

## First Watching Brief

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Census planning underway for next year.
- IDP resettlement underway. There is a continued flow of refugees across the northern borders from the violence in Country B.
- President will release development plans and priorities within 6 months.

### SITUATION UPDATE

#### Humanitarian Response

**Food:** Staple food prices remained stable, although the overall price for basket of basic food is slightly higher than 2006 levels. WFP has proposed a system to monitor changes in food prices quarterly but is currently only tracking annual changes. The Red Cross Society and WFP started delivering one-month rations to Eastern valley. This came after a series of reports of starvation in several remote areas of the desert where there are concerns about crop failures.

**Nutrition:** Fears of increasing child starvation as child malnutrition rates in refugee camps continue to remain high. Recent estimates of eastern areas of Nimpala showed that above 16% of children under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition. The global emergency threshold is at 15% of children under five years of age.

### SECURITY/PROTECTION

- Concerns remain about potential for further conflict between rebel groups. Despite the continued stability of the peace accord, reports from Western governments suggest that rebel groups in the north are re-arming. Militias continue to recruit as refugees flow across the border.
- Several days of violence several months ago left dozens of people, mostly women and children, dead, as militias continue to inflict violence as they demand food and staples from local populations. Initial reports of violence in eastern areas of land disputes as seasonal migration begins and displaced people continue to forage for food. This is just one of a continued string of sporadic attacks in the region over the past few months. One attack even hit a WFP supply caravan bringing critical grains and food to IDP camps.
- Several local NGOs are announced projects working with FAO and WFP to monitor pastoralist's movements. Reports this year note a shift in migratory routes due to shifting decreasing accessibility of water supplies and stability of land resources. This raises concerns that previously agreed use sharing systems of water sources and shifting stress between communities. The rainy season is over for the year so pastoralists are moving to more fertile lands for their livestock.

- Gender-based violence in camps is a serious problem, according to reports from UNFPA and UNICEF. Researchers found that many girls and women in the informal IDP camps trade sex for food, protection, transportation with those in the informal camp leadership, or are victims of opportune attacks while going to the latrine at night.

## SHELTER/RESETTLEMENT

**Refugees:** As fighting between semi-official government militia in Country B with rebel groups continues, OCHA reported a continued flow of refugees across Nimpala's northern border. Camps have been set up to accommodate roughly 5,000 people yet conditions continue to worsen, as facilities are inadequate for the quantity.

**IDPs:** Several resettlement programs are planned or already in preliminary stages. Current targets have identified relocating key camps close to other settlements to more stable areas, reducing tension between groups and limiting pressures on resources. The shortage of arable land and unoccupied land around IDP camps is causing concerns. Commercial farms are accused of encroaching on returnee land in places of IDP origins. This has raised serious concern about land becoming a major source of tension, especially as the most vulnerable members of society will suffer disproportionately. IDP camps have led to an assortment of complex environmental consequences, including deforestation around the camps and unsustainable groundwater extraction. The conflict also disrupted infrastructure development and funding from international sources, limiting management of natural resources and setting it as a lower priority.

## CENSUS

Officials from the ruling coalition announced plans to begin the census within the next year. This is a contentious issue, impacting future power-sharing agreements, and a clear priority for the seated coalition who believes that once completed, the census will provide a mandate for their political dominance. Management of this process has provoked sharp criticism from opponents who are concerned with accurate and fair data collection. Some analysts have warned of potential future outbreaks of violence targeted at preventing the census from occurring as well as the practical challenges of reaching remote areas of the country.

## ECONOMY

- During the war, many businesses fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them. Nimpala is heavily dependent on foreign aid and vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices for cotton, its primary export. External trade routes for the landlocked country have been jeopardized by continued unrest in neighboring Country B. Despite recent successes in macroeconomic stabilization and pro-market reforms, there are no signs of return of businesses or foreign capital. Two high profile Western companies have also withdrawn and ceased operations citing appalling humanitarian conditions.
- The United Nations Security Council has refused appeals to lift the timber sanctions. Pressure from the president and sympathetic countries have guaranteed that council will discuss the issue of lifting or reducing sanctions in three months.
- Infrastructure projects are underway with a proposal for a new major transportation route connecting portions of the east to the north. Many concerns remain that the irrigation systems, both destroyed during the war and lacking repairs will block critical water supplies.