weather events, disease (Ebola, cholera and measles), crop pests and the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.[129]

Many of these drivers combine in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, which experience the highest levels of armed violence.[130] Violence targeted at civilians displaced 2.7 million people in these provinces in 2021.[131] Armed groups restrict farmers' access to their land and loot crops, while also attacking humanitarian convoys responding to the crisis. In addition, restrictive measures to contain the pandemic meant that land preparation and harvesting were disrupted in 2021, leading to lower than average cereal harvests across the entire eastern area.[132]

The provinces are also under increasing pressure from the impact of climate change and interlinked patterns of land use change, such as deforestation, uncontrolled mining and settlements.[133] Temperatures and precipitation are projected to increase, which will dramatically affect the livelihoods of local populations.[134] Further pressure comes from migration, especially from the Lake Chad region. The increasing intensity and unpredictability of climate change is generating new migration patterns, which have become associated with conflicts over land and water in the three provinces.[135]

[123] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[124] Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 'Southern Africa food security outlook', June 2022 to January 2023.

[125] Food and Nutrition Security Bulletin, Southern Africa, Monthly Bulletin, June 2022.

[126] Food and Nutrition Security Bulletin (note 125)

[127] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[128] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[129] Radio Okapi, 'RDC: 27 millions de personnes en insécurité alimentaire aiguë (ONU)' [DRC: 27 million people in acute food insecurity (UN)], 11 Nov. 2021; World Food Programme (WFP), 'PAM R. D. Congo Fiche pays' [WFP DRC country fact sheet], Jan. 2021; and Global Hunger Index, 'Democratic Republic of Congo: A closer look at hunger and undernutrition', Oct. 2020.

[130] Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, 'DR Congo', [n.d.].

[131] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Congo, Democratic Republic of: Overview, 2021', Updated 18 May 2022. In addition to North and South Kivu and Ituri, the figure also includes the province of Kasai.

[132] Global Network Against Food Crises (note 20).

[133] Tshimanga, R. M. et al. 'An integrated information system of climate-water-migrations-conflicts nexus in the Congo Basin', *Sustainability*, vol. 13, no. 16 (2021).

[134] UN Environment Programme and CMS Secretariat, 'The Congo Basin and climate change', Fact sheet, Bonn, Germany, 2020.

[135] Tshimanga (note 133).

Conflict, climate change and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic are eroding resilience, and risk increasing local communities' vulnerability to further shocks and exacerbating violence. Research on the link between resilience and the propensity for violence in North Kivu suggests that reported experience of drought is associated with support for political violence among the least resilient individuals. Conversely, more resilient households are less likely to support political violence or participate in it.[136]

As in all of the countries discussed in this paper, women are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, as they have limited access and rights to resources such as land and credit.[137] They are also exposed to higher degrees of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). While violent conflict exacerbates SGBV, its roots lie in engrained gender inequalities linked to traditional Congolese masculine identity based on norms of leadership, strength, courage and the ability to protect one's family and assets.[138] There is evidence that a higher tolerance of SGBV increases the risk of a household being food insecure, whereas households in which women participate in decision making are less likely to be food insecure.[139]

Promising initiatives. Addressing the complex hunger crisis in the DRC will require a multipronged approach involving a range of actors. There is a need for provincial-scale assessments, local market monitoring and flexibility, which is needed to respond to changes in circumstances such as influxes of refugees from neighbouring countries, sporadic conflict and subsequent internal displacements, seasonally poor roads and insufficient mobile communications networks.[140] To this end, WFP and FAO, together with the government and local partners, have launched programmes to boost the resilience of host communities and IDPs, and to strengthen agricultural value chains. For example, the project 'Strengthening value chains for smallholder farmers in the DRC', implemented in 2016–21, reached nearly 90 000 people with combined technical, economic and social interventions to revitalize local economies and livelihoods. The project helped to ease tensions between communities and strengthen social cohesion.[141] Tangible results included the capacity building of farmer organizations, the creation of Early Warning Committees and Peace Committees, and the creation of Village and Saving Loans Associations. Sixty per cent of smallholder farmers adopted at least one good practice to protect the environment and all of them adopted improved post-harvest management techniques. Ninety per cent of

[136] Uexkull, N. V., d'Errico, M. and Jackson, J., 'Drought, resilience, and support for violence: Household survey evidence from DR Congo', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 64, no. 10 (2020), pp.1994–2021.

[137] Oluwasanya, G., Nzuzi, M. and Mihaha, E.-T., *Gender Analysis of the Climate–Water–Migration–Conflict Interactions in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) Policy Brief no. 8 (UNU-INWEH: Hamilton, 2022).

[138] Bapolisi, W. A. et al., 'Gendered determinants of food insecurity in ongoing regional conflicts, North and South Kivu, the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Agriculture & Food Security* 10 (2021).

[139] Bapolisi et al. (note 138).

[140] Brown, D., 'Review of food for peace market-based emergency food assistance programs: Democratic Republic of Congo Case Study Report', Report by Tango International, Jan. 2018.

[141] World Food Programme et al., 'Building resilient livelihoods in Tanganyika, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)', May 2021.

women in the project area said that their standing in the community had improved and that they had better access to social assets.

V. Conclusions and the way forward

This paper, like the literature it has drawn on, illustrates the multidimensional crisis that is afflicting Africa, constituted by the challenges of food insecurity inextricably interlinked with climate change, violent conflict, the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. The key pressures behind growing hunger since 2015 have been violent conflict and climate change, to which the effects of pandemic recovery bottlenecks can be added since 2021, all exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and sanctions since February 2022.

Most of these pressures did not arise from within Africa but are experienced most severely there. Some of these pressures are cyclical and can be expected to ease in the coming years, but the pressure of climate change will only build for decades ahead; action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions may be urgent but will not reduce the impact of climate change for a long time to come.

African governments can and must join cooperative efforts to address the geopolitical tensions that lead to global crises; and they can and must join in with cooperative efforts to address the causes of climate change. They have played no part in causing these problems but have an enormous stake in resolving them. In addition, African governments, along with the private sector and civil society, should look to their own region and countries. Africans need their countries and communities to be more resilient—less vulnerable to globally driven pressures in order to be able to cope better with local ones. They also need the pressures of violent conflict to be eased. Peace is an essential precondition for advances on every other front.

In taking action, African governments and communities need and deserve international support from bilateral donors, international financial institutions (IFIs) and UN and other agencies to finance the activities required to build resilience, support conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and work in partnership to make the transition from humanitarian assistance to sustained and sustainable development.

To this end, it would be advisable for African governments, the private sector, civil society and their international partners in governments, IFIs and UN and other agencies to do the following:

- Review national and regional policies that address some of the drivers discussed in this paper to ensure that the policies address the linkages between the problems so that the solutions are as interconnected as the challenges.
- Move on from a review to develop coordinated, coherent and decisive action throughout the region so that improving food security, enhancing resilience to the effects of climate change and building peace are combined.
- Continue to guarantee the humanitarian operational space and focus policy on moving from emergency relief to sustained

development and peacebuilding, combining short-term results with laying the foundations for long-term progress.

- Scale-up the resources available to support food security and coherent inter-sectoral action.
- Focus on programmes that offer a multiple bottom-line product—improved food systems, enhanced prospects for peace and greater resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Base all humanitarian, peace and development activities, including those that address climate change impacts, on a thorough assessment of the local context—listening carefully to what local voices have to say about problems and possibilities on the ground.
- Ensure that all activities are properly monitored not only to ensure accountability and appropriate use of funding but also to permit flexibility, and make the necessary adjustments as problems arise or circumstances change (including the global geopolitical and economic situation).
- Act firmly against any actor that uses starvation as a weapon of war or conflict.
- Use every opportunity, including at UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conferences of the Parties, to reinforce the commitment to achieving Zero Hunger by investing in nutrition and resilience in countries affected by conflict and climate change.

Abbreviations

BAY states	States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe in Nigeria
CAR	Central African Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFI	International financial institution
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
RSRTF	Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

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