

Country Case Study: Chad

GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

Chad is the 5th largest country in Africa. Located in the north-central part of the continent, it is a landlocked country, sharing borders with Libya, Sudan, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Nigeria and Niger. Three climate regions make up the majority of the country – a desert in the north, an arid region in the center, and a tropical area in the south. Lake Chad is located on the western border and is an important source of water for Chad and surrounding countries.

MODERN HISTORY

Chad has been in a state of almost constant war since its independence from France in 1960. Turmoil in the country is based on ethnic and religious differences provoked mainly by clan rivalries – the southern region is predominantly Christian farmers, while the northern and eastern regions are mainly Muslim.

In 1965, a tax revolt initiated a long civil war between the Muslims in the north and east and the government of Francois Tombalbaye in the south. Even with support from the French government, attempts to end the conflict failed until a military coup in 1975 installed General Felix Malloum, a southerner, as head of state. By 1979, dissent within the government led northern Prime Minister Hisense Habre to order an attack on the national army, and another civil war began.

BASIC FACTS

Location: Central Africa

President: Idriss Deby

Government: Republic

Capital: N'Djamena

Official Languages: French and Arabic

Population: 10.3 million

Climate: Tropical in south; Desert in north

Life Expectancy: 47.7 years

Adult Literacy Rate: 25.7%

Area: 1.284 million sq. km

Source: CIA World Factbook, 2010

Ethnic rivalry within the government eventually led to Habre's downfall. In 1989, Idriss Deby, one of Habre's leading generals from eastern Chad, fled to Darfur, Sudan, where he staged a series of attacks on Habre. In December 1990, Deby and the Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS), with assistance from Libya, gained control of the Chadian government.

In 2003, refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan began crossing the border into Chad, and conflicts around the border intensified. Both governments accused the other of harboring rebel units, and war between Chad and Sudan was officially declared in December 2005.

Deby removed constitutional term limits and won the presidential election in 2006. That same year, the Sudanese and Chadian governments formally agreed not to support armed rebel groups. Though signed, the agreement did not eliminate violence around the Chad-Sudan border.

In 2010, Deby visited Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, to meet with President Bashir in hopes of ending the border conflict. Both governments agreed to deploy forces along the Chad-Sudan border to restore peace in the region.

Even amidst charges of election rigging, fraud, ethnic favoritism and corruption regarding oil revenues, Deby has remained in power for 20 years. Fighting on the Chad-Sudan border continues, but relations between the Sudanese and Chadian governments have evolved with the hopes of finally putting an end to the instability. Presidential elections are scheduled to occur in May 2011.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Since independence, Chad has suffered from political instability, social

unrest and conflicts with neighboring countries. This has left the country with poor infrastructure, an unstable government and a dire humanitarian situation. Even though the country has reaped the benefits of an oil boom since 2003, the mismanagement of funds has led to widespread poverty.

In the past decade, Chad has become a safe haven for refugees fleeing from violence in neighboring countries. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that nearly 340,000 refugees from Sudan and Central African Republic are currently residing in Chad, with 12 refugee camps functioning in the country. This influx of refugees, particularly along the eastern border with Sudan, has created a great need for humanitarian assistance – for example, the rapid population increase has caused communities surrounding the camps to suffer from decreased and contaminated water supplies. In addition to the refugees, the UNHCR estimates that 170,000 people have been displaced internally, fleeing the eastern region due to violence and insecurity.

The western region of Chad frequently suffers from acute malnu-

trition rates above 20% during the hunger gap (a period of routine food scarcity between harvests). Insufficient rainfall over the past two years has exacerbated this crisis and now nearly two-thirds of households do not have sufficient amounts of food on a daily basis. A lack of arable land due to desertification, coupled with limited access to water and healthcare, has had devastating effects on malnutrition rates in the region.

ACTION AGAINST HUNGER'S PRESENCE IN CHAD

ACF launched its first program in Chad in 1982 to help re-introduce agricultural production into the war-torn country. In 2004, ACF shifted efforts to the eastern region of Chad to address the influx of Sudanese refugees. Eventually, the program was expanded to address the vulnerability of local Chadian populations while maintaining support for the Sudanese refugee populations. In early 2010, ACF launched a nutritional program in western Chad to address increasing malnutrition rates resulting from the lack of rainfall and the effects of increasing desertification.

North-Eastern Chad

- Monitor food distributions in 6 refugee camps
- Evaluate humanitarian context in refugee camps and address needs as they arise

South-Eastern Chad

- Distribution of non-food kits (plastic covers, blankets, water containers, soap)
- Distribution of vegetable seeds
- Installation and rehabilitation of water points
- Rehabilitation and enlargement of

- water distribution systems
- Construction of latrines
- Promotion of hygiene

Western Chad

- Intervene in emergencies to prevent and treat malnutrition in children
- Strengthen capacity of 33 local nutrition centers
- Perform nutritional surveys
- Operate mobile nutritional units

Sources: ACF, 2010; CIA World Factbook, 2010; UNHCR, 2010



