

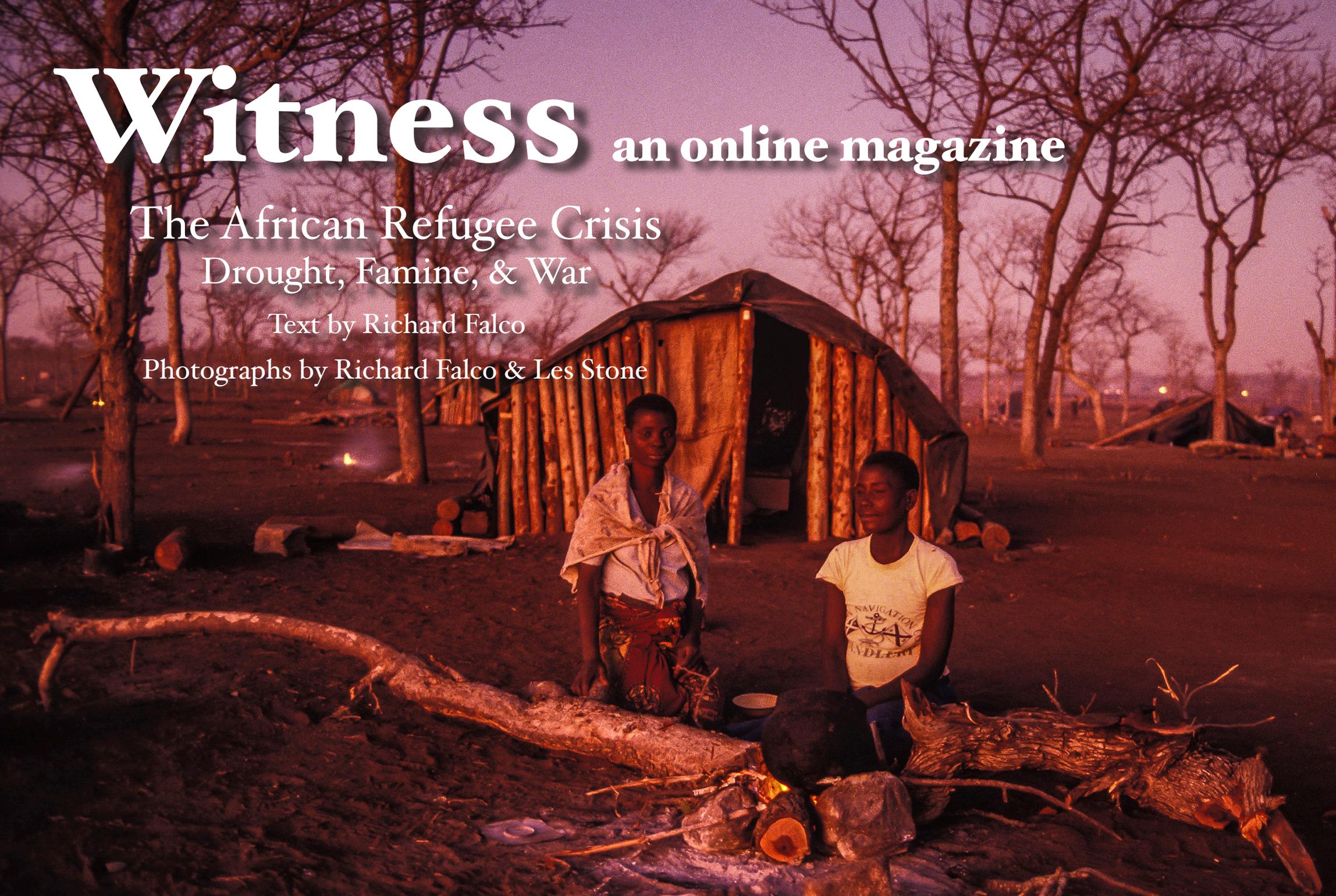
# Witness

an online magazine

## The African Refugee Crisis Drought, Famine, & War

Text by Richard Falco

Photographs by Richard Falco & Les Stone



# The African Refugee Crisis

## Drought, Famine, & War

Text by Richard Falco

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For decades, Africa has been afflicted by the horrors of war and famine. The last decade has witnessed a steady climb in violence across sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that between 9.2-10 million people have died over the last 10 years due to the effects of armed conflicts. Over 70% of these individuals have been civilians -- mostly women and children.

After the Second World War, many of the European colonies on the African continent sought independence. The situation became exasperating because Africa became the place where the Cold War competition between the United States and the Soviet Union played out most violently. Each side sought to shore up their African allies by rewarding them with generous military aid packages or conversely undermining hostile regimes by providing covert military assistance and training to anti-government rebels. The latter tactic led to the rise, and extensive use, of proxy armies by the superpowers or regional allies, which often inflamed longstanding regional tensions, chronic societal and political divisions, or helped to sustain high levels of civil conflict. In what would become the ultimate litmus test of the Cold War, African independence movements and emergent African governments were forced to declare their allegiance to one side or the other. By 1970, more than 35 new countries had come into being courted by either the United States or the Soviet Union. <sup>1</sup>

During this time, the number of states at war or with significant lethal conflicts doubled to 22. Full-blown regional wars grew out of conflicts in the Congo, Liberia, and Rwanda in the mid-'90s; simmering tensions boiled over





A mother and her child arrive at a small military post in Zimbabwe, exhausted after traveling many miles from Mozambique. Word has spread among the women fleeing the conflict that if they can reach one of these outposts, they will be transported to the relative safety of a refugee camp.

between Ethiopia and Eritrea and led to a major interstate war; civil wars in Angola, Mozambique, Somalia, and Sudan have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives; and ethnopolitical hatred in Rwanda led to the genocide of nearly one million people. Currently, over one-quarter of sub-Saharan African states are engaged in either civil or interstate conflict, or both. Several others are threatened by an imminent political, religious, or ethnic division that could erupt into violent conflict at any time.

The post-Cold War decade, which held out the promise of an “African renaissance,” deteriorated rapidly into severe instability across the continent and shows no sign of abating.

The United Nations estimates that there are some 38.8 million internally displaced people and 6.6 million refugees in Africa. As the drought and war rage, the majority of people who become refugees are women and children. Women comprise about half of the refugee population and children under the age of 18 constitute 57% of all refugees in Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In these conflicts, men are usually caught up in the fighting and are on one side or another. It is the women and children who are caught in between. It is they who seek out safety and stability from the chaos and ensuing famine. Often, they will travel great distances under harsh and dangerous conditions to refugee camps that have been established at the peripheries of the conflict.

Complicating the situation is the fact that 80% of the refugees have migrated to countries that are classified as least developed. These countries have over-stretched their inadequate resources and are least capable of handling the influx of the crisis.

Refugee children undergo a terrible childhood. Many will become sick or die. Others will lose their parents to death or kidnapping and become orphans. The ones that survive live a harsh existence, continually witnessing the tragedy that surrounds them. Every day millions of children will wait in line for hours for a plate or can of pasty gruel. They are completely dependent upon the United Nations, NGOs, or other government agencies to feed them.

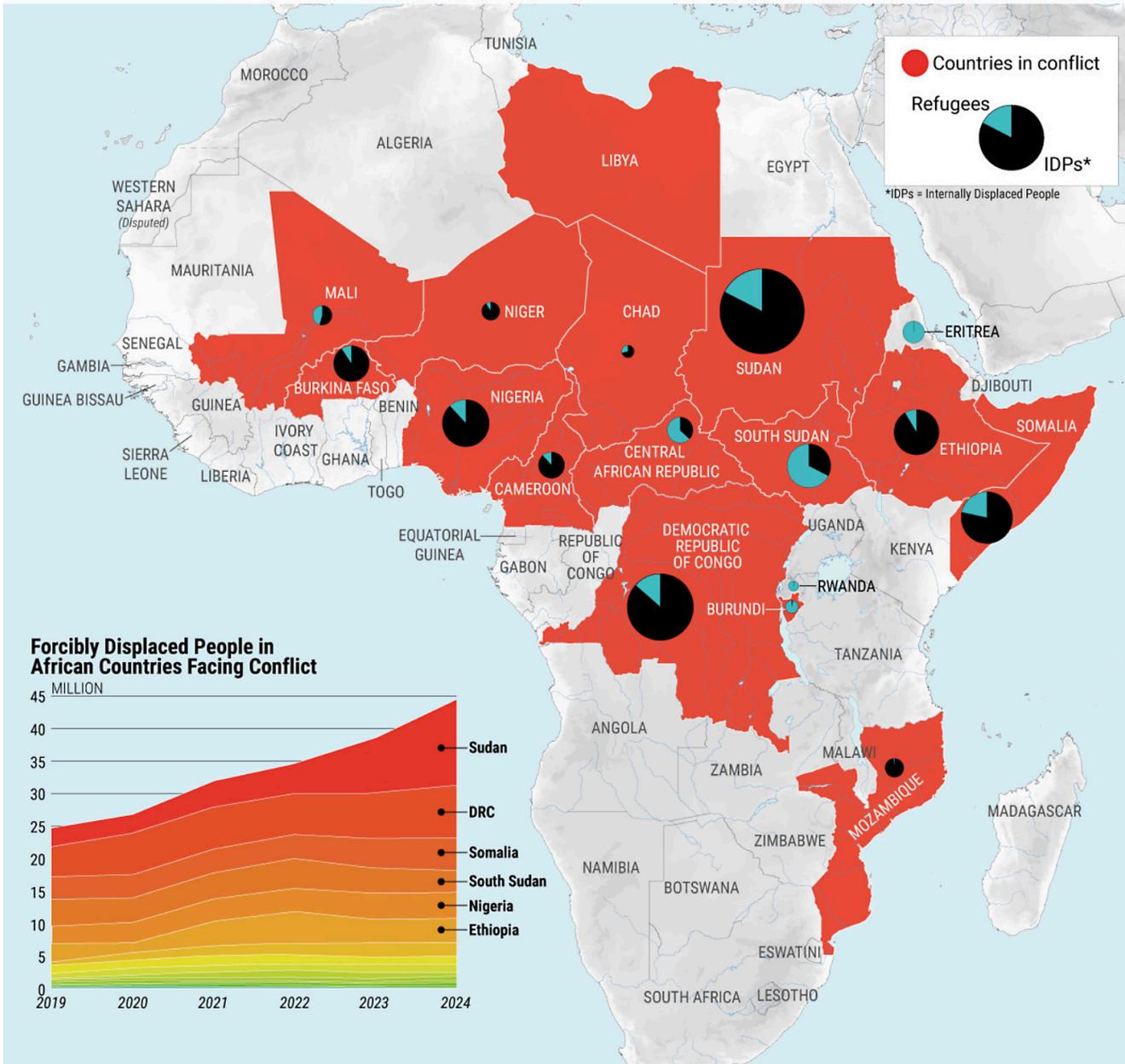




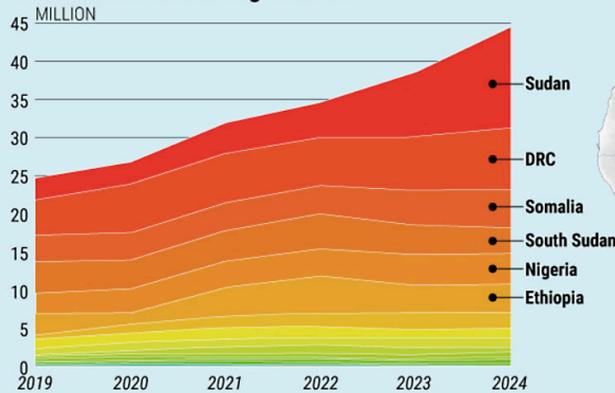
A child clings to life in an Ethiopian refugee camp. Ethiopia will host over 1,600,00 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, Eritrea, and Somalia.



# Displacement and Conflict in Africa

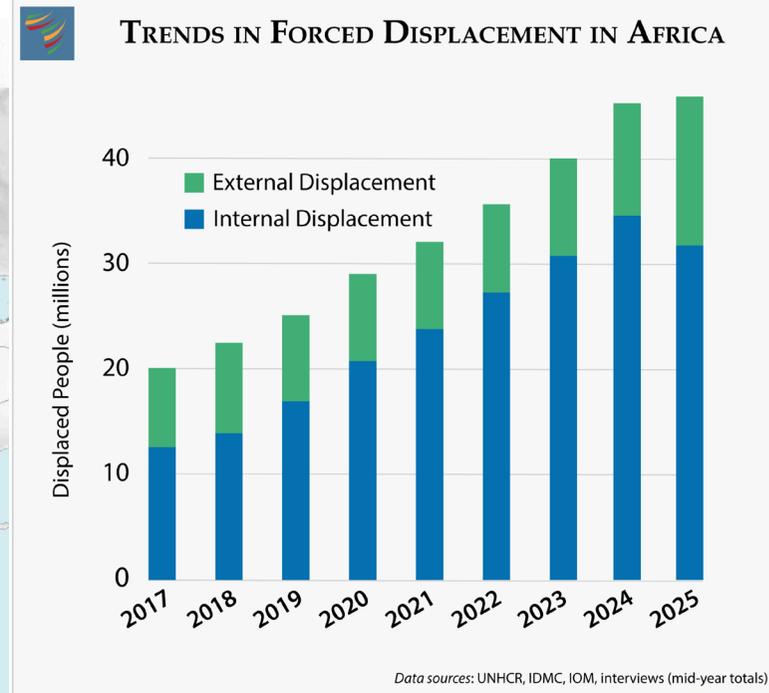


**Forcibly Displaced People in African Countries Facing Conflict**



Sources: UNHCR, IOM, IDMC

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Data sources: UNHCR, IDMC, IOM, interviews (mid-year totals)

Countries Most Contributing to Forced Displacement in Africa				
Country	IDPs	Refugees and Asylum Seekers	Total Displaced	Percentage of Country's Population Displaced (%)
Sudan	10,065,329	4,346,222	14,411,551	29
DRC	5,160,000	1,389,887	6,549,887	6
Somalia	3,228,940	1,185,750	4,414,690	23
Nigeria	3,575,114	501,107	4,076,221	2
Burkina Faso	3,612,535	388,148	4,000,682*	17
South Sudan	944,900	2,397,965	3,342,865	28
Ethiopia	1,747,194	322,796	2,069,990	2
Cameroon	969,273	187,635	1,156,908	4
CAR	446,722	701,830	1,148,552	22
Mali	402,167	412,185	832,815*	3
Eritrea	0	663,058	663,058	19
Niger	459,585	54,710	514,295	2
Mozambique	461,237	9,058	470,295	1
Burundi	7,000	381,731	388,731	3
Chad	225,689	49,041	274,730	1

**Total Forcibly Displaced in Africa: 45,737,653**

Data sources: IDMC, UNHCR, World Bank (mid-2025 data). \* Estimate. Countries in Conflict.



Somalian refugees wait in endless lines for food.  
To this day, the country is still torn apart by rival warring factions.

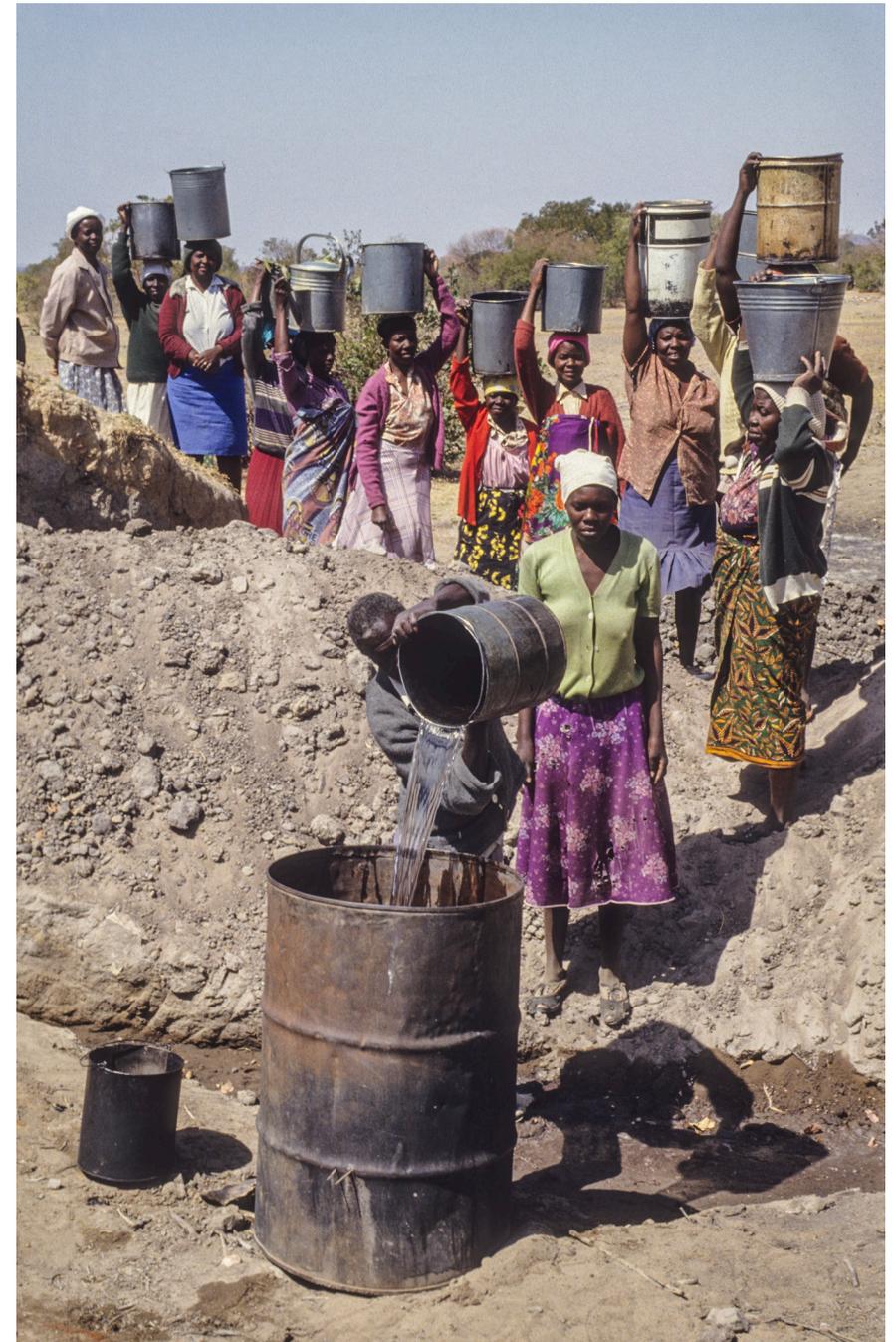
# Drought

Water is life. A human can survive for days without food, but not without water. Over the past quarter century, sub-Saharan Africa has endured at least six major, region-wide droughts. These extreme events have brought cascading consequences: mass hunger, widespread displacement, and hundreds of thousands of deaths. Beyond the immediate human toll, droughts have devastated economies, triggering agricultural collapse, water scarcity, power shortages, and environmental degradation. And these events are becoming more frequent and more severe.

When you add ongoing civil wars and violent conflicts to the equation, the crisis becomes far more complex—and dangerous. Drought and war together drive massive refugee flows, often into neighboring countries that are themselves unstable. In conflict



A farmer surveys his ruined crop, devastated by a severe drought. (top)  
Water is stored in an empty drum and carefully rationed for use throughout the day. (right).





Workers begin excavating the dry soil to find water for a well. (above)

zones, where people are already displaced and food insecurity is widespread, many are cut off entirely from aid. Without functioning governments to coordinate water relief or food distribution, humanitarian disaster is inevitable.

Farming grinds to a halt—not just because of drought, but due to displacement, land mines, or militia threats. Livestock die or are stolen. Infrastructure is damaged or inaccessible, and aid organizations attempting to reach affected populations are often blocked or attacked.

Conflict doesn't just complicate drought response—it multiplies the human cost and deepens suffering. Today, roughly 12 to 15 refugee settlements are in areas prone to recurring drought. In these regions, humanitarian challenges related to water, health, nutrition, and security are reaching crisis levels.

Children gather water from an established well. They will carry it back to their campsite. (bottom left).

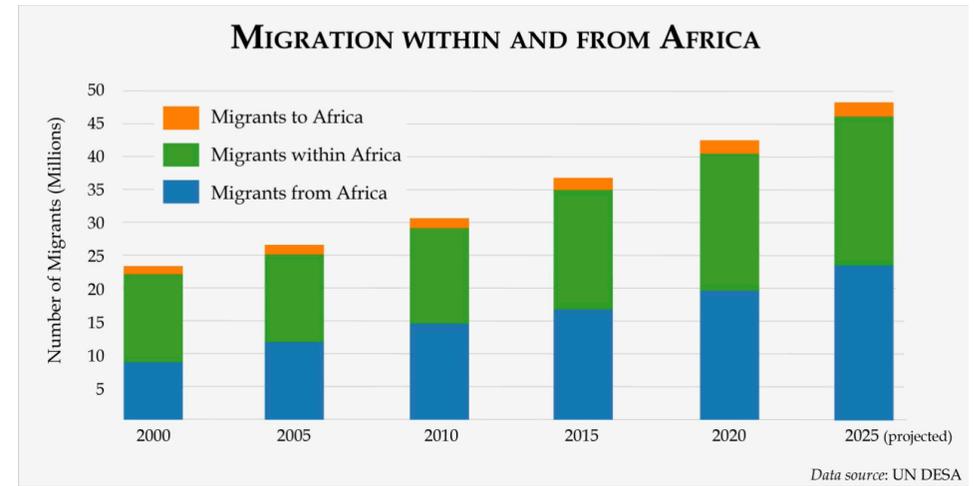


A worker carves out a tunnel to lay the foundation for a new well. (above)





Refugees wait at the induction center at Chambuta Refugee Camp.



Today unprecedented numbers of children are undereducated, malnourished, unemployed, and marginalized from major social, economic and political processes. Many children are finding it difficult to pursue academic and vocational education and livelihoods that would enable them to become economically independent and make an orderly transition into adulthood.<sup>3</sup>

The life of a refugee is a perpetual state of waiting. Their prospects of returning home grow dimmer and dimmer with time. War brought not only displacement but also massive destruction of social and economic infrastructure, including housing, health clinics, and schools.<sup>4</sup>

Refugees are often continually on the move until they can find a relatively stable situation. They will periodically seek out places where rest, food, and safety exist. But as soon as the fighting closes in, fear drives them onto the road again. Though some of the resettlement areas provide relative safety to their inhabitants, they also create an equal number of other problems, such as food, sanitation, disease, water, and housing.

In a number of the camps throughout Sub-Saharan Africa the population are as high as 50,000 people. All of these individuals are totally dependent upon the world's aid organizations for survival. The continent must find a way to create lasting social, political, and economic stability, otherwise the camps will become only temporary answers to problems that require permanent solutions.

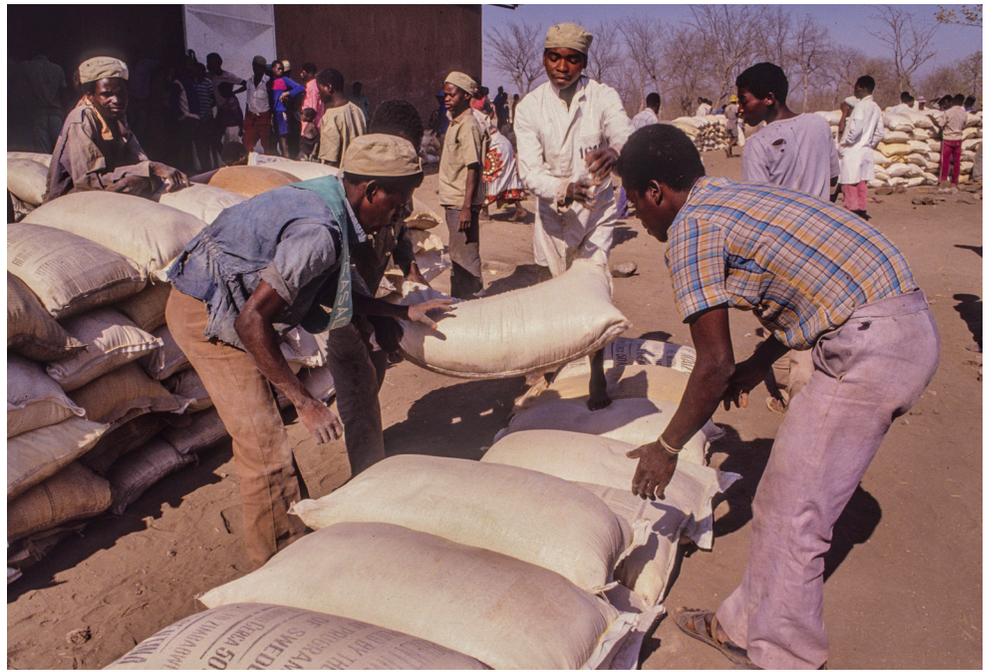
According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 28 countries in Africa depend on food aid to feed their populations.



The main source of nourishment in the camps is known as refugee gruel.  
Delivered in large sacks, this simple porridge is made from readily available, inexpensive grains and often serves as the primary food source.



Relief workers stack large bags of refugee gruel.



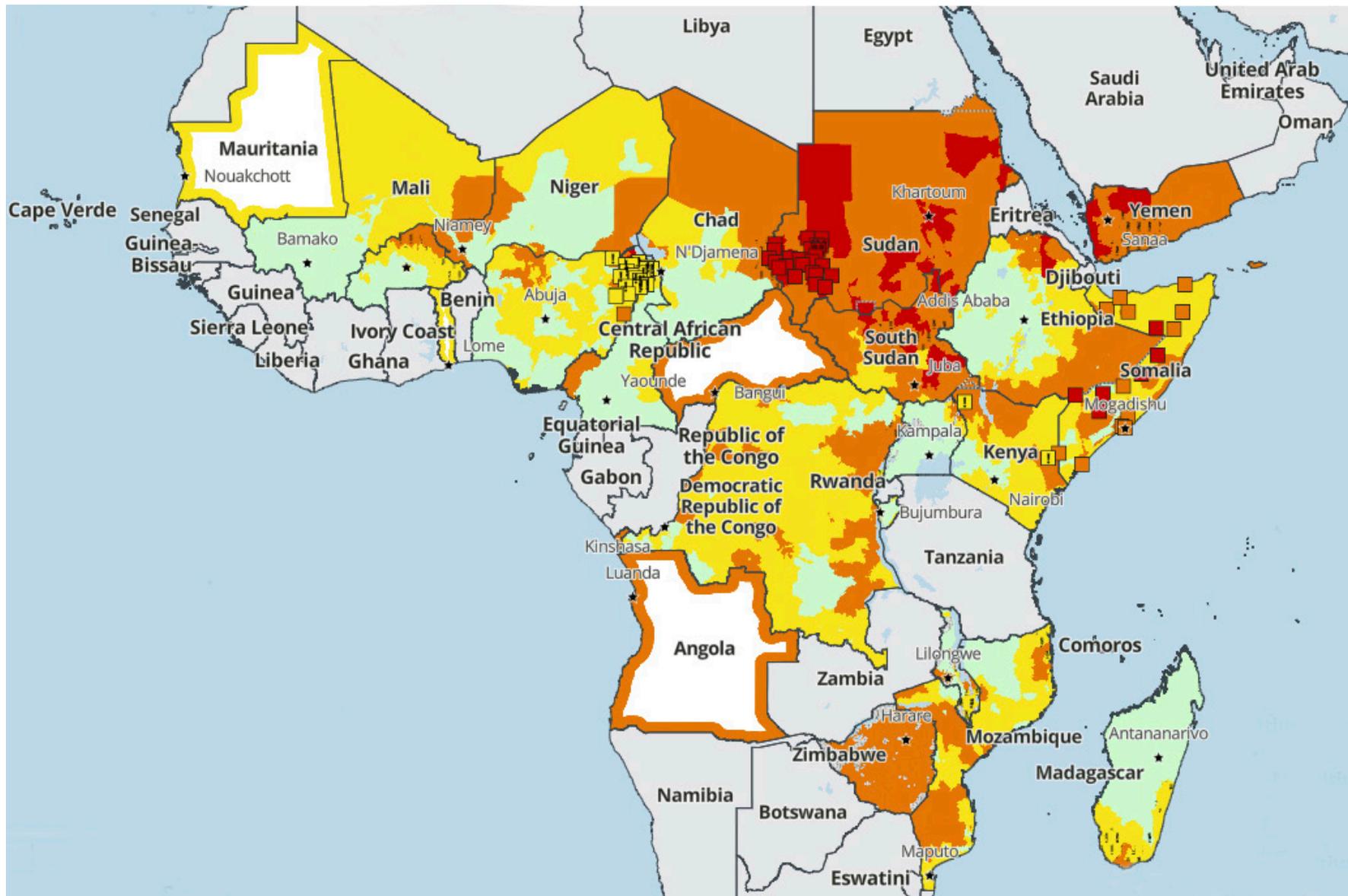
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports that sub-Saharan Africa has received an average of 136,000 tons of food aid annually over the past 20 years.



Without the intervention of NGOs and other donor organizations, survival for many would be impossible.







**October 2024 - January 2025  
Near Term Projection**

**IPC 3.1 Acute Food Insecurity Classification**

The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) acute food insecurity scale classifies areas according to a five-phase scale of increasing severity.

**Presence Countries**

- 1: Minimal
- 2: Stressed
- 3: Crisis
- 4: Emergency
- 5: Famine

Outcomes may be worse than mapped, but limitations on information reduce the ability to confirm or deny

- Not mapped
- National Parks/Reserves

**Remote Monitoring Countries**

Highest IPC classification in areas of concern within the country

- 1: Minimal
- 2: Stressed
- 3+: Crisis or higher

**Symbols**

- Settlement of displaced populations
- Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or planned humanitarian food assistance

**The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)  
Acute Food Insecurity Area Classification**

More than 30 million people in southern Africa will need significant food aid through the upcoming lean season, according to a new report from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). This represents an increase of 50 percent from the 2023-2024 lean season.

Conflict and extreme weather are the major drivers of the region's growing humanitarian needs.<sup>8</sup>



Once individuals have been integrated into the camps, they are given a weekly food ration. In many cases, this includes a cereal, some pulses, vegetable oil, and some salt and sugar. When the shipments arrive, refugees are told to come to the distribution area to pick up their allotment.



Too often, hunger can cause chaos. Aid workers are always trying to keep the situation calm.

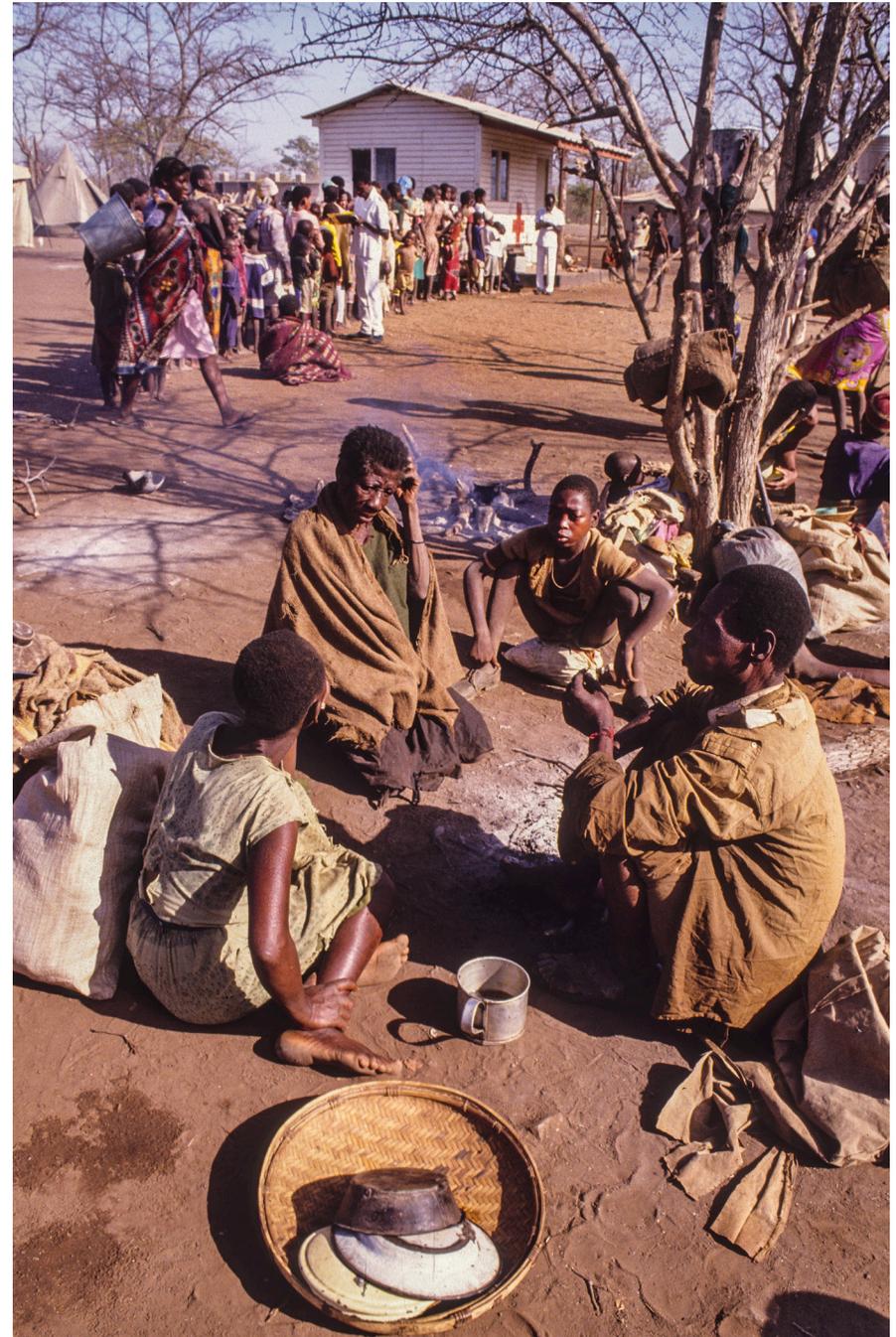




After receiving their ration, they must walk it back to where they have settled within the camp.



In 2023, the World Food Program (WFP) distributed nearly 3.1 million metric tons of food to people in need, including refugees in Africa. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, sub-Saharan Africa hosts more than 26 percent (over 18 million) of the world's refugees.



Upon arrival at a camp, so much time is spent waiting.



Mothers often arrive with only their children, trying to care for them as much as possible under the conditions. The presence of young men is scarce, largely due to their involvement in the conflict.



An estimated 57% of refugees in Africa are children under eighteen, highlighting the severe impact of displacement on the young.



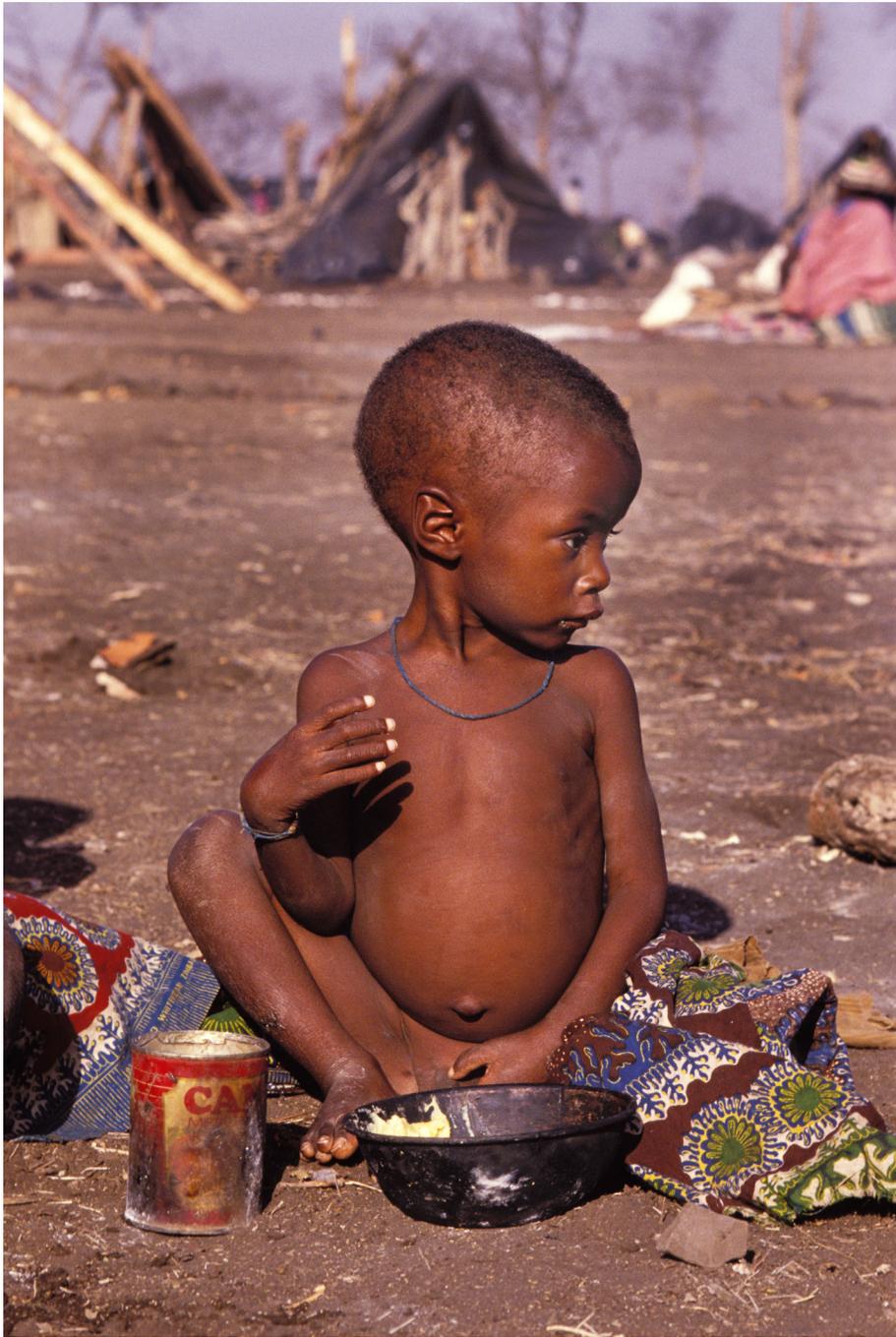
It's been days since some of the children last had anything to eat.



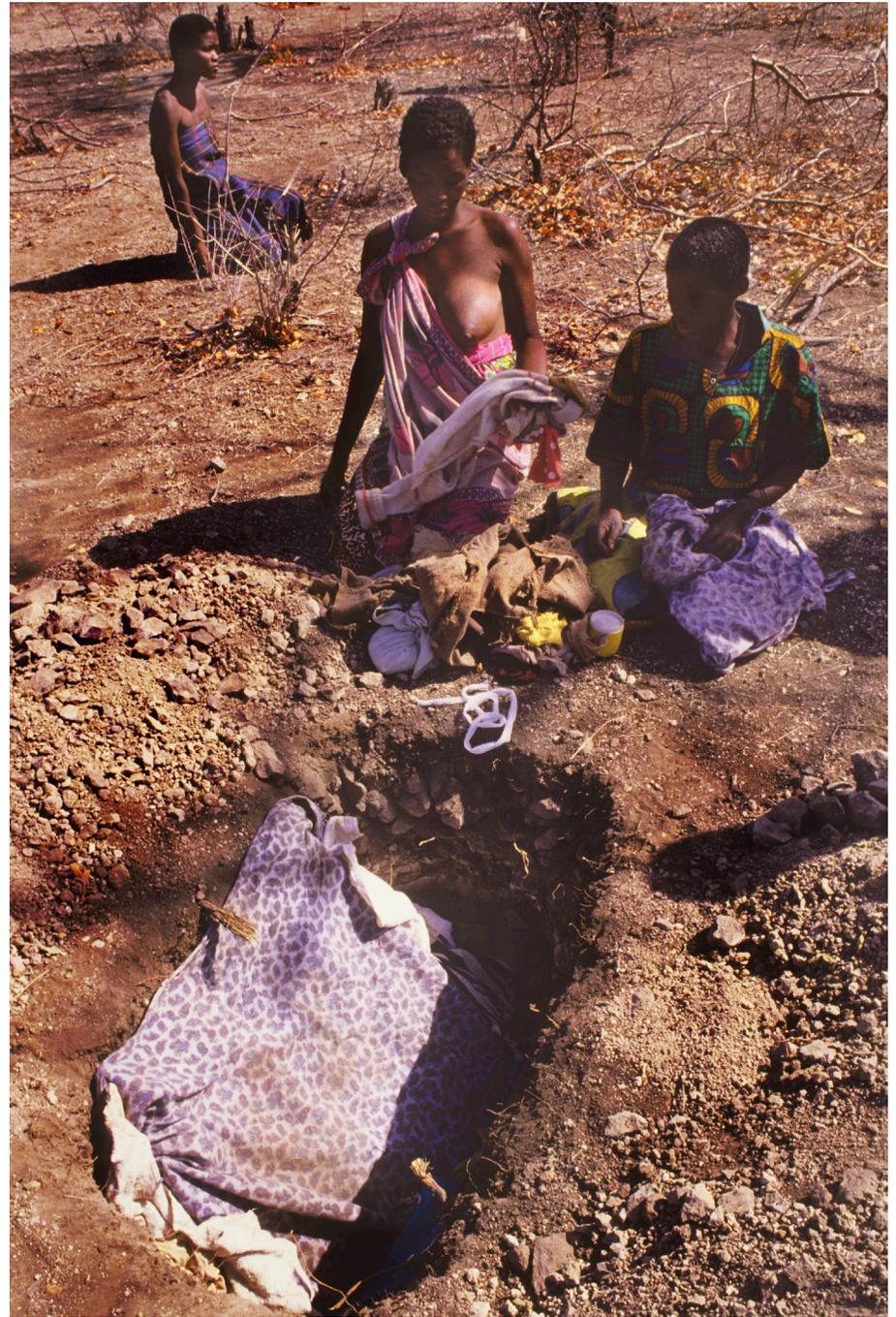


In many of the camps, refugees are provided with a pasty gruel made by mixing flour with water and heating it. They eat this twice a day.





For the youngest, survival is the most difficult.



Every day, children die as their mothers quietly mourn.



Death is a daily reality in refugee camps across the sub-Saharan region, with children suffering the highest toll. The majority of the deaths are attributed to starvation, disease, and violence.



Tragically, hundreds of people are buried in unmarked graves, only to be quickly forgotten as time goes by.



Life in the camps is a slow crawl until sundown.

## Blood Diamonds



Much of Africa's ongoing violence and conflicts are financed by the exploitation of the region's natural resources. These resources include oil, gold, cobalt, coltan, and diamonds. State, Non-State, and rebel groups seek to control and mine these resources to sell them on the international market to buy weapons. The United Nations has created the term for these resources:

*"Conflict resources."* Conflict resources are resources that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the Security Council.

Over the past few decades, seven African countries have endured brutal civil conflicts fueled by diamonds: Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, the Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rival groups also fight with each other to control diamond-rich territory. The tragic result is bloodshed, loss of life, and shocking human rights abuses – from rape to the use of child soldiers. Diamonds that fuel civil wars are often called "blood" or "conflict" diamonds. Past wars fueled by diamonds have taken about 3.7 million lives.<sup>5</sup>

Conflict diamonds are used by rebel forces to purchase arms and facilitate other illegal activities. These forces will often smuggle their diamonds out of areas they control and trade their diamonds in neighboring countries. In doing so, they make it quite difficult for others to trace the origin of these diamonds once they hit the market. Once the rough diamonds are polished, it is no longer possible to trace them back to their source, and they can therefore no longer be distinguished from legitimate diamonds.<sup>6</sup> Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, is believed to have taken 90% of Sierra Leone's diamond resources. These diamonds were smuggled into Liberia, which at the time was controlled by another notorious warlord, Charles Taylor. Together, they used the money to finance their wars and atrocities.

In the Central African Republic, coltan is another mineral used to fund regional conflicts. Coltan is a vital ingredient in the production of cell phones and computers. Approximately 80% of the world's supply of coltan is found in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>7</sup> In Nigeria, the main conflict resource is oil. Throughout Africa, gold, cassiterite, wolframite, tin, bauxite, cobalt, uranium, platinum, copper, iron ore, vermiculite, and zirconium are other natural resources eagerly sought after. These conflicts do not just affect the country where the resources are mined, but entire regions, often engulfing many countries at the same time. In many situations, it is more than just one natural resource that fuels the violence.





Many warlords and rebel groups around the world have historically used, and continue to use, captured or kidnapped prisoners as slaves. This practice is a severe violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.



Working in the mines across sub-Saharan Africa is a dirty, backbreaking job. Many laborers work 12 to 16 hours a day without any safety equipment or protective measures.





Those doing the grueling, most dangerous work see no financial benefit at all. Poverty is as endemic in the mines as it is in the refugee camps. The workers are controlled through violence, coercion, or the threat of death.



Diamonds are one of Sierra Leone's most valuable exports, accounting for 63% of the country's total exports and generating over \$240 million annually. Yet, despite this wealth, Sierra Leone remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

Human Rights Organizations throughout the world have classified this work as slave labor.

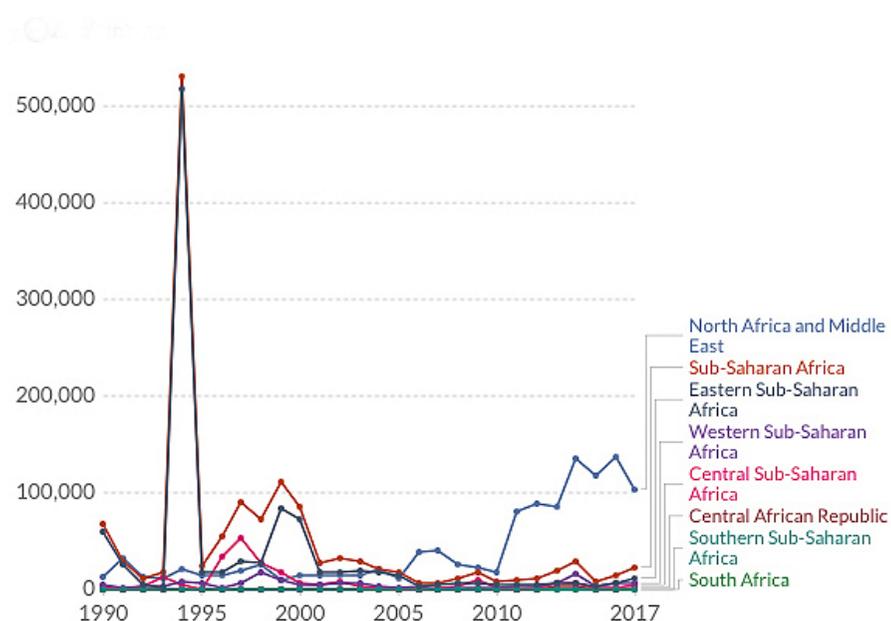


# Child Soldiers & War

## Deaths from conflict and terrorism, 1990 to 2017

Total combined number of deaths from conflict (civil conflict and war between states) and terrorism.

Our World In Data



Source: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME)

CC BY

1990 2017

Deaths from conflict and terrorism, Central African Republic, Central Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Middle East, South Africa, Southern Sub-Saharan Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Western Sub-Saharan Africa IHME,

Another tragic consequence of these conflicts is the use of child soldiers. According to a recent report released by The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, more than 300,000 children under the age of 18 serve as child soldiers with government armed forces and armed opposition groups worldwide, with over 120,000 of them located in Sub-Saharan Africa alone.

The United Nations counted a large number of African countries recruiting and using child soldiers in state forces or armed groups: Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Their ages range from 6 to 18. Many are kidnapped by rebel groups and are forced to join or die. Rebel leaders notoriously force the children to take drugs and alcohol to control and manipulate them, as well as making them conduct brutal acts of terror and rape. Many of the soldier's civilian victims have had their limbs, noses, and ears amputated. This is used as a tool of intimidation.

In Mozambique and Angola, large numbers of children were used as soldiers. The rebel group, RENAMO, in Mozambique exploited at least 10,000. In Angola, 36 percent of the children had accompanied or supported soldiers and 7 percent were actual fighters. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel movement in Uganda, notoriously used child soldiers. Children as young as eight were kidnapped, abused to the point of submission, and turned into merciless killers. Other leaders who utilized child soldiers to fight and commit atrocities were Charles Taylor of Liberia and Foday Saybana Sankoh, the founder of the Sierra Leone rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

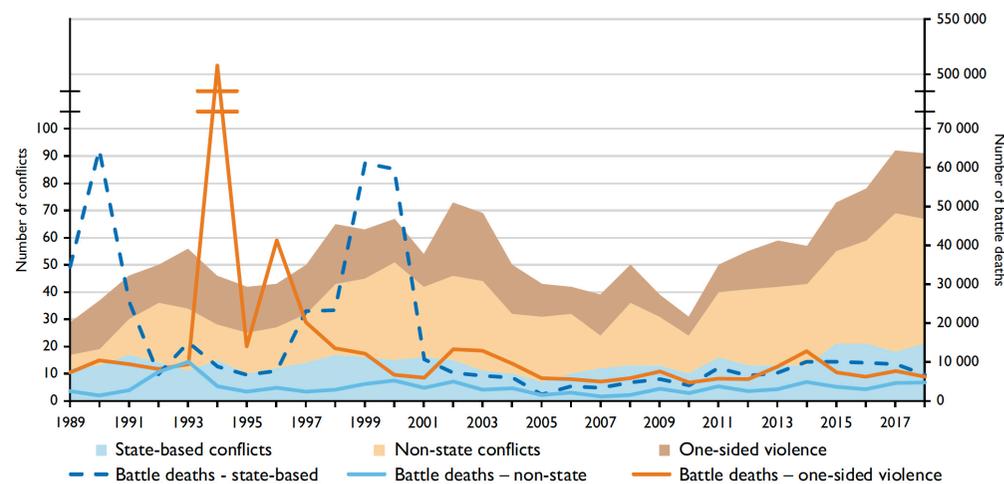


Figure 1: Conflict types and battle deaths (trends over time). Source: UCDP/PRIO database



High on drugs and adrenaline, a child soldier shows off his weapons.



Ethiopia



Ethiopia



Ethiopia



Liberia

Continually forced to take drugs, many of the child soldiers believed they were invincible. Manipulated by their leaders, they fight mercilessly, committing brutal acts of torture and rape.



A mother and daughter wait to be allowed into a UN refugee camp.  
Separated from the rest of their family, they did not know who was still alive or dead.

## **Some of Africa's most notorious rulers and warlords**

**All have been accused of genocide and crimes against humanity.**

**Idi Amin** ruled Uganda for eight years. He came to be known as the “Butcher of Uganda” for his brutality. His regime was characterized by rampant human rights abuses, including political repression, ethnic persecution, and corruption. Under his rule, 500,000 people were massacred and countless others tortured.

**Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir** became president of Sudan in 1989 and almost immediately started his assault on non-Arab Africans and his regime was designated a state sponsor of terrorism. In 2009 he was indicted for the mass killing, mass rape, and pillaging of the civilians of Darfur. The war in Darfur caused between 200,000 and 400,000 deaths. It has displaced millions of people.

**Afonso Dhlakama** was the leader of the rebel group RENAMO in Mozambique. He used thousands of child soldiers in a civil war that lasted 15 years. Over one million people were killed or died of starvation across the region.

**Charles Taylor** was a Liberian politician and guerrilla leader who served as Liberia's president from 1997 until he was forced into exile in 2003. For the next seven years, the armed factions fought a brutal civil war in which more than 150,000 people were killed and more than half of the population became refugees. Charles Taylor was convicted of war crimes in 2012.

**Jean Kambanda** became president of Rwanda at the beginning of the genocide in that country and remained president for the entire 100 days of the conflict between the Tutsis and the Hutus. When the conflict ended, 800,000 people were murdered. He is the first person ever to admit to committing genocide.

**Joshua Blahyi** used the alias, General Butt Naked. He was one of the most feared generals during the Liberian civil war of the 1990s, where he would charge into battle wearing nothing but shoes. He brutally slaughtered over 20,000 people.

**Joseph Kony** is the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army. Kony kidnapped over 66,000 children, forcing them to become child soldiers and sex slaves. Another 2 million people were displaced because of his actions. Kony was indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court but evaded capture. The LRA no longer operates in Uganda, but sources say they may be operating in other parts of Africa.

**Foday Saybana Sankoh** was the founder of the Sierra Leone rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF), which was supported by Charles Taylor. He is notorious for using children soldiers during the Sierra Leone Civil War, who used the amputation of limbs against civilians as a terror tool. An estimated 50,000 people were killed during the war, and over 500,000 people were displaced in neighboring countries.

**Thomas Lubanga** was the founder of the Union of Congolese Patriots (UCP), a group that fought for control of gold reserves in the DRC. He notorious is known for recruiting child soldiers, ethnic cleansing, and 60,000 murders. He was convicted of war crimes in 2012.

**Bosco Ntanganda** helped overthrow the Hutu-led government in Rwanda during the civil war, and then the government in DRC after which he was made head of the DRC armed forces. He was given the name, The Terminator. He is responsible for 800,000 combined deaths and countless human rights abuses.

**Robert Mugabe** started out as a rebel during the Rhodesian Civil War. Mugabe was responsible for the death of 20,000 members of the Ndebele tribe. After overthrowing the government, he became the president of the new Zimbabwe. For three decades, he oppressively ruled over a broken nation.



Among the most horrific tactics of these conflicts was the systematic use of amputations inflicted on civilians—a deliberate strategy that instilled deep fear and trauma.



Zimbabwe

The violence has no limits.



Sierra Leone



Ethiopia



The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers estimates that over 120,000 child soldiers were used by both government armed forces and armed opposition groups in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sierra Leone



The horror of having one's limbs amputated  
is a trauma  
survivors carry for the rest of their lives.



Ethiopia



Ethiopia



Ethiopia



Somalia



A woman watches as American troops arrive in Mogadishu, Somalia.

# International Intervention in Africa

Since 1960, a number of countries—both African and non-African—have directly intervened in conflicts and civil wars in Africa, either through military force, covert operations, or significant support to one side of a conflict. These interventions have been motivated by ideological, strategic, economic, colonial, or security concerns. In addition to the United Nations, the following countries have directly intervened in African conflicts.

## African Countries

### 1. Nigeria

- Liberia (1990s) – Sent troops as part of ECOWAS/ECOMOG during Liberia’s civil war.
- Sierra Leone (1990s–2000s) – Intervention alongside ECOMOG and later UN peacekeeping missions.

### 2. Rwanda

- Democratic Republic of the Congo (1996–1997; 1998–2003; 2009; 2021–present) – Backed rebels and deployed troops in the First and Second Congo Wars, Operation Kimia II / Umoja Wetu, Coordinated M23 + RDF offensive capturing key towns including Goma.

### 3. Uganda

- Democratic Republic of the Congo (1998–2003) – Supported rebels and deployed troops during the Second Congo War.
- South Sudan – Intervened in support of President Salva Kiir during the civil war.

### 4. Ethiopia

- Somalia (2006–2009; 2011–present) – Intervened against the Islamic Courts Union and later Al-Shabaab.
- Tigray (2020–2022) – Internal conflict with broader regional implications.

### 5. Chad

- Central African Republic – Periodic interventions in support of various factions or presidents.

### 6. South Africa

- Angolan Civil War (1975–2002)

- Lesotho (1998) – Military intervention to stabilize the government.
- Burundi (2000s) – Peacekeeping and military support during civil war peace process.

## Non-African Countries

### 7. France

- Algeria (1954–1962) – Brutal colonial war before independence.
- Chad (1980s–2010s) – Military interventions against rebels (Operation Épervier, Operation Barkhane).
- Mali (2013–2022) – Operation Serval and Barkhane against Islamist insurgents.
- Central African Republic (2013–2016) – Operation Sangaris.
- Côte d’Ivoire (2002–2011) – Intervention during civil war and 2010–2011 post-election crisis.

### 8. United States

- Somalia (1992–1994) – Humanitarian/military intervention (Operation Restore Hope).
- Libya (2011) – NATO-led intervention including airstrikes against Gaddafi regime.
- Various counter-terrorism operations – Including drone strikes and special forces operations in the Sahel, Somalia, and Libya.

### 9. Soviet Union / Russia

- Angola (1975–1991) – Supported the MPLA government with arms, advisors, and Cuban troops.
- Ethiopia (1977–1978) – Military support during Ogaden War against Somalia.
- Libya (post-2011) – Russia’s Wagner Group involved in Libyan civil war on behalf of Khalifa Haftar.
- Central African Republic (2018–present) Private Military Contractors, particularly the Wagner Group.

### 10. Cuba

- Angola (1975–1991) – Sent tens of thousands of troops to support the MPLA.

- Ethiopia (Ogaden War, 1977) – Troop support to Mengistu’s regime against Somalia.

#### 11. **China**

- Rare direct military interventions, but:
- Peacekeeping in Sudan, South Sudan, Mali, and Congo.
- Naval anti-piracy missions off Somalia since 2008.

#### 12. **United Kingdom**

- Sierra Leone (2000) – Operation Palliser to stabilize the government during civil war.
- Libya (2011) – Airstrikes and support for NATO-led intervention.

#### 13. **Israel**

- Covert involvement in various African countries during the Cold War era, including:
  - Uganda under Idi Amin (initial support, later raid at Entebbe, 1976).
  - South Sudan – Support to southern rebels (Anya Nya and SPLA) during Sudanese civil wars.

#### **Multi-national Interventions**

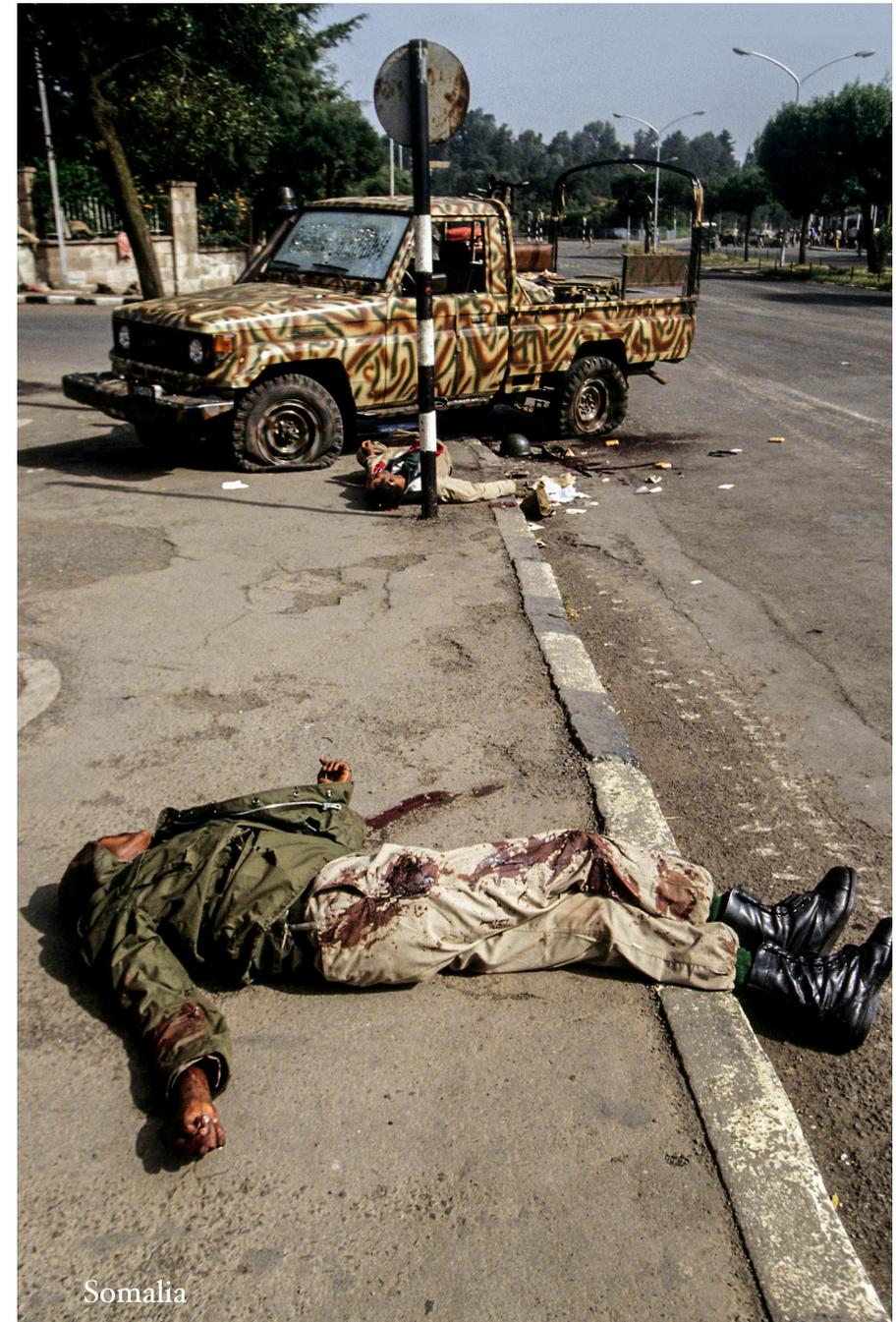
- NATO (Libya, 2011) – Air campaign supporting rebels against Gaddafi.
- ECOWAS/ECOMOG – Regional military interventions, mainly in West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau).
- African Union Missions – AMISOM in Somalia, and others in Burundi, Darfur, and the Central African Republic.

#### **United Nations**

- The United Nations has conducted peacekeeping or intervention missions in dozens of African countries—across more than 50 separate operations on the continent throughout its history.

#### **List of African countries where interventions occurred since 1960**

Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe.



Somalia



Somalia



The greatest tragedy is that this crisis has gone on for decades. The regional conflicts that continue to evolve are the root cause of the problem. Today, too many individuals are still living in refugee camps that they settled in many years ago. Most are dependent on the UN and NGOs for their daily survival. As long as ethnic and religious tensions remain high, poverty and corruption are endemic, natural resources are continually exploited, and political systems fail to address the needs of their citizens, there will be no peaceful resolution. Africa has become a destabilized collection of failed states. Although direct international involvement or intervention has resolved several regional conflicts, the world will watch these humanitarian crises shift from one region to another. Dreadfully, this will leave millions languishing in misery, continually on the verge of starvation, fearful for their lives, and with little hope for the future.

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Page 4 - Richard Falco  
Page 5 - Les Stone  
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## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Stephen Emerson, “Mozambican Civil War, Marxist-Apartheid Proxy,” *Pen & Sword*, 1988
- <sup>2</sup> United States Institute of Peace & United Nations reports (2020)
- <sup>3</sup> Alcinda Honwana, “*Child Soldiers in Africa*,” University of Pennsylvania, (2006)
- <sup>4</sup> Alcinda Honwana, “*Child Soldiers in Africa*,” University of Pennsylvania, (2006)
- <sup>5</sup> “Brilliant Earth,” <https://www.brilliantearth.com/conflict-diamond-trade>
- <sup>6</sup> “Diamonds Finance Wars Throughout Africa,” <https://www.voanews.com/archive/diamonds-finance-wars-throughout-africa>
- <sup>7</sup> “Diamonds Finance Wars Throughout Africa,” <https://www.voanews.com/archive/diamonds-finance-wars-throughout-africa>
- <sup>8</sup> Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), 2024, <https://ssa.foodsecurityportal.org>

## Richard Falco

Richard Falco is President of Vision Project. For the past thirty years he has worked as a photographer, filmmaker, and journalist. He has had assignments on four continents in over thirty-five countries and has worked for many major magazines, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Geo*, *Life Magazine*, *New York Times*, *US News & World Report*, to name a few. There are two published books of Mr. Falco's work: *Medics: A Documentation of Paramedics in the Harlem Community* and *To Bear Witness/ September II*, and two eBooks: *Hunger and Rice in Asia* and *Witchcraft: Ancient Traditions Alive In Salem*. He is the director of the films *Crossroads: Rural Health Care In America* and *Holding Back the Surge*, and is the executive producer of *Josie: A Story About Williams Syndrome* and *Dorothea's Tears: The State of Mental Health Care in America*. He is presently Coordinator of Multimedia Journalism in the Masters in Communication Program at Sacred Heart University and the director of all of Vision Project's educational programming.

## Les Stone

During the last two decades, critically acclaimed photographer Les Stone has chronicled the human cost of conflict in Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, Kosovo, Liberia, Cambodia, and Haiti, among other war zones. The winner of several *World Press Photo Awards* and *Picture of the Year Awards*, Stone worked with the SOROS Foundation on stories related to child soldiers and conflict diamonds in Africa. His work has appeared in *National Geographic*, *Time*, *Life*, *Paris Match*, *Stern*, *Fortune*, and many others magazines. There are several books of his work: *The Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads*, and *A Day in the Life of the United States Armed Forces*. Stone has exhibited at galleries in New York, and in 2006, the St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Scotland presented a large show of his photographs focusing on voodoo. He has given seminars on photography at: The International Center of Photography, Empire College, Sacred Heart University, and The New School for Social Research. In 2008, he joined Vision Project.

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## VISION PROJECT Inc.

Vision Project is an organization dedicated to the development of investigative journalism, documentary photography, multimedia, film, and education.

The goal of Vision Project is to produce documentary material and educational programs that encourage understanding and awareness about a broad variety of social issues. This information and programming are made available to the general public with a particular focus on members of the younger generation.

Vision Project seeks to reinforce the social, cultural, and historical impact documentary work contributes to society. To reach these goals, we have assembled a group of talented professionals with extensive expertise in journalism, photography, video, design, web technology, and education.

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