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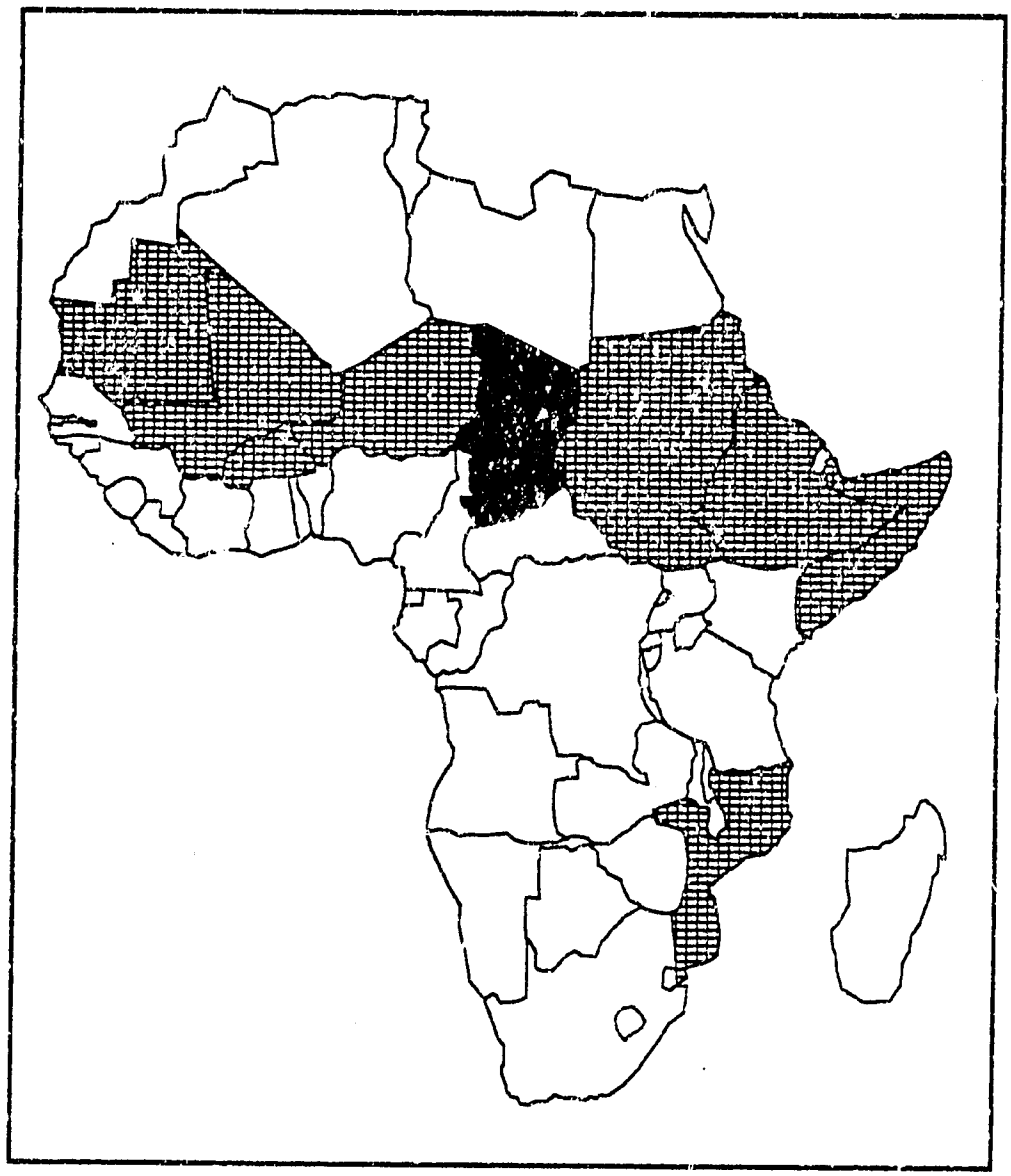
FEWS Country Report

CHAD



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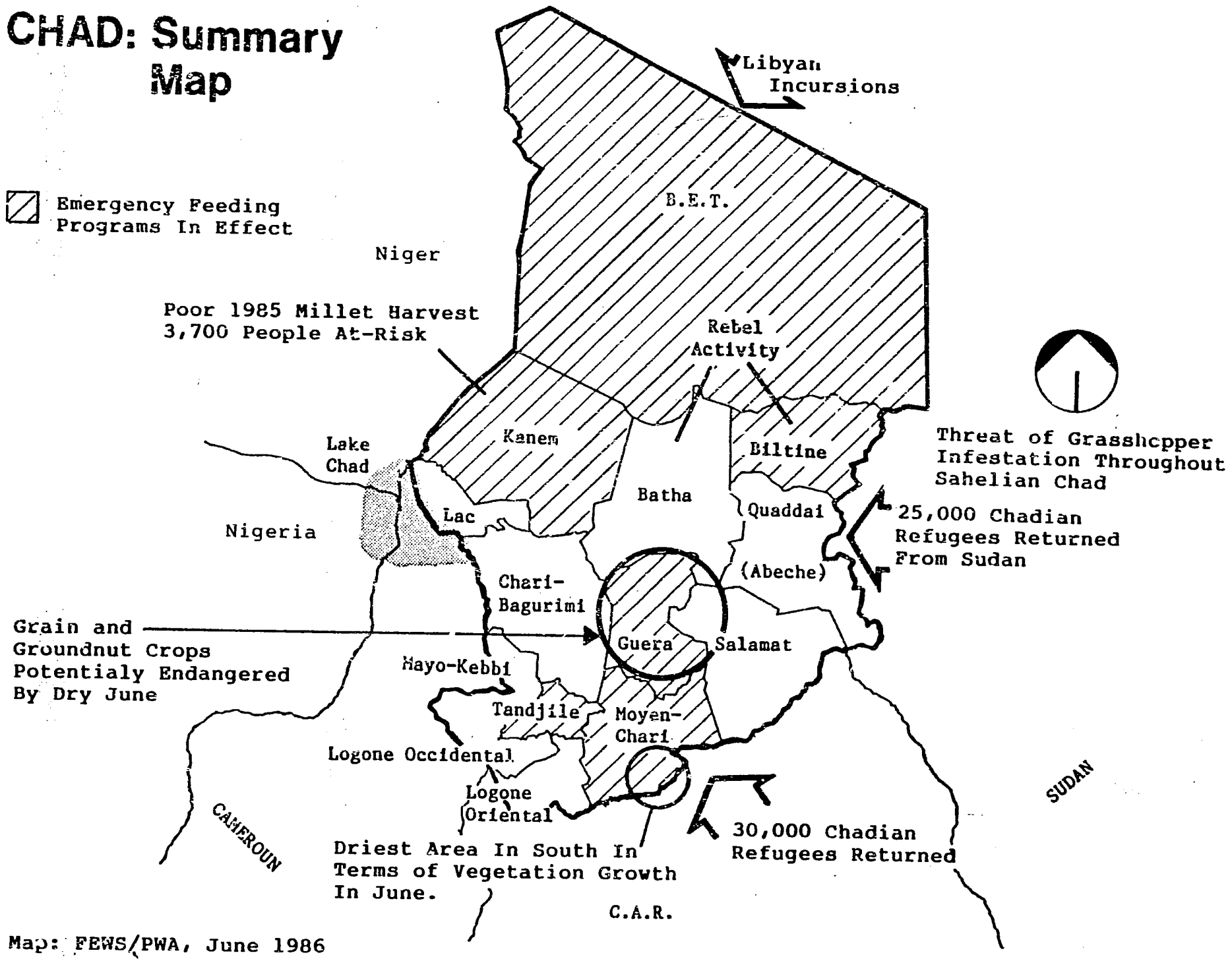
MAP 1

CHAD: Summary Map



Map: FEWS/PWA, June 1986

Famine Early Warning System Country Report

CHAD

Recovery Underway

Prepared for the
Africa Bureau of the
U.S. Agency for
International Development

Prepared by
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July 1986

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INTRODUCTION

This is the second of a series of monthly reports issued by the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS) on Chad. It is designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, or at-risk, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

Use of the term "at-risk" to identify vulnerable populations is problematical since no generally agreed upon definition exists. Yet it is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at-risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. Thus for the present, until a better usage can be found, FEWS reports will employ the term "at-risk" to mean...

> ...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis, i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of most importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short-term and in the long-run, including medical, transport, storage, economic development policy change, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at-risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme.

The food needs of individual populations at-risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports should not be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.

FEWS is operated by AID's Office of Technical Resources in the Bureau for Africa in cooperation with numerous USG and other organizations.

SUMMARY

The population at-risk in Chad is estimated to be 100,000. Feeding programs and food aid have been sharply cut back due to the good 1985 harvest, although there remain localized at-risk populations. Feeding programs are in effect in those areas, however, and returning refugees are being assisted. Rainfall in June benefited agriculture and rangelands in southern Chad, but drier than normal conditions in south-central Chad could lead to losses of seeds planted early. The rains started in the north in early July, and initial vegetation growth looks promising. Barring an escalation of the civil war, and assuming a good crop production year, current public and private food stores should be adequate to meet expected needs. Although additional food aid is in transit, it would be insufficient to meet emergency needs if the potential 1986 harvest is reduced. Accordingly, USAID/N'Djamena has requested an allocation of 10,000MT of food aid to meet contingency needs.

Issues

- There is a threat of locust and grasshopper infestations across the Sahel. The Chadian Crop Protection Service believes there is a potential problem for Chad's sahelian zone as well.

- The impact of the civil war and of Libyan incursions on food availability, displaced people and refugees could increase the population at-risk and limit drought rehabilitation efforts.

Key July Events

- Germination and early plant development will be determined primarily by the distribution of rainfall during the month of July. Estimates of the area planted by farmers will give an early indication of Chad's agricultural potential this year.

- The July rains will also control the passableness of roads. This has been a traditional problem in the north, and will have an effect on transportation of food aid.

RAINFALL AND AGRICULTURE

Increasing rainfall during June and the first 10 days of July has relieved dryness in the south. Although vegetation growth is still lower than normal, continued rainfall would produce favorable harvests. An area of concern is in Moyen-Chari Prefecture, where vegetation growth has been lower this June than in the previous two years. The driest area was south of Sarh and east of Moissala. Vegetation growth for June also lagged behind that of the last two years in eastern Logone Oriental.

The first ten days of July have seen rains starting in the central areas and in the sahelian Kanem and Biltine Prefectures. In spite of the rains being lighter than normal, satellite imagery suggests that vegetation growth is better than in 1985 or 1984. In fact, planting is well begun in the central areas around Mongo in Guera Prefecture. Heavy rains are still required over the next two months for sufficient growth of crops and pasturage.

FOOD FLOWS/NEED

According to both Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and AID, the overall food situation in Chad is satisfactory, although there is no margin for emergency food assistance should there be a crop shortfall this year. Some 52,000MT of food aid are either in the country or in transit. Although 12,515MT of emergency food aid cereal stocks are in country, the rainy season could limit food flows to areas identified as at-risk or potentially so. The AID Mission states that $1 million will be needed to pre-position additional stocks in at-risk areas, and has requested an allocation of 10,000MT of additional food aid to meet contingency needs in the event of a less-than-good 1986 harvest.

The FAO estimates total "coarse grain" production for last year at 690,000MT, 158% of the historical five year average. In most areas of the country, cereal grains are still in abundance in the marketplace and prices are unusually low. Due to these low prices, significant stores remain on farms, which will function as food buffers until the next harvest and beyond. In Kanem, the 1985 harvest of millet, while above that during the 1984 drought, was still low compared to pre-1984 levels. On-farm stocks of millet are also low in this prefecture.

The start of the rainy season in the north will make transport to that area more difficult. However, limited information on food flows and food need preclude more detailed assessments.

POPULATION AT-RISK

A recent informal mission survey of key private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and UN agencies indicates that there are, at most, 100,000 people at-risk in Chad. Limited information on the distribution of these people, their agricultural production and present food aid flows preclude more precise estima-tions. There has been a seventy-fold decrease in supplemental feeding programs since June 1985, which supports the great reduction from an April estimate by the UN Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) of 420,000 people still "affected by the drought." Assuming the 100,000 figure is accurate, the 520kg in food aid already pledged to

Chad could provide a minimum annual food aid of 520kg per person. This level of food aid is three to four times more than adequate, especially when combined with the use of traditional famine foods. Given the generally good harvest and the assessments of the FAO and AID Mission, this level of food aid should cover any need that may arise before the next harvest season.

Some areas with at-risk populations have been identified. Emergency food aid is being distributed in Lac, Biltine, Kanem, Borkou-Ennedi-Tibesti, Tandjile, Guera and Moyen-Chari. This food aid supplies some 54,800 people in dry feeding programs and 2,700 people in supplemental (wet) feeding programs. Approximately 23,000 people are supplied in Tandjile, 14,000 in Guera and 12,000 in Kanem, with the balance distributed among the other four prefectures. More current estimates on persons at-risk in these high-risk areas are anticipated.

REFUGEES

Recently 25,000 refugees and displaced persons have returned to Chad from the Sudan--with at least 2,000 of those to Abeche--and 30,000 have returned to Moyen-Chari from the Central African Republic. As of July 11, there were 3,630MT of food aid in place in Moyen-Chari. This would provide 121kg per returned person, if they were the only targetted population in the Prefecture.

There are an estimated 120,000 Chadian refugees still abroad. Of these, UNHCR is supporting 65,000 in camps in Sudan, 8,000 in the Central African Republic and 8,000 in Cameroon. The remaining 39,000 refugees, mostly in Sudan, are not in camps. There is little information available concerning their nutritional status.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

The Chadian Crop Protection Service believes that there is a potential threat from grasshoppers in the northern sahelian zone. This agrees with grasshopper predictions for neighboring countries.

An October 1985 FAO assessment puts overall livestock loss in Chad at about 10%. It can be anticipated that rebuilding herds will take several years. With the rains just begun in the north-central areas, it is not yet possible to tell how herders will do this year.

Rebels supplied by Libyans still hold large areas of the north and, according to recent news reports, continued fighting is likely. Should the civil war escalate, the at-risk population could greatly increase. Given food stocks, a sizable increase in those needing food aid may not be a serious problem in the short-run, although internal re-distribution may be difficult.