



26 September 2012 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today called for urgent international support for the people and governments of West Africa's Sahel region, warning that the area is at a critical juncture with 18 million people affected by a severe food crisis.

“Political turmoil, extreme climatic conditions and fragile economies are combining to create a perfect storm of vulnerability,” he told a High-Level Meeting on the Sahel held on the margins of the 67th UN General Assembly.

The Sahel region is currently facing a swathe of problems, which are not only political but also involve security, humanitarian resilience and human rights.

18 million people are estimated to be at risk of food insecurity and over one million children risk severe acute malnutrition.

Mr. Ban cautioned that any proposed military solution to the security crisis in northern Mali should be considered extremely carefully. “This could have significant humanitarian consequences, including further displacement and restrictions on humanitarian access,” he stressed.

Yesterday addressing the General Assembly, French President François Hollande, called on the international community to face up to the gravity of the situation in the Sahel region of west Africa, where terrorist groups have seized northern Mali, stressing that France will support the African Union and the Economic Community of West Africa in the measures they take to restore Mali's territorial integrity.