

Conflict Drives 8 Nations' Risk for Food Insecurity

Conflict has placed eight nations at either “high risk” of or “on watch” for food insecurity as 2018 begins, according to a United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) quarterly report for January to March 2018.

The nations deemed to be at “high risk” of food insecurity due to ongoing or intermittent conflict are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar (Burma), northeast Nigeria, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

Another eight nations are at risk or on watch due to other factors, including severe winter weather known as “dzud” (Mongolia) and drought (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan).

Edward Dima is pastor of First Baptist Church in Kajo-Keji, South Sudan, and president of the Baptist Convention of South Sudan.

While currently living and ministering in a refugee camp in Uganda, he has remained in contact with EthicsDaily.com and [provided regular updates](#) on how Baptists are working to meet ever-growing needs.

South Sudan has struggled with food security since 2013 when intermittent conflict began over factions loyal to President Salva Kiir and those supporting former Vice President Riek Machar.

Several cease-fires have been reached, but none has resulted in lasting peace.

“Conflict has progressively spread across the country, disrupting access for both the local population and humanitarian actors,” the FAO report summarized. “The distribution of humanitarian assistance is becoming increasingly difficult since the conflict has curtailed key transportation routes.

“From January to March 2018, the food security situation is projected to deteriorate unseasonably with the lean season expected three months earlier than normal,” FAO said of South Sudan. “This will result in an estimated 5.1 million (48 percent of the total population) people being classified as severely food insecure.”

A U.N. agency contacted Dima recently as part of “a research assessment on the impact of the violence on economy and livelihood in the country.” He shared his responses with EthicsDaily.com in a Jan. 6 email.

“The recent violence has caused untold suffering for the 12 million people in the country and has made every person vulnerable. We lost lives, livestock and agriculture. People were not able to harvest food because of the conflict,” Dima said. “For sure, we shall witness death between the months of January and May 2018” unless the international community provides sufficient food and other supplies.

“We gave out agriculture tools last year in three displaced persons camps in Kajo-Keji,” he continued. “Unfortunately, the harvest was interrupted by the conflict in October and November 2017. The displaced people lost every produce because of the conflict.”

The FAO report noted that the late-year main harvest only reduced overall food-insecure persons from 56 percent of the total population to 45 percent by the end of 2017.

“The expected seasonal respite due to the ongoing harvest will be minimal in conflict-affected areas, where households are likely to harvest less than three months of cereal,” FAO said. “From January to March 2018, the food security situation is projected to deteriorate unseasonably with the lean season expected three months earlier than normal.”

Dima concluded his email with a prayer “that God will intervene through churches and other charitable bodies to help buy food for the displaced persons in the camps.”

<https://ethicsdaily.com/conflict-drives-8-nations-risk-for-food-insecurity-cms-24588/> January 12, 2018 EthicsDaily.com Staff

The full report is available [here](#).

Editor's note: Previous EthicsDaily.com articles related to South Sudan can be found [here](#). Pictures from South Sudan provided by Dima are available [here](#). A 2015 EthicsDaily.com video interview with Dima can be viewed [here](#).