



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OCHA

Regional Office for West Africa

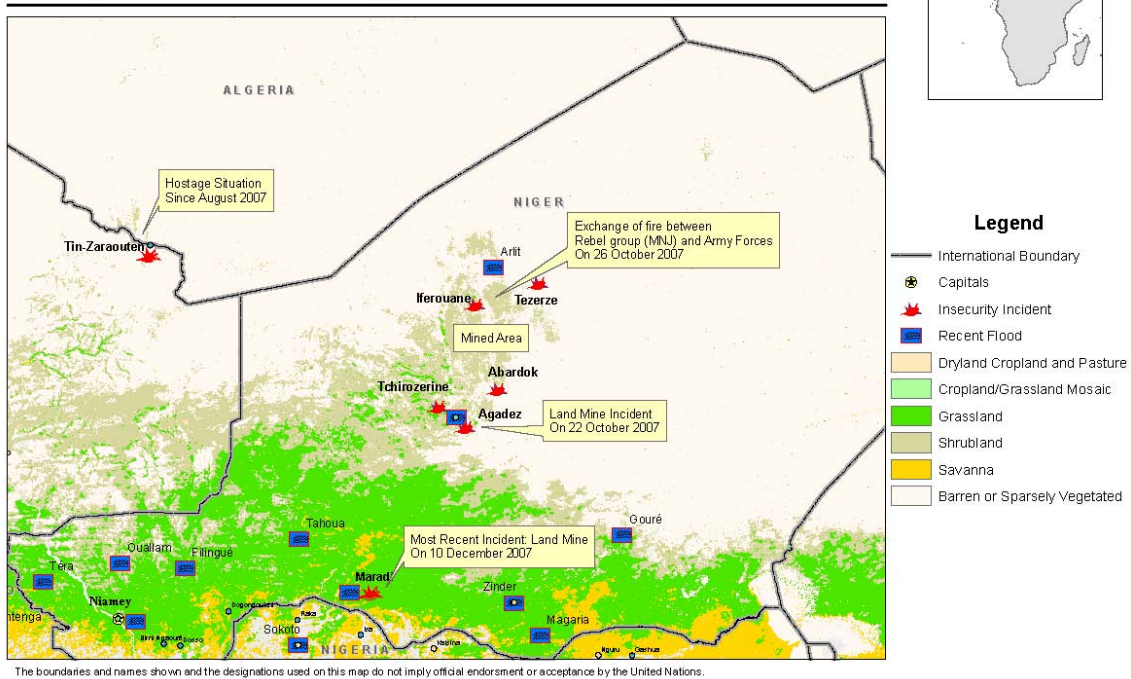
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Niger Floods and Insecurity Incidents since September 2007

As of 13 December 2007



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SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS

- Four French tourists killed in Mauritania
- An anti-tank mine exploded in southern Niger
- The Niger government warns against sabotage acts
- Hostages detained by rebels are to be released on 28 December
- Mali and Guinea make efforts to bring durable solutions to border conflict
- Agricultural production decrease in Cape Verde, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal
- Disarmament launched in Côte d'Ivoire
- Avian flu detected in Benin
- Future opening of an OHCHR office in West Africa
- Dear cost of living cause violent protests in Senegal
- Nigerian Senate threatens to overturn the Bakassi accord
- Ghana Flash Appeal to assist flood affected people is funded at 51%, while Burkina Faso's appeal is only at 3.1%
- 2008 west Africa CAP is launched on 18 December 2007

1- SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION

Insecurity in Mauritania: four French Tourists killed in Aleg

Four French tourists were killed and another one seriously injured on 24 December near Aleg, 250 km east of Mauritania's capital Nouakchott. The killing was reportedly committed by three people (including two Salafists reportedly linked to Al Qaeda) who were said to have been last seen near the Mauritania-Senegal border. Two among the runaways were previously arrested in 2006 for their belonging to the Algerian Salafist group for the predication and the combat (GSPC), which has been ever since re-baptized the Al Qaeda branch in the Islamic Maghreb (BAQMI).

Five people have also been arrested in Mauritania since the attack, including Mohamed Elmoustapha Ould Abdel Kader, known as "Abou Elghassem", who had also been arrested in 2006 for his belonging to a terrorist group. He reportedly hosted the assailants and provided them with the vehicle that was used to undertake the attack. Mauritanian, Senegalese and Malian authorities have deployed maximum means to find the runaways. But according to Malian authorities, the search will not be easy as Mali shares a 2000 km-long border with Mauritania, going from Kayes to the boundaries of the Sahara Desert.

According to the media, four Mauritanian military were killed on 27 December and their vehicle kidnapped by an unidentified armed group near El-Ghallawiya, some 700 kilometres north of Nouakchott. The assailants who targeted the vehicle of the military garrison of El-Ghallawiya also took away the weapon mounted on the vehicle. The media say assailants could be members of GSPC who led an armed attack against a military base in north-eastern Mauritania in 2005, killing 15 soldiers and injuring 17 others.

Insecurity in Niger: an anti-tank mine causes death in Maradi

An anti-tank mine exploded on 10 December near l'Université Libre of Maradi in southern Niger, killing one person and injuring two others. The mine exploded not far from the centre of Maradi when a small truck transporting food items and passengers ran over it. The truck was wrecked by the explosion. According to the Governor of the region who confirmed the accident to UN System (UNICEF, WFP and OCHA) the injured were immediately taken to the regional hospital of Maradi. A psychosis prevails among the populations. Since the day the accident occurred, patrols were planned by security and defence forces. The police regional direction addressed a request of CFA 2,629,000 to the UN system for organising the patrols.

On 1 December, Niger authorities warned populations in northern Niger against sabotage and terrorism acts planned by Tuareg rebels. According to the Niger minister of Interior and Security, the "Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice" (MNJ), a rebel group very active in the north since February planned to infiltrate urban centres in order to undertake sabotage acts. The climate is very tense in the north, and peaceful demonstrations were held in some towns in the region to protest against mine usage and rebel-related insecurity, according to public radio and television. A 10 kg anti-tank was reportedly defused by chance on 22 November in an important fuel depot in Dosso, 140 km south of Niamey. The government asked the army to better secure strategic sites and reinforce checks on the road. In addition, security at the capital's airport was reinforced, according to the media.

End of November, President Mamadou Tanja prolonged for another three months the "state of warning" that reinforces the powers of the army in the conflict zone. According to a press release published by the Niger ministry of defence, seven civilians would have been killed on 11 December by Nigerien soldiers in an military blunder, after clashes between rebels and an army unit near Tiguidit, 80 km south east of Agadez.

A group of hostages expected to be released in Mali

A group of hostages detained since late August in northern Mali by an armed group said to be under the rule of the Tuareg rebel chief Ibrahim Ag Bahanga will be freed on Friday 28 December following an agreement obtained on Wednesday. In a communiqué published on 26 December, the Presidency of

the Republic stated that such a happy outcome is the fruit of efforts made by the Malian Government, assisted by friend and brother countries.

The hostages will be handed over by an Algerian delegation in an official ceremony due to be held in Tinzaouatène, in north-eastern area of Kidal. Another group of hostages is also expected to be handed over by Libya in the coming days or months. The hostages that are to be released on Friday are part of some 50 people kidnapped end of August in the area of Tinzaouatène. Algeria that is assisting in the mediation first secured a peace agreement signed between ex-Tuareg rebels and Malian authorities in July 2006 in Algiers.

Mali and Guinea joint efforts to solve border conflict

Following the incidents that opposed on 6 November people from the border village of Siradiouba (Mali) and those of Dalakan in Mandiana (Guinea) and that made five deaths including a gendarme and 13 injured, Malian and Guinean experts from the joint technical commission for the materialisation of the border met in the Malian capital Bamako to exchange on means and ways to determine the border. At present, it is only marked off by a watercourse. Similarly, The Guinean minister of Interior and Security visited Bamako on 23 and 24 November to hold a meeting with officials in the ministries in charge of border issues in the two countries. At the meeting they recommended the justice system in both countries to pursue people who committed crimes at the border and their accomplices. They also demanded that security forces be given adequate communication means. The Malian and Guinean Primes ministers saluted the efforts made by ministers in charge of border issues for a durable solution of the conflict.

The Nigerian Senate threatens to overturn the Bakassi agreement

The Nigerian senate called for a review of the 2006 agreement in which Nigeria agreed to transfer ownership of the disputed Bakassi peninsula to Cameroon. The resolution issued by the senate on 22 November questioned the validity of the agreement saying that the former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, failed to bring the treaty before the national assembly for ratification. Since independence, the two nations have contested the 2,300-kilometre border from Lake Chad to the Bakassi Peninsula. Both countries have also claimed the rights to the oil-rich maritime area near the peninsula until the ruling in 2003 by the International Court of Justice decided that it too belonged to Cameroon. The two countries signed a final agreement on the hand-over in May 2007, and Nigeria is set to give the remaining 18 percent of Bakassi it controls to Cameroon by August 2008. On 21 November, 21 Cameroonian military were killed by unknown assailants.

High cost of living triggers violent protests in Senegal.

On 21 November, young street vendors poured into the streets of Senegal's capital Dakar, protesting a move by Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade to force them off Dakar's streets in an effort to improve traffic flow. Demonstrators set fire to cars and shattered windshields, destroyed traffic lights, and pillaged public buildings. Police responded with tear gas and arrested around 200 people. The same day, members of Senegal's 18 unions took to the streets in a previously planned and authorised march protesting the high cost of living. Union representatives who demanded a reduction in food and housing prices, an increase in salaries, and support for struggling businesses saw their march banned at the last minute by local authorities, which led to clashes with the police. Senegal has not seen such violent protests since President Wade came on power in 2000.

2 HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

2.1 Food security and nutrition

Food items price rise mitigates good crop production

Relatively good crops are expected in the Sahel, in spite of this year's erratic rains but food security is mitigated by price rise on the international market. These are the preliminary findings of joint CILSS/FewsNet crop assessment missions that have recently been completed in the nine Sahelian countries (Burkina-Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and

Senegal), and to three coastal countries (Benin, Ghana and Nigeria). The findings were presented by FAO (who participated in some of the missions), at the Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group meeting held on 30 November in Senegal's capital Dakar.

Cereal production is forecast to be above the average of the previous five years in all Sahel countries, except in Cape Verde and Senegal, where output is expected to decline by 46 percent and 11 percent respectively. Crop prospects are less favourable in the countries along the Gulf of Guinea, notably in northern Nigeria due to late and poorly distributed rains, and in Ghana severely affected by long dry spells and floods. A large cereal deficit in Nigeria will have a significant impact on regional cereal markets because of the high level of market integration in West Africa. Nigeria is the largest producer in West Africa and its agricultural sector strongly affects the food supply position of the whole subregion, notably in some poor and vulnerable neighbouring Sahel nations. In addition, exports of cereals from Sahelian countries to Nigeria are feared, which may trigger food insecurity in those countries.

In Cape Verde, production of maize is estimated to be 46 percent below the average of the previous five years. Until recently, food aid played a major role, accounting for over 50 percent of total cereal consumption in some years. However, the amount of food aid received has declined sharply in recent years due to various factors, including the upgrading of Cape Verde to medium-developed country status from least-developed country, and the shift of several donors' aid policy to direct budget support. As of late September the country had received only 3500 tonnes of food aid in 2007 compared to 22000 tonnes by the same period last year. In Mali, cereal production fell by 5% compared to last year but is still 10% higher than the average of the last five years. The decrease forecast in rice production is also important, about 9%.

In Senegal, cereal production is estimated to have declined by 11 percent compared to the average of the previous five years, for the second year running. Large segments of the rural population, already suffering from the effects of last year's low production, have yet again had poor harvests because of adverse weather. Their food security status will remain precarious and may even deteriorate further in commercial year 2007-2008 due to high and rising international food prices. Senegal is a food-deficit country whose domestic production covers only about half of the country's cereal utilization requirements. Every year, the country imports 900 000 tonnes of rice and wheat from the international market.

Mauritania is also likely to be seriously affected by increased international prices due to its high food import dependence and low per capita income levels. Mauritania cereal production only covers 30% of its food needs, and it relies on the international market to fill up the remaining 70%. In Guinea Bissau, the FAO/CILSS mission held between 15 and 19 October revealed a deficit of 9% compared to the commercial year 2006-2007, and a deficit of 18% compared to the average of the last five years. The populations could have relied upon imports of rice, but considering price rise on the international market, rice retailing sales have shot up by 35% across the country.*

In Niger, households still suffer consequences of the 2005 food crisis. This year, food production is 2% lower. Despite better agro-pastoral production in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the situation is still precarious. Thus, the results of the Early warning System annual meeting held in March 2007, some 1.1 million people are said vulnerable to food insecurity. And despite relatively good food production forecast, risks of food insecurity still prevail in Guinea. This is due to floods following heavy rains in July and August destroyed crops in Mamou, Dinguiraye, Dabola, Mandiana and Koubia.

2.2 Protection and movement of populations

Signature of supplementary agreements to re-launch disarmament in Côte d'Ivoire

Supplementary accords to re-launch the process of disarmament of ex-combatants in Côte d'Ivoire were signed on 29 November in Korogho, in the north of the country. Signed by the Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo and his Prime Minister and chief of the ex-rebellion Guillaume Soro, the agreements

prepare to relaunch the disarmament process on 22 December. The signature completes the peace agreement signed in March 2007 in Ouagadougou, aiming at unifying Côte d'Ivoire. While considering that many efforts are yet to be done, the UN force in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) hailed the agreements it qualified a great step forward marking the willingness of parties to consolidate the peace process. On 22 December, the Ivorian President and Prime Minister and the UN representative in Côte d'Ivoire attended the ceremony of the re-launch in Tiébissou where Ivorian military should retreat from an ex-frontline.

The OHCHR opens a regional office in West Africa

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) signed an agreement with the Senegalese government on 3 December to set up a regional office in the capital, Dakar. The office that is expected to open in early 2008, is meant to support the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) in its challenge for enforcing human rights. West Africa has experienced recent conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire which caused serious violations of human rights. Other countries like The Gambia and Guinea are regularly denounced for human rights abuse by human rights activists.

Military patrols to secure the border between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea

Military chiefs from Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone agreed on 4 December to strengthen security measures along their common borders; the objective is to maintain peace in the sub region. The discussions held under UN supervision led to the commitment of countries to make efforts and hold joint border patrols. Liberia and Sierra Leone that have just come from civil wars and Guinea where social instability prevails already launched joint patrols in September, after a meeting on regional security. The one held on 4 December was coordinated by the Military Commander of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

Repatriate some refugees and integrate the rest in Guineas

The challenge to take up in Guinea is to repatriate between 1000 and 3000 Liberian refugees that reportedly chose to go back home, while continuing the local integration programme in favour of the remaining refugees. The decision was made after the monthly coordination meeting held on 15 November by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners. They reviewed the integration of some 8000 Liberians, which is slightly delayed, while information campaigns about integration of Liberian and Sierra-Leonean refugees in Forest Guinea continue, notably in the prefectures of Lola, Macenta, Nzerekore, Yomou and Kissidougou. However, socio-political unrest in Guinea in January and February somewhat affected the implementation of the integration of Liberian refugees.

2.3 Health

IFRC Prepares for possible meningitis epidemics

About US\$867, 000 will be invested the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the four-month plan meant to fight possible major epidemics in Africa. As a reaction to the warning given by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 9 October, the plan will be launched in 14 countries in Africa to get ready for what could be one of the worst epidemics in a decade. It includes training approximately 25,000 volunteers involved in community-based first aid and organizing education and awareness campaigns among communities. According to the IFRC, the first indications of an epidemic could appear as early as February-March 2008.

The 14 countries involved in the project are located along what is commonly called the "African meningitis belt": Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Burkina-Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as West African countries of Niger, Mali, Chad, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin. Meningitis is difficult to detect because early symptoms like headaches or fever are common in other diseases. So, it is crucial for communities to be aware of the danger.

The H5N1 virus detected in Benin

The H5N1 Avian flu virus was detected on 5 December in Adjarra and Cotonou-Akpakpa, in the south of Benin, after laboratory tests confirmed it during the weekend. According to a press release issued by the Benin ministry of Agriculture, veterinary services secured and disinfected the two places, and they culled and incinerated 242 birds.

Since Avian Influenza appeared in Africa in 2005, no cases have been detected in Benin, a country neighbouring Nigeria where a hotbed of the pandemic was discovered and 1 person lost his life to the disease. Benin set up an emergency response programme in anticipation of the arrival of migratory birds carrying the H5N1 virus. When the virus was detected in Benin, neighbouring Togo forbade transport of live birds and poultry products from Benin. Benin is the eighth country to be affected by the virus in Africa.

Cholera is dwindling in Guinea and Guinea Bissau

Guinea Bissau- In early October, an outbreak of cholera was identified in the southern region of Tombali. Between 12 October and 8 November, 116 cases and 6 deaths were reported. The epidemic has so far been limited to a series of villages along the southern coast of Guinea-Bissau, in part due to a rapid response by local and central government, with the support of the UN system. Intensified efforts at all levels will be required to end the epidemic. Progress has been made on The National Health Sector Development Plan 2008-2012. This document will define how the government and partners will implement strategies and priorities for the health sector outlined in the Poverty Reduction Strategies.

Guinea – Cholera seems to be dwindling in Guinea. A number of 67 new cholera cases and 2 deaths were recorded for the week of 19 to 25 November 2007. The number of people who contracted the disease decreased in all the 11 affected areas, except Dubreka where 41 new cases were reported. The town of Guéckédou that has not recorded any new case for the past seven weeks was certified “non-endemic locality” by the National Disease Control Commission. At the end of November, 8, 289 cholera cases were reported in Guinea and about 294 people died of the disease. With the decrease in the number of cholera cases, the two centers for cholera treatment in the suburb of Conakry have been closed and new cases are now treated at the Donka Hospital.

World Aids Day celebrated in West Africa

World Aids Day was commemorated in most West African countries. Marches, workshops, information campaigns were organized to inform populations about how Aids is transmitted and how to prevent from contracting it. This year’s theme was leadership, because significant advancement has been achieved thanks to a strong and committed leadership. Results of the recent assessments run by the UN joint Programme against HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) are very encouraging as the number of people infected with HIV has reduced. However, Aids is still a major cause of mortality, with 5,700 deaths per day. Identified in 1981, Aids has infected some 60 million people, including 20 million who died of the disease.

Medical outreach in Maryland County

On 15 November 2007, medical personnel from UNMIL, the County Health Team and MERCI, a local NGO conducted a medical outreach in Barrobo District, Maryland County. The team of doctors and nurses screened and treated close to 600 patients from Glofarcken, the main town in the district. The outreach covered patients from more than ten neighbouring towns and communities. Pregnant women were also provided with insecticide treated mosquito nets.

Medical outreaches are often the only medical facility for people in remote parts of the country. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has already warned of the acute shortage of trained doctors and other skilled medical personnel, and the danger this shortage poses for socioeconomic recovery in Liberia. The drugs utilized in the outreach were provided by the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and NGOs.

2.4 Natural disasters/Floods

More than 800 000 people were affected by floods in 14 West African countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, the Gambia, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone, Benin, Guinea and Ghana.

Togo- The assistance to people affected by floods is ongoing. The French Red Cross (CRF) implements an assistance programme targeting 5,000 families in the Savanes Region, in the north of the country. The CRF distributes food items provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), 10,000 mosquito nets provided by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), as well as other basic commodities. In addition, the Togolese Red Cross has initiated capacity building programme in the sector of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to educate the affected people.

Mali- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will charter 2 planes of relief items to assist flood affected people in Mali. In a letter dated on 20 November, the Saudi ambassador informed humanitarian partners that two planes transporting 140 tonnes of relief items including food, tents, mosquito nets, blankets, and generators, will land this week in Malian capital Bamako. In addition, UNICEF held on 20 November the ceremony of delivery of relief items financed by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Most people who receive relief items are from Mopti, Ségou, Kayes and the district of Bamako.

Guinea- The World Food Programme (WFP) has planned to assist people affected by floods that occurred in August and September in the Prefectures of Mamou, Dabola and Dinguiraye. A total of 15,000 people will receive food aid for a period of two months.

Ghana - With 332 000 persons affected, Ghana is one of the countries the most affected by floods this year. However, from 22 November on, the Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT) meeting will be held once every other Thursday, and the frequency of sector coordination meetings held at the regional level, has also been reviewed. The Ghanaian government, UN agencies and partners continue to assist flood affected people, providing them with food items, education campaigns on water, sanitation and hygiene as well as health services.

, the Government has disbursed about US\$6 million to assist flood victims. The United Nations and partners have equally brought assistance to the affected. On 1 December will be launched another emergency operation of five months implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP) in order to assist in food 75,000 people including 10,000 pregnant and nursing women and malnourished children under five years. Non governmental organisations such as Care International, Concern Universal, Pro Net North, and Plan Ghana have brought their support to flood victims in kind as well as in cash.

-In Burkina Faso where some 93,000 people were affected by floods, the United Nations System and its partners have mobilised a total contribution amounting US\$251,969 from Ireland, Norway and Italy that allowed providing affected people with 244 tents, 4000 jerry cans and 5000 mosquito nets. The material that was handed over to the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity on 5 October, was entirely distributed to beneficiaries.

For more information about floods in West Africa, please visit the following:

<http://ochaonline2.un.org/Default.aspx?tabid=10305> et

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc108?OpenForm&emid=FL-2007-000141-NGA&rc=1>

3 RESOURCE MOBILISATION

- *The United Nations seek US\$11 million to assist flood affected people in Ghana and Burkina Faso*

Ghana -The flash appeal launched on 4 October by the United Nations and partners and seeking to raise US\$12 million has been funded up to 51% as of 30 November. Funds have been received from the Central Emergency Response Fund (US\$2,496,956), Canada (2US\$76,000), Germany

(US\$360,230), Australia (US\$400,000), ECHO (US\$504,323), Netherlands (US\$953,540), Sweden (US\$350,000), UNICEF National Committee of France (US\$134,668) and France (US\$709,220)

Other resources outside the flash include donations to CARE amounting to US\$700,000 from DFID for sustainable livelihood and US\$100,000 from CIDA also for sustainable livelihood, while World Vision received US\$128,250 from Germany and World Vision Germany for Non Food Items and Shelter. Care International is actively participating in the HCT activities, thus allowing for coordinated and complementary action.

Burkina Faso - The United Nations and partners are still trying to raise more than US\$5.7 million to assist more than 93,000 people affected by floods in Burkina Faso. An appeal amounting at US\$5.9 million was launched on 26 October but as of 10 December, it has only received US\$188,228, which equals 3.1% of the whole request. The money will be directed to agriculture, health prevention, education, house rehabilitation activities. Governmental institutions, the United Nations, non-governmental organisations and Burkina Faso Red Cross will implement the projects.

Canada has contributed US\$140,000 to fund UNICEF projects: US\$40,000 for immunization of flood affected populations, US\$40,000 for safety water supply, basic sanitation and hygiene, and US\$60,000 for provision of emergency nutrition services for flood victims in 11 of 13 affected regions. UNICEF has also received US\$43,228 from the Principality of Monaco.

West Africa 2008 Cap launched

The United Nations launched on 18 December an appeal requesting over US\$312 million in support of humanitarian activities in West Africa in 2008, in order to ensure humanitarian assistance for some of the poorest countries in the world. This year's appeal includes 83 projects to be implemented by UN agencies and NGO's. Partners have indicated that US\$8 million US dollars have already be made available, which brings the request to US\$305 million.

- *West Africa 2007 CAP funded at 53 %*

The Consolidated Appeal for West Africa was funded up to 53 % as of 10 December 2007.

Table of 2007 CAP funding level per theme (as of 10 December 2007)

Themes	Requests in US \$	Funding in US \$	%	Pledges in US \$
Food security and Nutrition	138,590,435	61,122,762	44%	1,315,789
Health Emergencies	19,533,255	7,504,023	40%	0
Protection /Movement of populations	184,475,087	113,588,446	62%	0
Trans-thematic/coordination	10, 041, 026	3, 001,202	30%	0
Theme not yet specified	0	0	0%	0
Overall Total:	351,6039,803	185,216,433	53%	1,315,789

For more information on the 2007 CAP funding, please refer to www.reliefweb.int/fts . The direct link for information concerning the CAP West Africa: <http://ocha.unog.ch/fts2/pageloader.aspx?page=emerg-emergencyDetails&emergID=15184>

5 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Date	Events	Where	Who
1 December	Coordination Meeting of the Working Group Food Security and Nutrition	UNICEF Regional Office, Dakar	Hosted by OCHA Chaired by UNICEF
4-8 December	Workshop on the directives and principles of internal displacement.	Abidjan	OCHA Côte d'Ivoire
4-6. December	ALNAP Bi-annual meeting	Dakar	
6-8 December	Global Meeting on bird flu	Bamako	UNSIC
18 December	West Africa 2008 CAP Launch	Dakar	OCHA
6-8 February	Regional workshop on the protection of the civil populations	Dakar	OCHA

For further information on the humanitarian situation in West Africa and to consult other reports on the humanitarian situation in the region: <http://ochaonline.un.org/westafrica>

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