JOMUN XIV

Forum: APQ
Issue: Food security in refugee camps in East Africa
Student Officer: Noah Whitfield
Position: Deputy Chair

INTRODUCTION

Since the start of the new millennia, East Africa has constantly faced civil and transnational conflict. The two main conflicts that had plague the region would be the civil wars in South Sudan and Somalia, which have led to millions of refugees flooding into neighboring countries. In the last ten years, the world have seen the establishment of Africa's newest nation, South Sudan, but with independence comes a flood of new daunting obstacles. The country remains in turmoil, having to face a civil war and a consequent refugee crisis. Much of Somalia still lacks a centralized, official government and is considered a "failed state". Somali refugees are now scattered throughout East Africa and some of the Middle East. Statistically, as the refugee population rises within large refugee camps, living conditions deteriorate and access to basic necessities becomes limited. The crisis in South Sudanese refugee camps has been declared by the UN Security Council to be "the worst in the world." Countries and organizations alike are pooling their efforts in order to get the situation under control.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Food Security

To have access to sufficient amounts of nutritious food in order to live a healthy life. East Africa struggles with ensuring food security for the displaced communities in refugee camps.

Refugee Influx

A large flow of asylum seekers from their home countries into another country. Many East African countries have seen a continual refugee influx since the start of the new millennia.

Dinka

One of the two largest South Sudanese ethnic groups, which supports President Kiir. One of the warring groups in the South Sudanese conflict that has displaced hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese people.

Nuer

One of the two largest South Sudanese ethnic groups, which supports Riek Machar. The rebel group is a key player in the South Sudanese conflict that has displaced hundreds of thousands of South Sudanese people.

Council of Islamic Courts

A radical Islamic group of Sharia courts that was one of the key contributors to the Somali – Ethiopian conflict in 2006 which led to the Somali refugee crisis that persists up until the present.

Transitional Federal Government

The government of Somalia that was meant to take authority over Somalian warlords and Islamists, and lasted from 2004 until 2012. It was the main oppositions to the Council of Islamic Courts, which led to the terrible conflict and humanitarian crisis in 2007 that displaced hundreds of thousands of Somalis.

El Niño

A weather phenomenon that alters air pressure and temperature over the Pacific Ocean. It causes severe desertification and famine in regions like central, Eastern and Southern Africa.

BACKGROUND ON THE ISSUE

The issue of maintaining food security in East Africa has had many setbacks in the 21st century. The governments of the region had not spent much of their budgets on agriculture nor the food production industry. Much of the region's staple food was imported. When major armed conflicts arose, the already small agricultural industry was flattened and refugees fled to crowded temporary settlements that had inefficient distribution methods. Climate change landed the final blow, by decertifying more of the region's land, making it near impossible to grow crops. Famine followed drought, leaving vulnerable refugee populations in a terrible crisis. Lack of sufficient food in a country tends to be followed by less children attending school and higher mortality rates. These effects set back a country's human development, as low mortality rates and high education rates are required for higher development. Luckily, outside help was brought in from the international community to assist refugees in East Africa.

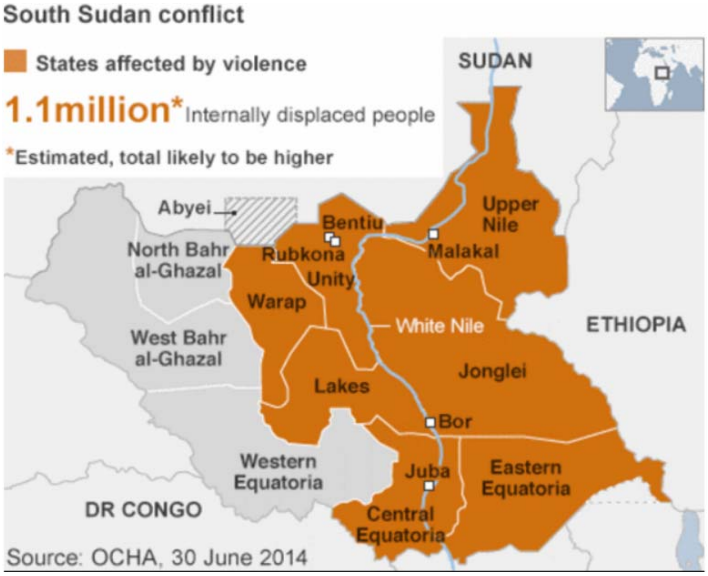
Civil War in Somalia

Since the early 2000's, Somalia has faced constant political unrest. Up until the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in 2004, most of the country was ruled by warlords and radical Islamists. It was meant to function as the centralized executive branch of government, in the capital city, Mogadishu. Unfortunately, its flaw was that it was not a

unifying, decided upon government and rather a coalition. The TFG was funded and promoted by the United States of America, as well as Ethiopia. Since it challenged unofficial authorities and rulers in the country, Islamist and insurgent groups, one being the Council of Islamic Courts, waged war against the Transitional Federal Government. After the CIC defeated the TFG in a conflict that lasted from 2005 until 2006, Ethiopia invaded the capital city of Mogadishu. Most of the fighting took place in Mogadishu, where there was the most loss of life and displacement. At the time after the civil conflict in 2007, it was officially a failed state. At this time around 300,000 residents fled, with hundreds of thousands more who left later on. The city is still very much in shambles and lacks security. Many farmers also fled, leaving the main food source of the country to be fish, which is not very sustainable and lessens food security. As a result of this, Somalian residents continue to flee and seek refuge in neighboring nations, such as Ethiopia and Kenya.

South Sudanese Civil War

After establishing itself as an independent nation from Sudan, South Sudan has had relentless political problems regarding the country's governance. The president in power is Salva Kiir, who is supported by the Dinka population in the country. His opposition is, Riek Machar, rallied the support of the Nuer population. This allowed the conflict to transcend politics and become of matter of conflicting ethnic groups. The president accused Machar of trying to start a revolt against the leadership, which resulted in a violent conflict that broke out in December, 2013. Innocent citizens began being targeted by militia based on their ethnicity and were killed, raped or had their property destroyed. This made the overall climate of the country extremely violent and dangerous, thus inciting a mass exodus of asylum seekers, attempting to flee the conflict zone. In January of 2014, peace talks continue, although ceasefires are frequently violated because of disorganized, fringe militia groups. The United Nations deployed security forces to



assist in nation building, but in May of 2014 it had to change the mandate so that the 7,600 peacekeepers and 6,000 security forces in South Sudan could be used to protect civilians, using lethal force if necessary. Most recently in July of 2015, it has been reported that 166,000 South Sudanese refugees reside on UN bases, known as Protection of Civilian sites. Since the conflict began, farmers have been unable to plant and harvest crops, leaving the nation with a dwindling food supply and high amounts of food insecurity.

Drought/Famine

Recently, East African has suffered an intense drought, with 2011 having been the driest year since 1951. Farmers crops have diminished and harvests yield very little. At the same time, the cost of stable cereal grain is more expensive than it has been. More underdeveloped, agricultural areas have received famine warnings. In these particular areas, in some cases up to 90% of people's cattle has died, which takes away their livelihood by leaving them without meat or dairy resources. In refugee camps, the situation of malnutrition is a severe issue within those communities. A total of around 36 million people in East and Southern Africa are affected by the drought. As of 2016, 20 million have been left food insecure. The drought is said to be connected to the El Niño weather phenomenon, which alters air pressure and temperature over the Pacific and subsequently continues to ripples these conditions over the whole world. Four fifths of Ethiopia's crops rely on water, therefore making their particular situation the most disastrous of all the East African countries. Additionally, the largest refugee population is harbored within Ethiopia.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATION INVOLVED

World Food Programme:

WFP supplies food resources to nations in emergency situations, aiming to provide food security through their food – for – assets and cash – for – assets projects. WFP has given aid and assistance to all nations suffering from the refugee crisis, this year, aiming to assist 3 million people in South Sudan.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN:

FAO runs 42 drought relief and food security programs with Africa. Its aim is to increase the harvest yield of cereal and fruit crops by using different agricultural strategies. It seeks to develop sustainable agriculture in poorer communities in East Africa to reduce further food insecurity.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

The UNHCR works with governments of conflict nations and governments that host refugees in order to ensure safety and food security within asylum systems. In East Africa the UNHCR provides basic needs and services to refugee communities, while also investing specifically in the well-being of women and children refugees. It currently has a billion dollar budget plan for ensuring refugee safety in all of East Africa.

Somalia:

Somalia is the origin place for many of the refugees who seek asylum in Kenya and Ethiopia. As a result of a weak economy, it cannot deal with its refugee crisis alone. It seeks to work in accordance with the UN in order to ensure the safety and food security of all Somalians living outside of the country.

Kenya:

Kenya is a hub for many Somali and South Sudanese refugees, with around 500,000 seeking refuge within the country. Its largest refugee camps being Dabaab and Kakuma are starting to push their carrying capacities, and as a result of the drought in the region, food insecurity has become a large problem. Kenya receives continual assistance from the WFP and UNHCR.

South Sudan:

South Sudan's food crisis is said to be "the worst in the world." Many hundred thousand residents of South Sudan have decided to flee as a result of the civil war, with just as many having died as a result of the violence and or food insecurity. South Sudan receives aid and assistance from most, if not all international humanitarian organizations, including the WFP and UNHCR. The country pursues peace talks between opposing political leaders, Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, and is working to ensure food security of South Sudanese people in and outside of South Sudan.

Ethiopia:

Ethiopia borders South Sudan and Somalia. In late 2006, Ethiopia launched an offensive on the Council of Islamic Courts in Mogadishu, Somalia, leading to large loss of life and destruction of property, leading to the destabilization of the country and the exodus of many Somali refugees. Ethiopia has received hundreds of thousands of Somali and South Sudanese refugees, and as of August 2014 is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa.

TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

November 2004	FOA raises $766 million to develop the agriculture and livestock infrastructure within African nations to increase harvest yield and reduce famine risk.
January 2007	Major armed conflict and humanitarian crisis in Somalia, displacing up to 300,000 residents from the capital of Mogadishu.
September 2011	Food and Agriculture Organization declares drought in East Africa the worst in 60 years.
December 2013	Start of civil war in South Sudan; armed conflict arises between Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, UN Security Council deploys 6,000 security forces into South Sudan.
July 2014	South Sudanese food crisis becomes dire; UN Security Council declare South Sudanese food crisis the worst in the world; World Food Programme has cuts in food ration for 800,000 refugees. Malnutrition rates in South Sudan increases.
August 2014	Ethiopia becomes the largest asylum host in Africa; Ethiopia hosts around 665,000 refugees in 8 refugee camps, some of which are pushing capacity.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The UN General Assembly has drafted several resolutions on the topic of agriculture and food security for East African nations. These focus on promoting agricultural investment, strengthening social protection of vulnerable groups and reducing hunger. The UN is still trying to achieve long term solutions to food insecurity in the region.

The Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security: November 2009

This calls for world nations to invest in country-owned programmes, promote better resource allocation and ensure sustained investment in agriculture and food security in developing nations.

Agriculture Development and Food Security: December 22 2008, A/Res/63/235

Asks to address agricultural and food security through national and international policies, and develop a report on agriculture and food security for further reference and decision making.

Agriculture Development and Food Security: August 10 2012, A/Res/67/228

Promotes international support of African programmes for food security, the revitalization of agriculture and rural development sectors, the removal of food taxes for humanitarian use, more agricultural productivity and appropriate harvesting practices.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees

East African nations, such as Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, along with Yemen agreed to *Addis Ababa Commitment towards Somali Refugees,* which states that these countries must maintain asylum space for Somali refugees and improve the quality of refugee camps. These countries have held up the agreement to retain asylum space for refugees, but on the other hand have not maintained nor improved the quality of many of their refugee camps. In some cases, refugee camps are going past their carrying capacity.

FOA Food Security Programme

In 2004, the Food and Agriculture Organization aimed to aid developing countries within Africa and collected $766 million in order to: increase harvests of cereal, horticultural as well as fruit crops, improve livestock variety, prevent against insect pests and animal parasites, raise food safety standards and reinforce infrastructures that allow the competitive marketing of goods and produce. This programme was not sustainable as Africa only uses 4% of its available water for crop irrigation; in contrast, Asia uses 40% of its available water for crop irrigation. In the coming years after the programme, a serious drought also plagued the region, making it near impossible to farm crops.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Improve agricultural infrastructure

Very little arable land in East Africa is exploited and the governments of these nations have greatly neglected their agricultural sector. In regards to the balance of food produced, most East African nations are at a deficit of a few hundred million USD, while countries like Brazil are in excess by many billion USD. These nations would largely benefit from improved agricultural infrastructure, which would increase their crop yields and provide many nations with a certain degree of food security. Better agricultural infrastructure would include, but would not be

limited to: more efficient irrigation systems, modern farming machinery, less harmful pesticides etc.

Establishment of new refugee camps

In most refugee camps in East Africa, food is usually hard to come by, especially if the camps are overcrowded. Unfortunately, this is the case for many camps like Dabaab and Yusuf Batil in Kenya and South Sudan. The people in these camps live off of 5 or 10 day food ration packs, which sometimes aren't distributed on a normal basis and aren't very much to start off with. If new refugee camps could be established in less isolated areas, refugees could be redistributed, allowing for the reduction of overcrowding and better access for aid organizations. To have many refugee camps would mean that no one camp would overcrowd and push its carrying capacity to the point that living conditions drastically diminish.

Find better distribution routes or methods of distribution

In truth, the world has more than enough food to feed every person on the planet, but unfortunately, food is more abundant in some places and not others. Often, the World Food Programme has a difficult time distributing important food supplies to refugee camps that are in need, due to violent conflict around distribution routes. Instead of reducing food rations or failing to provide aid, it would be helpful to find more efficient supply routes or better methods of distribution. If an area is too dangerous to cross through via ground vehicle, air drops or boats could be utilized in order to ensure food security to at risk refugees.

WORKS CITED

"Civil War in South Sudan." Http://www.cfr.org/. N.p., 15 Apr. 2016. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Sasson, Albert. "Agriculture & Food Security." Food Security for Africa: An Urgent Global Challenge. N.p., 19 Apr. 2012. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Menkhaus, Ken. "The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts." N.p., 2007. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Momodu, Sulaiman. "Ethiopia Becomes Africa's Largest Asylum Host." N.p., 13 May 2015. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

"2015 UNHCR Subregional Operations Profile - East and Horn of Africa." N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

"Kenya." Https://www.wfp.org. N.p., 2016. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Ford, Elise. East Africa Food Crisis: Poor Rains, Poor Response. N.p.: Oxfam GB, 2011. Https://www.oxfam.org/. 20 July 2011. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

"East Africa Food Security Alert October 27, 2015." Http://reliefweb.int/. N.p., 27 Oct. 2015. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Allen, Jesse. "Natural Hazards." Http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

Lamble, Lucy, and Emma Graham-Harrison. "Drought and Rising Temperatures 'leaves 36m People across Africa Facing Hunger'" Http://www.theguardian.com/. N.p., 16 Mar. 2016. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.

APPENDIX

- South Sudan crisis abstract
  http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/civil-war-in-south-sudan
- Somali conflict abstract
  http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/content/106/424/357.abstract
- Influx of Somali/South Sudanese refugees into other east African countries
  http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45a846.html
- UNHCR definition on food security and their mission statement
  http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cec.html
- Breakdown of food situation by refugee camp in South Sudan
  http://www.unhcr.org/536a12999.html
- Reasons for lack of food security in refugee camps
  https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bn-east-africa-food-crisis-200711-en.pdf
- Alarming health and nutrition for Somali refugees
  http://www.unhcr.org/503881659.html
- UNHCR distribution info on supplying food to refugees
  http://www.unhcr.org/53b2a1969.html
- Drought in Kenya/ activities and contributions by the WFP
  https://www.wfp.org/node/3497/2608/279525
- Flooding and destruction of agriculture in Somalia
  http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/east-africa-food-security-alert-october-27-2015
- Info on humanitarian aid to the East Africa/ statistics on malnutrition and drought
  http://agricultureandfoodsecurity.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/2048-7010-1-2
  http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-28502260
  http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/ethiopia-becomes-africas-largest-asylum-host.html
  http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/NaturalHazards/view.php?id=51411
  http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/16/drought-high-temperatures-el-nino-36m-people-africa-hunger
  http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/susdevtopics/sdt_pdfs/SG%20Report%20on%20Agriculture%20Development%20and%20Food%20Security.pdf