

HIGHLIGHTS

- Multiple disasters hit Tajikistan
- Tense situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border
- Drought in Kyrgyzstan might drive up food prices
- Floods in Kazakhstan

FIGURES

# of Syrian Armenian refugees	16,000
Affected pop. in Tajikistan	7,400
# of disasters in Tajikistan	21
# of disasters in Kyrgyzstan	82

CAUCASUS

Total population	17 mln
Pop. below poverty line	2.6 mln
Average HDI ¹	0.74
# of disputed territories	3
Pop. living in disputed territories	435,862
# of IDPs	282,396

Sources: State Statistics Agencies (all countries), CIA World Factbook, UNDP, UNHCR, NRC / IDMC 2014

CENTRAL ASIA

Total population	65 mln
Pop. below poverty line	16 mln
Average HDI ¹	0.67
# of enclaves	8
Pop. living in enclaves	100,000
# of IDPs ²	179,400

Sources: State Statistics Agencies (all countries), CIA World Factbook, UNDP, UNHCR, NRC / IDMC 2014



Credit: UNOCHA

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Main trends from 2013 continue

Region still vulnerable to seasonal disasters and man-made crises

The first half of 2014 saw main trends from 2013 continue: the year started off with a cross-border conflict in the tumultuous Fergana Valley that climaxed in May, with residents of the Tajik enclave Vorukh clashing with adjacent Kyrgyz villages. The official sides once again show interest in peaceful mutually-beneficial resolution to the tensions; however, results of the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan agreement on cooperation signed in on 28 May are yet to be seen.

In Tajikistan, a series of small- to medium-scale seasonal disasters struck several districts, killing 20 people and causing agricultural and infrastructural damage. The Government of Tajikistan demonstrated its increased capacity to coordinate relief efforts with humanitarian partners and to quickly respond to emergencies.

In Armenia, humanitarian partners continued monitoring the refugee situation and provided help to the most vulnerable in surviving cold winter. Some 16,000 Syrian Armenian refugees are reported to have entered the country since the start of the crisis.

Villages in central Kazakhstan were inundated as a result of a dam burst in March. Five people died and nine received injuries in the disaster. The Government of Kazakhstan managed the response with some assistance from the National Red Crescent Society. So far this year, Kazakhstan has experienced more natural disasters than during the same period in 2013. The Ministry of Emergency Situations reports a 35.9 per cent increase in the number of the disasters compared with 2013.

The reporting period ended with warning signs in Kyrgyzstan that drought may be seriously affecting vast agricultural lands across the country. The disaster might drive up food prices in the fall, putting additional burden on the many vulnerable families.

Tajikistan: succession of multiple disasters

Seasonal disasters larger in scale and frequency than normal

Already vulnerable communities in rural areas of Tajikistan were subjected to a series of floods, mudflows and mudslides between 11 April and mid-May. High precipitation and hailstorms on 11-12 April triggered the first wave of flash floods and mudslides, killing 16 people and affecting over 450 families in the south-east of Khatlon province. Less than a week later, mudflows in the west of the same province took the lives of two kids and affected 1,500 people. Disasters made a comeback to already affected areas in the south-east, hampering ongoing debris removal and recovery works, and damaging houses, bridges, infrastructure and water lines.

May brought about more floods and mudflows. This time, geography of the affected area stretched from the previously inundated south-east Khatlon province towards south and north of the country. Two people died and over 1,072 families (or 5,360 people) in nine districts suffered losses in flash floods that occurred on 10-12 May. The International

¹ The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. The Caucasus is ranked as high, whereas Central Asia falls in the medium human development category.

² This includes 172,000 returnees in Kyrgyzstan, who are reported by UNHCR to be in an "IDP-like" situation.

Tajik Government and local authorities provided rapid assistance to the people affected by disasters.

Federation of the Red Cross reports that around 425 people lost their homes and found temporary shelter in kindergartens, mosques, at relatives or in neighboring villages.

Increased governmental capacity to respond to medium-scale disasters

Through the barrage of disasters in Tajikistan this year, the Government and local authorities demonstrated the significantly boosted response capacity. With some international assistance and support from the Tajik Red Crescent Society, the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES) managed to provide quick and tailored assistance to the people in need. Most of the affected districts had pre-positioned stocks of food and non-food items, as well as reserve funds to respond to small-scale disasters.

In each district, the Government mobilized its structures to rehabilitate the damaged infrastructure (cleaning roads and ditches, restoring electricity lines, providing clean drinking water) within their capacity.

The infographic on the last page of this bulletin provides a visual insight into the disasters that occurred in April and May in Tajikistan.



Credit: Tajik Red Crescent Society
Kulyab zone, Khatlon, Tajikistan (April 2014) – women clean up their household following flash floods and mudflows

Fergana Valley: cross-border tensions continue

Despite political will to defuse tension, people still keep clashing

Villagers living in and around enclaves in the Fergana Valley are demanding border demarcations to be completed.

One year since a scuffle along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border almost resulted in a humanitarian crisis in Sokh enclave, more cross-border tensions in the Fergana Valley are causing hardship for the local people. Kyrgyz villagers living around the Tajik-governed enclave of Vorukh have for years faced difficulties accessing other parts of the country, which impacts the access to food, fuel, medical care, markets and jobs. Border checks and occasional border closures affect at least four Kyrgyz villages and some 30,000 residents of Vorukh. To resolve the issue, Kyrgyz authorities initiated the construction of a bypass road.



Map sources: ESRI, OCHA, UNCS.

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Map created in July 2014.

agreement on cooperation in civil defense, emergency preparedness and response in demonstration of commitment to peace.

On 11 January, Kyrgyz and Tajik security forces clashed over legitimacy of the road construction works around Vorukh, leaving several people wounded. Following the conflict, official sides took time to resolve the issue diplomatically. Tensions ran high, and on 7 May, crowds of local people gathered along the border and, after an exchange of insults, began throwing stones at each other. At least 20 people were reported wounded in the clashes. Locals demanded demarcation of borders.

In 2013, residents in and out of Vorukh enclave were engaged in a similar conflict (see [Humanitarian bulletin](#), 1 January – 30 June 2013). Authorities then pledged to resolve the issue, but the occurrence of more cross-border conflicts this year shows little progress. In a positive signal, on 28 May, the Governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed an

Scarce water resources create potential for conflicts

In June, Kyrgyzstan announced that they were considering repairing Big Namangan Canal in the southern Jalal-Abad province. If the plan gets approved, Uzbekistan will be at risk of losing irrigation water at a crucial time for harvesting. Earlier in April, Uzbekistan stopped supplying gas to the south of Kyrgyzstan due to contract expiration.

Disputes over water are not new to Central Asia. The region is divided into water-rich upstream (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and water-poor downstream countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). The upstream countries are the region's most vulnerable and poorest economies. Lacking enough energy resources, the upstream countries

devise plans how to use the plentiful water for the benefit of their population. Such plans often do not meet interests of the downstream countries, which rely on water for their agricultural needs.

Farmers in the upstream countries also add to the existing tensions. Poor water management and the decaying Soviet-era infrastructure can lead to produce drying out even in the upstream countries. Significant amounts of water get wasted, falling short of reaching agricultural fields. Kyrgyz villagers resort to setting up dams, diverting water flows and, thus, harming the downstream countries.



Credit: OCHA
Vahdat district, Tajikistan (November 2013) – a young woman pulls water flasks. Tajikistan is located up stream of the main river basins of Central Asia, but many rural communities are still lacking proper access to water.

Drought looming over Kyrgyzstan

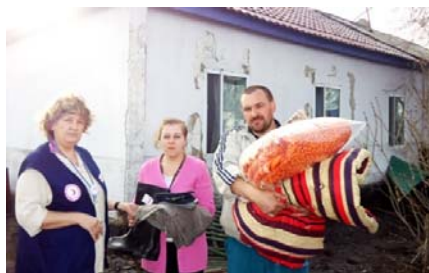
Authorities warn the country may be facing the worst drought in years

Less than normal precipitation levels in winter and late arrival of warm spring weather are causing drought across Kyrgyzstan. Authorities warn that the situation has already affected the quality of agricultural yields. Come fall season, agricultural yields are expected to be lower than usual, potentially driving up prices of basic food commodities. Humanitarian partners are assessing the situation, and will soon produce their analysis and forecasts.

Authorities in Kyrgyzstan are warning that the drought is likely to affect food prices in the fall.

Dam breaks in northern Kazakhstan

Five people dead, nine injured and over 300 houses flooded



Credit: Kazakh Red Crescent Society
Karaganda, Kazakhstan (April 2014) – a family holds items distributed by the Red Crescent following flash floods caused by a dam break

A flash flood triggered by a dam burst on 31 March killed five people and injured nine others in Kazakhstan's northern Karaganda region (oblast). The water flooded up to 354 houses in Kokpekty village. Some 400 inhabitants were evacuated. The authorities cleared yards and streets, pumping out the water out of houses' cellars, barns and other buildings. Roads, electricity lines and power supplies were restored. Overall, the Government managed the response with some support from the Kazakh Red Crescent Society in conducting needs assessments and providing bed items, clothing and hygiene kits to the affected.

Syrian Armenian refugees are struggling with assimilating back into Armenia. Housing solutions, steady employment opportunities and education are the top priorities in helping these families.

Syrian refugees struggle to adjust to region

Harsh winter in Armenia affects the vulnerable refugee families

December 2013 - January 2014 presented new challenges to the struggling Syrian Armenian refugees that fled the Syria crisis to their historic motherland. In January, the Armenian Red Cross Society observed that many refugee families found it particularly challenging to overcome the cold winter season. The climate in Armenia is harsher than in Syria, and the winter of 2013-2014 was one of the coldest in Armenia. ARCS identified 1,000 most vulnerable people to receive warm blankets, clothes, shoes and hygiene items, and provided the beneficiaries with vouchers to purchase the goods.

The Armenian Ministry of Diaspora estimates that over 16,000 refugees have entered Armenia since 2012 and some 300 newcomers arrive every month.

Syrian Armenian refugees continue struggling with assimilating into Armenia. Housing solutions, steady employment opportunities and education are the top priorities in helping these families.

A few hundred Abkhaz repatriates return to the Black Sea region

The de facto authorities of the breakaway region of Abkhazia report that about 490 Syrian refugees of Abkhaz origin returned to the region. They also report that over 5,000 ethnic Abkhaz are estimated to be in Syria. A "Repatriation Fund" has been instituted by Abkhazia's de facto authorities to manage the integration of their Syrian compatriots. The Fund has allocated around \$1.5 million since 2012 to support housing, educational and financial projects for refugees. Abkhaz Syrians are given rented apartments and receive a monthly allowance of 10,000 rubles (\$280).

Massive landslide in northern Georgia

Four dead, three people missing in Dariali Gorge

On 17 May, a landslide blocked the Georgia-Russia road and damaged Russia-Armenia gas pipeline. Rescuers have found four dead bodies; three more people are reported to be missing. The major slip happened near Gveleti village, 20km away from where the Dariali Hydro Power Plant (HPP) is currently being built in northern Georgia, near the Russian border.

The Government of Georgia undertook the necessary response measures. At the Government's request, the European Commission activated the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to monitor glacier movement and identify relevant prevention and preparedness measures. On 3 June, ECHO experts concluded that the landslide was caused by natural events and had no connection to the HPP construction works. The experts recommended installing an automatic early warning system to alarm communities of any land movement.

Landslides are common in Georgia, with more than half of its territory susceptible to high-moderate risk of landslides.³

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OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at www.unocha.org/rocca | www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int

³ "Landslide hazard assessment in Georgia." *Report on the 1st project of AES Geohazards Stream*, July 2014.

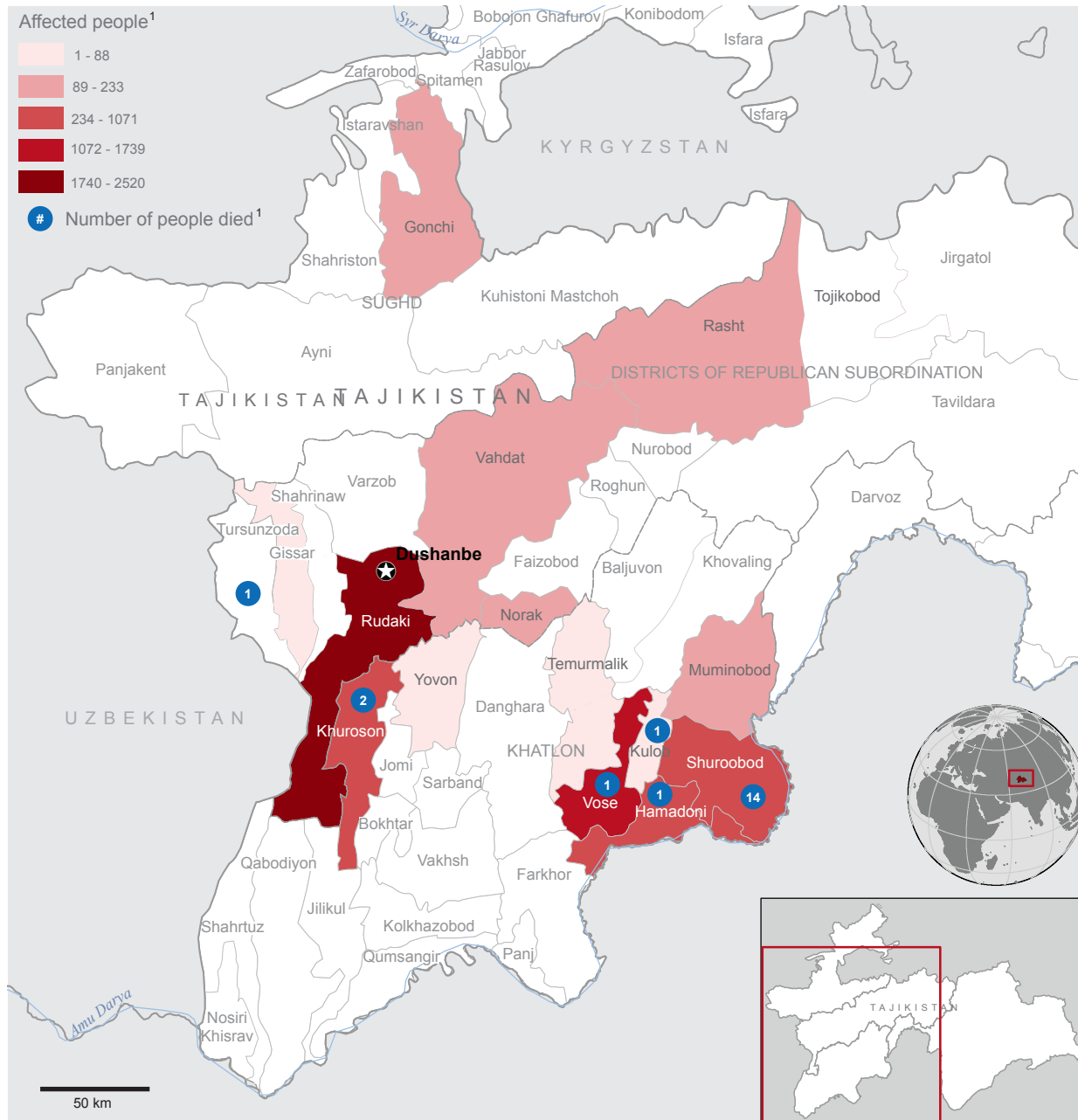
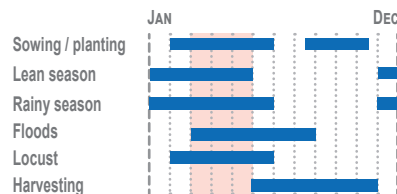
BACKGROUND

Between 11 April and 18 May 2014 a series of small to medium scale disasters occurred in several districts of Tajikistan. Flash floods and mudslides pounded the already poor communities in quick succession, leaving little time for recovery. Agricultural lands suffered significant damage at a time when planting works were taking place. Livestock also perished in the disasters, putting additional stress on the affected families who are often reliant on cattle for their livelihood.



SEASONAL AND HAZARDS CALENDAR, TAJIKISTAN²

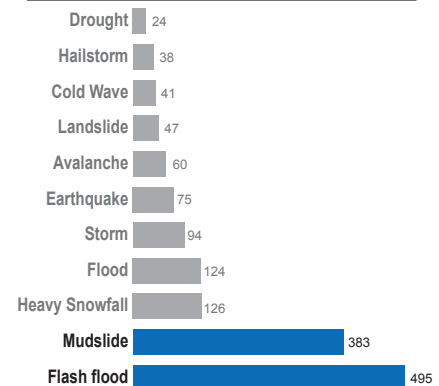
Disasters mostly occur in spring, often meddling with planting. It is also the lean season when food stocks are low.



RESPONSE

National and local military structures were immediately deployed to support Tajikistan's Committee of Emergency Situations to gain access to the affected communities. The Government carried out a rapid initial assessment and relocated the affected population to safer places and supplied life-saving items such as food, temporary shelters and blankets. The Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT), consisting of donor agencies, national and international NGOs, the National Red Crescent movement and UN agencies, complemented the Government assessment and contributed to the assistance through provision of fuel, food and non-food items. The Government issued a decree to allocate land spots for construction of houses to families who lost their dwellings.

TYPES OF DISASTERS, TAJIKISTAN, 1998-2012³



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.