

INTRODUCTION

Dominik:

Together with Pascale Meige, Director of Disaster and Crisis for the International Federation, we invited you on behalf of the RC/RC Movement to talk about the extremely alarming food crisis affecting several countries in Africa and the Middle East.

As severe hunger and famine loom over Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen with 20 million people suffering severe food insecurity and in urgent need of food assistance, we are at the brink of a humanitarian mega-crisis unprecedented in recent history.

Whilst the consequences of the humanitarian crisis in all of these contexts are similar, the situations also differ. Drought is an important driver of humanitarian needs in the Horn of Africa but in Yemen, South Sudan and the Lake Chad Region the root cause of hunger is largely due to protracted conflict. Somalia is facing both a drought and a protracted conflict. All the conflict situations are characterized by asymmetric warring parties, particularly fragmented and multiplying non-state armed groups, by a widespread lack of respect for even most fundamental rules of IHL and perhaps most importantly, by a lack of any viable political solution to end conflict.

Pascale:

In view of this very alarming situation over large geographical areas, the RC/RC Movement has come together, responding in a coordinated way, and leveraging our respective strengths and diversity with a view to working towards one common goal: to save lives in communities most at risk in these countries. As a RC/RC Movement, we are already on the ground with volunteers and staff of the respective National Societies, and colleagues from ICRC and IFRC, as well as staff from partner National Societies, responding to needs in areas that are extremely hard to reach and delivering life-saving assistance as we speak.

Famine can be prevented if we all act now to reinforce our responses. This requires a collective effort bringing together our RC/RC Movement, UN agencies, NGOs and other humanitarian and development actors, as well as you as our donors. Your support is critical in order that we expand and sustain our activities in these countries to avoid further loss of lives and reinforce the resilience of communities facing severe hardships.

Dominik:

Over the last weeks and months, the ICRC and the Federation, together with the Red Cross and Red Crescents of the six countries affected by the food crisis and other Movement partners, have already increased the response to urgent needs – for food, health and livelihoods. The combined response to this crisis has been coordinated and further plans continue to be elaborated, aiming at supporting a total of over 7 million people. This, as part of existing 2017 programmes and an overall humanitarian response amounting to nearly 600 million Swiss Francs.

Let us now have a closer look at the different contexts:

YEMEN

What's the problem for the people?

Two years of intensifying conflict following decades of recurrent upheaval, drought and chronic impoverishment have caused spiraling humanitarian needs. More than 50'000 civilians have been killed or injured and more than 3 million people are displaced.

Particularly worrying is the disruption and blocking of import mechanisms in and around Hodeida, Yemen's largest port city currently under control of the Houthi / GPC alliance. The offensive launched against this city by the Saudi Arabia lead coalition since the beginning of 2017 has resulted in heavy fighting, shelling and air strikes all along the Red Sea Coast and risks further limiting food and fuel supplies in a country that imports 90% of its staple food.

As a result, Yemen is currently facing the largest food insecurity situation in the world with over 7 million people in urgent need of food assistance and up to half a million children severely malnourished.

In addition, nearly 15 million people lack access to basic health care. Over the past two years, 160 health facilities have been attacked and damaged or destroyed. Only 45% of Yemen's health facilities are running today, further exacerbating the humanitarian situation. There is also a severe lack of medicine for non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and the ICRC has thus repeatedly provided dialysis supplies to dialysis centres across the country.

What are we doing?

- Today, the ICRC and IFRC are presenting a one international emergency appeal, launched by the ICRC. This represents a preliminary budget extension of over CHF 42 million bringing the total budget for Yemen to CHF 90 million. This includes over a million CHF to support the Federation's activities with the Yemeni Red Crescent Society.
- This should allow us to reach up to 1 million people with food aid until the end of the year.
- The ICRC is present throughout the country with offices in Sana'a, Aden, Taiz, Sada'a and Hodeida, working hand in hand with the Yemeni RC.
- The Yemeni RC has 39 local units, for 315 paid staff and 7'800 volunteers. YRCS also provides much needed health services to communities through its ten health facilities.
- There is a well-functioning coordination mechanism with Movement partners present in Yemen – the ICRC, the Federation, the Yemeni Red Crescent, the Danish RC and the German RC, meeting regularly to discuss and share information and plan activities.
- The ICRC's focus is on health with a surgical team that has been deployed to Hodeida and another one on stand-by for Sa'ada and continuous support to 8 hospitals and 31 PHCs. Together with the YRCS we've established an emergency transport system to evacuate wounded from the battlefield. We are moreover maintaining and improving the supply of drinking water for up to 3.5 million people
- Through its 2017 country plan for Yemen, the Federation focuses on strengthening YRCS operational presence and operational management capacities, in particular in terms of finance, human resources, logistics, and communication. The IFRC also supports selected branches in emergency management, and selected Yemeni RC health facilities with equipment, running costs and new ambulances. As part of the one international appeal launched by the ICRC, the IFRC will increase such support to the YRCS HQs and branches in stockpiling of relief items, strengthening, repairing and building warehouses, and upgrading health facilities through provision of health equipment and ambulances.

NIGERIA / LAKE CHAD

What's the problem for the people?

8 years of protracted armed conflict have forced up to 2.4 million people to flee, the majority of them in North-East Nigeria and tens of thousands have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Civilians continued to be killed, wounded, traumatized, abducted or displaced, distrusted by the security forces on the one hand and bearing the brunt of the Armed Opposition's violence on the other.

As access to remote rural areas cautiously improves, the grim reality faced by these communities is coming to the fore, increasing the need for renewed efforts. Despite the recent scale up of relief operations by several humanitarian actors including WFP, the overall response capacity does not match the needs on the ground. General Acute Malnutrition remains high in all areas, especially amongst children, and alarming in remote hard to access areas. More than 5 million people are in urgent need of food assistance.

Authorities meanwhile remain keen on pressing communities to return, often in devastated areas where neither adequate livelihood opportunities nor safety exist. Livelihoods remain undermined by insecurity and ensuing restrictions, whilst the solidarity of host communities sheltering the majority of those in need is giving way to increasing pauperisation and inter-communal tensions.

What are we doing?

- The RC/RC Movement has an extensive presence in the Lake Chad region, with National Societies active in all countries and ICRC, IFRC and partner NSs supporting them to various degrees. In Nigeria, the Nigerian RC counts with 800'000 volunteers, and approximately 400 paid staff. It has access to all parts of the country with its 37 branches and 600 active divisions.
- We are today launching a one international emergency appeal for the Lake Chad region – a preliminary budget extension of over 27 million CHF bringing the total budget for the four countries to 173 million CHF, with a particular focus on the most difficult-to-reach areas.
- This extension also integrates just over 5 million CHF for Federation support to and joint action with the Nigerian Red Cross. This comes on top of the support provided through the IFRC 2017 multi-country plan for the region covered by the Abuja office. The additional 5 million include both emergency responses to the consequences of the food crisis as well as increasing its capacity strengthening of the National Society, in particular in the 3 branches in the North East, which count 26'000 volunteers.
- In 2016, the ICRC together with the Nigeria Red Cross provided food to more than 1.2 million people in conflict affected areas of Nigeria, and agricultural inputs to more than 280'000 returnees to enable them to start farming again. It also provided hundreds of thousands of people with medical assistance, access to water and improved sanitation and hygiene.
- In 2017, together as the RC/RC Movement, we aim to respond to the food, livelihoods and health needs of 2 million people in the Lake Chad region.

SOUTH SUDAN

What's the problem for the people?

More than three years of brutal armed conflict have resulted in economic collapse, with large-scale displacement, loss of agriculture and livestock, massive inflation, rising food prices, widespread hunger.

- Conflict has displaced more than **3 million people in the last 3 years**, many of them have been repeatedly forced to flee their homes, hiding in remote swampy areas for months on end and surviving essentially on wild fruit.
- **An estimated 5 million people** are in urgent need of food assistance.
- The famine declaration in parts of Unity State reaffirms how severe the humanitarian situation is. Disease outbreaks are looming, and low vaccination rates are of high concern.
- The root causes are not climatic and must be addressed by the parties to the conflict. Otherwise, things will continue to spiral downwards.

What are we doing?

- There is a large presence of the RC/RC Movement in South Sudan. The SS RC has grassroots presence throughout the territory with its network of 55 local units, and counts 511 staff and 4'547 volunteers. Seven partner NS also operate alongside the ICRC and IFRC to support the NS.
- The ICRC, together with the SSRC is focusing on areas most affected by conflict. As in 2016, South Sudan remains the single largest ICRC operation in Africa with a budget of 126 million CHF and nearly 1000 staff on the ground in 17 different locations, working closely with our partners of the RC/RC movement.
- In total, we will aim to reach 800'000 people affected by famine and severe hunger, many of them in some of the areas hardest hit by fighting. In parallel there will be distributions of seeds and tools, fishing kits and livestock vaccinations, providing people with urgently needed means of subsistence. The ICRC also has 6 surgical teams operating in both government and armed opposition areas.
- In addition to the support provided by the IFRC on organisational development and capacity building through its 2017 country plan, the IFRC and the SSRC are currently carrying out an assessment on the food insecurity in areas that are less affected by conflict and closely coordinated with ongoing programmes and activities to best design a response addressing current gaps. In the meantime, the IFRC is already supporting the SSRC to engage in the social mobilisation campaign for measles vaccinations due to start beginning of May.

SOMALIA

What's the problem for the people?

Nearly 3 decades of conflict have left the population extremely vulnerable to the occurrence of what happen to be regular climatic shocks in **Somalia** (drought and floods).

Only six years after a devastating acute food crisis that led to the death of more than a quarter of a million people, half of them children (UN statistics), the current severe drought, **stemming from two consecutive seasons of poor rainfall**, threatens to have similar humanitarian consequences.

- The UN estimates that up to 6.2 million people are at risk, of which 2.9 million are in urgent need of food aid. 65% of these people are living in rural areas often under AS control such as Gedo, Baidoa, Bakool, Hiraan, Middle and Lower Shabelle, and Lower Juba, where the ICRC is already operating and where there is no or very limited presence of other humanitarian actors.
- **Rapid deterioration in the health and nutrition** status of people. An estimated 190'000 children are severely malnourished. Our own nutritional feeding centres in Kismayo and Baidoa registered a 40% increase in admissions during the first 3 months of 2017 compared to 2016. Since the beginning of the year and as of 26 March, there were 4,499 suspected measles cases, and as of 9 of April 25,424 cholera cases reported. Disease outbreaks come as a second killer on a fragile nutrition situation.
- **Mass livestock deaths**, overcrowding in watering places, and spread of disease. Livelihoods have been destroyed (death of cattle). Food prices are skyrocketing.
- Increased trend of **displacement** directly generated by the drought, and initial **outbreaks of violence** related to competition for resources (water supply, food, etc.)

Should the Gu rains (April-June) fail, the displacement of population and the mortality rates could spike sharply. Given the fact that the present drought is affecting a greater geographical area than in 2011, it is feared that the potential consequences, heightened six years ago due to a very slow reaction from the international community, could be more acute this time.

What are we doing?

- The RC/RC Movement response in Somalia is coordinated and spread on a geographical basis.
- The Somali RC has a grassroot presence in all the regions of Somalia through its network of 18 branches and sub-branches. It runs an Integrated Health Care Programme which combines clinical and community-based activities. The SRCS has a network of 54 static and 18 mobile health clinics.
- Since mid-February, the ICRC has significantly stepped up its emergency assistance and began distributing food and cash to more than 320,000 people affected by the drought.
- To resource the expansion of this response, the ICRC launched a budget extension of 20 million CHF in March, bringing our total budget for Somalia to CHF 92 million. This should allow support to 1.4 million people in Somalia this year with food assistance, access to water and cash grants as part of our response to the consequences of the food crisis. The ICRC is also rehabilitating water pumping systems and planning to provide temporary drinking troughs to ease overcrowding of animals at the boreholes. The ICRC works hard to build links with all communities, and we are able to work in some areas of the country others are not able to access.

HANDOVER TO PASCALE

- The IFRC is supporting the Somali Red Crescent in Somaliland and Puntland through its 2017 country plan, focusing on organizational development and capacity building of the regions' 9 branches. It further launched an Emergency Appeal in March 2016 in response to the drought. The Appeal was revised mid-March 2017 and now seeks 3.3 million Swiss francs (up from 1.2 million

Swiss francs) to help support 150,000 of the most vulnerable people in Somaliland and Puntland for ten months with activities on health and water, sanitation and hygiene, and 21'200 beneficiaries for food security related activities in the form of cash transfers and distribution of nutritious food for under 5 children as well as malnutrition screening and referrals. In close coordination with the ICRC and IFRC, the German, Finnish, British and Norwegian RC work in a consortium and focus on cash in 3 districts in Somaliland for 1'400 HH and provide support to SRCS clinics in the same districts.

KENYA

What's the problem for the people?

Food insecurity is on the rise again for the first time since 2011. Indicators are similar or worse than those in 2010 and just prior to the 2011 famine:

- the rate of malnutrition is above emergency levels in some areas and other parts show serious acute malnutrition levels;
- poor rains have contributed to water shortages, poor livestock performances and reduced access to milk in several pastoral areas (Northeast / Northwest regions): high local cereal prices, increasing livestock mortality (25-75%) and conflict have exacerbated the impacts of the drought;
- the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Kenya rose from 1.3 million in August 2016 to 2.7 million in February 2017 – a 48% increase compared to the situation 6 months ago.

The Kenyan Government has declared the current drought affecting 23 arid and semi-arid counties (out of 47) and pockets of other areas, a national disaster. There are no signs of improvement of the current crisis and the Early Warning System information confirms the evolution towards a deterioration of the situation. If the rains in April-May fail, the current state of the crisis will increase exponentially and famine will affect several parts of the country.

What are we doing?

- The Kenyan RC is a primary recognised local humanitarian actor in Kenya, with 64 active branches. It has been leading the response to the crisis in nine of the affected counties with integrated Health and Nutrition outreaches with financial support from UNICEF although this requires a significant scale up. A number of Movement partners are present in Kenya, and partner National Societies hosted by the KRCS include: the American, Austrian, British, Danish, Finnish, German, Japanese and Norwegian Red Cross. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) regional delegation is also hosted in Nairobi, which serves as a hub for operations in eastern and central African countries. As well, the IFRC regional office for Africa is located in Nairobi.
- The IFRC has been supporting the Kenyan RC since November 2016 to respond to the drought, through an Emergency Appeal for 3,844,037 Swiss francs and allocation of an initial 297,808 Swiss francs from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). In February 2017, the Emergency Appeal was revised a first time and brought to 9,107,628 Swiss francs to assist 340,786 people in 13 counties. End of March 2017, a further revision of the Appeal brought it to the current level of 25,062,572 Swiss francs to assist 1,033,300 people (150,424 households) in 14 counties.
- Due to the great increase in the number of people who require nutrition support, especially children with acute malnutrition, the KRCS is scaling up activities in health and nutrition, cash transfer, animal destocking and slaughter programming, and distribution of foodstuffs.
- Furthermore, KRCS' assessments show the distance to water points is much longer than average in recent months (impacting up to 70 per cent of the community, who may be traveling three times further than average). As such, the revised appeal seeks to increase water access through

installation or rehabilitation of water points. This is critical as food security interventions should be aligned with adequate access to water.

- The ICRC is also scaling up its response in the areas affected by drought and violence, namely in Lamu and Tana River / Tana Delta. As the only international humanitarian organization present in these areas, the ICRC aims to cover the essential needs – food, water, livelihoods and cash – for some 300'000 people.
- The ICRC increase in activities is integrated in the 2017 initial appeal for Kenya, that remains underfunded to date.

ETHIOPIA

What's the problem for the people?

Ethiopia has been hit by frequent drought in the past three to five years with the 2015 El Nino induced drought described as one of the worst in decades resulting in high food insecurity and death of livestock in several parts of the country. According to the GoE, the positive impact of the 2016 summer kiremt/gu/ganna rains and the subsequent above-average meher harvest rains in northern and western parts of the country significantly reduced the number of people requiring food assistance from 10.2 million in 2016 to 5.6 million in 2017. However, the impact of the Indian Ocean Dipole¹ and the failure of the autumn deyr/hagaya rains have negatively impacted the food security of pastoralist households in southern and south-eastern lowland areas and in pockets of areas throughout the country. The October to December rains started late and were infrequent especially in the southern and south eastern parts of the country, resulting in rivers drying up in several areas including Somali, Oromia and SNNP regions. In these areas, the total cumulative rainfall was well below average coupled with equally below average March to May 2016 rains thereby compounding the existing drought situation. The consecutive poor rainfall seasons have resulted in poor water and pasture regeneration and dried out water sources. This has led to death of livestock, high levels of malnutrition and food insecurity.

According to authorities, adding to the 5.6 million people who will require food assistance; 1.2 million children, pregnant and lactating mothers will require supplementary feeding; 9.2 million people will be without safe drinking water; 2.4 million households will need livestock support; and estimates are 300,000 children will become severely malnourished in 2017.

Additionally, violence has increased significantly in scale and intensity (the internal border between Oromia and Somali Regional State). Long-standing territorial disputes and the adverse climatic conditions resulted in:

- Deaths of dozens of people, the displacement of 90,000 people, closure/looting of dozen of health infrastructure, denial of medical transportation and medical personal fleeing the affected areas.
- Limited access to food and water.

Humanitarian assistance has been extremely limited compared to the needs

What are we doing?

- The Ethiopian RC structure consists in 11 regional offices, 33 zonal branches, 88 district (woreda) branches, and more than 4,500 committees (Kebele Red Cross Committees) at grass root-level. It employs a total of 1,114 staff, out of which 271 are based at the HQ and 843 at branch offices.

- There are 7 partner NSs present in Ethiopia, and there is now an agreement that all Movement partners' drought response activities will be harmonised with the ERCS National Drought Response Plan.
- The IFRC has responded to the crisis by launching an Emergency Appeal in January 2016 for 2,211,085 CHF to support 35,371 people. 181,521 Swiss francs was allocated from the IFRC Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) as a start-up support for the ERCS response. After revisions in June 2016 and January 2017, the Appeal was increased in March 2017 to 13,686,550 Swiss francs to assist 318,325 people, in view of the deteriorating situation. The revised Emergency Appeal foresees distribution of supplementary food, support to malnutrition screening and referral, community health services support, improved access to safe water and hygiene promotion, and reinforcing family livelihoods and coping mechanisms. The supplementary food component in the revised Appeal targets families with children under five and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- The ICRC (in collaboration with the ERCS) is one of only a few non-governmental actors responding along the internal border between Oromia and Somali Regional State. The ICRC will focus its economic support on areas where drought exacerbates violence assisting over 80'000 vulnerable people, also addressing the chronic water shortages.
- The ICRC increase in activities is integrated in the 2017 initial appeal for Ethiopia, that remains underfunded to date.

IFRC Regional Coordination Appeal

Aside from the annual country plans and country-specific Emergency Appeals, the IFRC has also launched last week an Appeal to strengthen regional operational and technical management, as well as scenario planning and regional coordination. This crisis of unprecedented scale and spread requires close support to the National Societies in the affected countries, and the IFRC has already deployed a Head of Emergency Operations to Nairobi as well as several technical experts to help design, implement and monitor the responses.

The regional coordination appeal seeks 3,877,335 CHF for 18 months and covers the 6 countries described today, as well as other countries under watch for food insecurity and countries affected by population movements induced by the food crisis. The funding will allow to have a fully dedicated team at regional level, with extensive travels to the affected countries.

Budget figures

In financial terms:

- Both ICRC and IFRC have their annual plans and budgets (ICRC Operations Appeals 2017, IFRC Operational Plans 2017)
- Given the scope of the food crisis, we have increased our response, as shown by the additional request of 136M CHF, bringing the total to nearly 600M CHF
- It is a coordinated response in all countries, and today's joint presentation reflects this coordination
- What we have been aiming at when it comes to the additional ask, is to have only one new Emergency Appeal per country; and we have succeeded, except for Somalia, where we have a clear geographical repartition (see slide)
- As a result, the ICRC and IFRC are coming with an additional ask of almost 140M CHF, bringing the total ICRC/IFRC budgets for the 6 contexts to over 570M CHF, and the outstanding needs to nearly 300M CHF – roughly 50% of the needs.