

Beat: News

Burkina Faso: Conflict aggravates ongoing food crisis

International Committee of the Red Cross

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The Sahel region is being hit by the worst drought in over a decade, pushing more than 10.5million people into malnutrition. For Burkina Faso, the situation is particularly worrying as the country reels from the consequences of conflict that are severely aggravating the ongoing food crisis.

Violence has internally displaced over 1.8 million people, almost 10% of the country's population, a number that keeps rising every day.

"A person of good will allows me to exploit this piece of land. But because of the lack of rain, the harvest is bad. Our fields in the village are more fertile than those here. There are pockets of drought here. The rains don't come."

Larba Mathieu Yougbare was forced to flee his home and is now internally displaced in Fada N'gourma with his family. Crops he used to plant back home cannot survive in the dry environment he now finds himself in and he is barely able to produce enough food for his family. As the lean season comes in and people's food stocks are depleted, the situation risks severely deteriorating.

80% of Burkina Faso's population rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Many of those displaced now rely on aid to survive.

15% of the population are currently food insecure in the country. Especially vulnerable are pregnant women and newborn children. Right now, 1 in 10 children in Burkina Faso are facing malnutrition. The compounding crises are pushing the healthcare system to the brink. Harouna Sawadgo, Chief Nurse at the CSPS in Fada has watched the situation evolve as thousands of internally displaced persons settled in the city in search of safety.

"We expected 221 cases of malnutrition in our health facility for the whole year. Today, in the space of three months, we have already reached 211 cases of malnutrition."

Combined with the negative effects of climate change, the reality on the ground is a humanitarian crisis that fuels itself.

The ICRC together with its partners from the Red Cross Movement has scaled up its response across ten countries in Africa in order to assist those most vulnerable. In Burkina Faso, together with the Burkinabe Red Cross, the organization is providing emergency food and water, cash and support for basic services and aiming to recover the livelihoods of host communities and displaced persons. For Nilla Ouarme, who is internally displaced in Ouahigouya, the assistance came right on time.

"We fled our village without taking anything. We couldn't take shoes, hats, nothing. We find ourselves in food insecurity now. There's really no food. God willing, the ICRC assistance came. After receiving the money, first of all we are going to buy some food. It's food that keeps the human being going. After the food we'll see."

Source: Data provided by ARAC International official strategic global media partner U.N. OCHA Services

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.

3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168

Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA

(702) 943.0321 Local

(702) 943.0233 Facsimile

info@unitedpressassociation.org

info@gna24.com

www.gna24.com