

Humanitarian protection in the Liptako-Gourma region

Local protection mechanisms and humanitarian response

Field research conducted in the
Liptako-Gourma region
(August–September 2020)

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

IGA	Income generating activities
AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AQIM	Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
ASACO	Community health association [Association de santé communautaire]
CGD	Centre for Democratic Governance [Centre pour la gouvernance démocratique]
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
LCPC	Local Community Protection Committee
CNIB	Burkinabé national identity card
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale Italia
CVD	Village Development Councillor [Conseiller villageois de développement]
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ISGS	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
FDS	Defence and security forces [Forces de défense et de sécurité]
G5 Sahel	Group of 5 countries (Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad)
NSAG	Non-state armed group
GSIM	Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims
HD	Centre for humanitarian dialogue
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
LASDEL	Laboratory of Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Development [Laboratoire d'études et de recherche sur les dynamiques sociales et le développement]
ONEA	National office of water and sanitation [Office national de l'eau et de l'assainissement]
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
IDP	Internally displaced person
PSIRC	Integrated security plan for the central regions [Programme de sécurisation intégrée des régions du Centre]
PTF	Technical and financial partners [Partenaires techniques et financiers]
RCI	Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
SAT	Temporary hosting site [Site d'aménagement temporaire]
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SP/CONASUR	Permanent Secretariat of the National Emergency Relief Council [Secrétariat permanent du Conseil national des secours d'urgences]
GBV	Gender-based violence
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Main results

This research was conducted as part of a project led by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the following research partners: the Centre for Democratic Governance (CGD) in Burkina Faso, Point Sud in Mali and the Laboratory of Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development (LASDEL) in Niger. This two-year project (2020-2022) focused on the Liptako-Gourma region, or the tri-border area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Since 2005, this region has been the epicentre of the Sahel crisis, characterised by a rapidly deteriorating security situation.

Economy

- The main economic problem cited by the respondents is unemployment and the lack of economic opportunities; the second relates to limited access to agricultural land in Burkina Faso and Mali and poor harvests in Niger.
- The increase in population in the host areas creates new humanitarian needs in terms of protection and access to basic social services. While respondents are concerned about the presence of displaced people because of the mistrust it creates between communities, the pressure on livelihoods remains the main concern.
- The arrival of displaced people in a locality and the length of their stay have significant economic consequences for the host communities. While the latter have compassion, the issue of food and food insecurity as risks inherent to the arrival of displaced persons frequently comes up in the interviews. Food insecurity also affects resident families due to limited access to fields and the burden that displaced families place on already weak economies.

Governance

- Lack of infrastructure is cited as the main governance problem in Burkina Faso and Niger, while in Mali it is access to social services.
- With regard to basic social services, access to water and food are the main problems highlighted by the respondents. This is followed by access to health facilities and access to housing.

Security

- The main motivation for joining violent groups is economic.
- In Burkina Faso and Mali, respondents say they can move freely outside their communities, which is not the case in Niger.
- The feeling of insecurity experienced by the respondents is mainly due to the proximity of combat zones, attacks and threats against the population, criminal activities and the presence of non-state armed actors.

Protection mechanisms

- The plurality of protection mechanisms is due to the differing security contexts between sites, but also due to the strategic position of the different categories of actors, each of which defines a particular course of action for protection.
- Local protection mechanisms include dialogue and reconciliation committees set up in some villages, and community dialogues led by the elderly. Young people are also involved, ensuring village surveillance and patrolling the areas.

- In the event of an incident, people report it first to family (49.81%), and mostly to women (63.33%) as well as community leaders. Where the respondent is a migrant, they prefer to report it to the defence and security forces (FDS) and where the respondent is a nomad, they prefer to turn to community leaders.
- Some conflicts have been resolved through dialogue and mediation, but also through *cousinage à plaisanterie* and inter-community dialogue, in particular between Dogon and Fulani in Mali.
- Protection mechanisms can be community-based or institutional, with each displacement triggering a chain of solidarity at all levels, based on traditional solidarity.
- Coordination of aid is problematic: often, information on the availability of aid is transmitted by the mayor's offices or the cercle council, which work with the local prefects and sub-prefects. People feel left out of the management of humanitarian aid. Cases of diversion by local authorities have also been reported, particularly in Mali.
- Covering several areas, the distribution of aid focuses on the basic necessities to enable displaced populations to settle and cope with the shock of their displacement. For the majority of respondents (49.09%), the activities carried out within the framework of humanitarian protection meet the basic needs of communities.
- According to 72.23% of respondents, protection activities respect local cultural codes and 65.40% of them consider that humanitarian protection helps to strengthen existing local protection mechanisms.
- The security situation is leading to the transformation of local conflict prevention and humanitarian protection systems. These tend to become obsolete in the Nord and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso where insecurity is very high and mistrust is growing between communities that previously coexisted and shared conflict resolution mechanisms. The strategy of terrorist groups is to attack the guarantors of social order, religious leaders, traditional leaders and local elected officials.

I. Introduction

As part of the research programme on humanitarian protection in conflict zones, this report seeks to understand the impact of humanitarian protection programmes implemented in the Liptako-Gourma region and examines the links between local protection mechanisms and humanitarian protection mechanisms. Strengthening the effectiveness of protection programmes requires a clear understanding of the issues, grounded on empirical data collected from a representative sample of populations. This report is based on quantitative and qualitative data collected in Burkina Faso (Nord and Sahel regions), Mali (Mopti region) and Niger (Tillabéri region) in August and September 2020.

The Liptako-Gourma region, located on the borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, is the new epicentre of the Sahara-Sahel crisis that broke out in 2012. The rise in “insecurity is attributed to the exacerbation of three phenomena: violent extremism, transnational organised crime and local conflicts¹.” The populations of these regions face widespread violence and are victims of numerous abuses committed by different armed groups and the FDS. Attacks are increasing not only on the civilian population but also on representatives and symbols of the state, including the FDS², local authorities – administrative, religious and customary – and even government employees and traders. To address the situation, a joint multinational G5 Sahel force was set up in 2017 by Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad to support national forces. This force is deployed along the borders of the three countries. Burkina Faso and Niger also have their own military operations (such as “Dongo” and “Almahau” in the Nigerien Liptako area or “Otapoanou” and “Doofu” in the Liptako-Gourma area in Burkina Faso) to try to curb the terrorist threat and fight the proliferation of armed groups and organised crime. Mali also adopted an Integrated Security Plan for the Centre [Plan de sécurisation intégrée des régions du centre] (PSIRC) in 2017. Yet, despite the mobilisation of foreign and national forces, the security situation continues to deteriorate. Local communities feel abandoned by their states and some are increasingly isolated. The attacks regularly cause population displacements, sometimes in addition to the Malian refugees who have fled the combat zones since 2012.

Historically, the Liptako-Gourma region covers eight administrative regions of Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou, Tenkodogo, Manga, Kaya, Fada N'Gourma, Ziniaré, Ouahigouya and Dori), four regions of Mali (Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal) and two regions of Niger (Tillabéri and Dosso), together with the metropolitan area of the capital Niamey. It includes nomadic and sedentary populations as well as a variety of ethnic and socio-professional groups, in particular farmers, herders, traders and fishers. The Liptako-Gourma region is also a historic transhumance area, but the reduction in grazing areas due to land being used for crops, the depletion of water and fodder resources and, on a wider scale, the impact of climate change is having serious consequences for the way of life of local populations. Various droughts have already seriously increased the vulnerability of the population and their livestock, fuelling tensions between communities, with the risk of the situation degenerating into inter- and intra-community conflicts. It is currently an area where many non-state armed groups (NSAGs), militias and/or self-defence groups, often community-based, and violent extremist groups³ cause the population to live in fear in areas where the state presence is very uneven or non-existent. It is the theatre of operations for transnational jihadist groups including Al

¹ Institute for Security Studies, “Extrémisme violent, criminalité organisée et conflits locaux dans le Liptako-Gourma” [Violent Extremism, Organised Crime and Local Conflicts in Liptako-Gourma], West Africa Report No. 26, December 2019, p. 3.

² Between 2016 and 2020, the Nigerien FDS lost dozens of soldiers in attacks by armed groups on camps including Inatès, Sinaghodar, Ayorou, Wanzarbé, etc.

³ Increase in violent groups with a local combatant base that are “led, at least in mid-level positions, by individuals predominantly from the communities within which they established”, testifying to an “localisation of the threat” in Institute for Security Studies, “Violent extremism, organised crime and local conflicts in Liptako-Gourma”, West Africa Report no. 26, December 2019, p. 7.

Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and Ansarul Islam⁴. These groups also play into social tensions, contributing to the aggravation of local conflicts, with serious consequences for social cohesion.

Map 1. Liptako-Gourma region



Since 2015, conflicts have led to massive population displacements, increasing the vulnerability of populations already weakened by the recurrence of poor agricultural seasons and the subsequent drop in food and fodder production. In 2020, the crisis has led to the death of about 5,000 people (as of 31 August 2020) and to many displacements: 1,617,132 people were displaced, of which 1,448,659 internally displaced (90% of the people displaced). 65% were in Burkina Faso, 19% in Mali and 12% in Niger⁵.

⁴ European Council on Foreign Relations, “Mapping Armed Groups in Mali and the Sahel”, https://ecfr.eu/special/sahel_mapping (page accessed on 16/05/2022).

⁵ IOM, “Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Central Sahel & Liptako Gourma Crisis”, Monthly Dashboard No. 10, 20 October 2020, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/LGC_Monthly_Dashboard_October_2020_v4.pdf (page accessed on 16/05/2022).

II. General context of the research: humanitarian protection in the Liptako-Gourma region

The research focuses on humanitarian protection in the Liptako-Gourma region and aims to *understand the impact of humanitarian protection programmes implemented in the Liptako-Gourma region*. A better understanding of protection mechanisms should, among other things, help to identify the most effective interventions and to adapt them to better meet the expectations and needs of the communities affected.

A. Methodology

Launched in June 2020, this study aims to understand the impact of humanitarian protection programmes on the populations of this region, which is severely affected by the multidimensional crisis currently taking place in the Sahel. More specifically, the aim of this research is to analyse humanitarian response mechanisms in order to make them more effective and, above all, more adapted to the expectations of affected communities. To do this, it is necessary to take into account the perceptions and priorities of the populations, and in particular those of the beneficiaries of humanitarian protection programmes, in order to improve their approach and implementation, based on empirically contextualised data – qualitative and quantitative.

With this aim, we identified several research areas:

- analysis of the threats, risks and vulnerabilities of the populations of the Liptako-Gourma region;
- identification of local protection mechanisms and understanding of the social norms and rules on which they are based;
- identification of humanitarian protection responses and analysis of the interaction between humanitarian protection responses and local protection mechanisms;
- evaluation of the impact of the responses provided and the adequacy of the assistance offered in relation to the needs identified.

1) *Research partners*

The research was coordinated by SIPRI across the three countries. In each country, the coordination was supported by local partner institutions in Burkina Faso (CGD), Mali (Point Sud) and Niger (LASDEL), each of which deployed facilitators and researchers in the field. The field research was carried out in the Sahel and Nord administrative regions of Burkina Faso, in the Mopti region of Mali and in the Tillabéri region of Niger in August and September 2020.

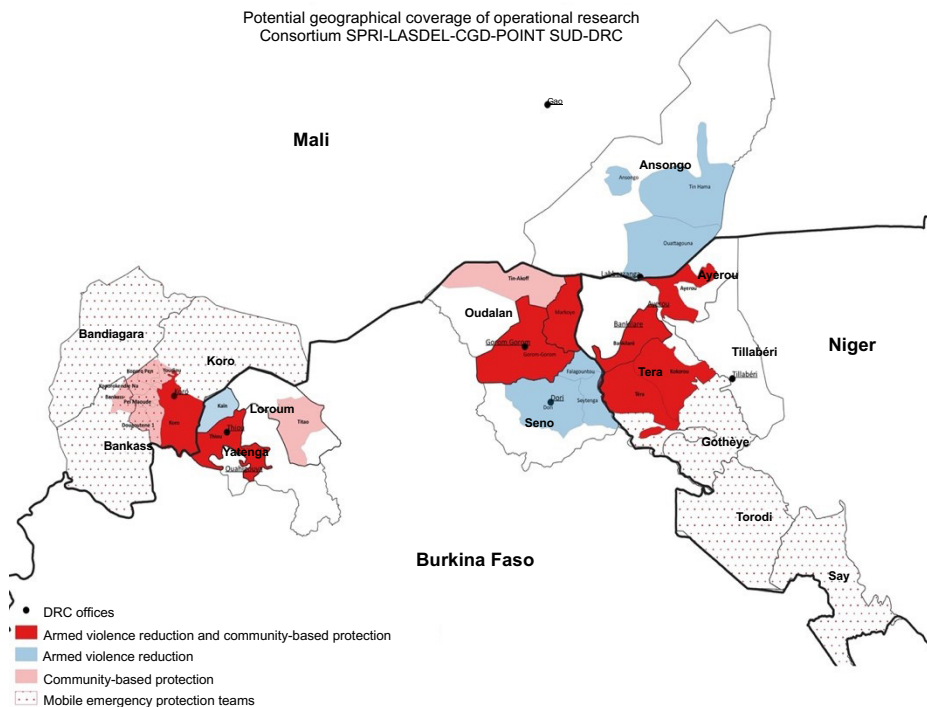
Working in the Liptako-Gourma region since 2013, **DRC** provides a wide variety of emergency aid ranging from food security to protection (especially for children).

- In the Sahel region of Burkina Faso, it runs a follow-up programme to protect and assist vulnerable people near the Malian border, including through emergency multi-sector assistance.
- In the Mopti region of Mali, DRC has been responding to the security crisis since January 2013. It is one of the main actors in community protection and has been running a project for five years to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and implement child protection measures.
- In Niger, DRC has been implementing protection programmes in the Tillabéri region since 2018, as well as providing rapid response emergency assistance (housing, non-food items, income generating activities [IGAs]).

DRC's community-based approach to the security and management of its activities focuses on identifying the needs and priorities of affected communities and promoting the implementation of locally defined solutions in the context of human security.

Data collection takes into account local differences but also the institutional context in each country. The production of data in areas affected by conflict and its analysis supports and enhances the effectiveness of humanitarian aid, giving priority to the most vulnerable groups. Based on a mixed qualitative and quantitative research approach, the data will allow DRC to shape its programmes by integrating the specificities of local contexts in order to understand the constraints and local protection mechanisms.

*Map 2. Potential geographical coverage of operational research
SIPRI-LASDEL-CGD-POINT SUD-DRC*



2) Research area and surveyed communes in Burkina Faso

Table 1. Research area and surveyed communes in Burkina Faso

Region	Cercle/ province	Commune
Sahel	Soum	Djibo
	Seno	Dori
	Oudalan	Markoye
		Gorom-Gorom
Nord	Yatenga	Kain
		Yensé
		Ouahigouya
	Loroum	Banh

3) Research area and surveyed communes in Mali

Table 2. Research area and surveyed communes in Mali

Region	Cercle/ province	Commune	Village/neighbourhood	Observation
Mopti	Koro	Koro	Koro	Bargou (Koro) was replaced during the course of the survey by Edjibara in the commune of Koro for security reasons.
			Kiri	
			Bargou (Koro)	
			Bih	
	Mopti	Mopti/Sévaré	Mopti/Sévaré	Bih was replaced during the course of the survey by Tagou-Souan in the commune of Koro for security reasons.
	Bankass	Bankass	Bankass city	

4) Research area and surveyed communes in Niger

Table 3. Research area and surveyed communes in Niger

Region	Department	Communes	Villages	
Tillabéri	Bankilaré	Bankilaré	Amarsingué	
			Petelkolé	
			Bankilaré	
	Tera	Diagourou	Bangaré	
	Tillabéri	Dessa	Dessa	Dessa
				Kandadji
				Sanguilé
				Seno
				Famalé
	Ayorou	Commune	Commune	Kongotchiré
				Koutougou
				Gaoudel

5) *Data collection*

The research was conducted using a mixed-method approach, combining in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus groups and the administration of questionnaires. This method makes it possible to measure people's perceptions, but also to deepen certain aspects through qualitative research.

A training session was organised in each country for facilitators and junior researchers on qualitative and quantitative survey techniques (conducting interviews, leading focus groups, *reporting* techniques, etc.). Following the training, each centre participated in the development of the research protocol and the interview guide. The questionnaire was developed by SIPRI and DRC and tested with the facilitators during the training workshops. Each team then prepared its fieldwork by informing the administrative authorities and with the support of focal points.

The quantitative research involved 1,328 interviews, distributed as follows:

Table 4. Distribution of interviews

	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger
Questionnaires	540	394	394
Focus groups	10	26	7
Qualitative interviews	30	22	71

The qualitative research was based on the administration of semi-structured interviews and the organisation of focus groups, in particular:

- local leaders such as village chiefs, religious leaders, leaders of youth and women's groups;
- communes and communities: people responsible for community structures, associations and displaced persons;
- families: head of household, vulnerable people.

6) *Limitations of the study*

a. The inaccessibility of some localities

The limitations of the study are primarily security-related. In Burkina Faso, access to the research area is strongly discouraged by the authorities, making some villages inaccessible. In other localities, the researchers were warned by the population for security reasons. In around fifty communes in the two regions, only inhabitants or internally displaced people (IDPs) could be interviewed.

In Niger, the study has faced operational and security challenges. The killing of the seven aid workers in Kouré (9 August 2020), the declaration of a state of emergency in the area and subsequent military operations have made the collection of data more complicated. Due to the risks associated with travelling to certain areas, it was not possible to carry out the questionnaire interviews according to the original survey design. The facilitators therefore returned to Niamey without having filled out all the questionnaires. In the commune of Ayorou, three villages on the Niger-Malian border were inaccessible at the time of the survey: Kongotchiré, Koutougou and Gaoudele. The quantitative surveys were replaced by qualitative surveys in the town of Ayorou, where it was possible to meet

the customary authorities of the villages of Kongotchiré and Koutougou. At the end of the survey, 32 individual and group interviews had been conducted. In Bankilaré, the team was able to administer the questionnaires in the main town of the commune. For security reasons, all authorities advised the team against visiting the villages of Petelkolé and Amarsingué. Part of the villages have retreated to Téra, including the village chiefs who have been living there since. The presence of the customary authorities allowed qualitative interviews to be conducted and DRC also organised meetings with the inhabitants of these areas. In the department of Téra, the village of Bangaré on the border with Burkina Faso, part of whose population had taken refuge in Téra, was inaccessible. All the leaders (teachers, opinion leaders, religious leaders, etc.) and local officials (municipal councillors, mayor, customary authorities) had also taken up residence in Téra more than seven months earlier. The decision was then made to carry out the interviews in Téra itself, with displaced persons from Bangaré and Bouppo, a village that shares the same land and the same insecurity as Bangaré. This adaptive approach made it possible to conduct around 100 interviews. Given the very small number of questionnaire interviews (71 in total) conducted during the first phase of data collection in the departments of Ayorou, Bankilaré and Téra, a second phase was initiated in the rural commune of Dessa (September 2020), which is more accessible and less exposed to security risks.

In Mali, the security situation has also created some difficulties: the climate of insecurity has led to the displacement of people from Bih and access to this village has been discouraged by the inhabitants themselves, who are based in Koro. People fear reprisals after the facilitators' visit. Nevertheless, there were enough people in Koro to allow the teams to conduct interviews⁶. Similarly, the main difficulty in the Mopti region was insecurity. The law enforcement authorities are present in the main towns of the cercles but they do not go into the localities, and security is provided by the Dozo hunters.

b. The language barrier

The second difficulty is linguistic, a limitation reported by the teams in all three countries. For example, in Burkina Faso, despite the careful consideration taken by CGD to prioritise inhabitants of the research area as facilitators, some groups of IDPs did not speak the facilitator's language or only spoke it slightly. However, this difficulty could be overcome by using focal points as interpreters in all three countries.

Map 3. Areas surveyed

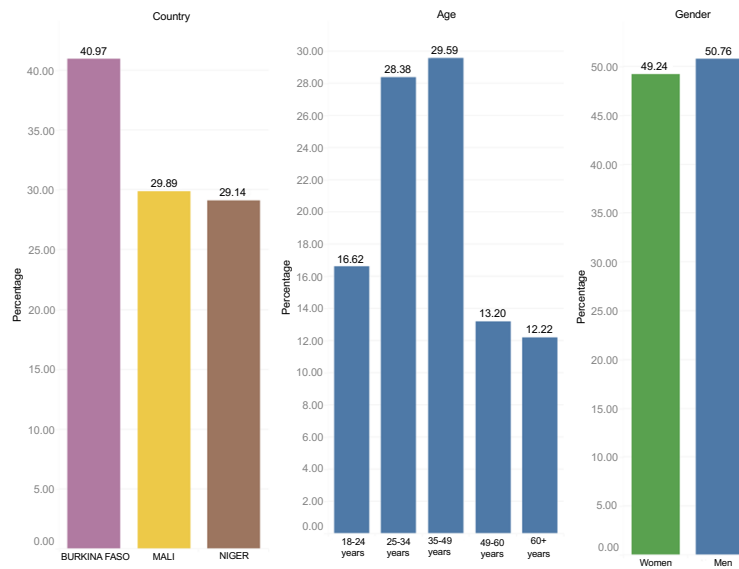


⁶ Forced displacement is one of the visible consequences of insecurity in Koro. The most affected villages are Bih, Ségué, Lourgan, Derouh, Gomso, Pogonon, Ana-Mossila.

B. The sample

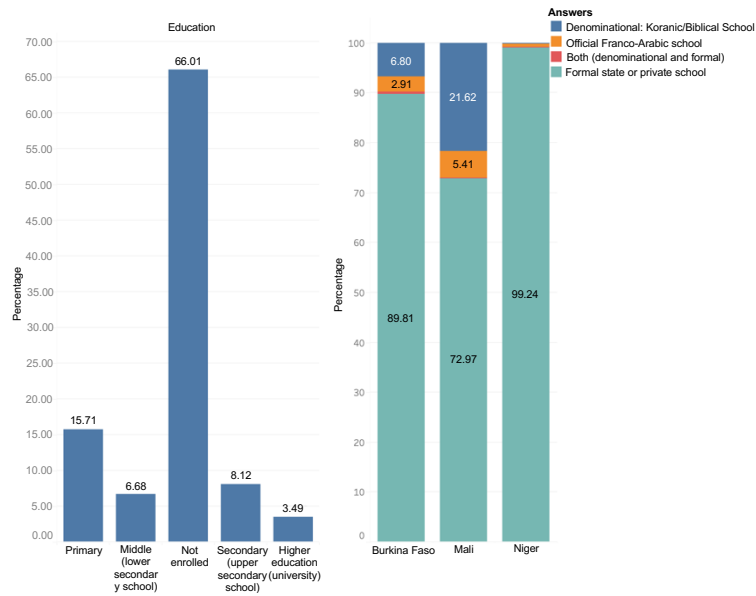
1) Distribution: country, age and gender

Chart 1. Distribution: country, age and gender



2) Level of education

Chart 2. Level of education



3) Profession of respondents

Chart 3. Profession of respondents (% total)

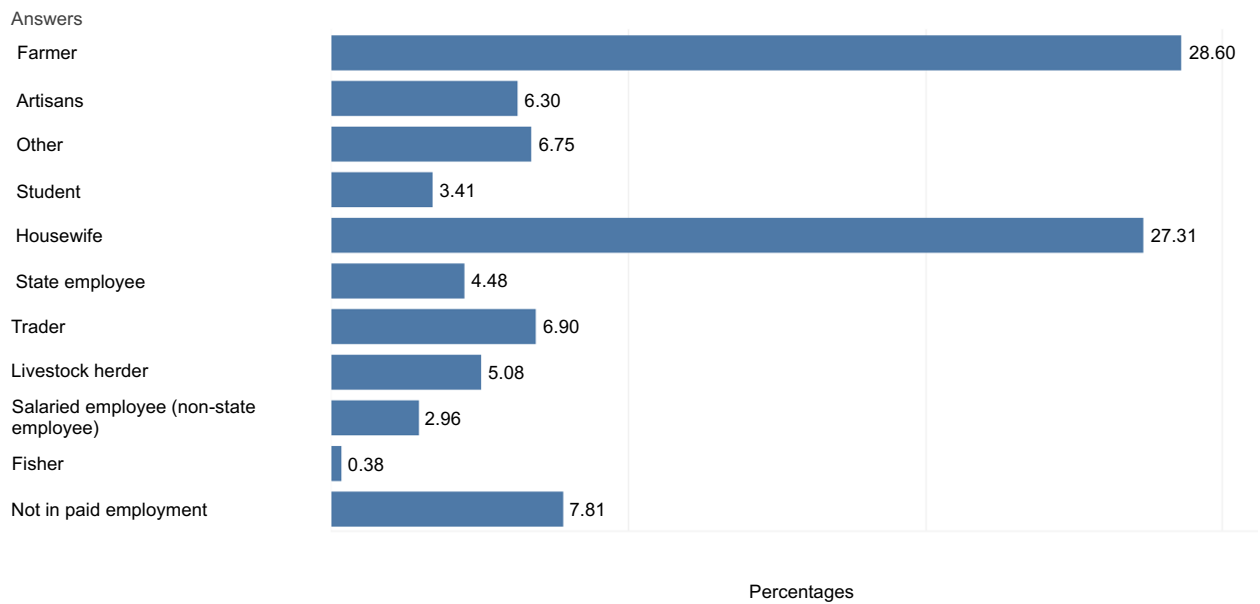
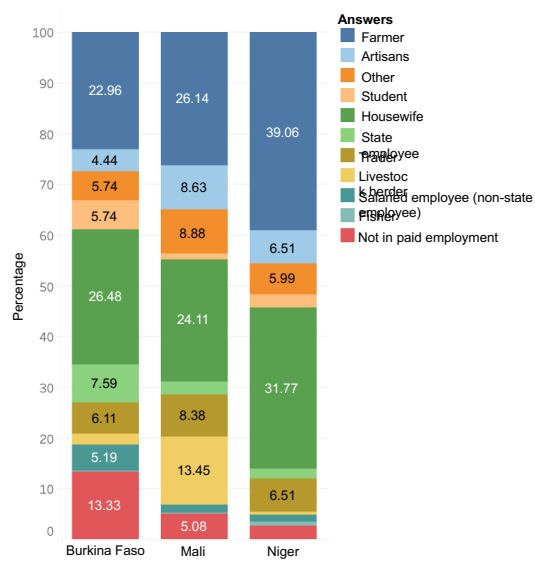


Chart 4. Profession of respondents (breakdown by country)



4) Status of respondents

Chart 5. Status of respondents (% total)

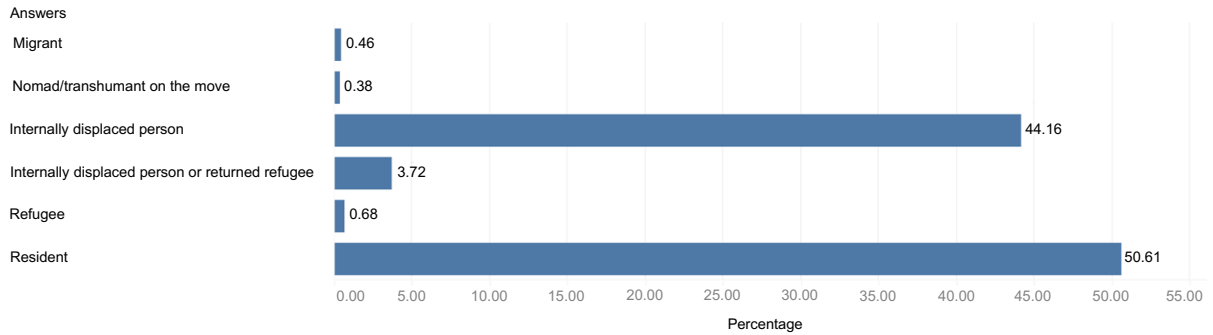


Chart 6. Status of respondents (breakdown by country)

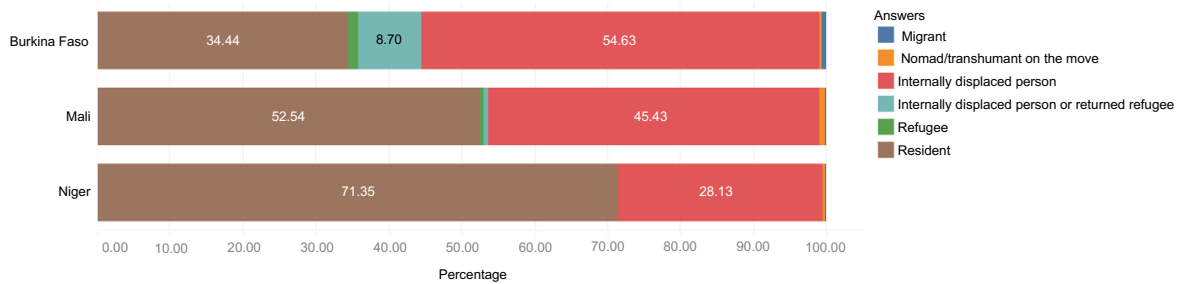
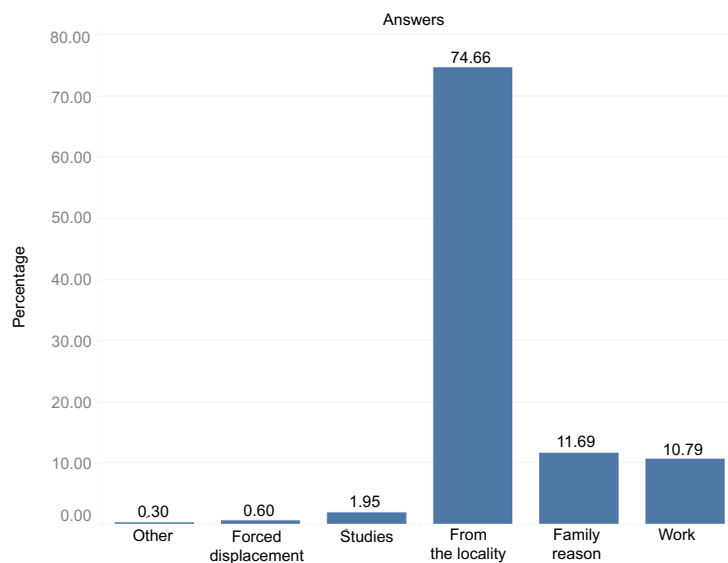


Chart 7. Reason for displacement



5) Types of displacement

Chart 8. Type of displacement (% total)

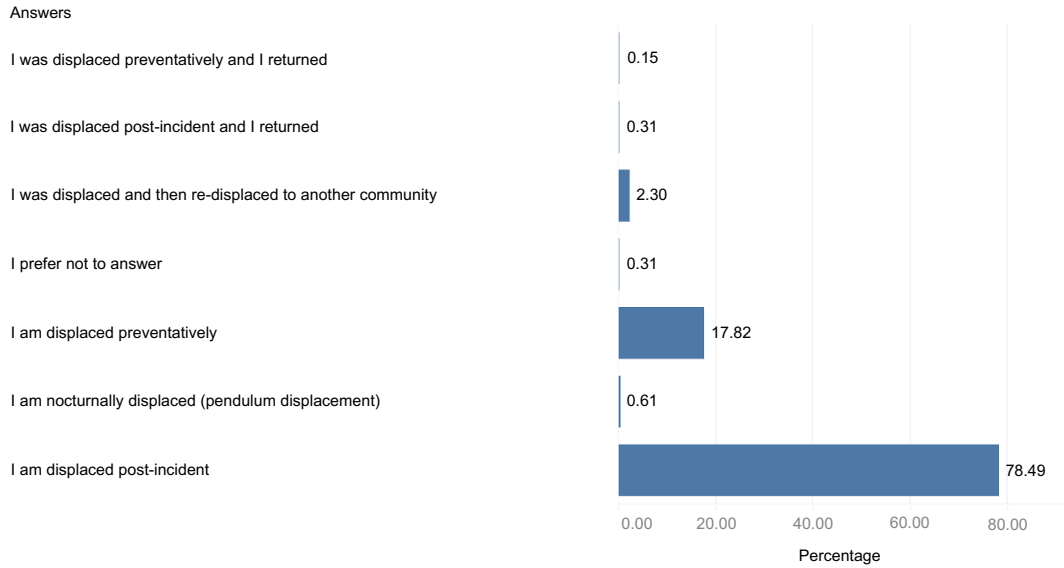
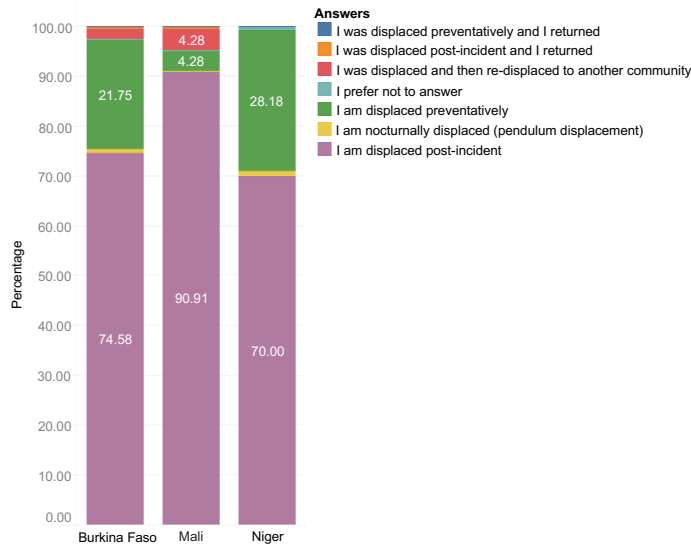


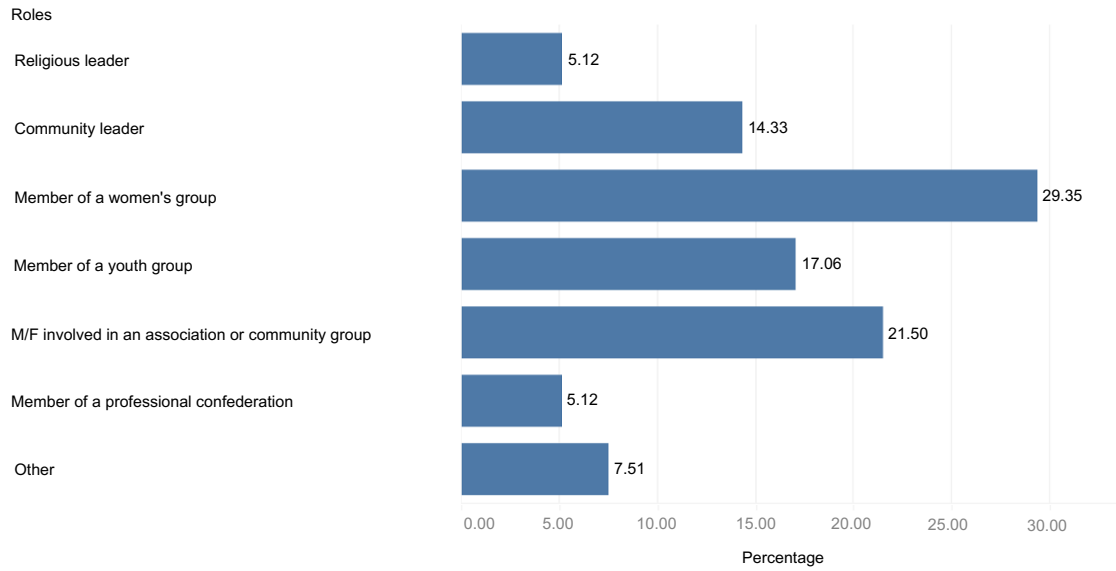
Chart 9. Type of displacement (breakdown by country)



6) *Role in society*

77.77% of the respondents do not have a particular social role in their society.

Chart 10. Role in society



III. Threats, risks and vulnerabilities

The localities surveyed in the Liptako-Gourma region face various types of threats, including terrorism, violence from NSAGs (including violent extremist groups), various forms of trafficking, organised crime, etc. The populations, state representatives or traditional and religious authorities are particularly affected by targeted assassinations, kidnappings, attacks on homes and markets, etc. Civilians are subject to various attacks by NSAGs and the number of victims has increased considerably. This crisis also exacerbates structural vulnerabilities such as state weakness, extreme poverty, social divisions and the degradation of natural resources.

A. Nature of the threats and risks

The threats are diverse in nature, with regard to their basis, form and modus operandi, but also in terms of the actors involved and the targets. For **40,67 %** of respondents, **the most important problems are security-related**: these are cited first by 42.30% of men and 38.98% of women, and by all age groups up to 49 years. For respondents aged 50 and over, economic problems come first. By disaggregating the data by country, we can see that security problems are much more important in Burkina Faso (60.19%) than in Mali and Niger, where economic problems take precedence.

Chart 11. Nature of threats and risks (% total)

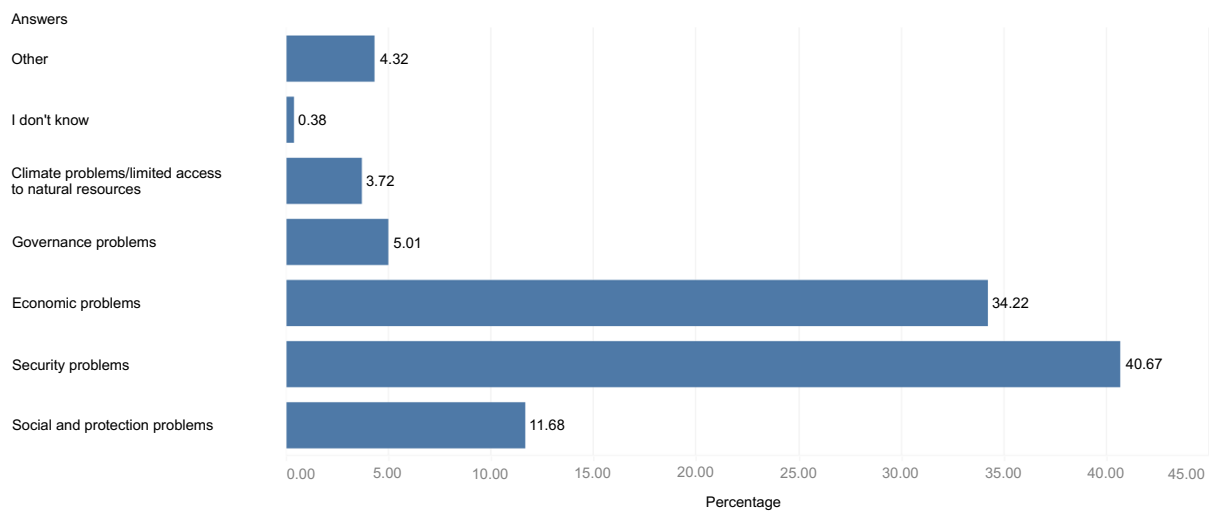
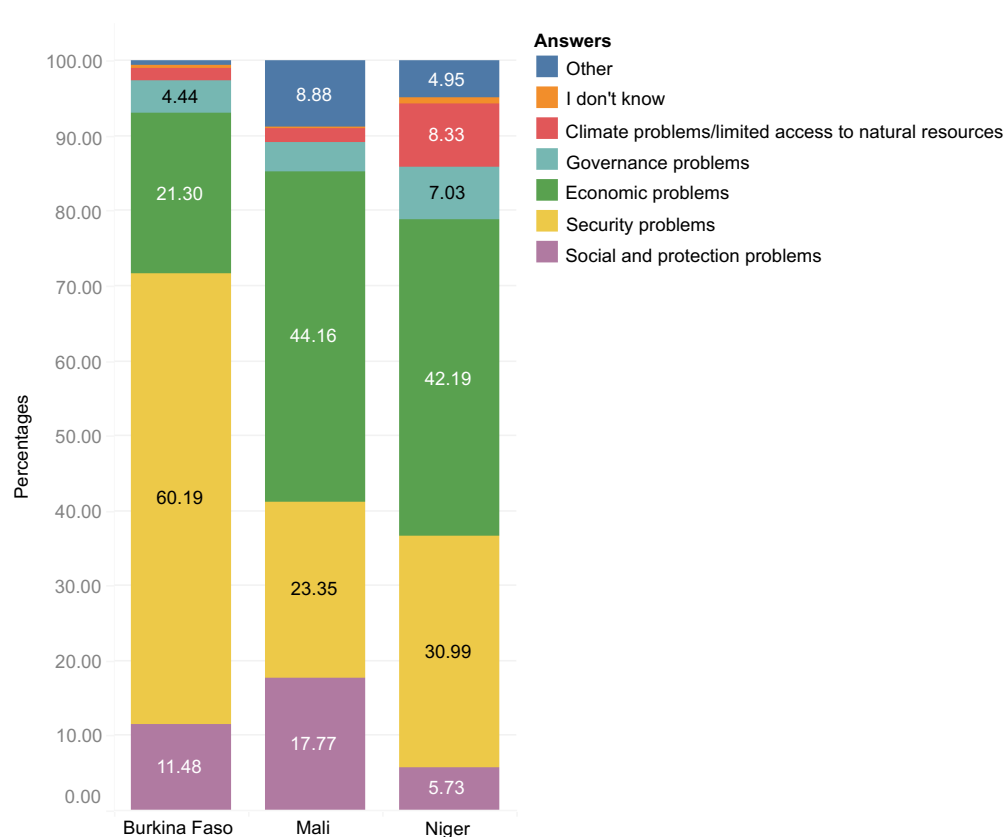


Chart 12. Nature of threats and risks (breakdown by country)



1) Economic problems

For **60.24%** of respondents, the main economic problem is unemployment and lack of economic opportunities (60.39% for men and 60.09% for women, all ages combined), including:

- Burkina Faso: 67.59 %
- Mali: 57.11 %
- Niger: 53.13 %

In second place is limited access to agricultural land in Burkina Faso (41.67%) and Mali (32.23%), and poor harvests in Niger (27.34%).

a. Economic problems linked to the presence of displaced persons

Due to insecurity, many people are forced to leave their villages to take refuge in the main towns of the communes, departments and regions. As of November 2020, Burkina Faso had 1,049,767 displaced people and 19,594 refugees, Mali had 295,015 displaced people and 29,828 refugees, and Niger had 140,763 displaced people and 59,857 refugees⁷. Displaced people move to villages whose inhabitants share family or matrimonial ties with those of the villages affected by conflict. These IDPs therefore join the various refugees already settled in certain localities

⁷ IOM, “Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Central Sahel & Liptako Gourma Crisis”, Monthly Dashboard No. 10, 30 November 2020, https://displacement.iom.int/system/tdf/reports/LGC_Monthly_Dashboard_November_2020_v4.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=10285 (page accessed 16/05/2022).

(in Niger in particular), and these population displacements all have an economic impact on the host communities.

41.73% of respondents said they were worried about the presence of displaced persons, especially because of the mistrust it creates between communities (51.64%; 54.08% for men and 48.83% for women; 52.83% in Burkina Faso, 43.07% in Mali and 74.6% in Niger). However, they are less concerned about the risk of inter-community tensions (75.64% no) than about the pressure this presence exerts on livelihoods (50.18% yes).

In Niger, the border towns of Ayorou, Téra, Bankilaré and Dolbel (Tillabéri) have seen a large influx of refugees (Maliens and Burkinabés) and/or internally displaced people fleeing the violence in their hometowns. The increase in population in the host areas creates new humanitarian needs in terms of protection and access to basic social services. For example, the town of Ayorou is heavily affected by forced migrations. Because of its geographical location, it has seen several waves of Malian refugees arrive since 2012, to which have been added thousands of internally displaced persons mainly from Inatès (as of July 2019) when the FDS abandoned the area, leaving the civilian population defenceless. In addition to the internally displaced people from Inatès, there are also those from several other border villages in the commune of Ayorou, such as Wailabon, Gaoudeh, Kongo Tchiré and Tedebet.

The arrival of displaced people in an area and the length of their stay have important economic consequences for the host communities. These host communities feel compassion for these people, but are concerned about the impact in terms of the amount of food available. The issue of food and food insecurity as risks inherent to the arrival of displaced persons came up frequently in the interviews. While the issue of famine is mainly of concern to displaced people, food insecurity also affects resident families because of the limited access to fields, but also because of the burden that displaced families place on already weak economies.

It's true that there is good cohabitation with displaced persons, but it must be acknowledged that there is a serious problem concerning food in the locality. Since these displaced people have come empty-handed and the host population does not have the means to provide for them even if they have the willingness to do so. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

There is perfect cohabitation and collaboration between displaced persons and the population of our neighbourhood. I can even testify to this good cooperation as I have heard and seen it with my own eyes. Our mums organise themselves to help their sisters in difficulty in their own way. (Focus group with young people held on 13 August 2020 in Oroboye, Bankass cercle)

Problems of cohabitation with host families, housing, access to health and education are also mentioned: *“There is no way to list all the challenges that displaced people and host families are currently facing.”* (Focus group with women held on 11 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle). The arrival of families poses problems with food, and housing as well as difficulties adapting or problems with misunderstandings.

The destruction of villages, the displacement of populations and the closure of schools have serious consequences on the lives of displaced populations who are forced to abandon their activities and thus lose their sources of income.

If some internally displaced people were lucky enough to be able to take some animals with them, there is then the issue of grazing areas. The temporary hosting sites (SAT) in Burkina Faso are located next to the fields of the host populations, and the displaced populations cannot leave their animals in the fields, especially in the rainy season, or else they risk causing further conflict. Respondents reported that when their animals move away from the sites, they do not have the courage to go and look for them. In Mali, the livestock of displaced people is causing tension:

They came with their livestock but it could become a problem between us, they have a lot of livestock and their livestock is starting to enter our fields and this could be a tension between us. Every day the councillors leave to talk to them, every day it becomes more and more of a problem, that's what I have to say. (Interview with a farmer conducted on 14 August 2020 in Diondori, Mopti cercle)

b. Difficult access to arable land

Food insecurity is linked to the inability of farmers to grow food. **In the Nord and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso**, in areas such as Thiou, Tasmakatt and Tokabangou, farmers no longer go to their fields for fear of reprisals from armed groups.

In the Mopti region, the risk of famine, which mainly concerned displaced people, has become a major concern for the populations, including resident families, since the lack of access to fields limits harvesting possibilities in a context of already difficult rainfall.

People didn't farm last year and this year they might not again. In this situation, they will forget the conflict. The famine is more serious than the conflict. (Interview with the village chief of Bankass conducted on 6 August 2020)

This is the fourth year of the crisis. We have experienced all kinds of difficulties. There is famine, killing, theft of livestock. (Interview with the president of the school management committee on 5 August 2020 in Kiri, Koro cercle)

c. Cattle rustling

In the Liptako area in Niger, attacks on livestock farmers, animal owners and herders, as well as animal rustling and abduction are very common. Population flows exacerbate tensions and conflicts over access to and control of resources, particularly around water points, crop fields and grazing areas.

Here in Ayorou, we were already experiencing difficulties with access to drinking water long before the arrival of refugees and internally displaced people. But it is with their presence here that the problem has worsened. And today, many of us drink water directly from the river. This exposes us to diseases. The worst thing about it is that the foreigners who came brought animals with them. And as they cannot stay in the bush, for security reasons, they have settled with their animals next to the fields, which causes misunderstandings between them and the owners of the fields. (Interview with a municipal official conducted on 7 August 2020 in Ayorou)

Owning animals has become a source of insecurity. The regions of Tillabéri and Mopti are significantly affected by this phenomenon of cattle rustling and the levy on livestock, especially cattle. Not only does animal ownership no longer guarantee a certain economic security, but it has become a source of insecurity due to the actions of violent groups whose tax on livestock constitutes a local source of financing. For example, this year in Sanguilé (Tillabéri region), the population paid

950,000 CFA francs for 380 cattle (2,500 CFA francs per head). If someone refuses to pay the unilaterally set amount, the “recalcitrant” may pay with their life. In Burkina Faso, in the Sahel region, transhumance is particularly affected as herders are targeted by armed groups who rob them of their herds.

d. Fairs and markets

Fairs in particular are significantly affected by insecurity. They are often deserted by traders but also by the population, as is the case for the weekly markets in Douna Pen, Dangatené, Dinangourou, Douari, Yeremdourou, Gangafani, Kiri, Dioungani and Bamba in Mali. These markets used to allow people to buy basic necessities and sell products from gathering and agriculture. In the absence of a regular market, trafficking is increasing and the price of food is rising.

I stopped everything because I used to trade between Sévaré and Fatoma, I used to go to the fairs in Somadougou and all the surrounding areas. I have stopped everything now because of the insecurity, when you travel you have no peace of mind, you are constantly afraid. The direct consequence of stopping these activities is a significant decrease in our household income. We are becoming poorer than usual. (Interview with a mother on 6 August 2020 in Sévaré)

The economy is severely affected by the insecure situation. Many localities whose economies are linked to tourism, catering and trade are persistently affected, particularly around Koro and Bankass.

In the border area between Mali and Burkina Faso, the closure of the border has led to an increase in prices, particularly for condiments. The cessation of trade with Burkina Faso means a loss of income for small traders. The “fish road”⁸ allowed Burkinabés and Ghanaians to bring their goods to Koro and vice versa. This economy is seriously undermined by attacks on roads as well as the sabotage of bridges linking different localities. Women, in particular, were involved in this trade, selling small items on the road to meet their daily needs:

I used to take small items from passing traders and sell them on, and then I made a little profit, enough to pay for soap or condiments. [...] It was the cessation of traffic on this road that ruined us, otherwise... I always had something to offer the passing traveller: coal, poultry, seasonal fruit, etc.). But all that has gone. (Comments recorded during a focus group discussion held on 4 August 2020 in Bargou, Koro cercle)

Forced to limit travel, people have changed their habits.

⁸ Road linking Burkina Faso to Mali via Koro.

2) Governance problems

The **lack of infrastructure** is cited by 42.79% of respondents as the main governance problem (42.6% for men and 42.99% for women). It is 63.7% in Burkina Faso and 40.1% in Niger. In Mali, it is access to social services (29.44%). The second problem is access to social services (school, health, etc.) (37.63%, where 46.85% in Burkina Faso, 28.17% in Mali and 34.38% in Niger). The third problem, for women, is limited access to administrative services (19.72%) and, for men, limited access to justice and police and gendarmerie services (17.94%).

Regarding basic social services, **48.88% of respondents cite access to water and food as the main problem** (45.44% for men and 50.39% for women). It is 54.81% in Burkina Faso, 51.04% in Niger and 35.28% in Mali. For 28.15% of respondents, the second problem is access to health facilities. It is 36.04% in Mali and 37.24% in Niger, while 34.63% of Burkinabé respondents cited access to housing (43.53% in the Sahel region, and 54% of respondents in the Nord region cited access to water and food).

a. Water scarcity

The issue of water is a major problem, particularly in urban and semi-urban centres, and is now exacerbated by the arrival of large numbers of displaced populations and the resulting increase in demand. In Burkina Faso, for example, water problems (boreholes, broken pumps, etc.) have been reported several times, since 2018, by citizens' organisations to the regional management of the National Water and Sanitation Office [Office nationale de l'eau et de l'assainissement] (ONEA).

You know in Ouahigouya, since the 1990s, we have had a water problem. From February onwards, it's complicated. I remember in 2018, the unions filed their list of grievances and the authorities were obliged to call ONEA to explain themselves. That's when ONEA said that it has a daily production of 4,000m³ for a need of 40,000m³ and, as you can see, there are 38,000 displaced people in Ouahigouya at the moment. There is a WASH [water, sanitation and hygiene] problem. (Interview with the regional director of the Ministry of Social Action on 6 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

b. Lack of identity documents as a barrier to mobility and income-generating activities

Displaced people often leave behind their identity documents or identification papers such as birth certificates. As a result, the lack of identity documents becomes an obstacle to their mobility and search for income-generating activities. For example, in Burkina Faso, people housed at temporary hosting sites (SAT) are prevented from entering or leaving urban or semi-urban centres, or even from travelling long distances, as the security context has increased identity checks. Income-generating activities also become almost impossible when they require banking or telephone transactions⁹. The authorities of the host areas are also unable to issue identity papers to the displaced population:

Not least of all is the problem of paperwork. The sites for displaced people are located in informal settlements outside the city. They cannot enter the city. Very often we have to go to the police stations for them to step in. I myself often have to issue passes to allow people to enter the city, even if only to do some shopping. People fled. In their original communes, the civil registry office, the mayor, everyone has fled. Yet the law says that birth certificates are to be issued where you were born. But where you were born is not accessible.

⁹ In Burkina Faso, telephone operators have developed transaction mechanisms, namely Airtel Money and Mobicash, among others. The receipt of a money transfer or the opening of an account requires the presentation of identification documents.

If you don't have a birth certificate, we can't issue a CNIB [Burkinabe national identity card]. They have nothing. I think that the legislation needs to be reviewed to adapt it to the new situation. (Interview with the regional director of the Ministry of Social Action on 6 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

c. The disintegration of public services

In Mali, schools are particularly affected by the crisis. Some schools have been closed for a long time, such as the one in Kiri, which has been closed for three years without the students being taken on by another school.

Here the teachers refuse to come. They were reassured but to no avail. So our children wander around like this except for those who have parents in Koro. But the town of Koro itself is full of displaced people, so it's complicated. (Interview with a pastoralist conducted on 5 August 2020 in Kiri)

Teachers, but more generally state employees, fear for their lives and do not want to travel to certain localities.

In Koro in central Mali, people are also reluctant to go to the health centres for treatment:

We as women face many problems in getting to our health centre for consultations. Because we go through the forest and these armed men are hiding there [...] there is also the risk that our children will abandon us for the simple reason that school has been closed for more than three years and those who go to cities like Bamako for seasonal work don't return. If nothing is done, we will find ourselves without children one day. (Focus group with women held on 7 August 2020 in Kiri)

In the field of education, all schools are closed and our children are left to fend for themselves. This situation has also led to a new development in our society: begging. Currently, we are seeing an increased number of beggars (men, women and children) within the town of Bankass and on the outskirts. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

d. Rising inter-community tensions and forms of discrimination

Inter-community conflicts have increased in recent years throughout the Liptako-Gourma region. These conflicts can be linked to tensions between farmers and livestock herders, against a backdrop of dwindling fodder and water resources, or the reduction of arable land. Land conflicts fuel tensions between communities. Stigmatisation¹⁰ affects all communities, leading to displacement when people feel threatened¹¹. Stigmatisation is also observed between displaced persons at some temporary hosting sites where different groups cohabit:

When you go to the sites for displaced people on the Youba road, you have two categories of population: the returnees from Yoro in Mali, who are Mossi, Maiga, and opposite you have displaced people from Barga, Fulani. Obviously, as soon as those from Barga arrived, there were tensions that we tried to calm down. The returnees say that they were chased out of Mali

¹⁰ We have noticed that when the issue is raised during the interview, the respondents dodge the subject. But when the recording is stopped, they are more comfortable talking about it. In other words, they prefer to talk about it off the record.

¹¹ This statement emerged during an interview with an NGO worker in Thiou on 4 August 2020 and during a focus group discussion organised with young people from Thiou invited to Ouahigouya for the occasion on 14 August 2020.

by the Fulani and that there is no reason to place the Fulani next to them. So we worked to defuse the tension. There was a fountain that had been planted by a native from Youba, at the beginning the returnees had said that the Fulani would not have access to this fountain. (Interview with the regional director of the Ministry in charge of Social Action on 6 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

Discrimination is also regional: according to the respondents, the Sahel region is discriminated against in the redistribution of national wealth:

This region has been discriminated against since independence, the sharing of resources is uneven, which makes us the centre of insecurity. Insecurity might go away one day, but if these discriminations are not solved, there will always be discontent. (Interview with a municipal councillor conducted on 10 August 2020 in Tokabangou)¹²

e. Land speculation and the housing problem

Internally displaced people face housing problems. They find shelter with host families or set up informal settlements, referred to as “non-lotis”. The high demand for land for the construction of these settlements is causing land speculation in some places such as Gorom-Gorom, Thiou and Ouahigouya in Burkina Faso.

The daily life of the populations has become very complicated because insecurity has serious consequences regarding access to health, food, education and even humanitarian protection. As one respondent put it, “*there is a lot of fear. If a tyre bursts here, you will see the whole village empty*”¹³ (interview with a humanitarian worker in Thiou, 4 August 2020). The displacement of populations has an impact on the displaced people who are left without resources and livelihoods, but also on the host communities (access to water, grazing areas, land, housing, etc.).

3) Security problems

The deterioration of the security situation is very marked in this area known as the “three borders”. **The main problem cited at 49.66% is banditry and armed and unarmed robbery** (45.81% for men and 53.62% for women; 89.8% for IDPs, 46.45% in Mali and 67.71% in Niger).

In Burkina Faso, the presence of militias and armed groups and banditry are cited equally (39.15%). The second most important problem for women is violence within the community (19.72%).

a. Terrorist attacks

The Nord and Sahel regions of Burkina Faso have experienced a deteriorating security situation since 2016 with numerous terrorist attacks in villages, particularly against civilians¹⁴, and ambushes on civilian and military convoys. The armed groups identified belong to the jihadist movement –

¹² Comments from a respondent in the Oudalan province. This position is reflected in more than three interviews conducted in the Sahel region.

¹³ Comments from an NGO worker in Thiou during the interview on 4 August 2020 in Thiou.

¹⁴ “Le HCR est indigné par les meurtres de 100 civils lors d’attaques au Niger ; des centaines de rescapés fuient à pied” [The UNHCR is outraged by killing of 100 civilians in Niger attacks; hundreds flee on foot], *Reliefweb*, 4 January 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/le-hcr-est-indigne-par-les-meurtres-de-100-civils-lors-d-attaques-au-niger-des-centaines> (page accessed 16/05/2022).

Ansarul Islam, the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (JNIM) or the ISGS for example – or are self-defence groups such as the Koglweogo and Rugga in Burkina Faso or the Dozos and Dan Amassagou in Mali. In the field, however, respondents perceived a certain lull and the number of attacks decreased at the beginning of the rainy season, a situation that allowed some displaced people to return to their villages, including some displaced people from Youba who were in a temporary hosting site near Ouahigouya in Burkina Faso.

In Mali, the Koro area is particularly affected by attacks by armed groups:

We still have the trauma of their passage here less than a year ago. They came and surrounded us and took all the livestock (cows, goats, camels, everything). They murdered two men. You could count them by the hundreds. However, we are only about thirty kilometres from Koro town. The army came but did not fight because they said they had not received the order to fire. So we were left to our own devices. (Interview with the village chief of Bargou on 4 August 2020, Koro cercle)

This fear is present in almost every village on the “fish road”. Armed men burst into the village of Bargou the day after the facilitators conducted interviews with the inhabitants, who live in fear and fear attacks at any moment.

Rumours circulate quickly here. And when this happens, the whole population panics. This can cause trauma for some people. Also when we find out that a nearby village is under attack, the locality is shaken by fear and everyone has their plan B. In other words, running away or leaving becomes the only alternative for some. (Focus group with young people held on 13 August 2020 in Oroboye, Bankass cercle)

The biggest threat is the probable terrorist attack in the locality. Since no one feels safe and everyone is defenceless in the locality. So at the slightest noise or rumour, the whole locality is frightened, causing trauma for some sections of society. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

b. Banditry

In the Mopti region, the populations cite physical security first:

It really is banditry, armed men. Often we haven't had access to our fields because of the brigands. This is what makes us very tired here. Now our young people patrol every night in groups of ten. But this did not have the desired effect because each time you have to pay for the patrols, and people do not have the means here. (Interview with the village chief of Bargou on 4 August 2020, Koro cercle)

We face several threats: intimidation, physical attacks, harassment, arbitrary acts of violence, abuse of power, targeted abductions, destruction of property and homes, cattle rustling, and increasingly frequent cases of rape. (Focus group with women held on 11 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

c. Attacks on traditional authorities

We found that customary leaders, marabouts, wealthy people, spiritual people, informers and state employees are the main targets of bandits. Their objective is to eliminate all local leaders

in order to control the area and impose their law. (Interview with a customary leader conducted on 9 August 2020 in Ayorou)

In Niger's Liptako region, thousands of people have been forced to leave their home villages, fleeing violent clashes, atrocities and threats from jihadists. Some villages in Ayorou (Wailabon, Inatès), Diagourou (Bangaré, Bouppo) and Gorouol (Kossa, Tondo Bon) have been virtually emptied of their population because of the terrorist threat, but also, in some cases, because of reprisals by the armed forces who accuse them of complicity with the enemy.

Community leaders, i.e. people who have influence on their communities, are particularly targeted for attack:

They attack people who, because of their status, play any role as representatives of the state. They also attack people who are hostile to their will in terms of religious practices. This is why we live in fear, in absolute panic. A few months ago, they came looking for an imam to murder him, but fortunately they didn't find him at his home. Just two days ago, a person's throat was slit in their home. We are not safe there where we are. (Interview with a respondent from the village of Bangaré displaced to Téra, conducted on 14 August 2020)

According to the respondents, jihadist fighters proceed differently depending on the situation in question. They force people to leave their villages by threatening or assaulting them.

That day I was reading the Koran when they found me. They took my three mobile phones. Some of them suggested that I be killed. Others, however, asked that I be left alive. It was at that moment that they fired several shots into the air. On that day, they ordered everyone in the village to leave, giving no choice. They said that if they find them in the village again, they will kill them all. (Comments from an imam from W. and primary school teacher, Ayorou commune, August 2020)

Sometimes they allow people to choose, provided they adopt the religious practices they consider more authentic, such as the wearing of the hijab for women (including little girls) or the ban on attending ceremonies and funerals. They also prohibit all forms of grouping and unauthorised contact between men and women. Men are forced to wear short trousers, grow a beard, abandon the rosary, participate in collective prayers in mosques and attend preaching. In some cases, they also demand that parents let their children join these groups.

This climate of insecurity creates widespread panic among the population and leads many people or families to leave their respective villages. In the Tillabéri region, the displaced populations increase the ranks of Malian and Burkinabe refugees already settled in or around the Niger border towns.

B. Risk and vulnerability factors

The continuing violence increases the vulnerability of the population and has serious humanitarian consequences. The mobilisation of national and international organisations in the area is very strong, complementing local protection mechanisms. Insecurity leads many communities to move to the tri-border area. The humanitarian protection strategies developed to address this are both local and external.

Chart 13. Type of violence encountered

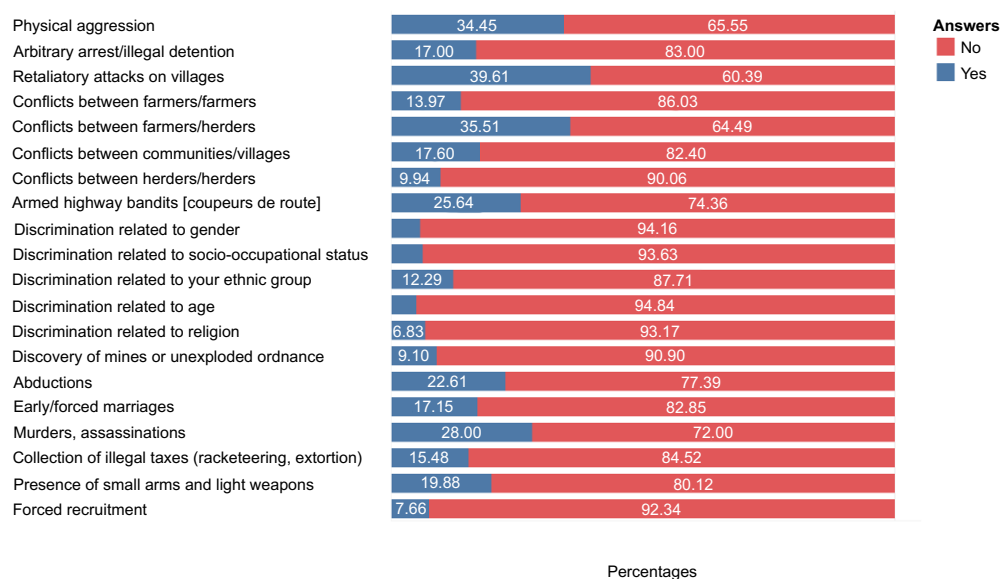
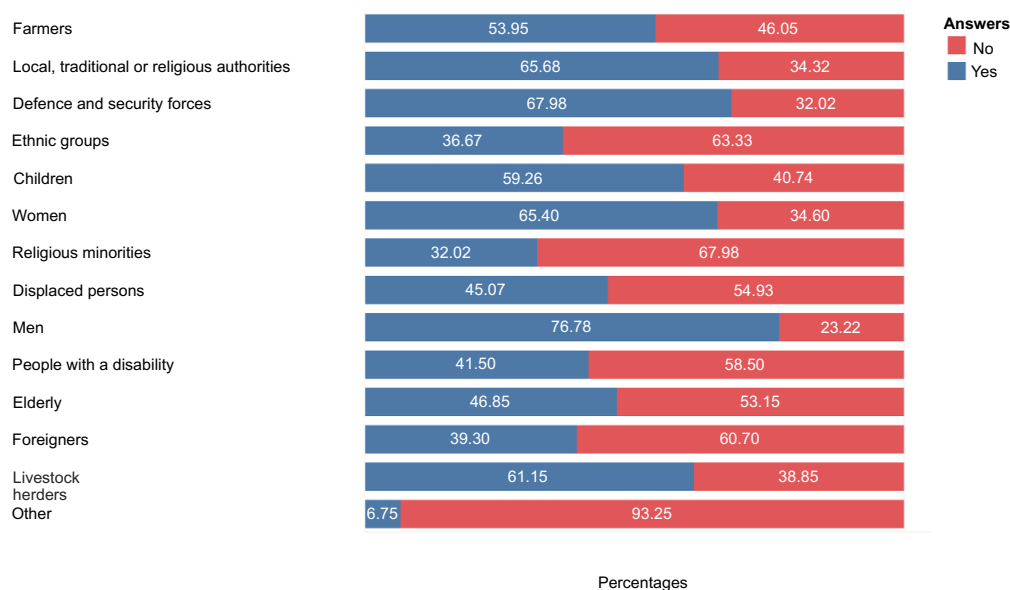


Chart 14. Main victims of known violence



Among the **main victims**, **children** are cited in 59.26% of cases (91.12% in Mali and 57.5% in the Sahel region); women in 65.4% (96.7% in Mali) and men in 76.78% (93.91% in Mali, 85.19% in Burkina Faso). Traditional authorities are also particularly affected by violence: 71.43% in Burkina Faso, 50% in Mali and 73.70% in Niger.

1) Risk factors

In Burkina Faso and Niger, the main motivation for joining violent groups is economic (58% for men and 54.24% for women), while in Mali the motivations are more diverse.

Chart 15. Main motivation for joining a jihadist group

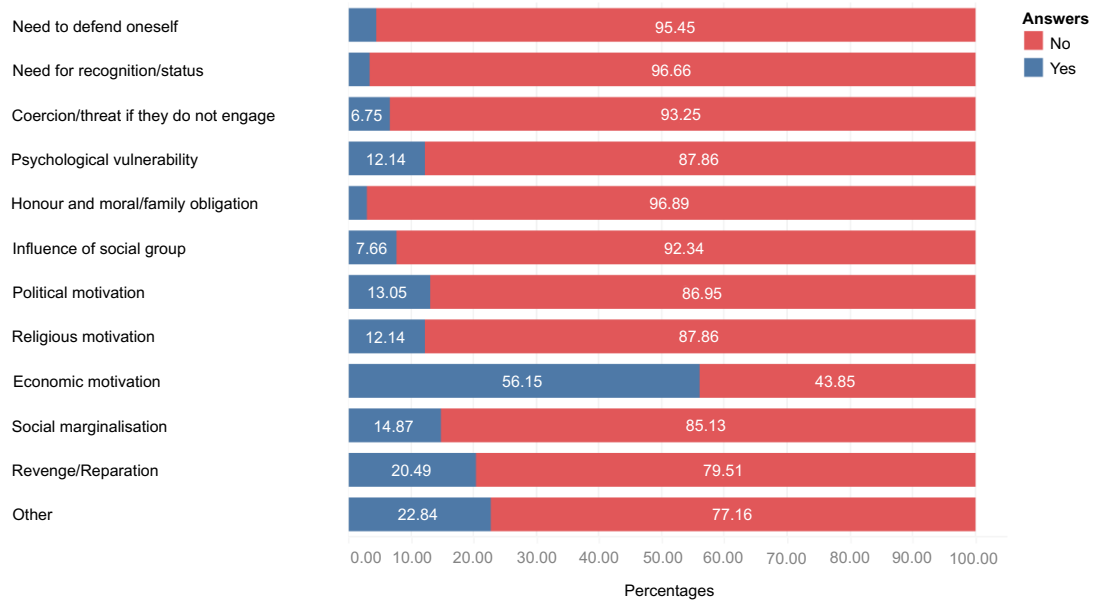
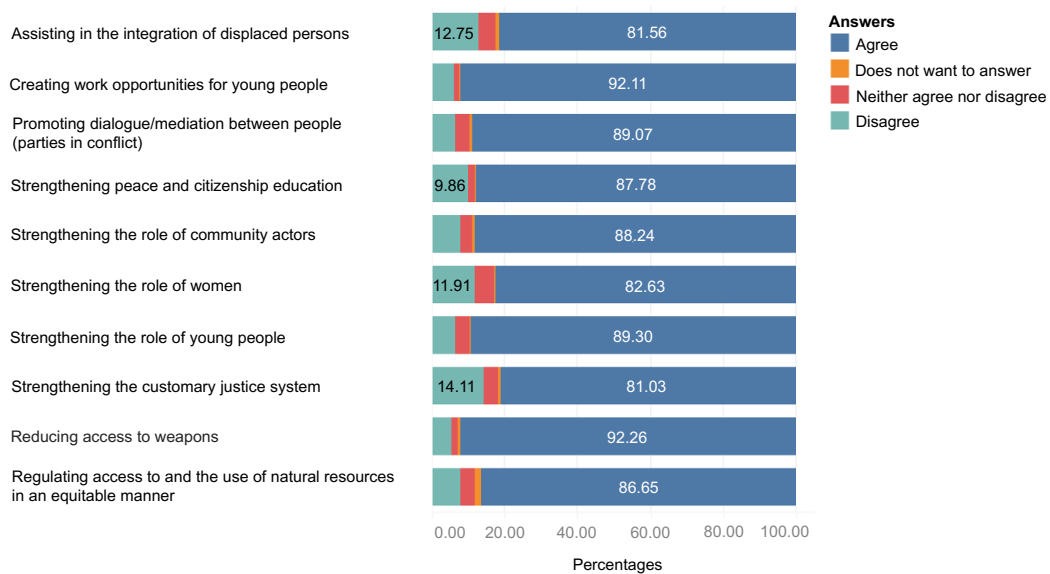


Chart 16. Main mechanisms for reducing violence



2) Poverty

Located in the heart of the Sahelo-Saharan strip, the Niger Liptako region is characterised by an economy that is highly dependent on agriculture and livestock breeding, the main economic activities of local communities. Local agricultural and pastoral production systems are currently severely disrupted by the deteriorating security situation, which has resulted in numerous population movements and an increase in livestock theft organised and maintained by armed groups living off racketeering.

Rural communities are paying a high price as they are constantly losing their livestock capital. Animal losses are measured in their thousands: *“Between August and November 2019 alone, thousands of heads of cattle and small ruminants have been taken away by bandits in the department of Bankilaré and have been reported to us.”* (Interview with a prefectural authority in Bankilaré conducted on 13 August 2020).

People's livelihoods are also affected by numerous attacks on local markets. These aim to reduce the number of visitors and to destroy a local trading economy. The communes, symbols of the local state, are therefore deprived of an entire part of their resources, the majority of which comes from taxes on the markets. The markets are now very rarely visited and, when they are, the time spent in these community trading places is considerably reduced. In some villages, weekly markets have been closed. This situation increases the economic vulnerability and food insecurity of the population and results in a decline in household income.

In addition to the precarious situation of the local population, there are also the consequences from the government's implementation of restrictive security measures, namely the state of emergency, the ban on the use of motorbikes and the closure of certain service stations. In the localities affected by insecurity, the implementation of these state security measures has contributed to stifling the economy and depriving a significant number of people of employment, specifically those whose income is mainly linked to the markets being operational. This includes motorbike taxi drivers, motorbike mechanics, spare parts sellers, petrol pump attendants, petrol station managers, etc. This situation of poverty and misery makes the populations less resilient and is undoubtedly a significant risk factor:

Poverty, aggravated by recurrent droughts, is the main risk factor, having benefited the establishment of insecurity throughout the department of Bankilaré. (Interview with a prefectural authority from Bankilaré conducted on 13 August 2020)

In this sense, the accounts and information collected present structural poverty as one of the decisive factors in the propensity and entrenchment of insecurity. For the populations surveyed, poverty allows jihadist groups to gain ground and prosper. The latter take advantage of the level of poverty and misery of the population to try to convince them to join their ranks, by offering them money in return for their commitment or by promising to lift them out of their poverty. This idea, which is shared by the majority of respondents, is well supported here by the words of this respondent:

Today, those that have thought about it understand the real motives of the terrorists. They are bandits, thugs, traffickers and criminals who use religion as an alibi to hide their true face and deceive people. The truth is that they have dirty money from trafficking or theft and they take advantage of the poverty of the population to deceive some people. All the people who are with them or who have become their accomplices, it is not because of religion, it is because of the money they offer them. And not everyone is allowed to have the courage to stand up to money. Imagine the reaction of a poor person in the bush who is offered 400,000 CFA francs and a motorbike. It takes a lot of courage and an unshakeable faith in God to refuse such an offer. So, for me, the problem is poverty. (interview with A. A. conducted on 9 August 2020 in Ayorou)

In an economic context characterised by unemployment and inactivity after work in the fields, the “offer” from terrorist groups appears to be a new opportunity to be seized. Once the harvest is over, rural populations lack activities for at least eight months. Migration to neighbouring countries,

which used to be an escape route for young people, is being disrupted by insecurity and political instability in the main countries of emigration.

3) Low employment opportunities for young people

The socio-economic crisis, aggravated by insecurity, affects young people in particular, who find themselves in a situation of economic uncertainty. Employment opportunities for them have sometimes dried up in the most exposed areas. The practice of agro-pastoral activities, small-scale trade and transport (notably motorbike taxis), which traditionally occupy young people, are now being disrupted, both by the resurgence of violence and by the restrictive security measures decreed by the state. The consequences of insecurity are also reflected in fewer job opportunities for young people. Civil society organisations, emergency or humanitarian organisations that used to offer them occasional work (and services) locally also avoid insecure areas and often retreat to the departmental or communal capitals or to the capital cities:

Insecurity has put many young people out of work. And the ban on motorbikes has worsened their situation, as many have been left without work and without any source of income to support themselves. (Interview with a conservator conducted on 7 August 2020 in Ayorou)

Young people also feel abandoned by the state, and the combination of these factors increases their economic and psychological vulnerability and exposes them to the risk of recruitment by armed groups (especially the more radical ones). The strengthening of community resilience is required, as is tackling youth unemployment.

In the commune of Dessa in Niger, the construction of the Kandadji dam initially raised a lot of hope, both among young people and the general population. Indeed, many hoped that the start of the various construction sites for this dam would offer job opportunities and would make it possible to solve the problem of unemployment, if only temporarily. It has to be said that currently this is not the case, which fuels a feeling of marginalisation and injustice among the population, especially since, according to respondents, those responsible for recruitment bring in workers from elsewhere to work on the various sites. This situation creates frustration among the populations concerned.

Moreover, it was clear from the responses that the NSAGs are exploiting the weaknesses of the state to try to gain the trust of the population. For this reason, the respondents believe that the state itself creates the conditions for strengthening NSAGs. Unless the state takes action to provide opportunities for young people, they will remain vulnerable and susceptible to recruitment by these criminal groups or to illegal activities.

For me, poverty, lack of work, delinquency, drug use and ignorance are the root of all evil. And this is the basis of insecurity, in my opinion, because what could make someone put their life in danger if they have a job that allows them to provide for themselves? I can't think of any reason. (Interview with a young person from Famalé living in Dessa conducted on 24 September 2020)

4) *Proliferation and easy access to illicit weapons*

Today, illicit weapons circulate in our area like cigarettes. (Interview with a young leader¹⁵ conducted on 9 August 2020 in Ayorou)

The large number of weapons in circulation and their ease of acquisition is causing deep concern in communities.

Today, anyone can acquire a weapon. You only have to go to Mali, where they sell them everywhere. This is why there are more and more small-time bandits who rob or attack traders at home. This is the problem today. In the bush, whenever you see a herder, be sure he has his gun hidden in the bush. (Interview with a customary leader from Tedeбет, conducted in Ayorou on 9 August 2020)

5) *Inter-community tensions*

The survey data show that the NSAGs operating in the area rely on a network of accomplices recruited from within the local communities, who act as relays, scouts and informants to conduct their operations. It is strongly argued that the main strength of NSAGs remains the internal complicity that allows them to have very precise information about their targets and to carry out their attacks. The recruitment of these accomplices is facilitated by intra-community jealousies and rivalries.

The exacerbation of internal rivalries gives the NSAGs the opportunity to gain ground through relays and informants who favour them. This situation has given rise to widespread panic among the population, who were astonished by the extent and level of infiltration of villages by the NSAGs, who seem to “have eyes and ears” everywhere:

One day I received a call from a stranger asking me to give two million. I replied that I don't have two million. He then called again, this time to threaten me if I didn't pay the money. I said again that he might kill me but I can't give what I don't have. Following this call, I travelled to Niamey. When I returned in the night, they attacked my home. I am a polygamist, so when they arrived, they went straight to the house where I was spending the night. This was no coincidence. They certainly have an informant who knows me quite well. (Interview with a young person conducted in Sanguilé on 23 September 2020)

In Mali, in the Koro area, conflicts between farmers and herders, but also between farmers themselves have been reported. The town of Bankass has been particularly affected by population displacements:

There were families displaced from Bankass to other localities. The Fountanké neighbourhood in particular, where many Fulani lived, suffered a high incidence of displacement. The members of most of these families left the town of Bankass for fear of reprisals or amalgamation due to the conflict... These families felt threatened in Bankass because of their ethnicity. (Focus group with women held on 11 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

¹⁵ From the village of Tedeбет (formerly Koutougou Haoussa).

The departure of families from Bankass was not caused by threats or tensions, but by preventative and security measures:

There was no conflict within the town of Bankass, but the echoes came from the surrounding communes. The Fulani abandoned the town to avoid being targeted by self-defence groups, while some Dogon and state employees left as a preventive measure against jihadist attacks [...] there were also displacements of Dogon people and state employees from Bankass to other localities. They are families originally from other localities. The main destinations are Bandiagara, Mopti, Segou and Bamako. (Focus group with women held on 11 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

Also, the study reveals that the displaced people who came to Bankass to protect themselves tried to return to their localities:

The entire village of Sinetomo in the commune of Baye was displaced to the town of Bankass. After staying there a while, they all returned to their village after a few lulls. However, the armed bandits chased the inhabitants of this village back towards Bankass. Currently, many villages are in this situation of being driven back after trying to reach their village. This includes the villages of Gorou in the commune of Baye, Wéla in the commune of Tori, etc. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

I tell you honestly that some displaced people want to return to their localities now if they find a way. But the problem is that the situation is getting worse and worse in the neighbouring communes. There is no question of farming or grazing in the bush because of the presence of armed groups in the area. (Focus group with young people held on 13 August 2020 in Oroboye, Bankass cercle)

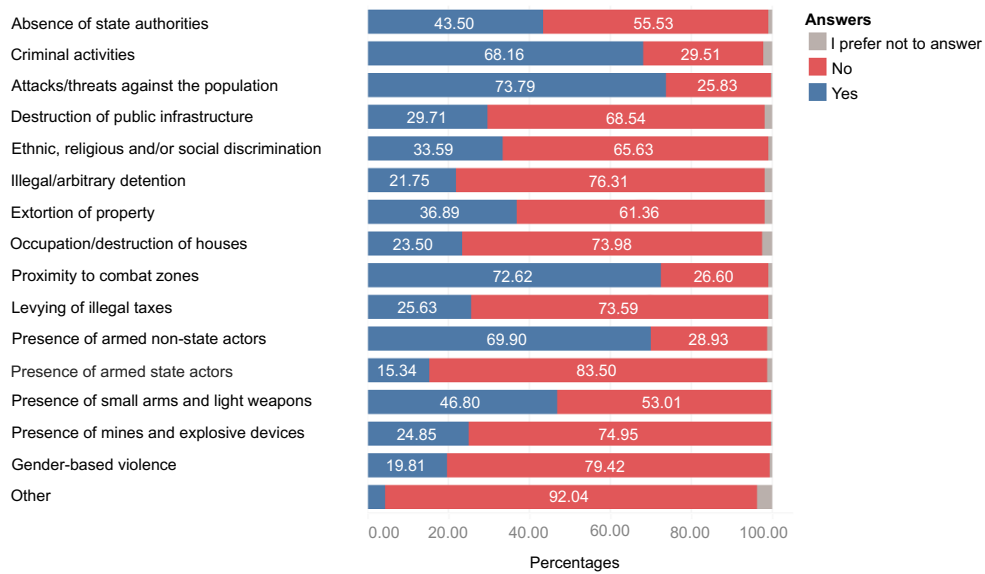
As far as I know, there were families and people from some villages, such as Gorou, Séssirina, Koupangou, who had returned to their locality with all their families after staying in Bankass and who are returning again. But these same villages retreated to Bankass because of the imminent threats and total destruction of their village for a second time. Since this forced return, the displaced people are currently in Bankass in very poor conditions. However, other families have moved to larger cities such as Mopti and Bamako. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

C. Perceptions of security

50.53% of respondents said they could move freely outside their communities (54.07% in Burkina Faso and 51.27% in Mali) and 60.62% said they were safe. In Niger, 55.21% of respondents said they could not move freely outside their communities.

When respondents do not feel safe, the main reasons are proximity to combat zones, attacks and threats against the population, criminal activities and the presence of armed state actors.

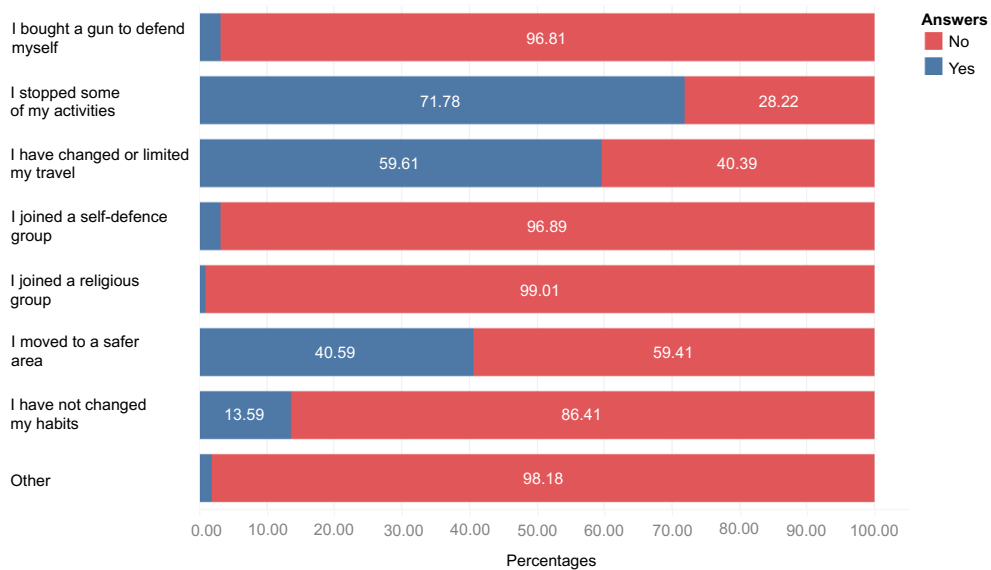
Chart 17. Main factors of insecurity



Faced with insecurity, **people adapt their behaviour**. The majority of respondents say that they have **stopped some of their activities** (100% of nomads, 88.83% of IDPs, 87.76% of returnees and half of migrants; 75.56% in Burkina Faso, 82.49% in Mali and 55.47% in Niger), then **changed or limited their movements** (59.61% in all regions combined; 66.67% of migrants, 100% of nomads, 62.13% of IDPs, 57.154% of returnees, 55.56% of refugees and 57.27% of residents), and finally **moved to more secure communes** (40.59%; 76.63% of IDPs, 65.31% of returnees; 54.63% in Burkina Faso – including 81% in the Nord region –, 66.75% in Mali and 71.61% in Niger)

It should be noted that a very small proportion of respondents said they had joined a self-defence group.

Chart 18. Changes in behaviour in the face of insecurity



IV. Local mechanisms and humanitarian protection responses

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines protection as “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, in particular HR law, IHL, refugee law”¹⁶. Humanitarian actors must ensure that the rights of affected persons “in accordance with international human rights law are respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination”¹⁷. By local mechanisms, we mean the informal ways in which communities protect people, property and services. These mechanisms are built on local norms. In conflict-affected areas, existing mechanisms adapt or transform, which can also lead to a redefinition not only of local norms, but also of community identity.

This insecurity and its consequences, the arrival and settlement of refugees then displaced persons in the tri-border area, place us in a multifaceted humanitarian context. Protection strategies are both local and external. On the one hand, local mechanisms are often perceived as effective ways of limiting or reducing violence, but can have negative effects, especially for different population groups. On the other hand, humanitarian protection mechanisms must also ensure that responses do not recreate discrimination, abuse or violence and do not harm communities. The aim of this study is to identify the different local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses, to document them, to cross-reference them and to see how they may or may not complement each other. Understanding the impact of protective mechanisms is therefore crucial to reducing negative effects and enhancing positive ones.

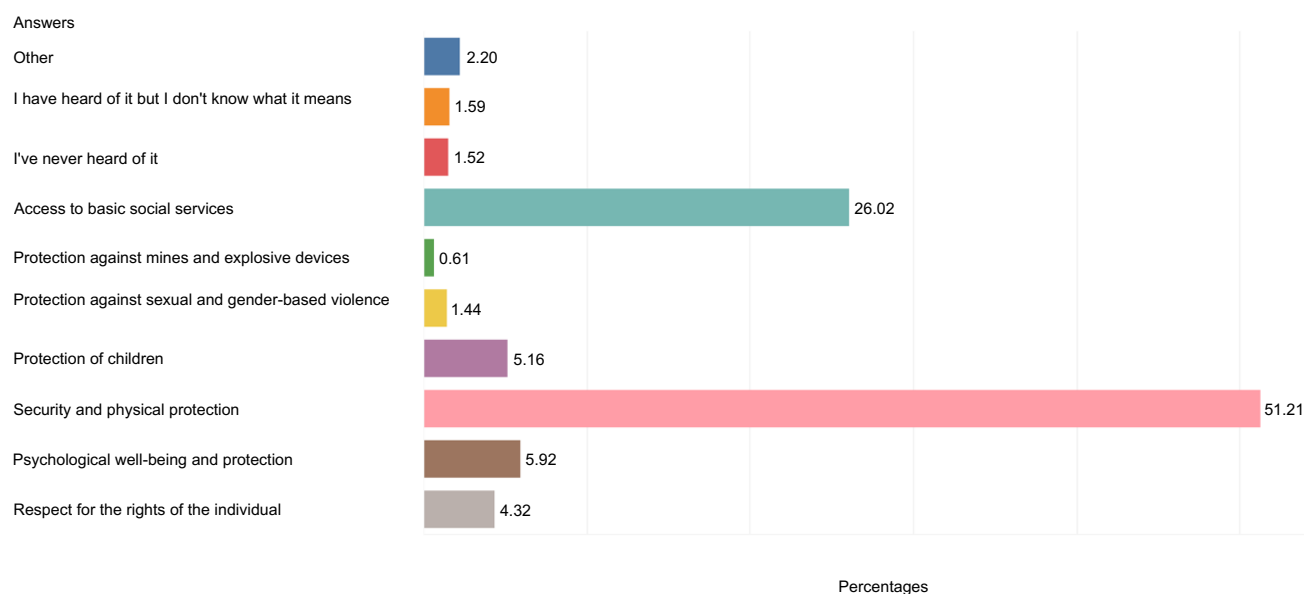
While the protection of populations is primarily the responsibility of the states, multiple actors carry out protection activities, including the state, community actors, local actors, national and international NGOs and the FDS.

The situation of insecurity forces people to adapt their way of life. A number of actors provide emergency relief and rehabilitation to people fleeing violence and conflict.

¹⁶ IASC, Protection Policy for Displaced Persons 1999.

¹⁷ “IASC Operational Guidelines on the Protection of People Affected by Natural Disasters”, Brookings-LES Project on Internal Displacement, September 2011, www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/0106_operational_guidelines_nd_french.pdf (page accessed 16/05/2022).

Chart 19. What does “protection” mean to you?



A. Local protection mechanisms

Local humanitarian protection mechanisms include all actions, individual or collective, undertaken locally both by refugees and displaced persons and by host populations and local authorities for the benefit of refugees and displaced persons. Humanitarian protection responses are provided by a variety of actors from outside local communities, including the central government, its branches and its technical and financial partners (PTF).

The plurality of protection mechanisms is due to the differing security contexts between sites, but also due to the strategic position of the different categories of actors, each of which defines a particular course of action for protection. Depending on their socio-professional, cultural, economic and political status, among others, the actors use a multitude of strategies in order to protect themselves.

Based on the responses from the populations we met, we can isolate and analyse several types of local protection mechanisms used in the localities covered by this study. These vary according to the category of population affected by insecurity: on the one hand, populations directly affected by insecurity and violence and, on the other, populations and authorities of the areas hosting refugees and displaced populations.

In the event of an incident, 49.81% of respondents report it first to family (63.33% of women and 36.68% of men; 58.63% in Burkina Faso, 50.25% in Mali, 41.93% in Niger). The majority then turn to community leaders (29.89%), particularly in Niger (41.93%). **If the respondent is a migrant, they prefer to report the incident first to the FDS (33%), while family, community leaders, local elected officials and local authorities are cited equally (16.67%).**

If the respondent is a nomad, they prefer to report it to community leaders (60%).

As a third choice, men turn to local elected officials, women, community leaders, migrants, friends and neighbours.

For 65.48% of respondents, protection services exist in their localities (79.07% in Burkina Faso, 60.41% in Mali and 51.56% in Niger). The vast majority of people believe that protection services are provided by the state and then by international organisations.

Table 5. Actors responsible for protection services

	Total	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger
State authorities	72.42 %	82.44 %	52.1 %	75.25 %
Local NGOs	29.66 %	23.65 %	25.63 %	47.47 %
International NGOs	49.71 %	51.05 %	50 %	46.46 %
Community groups	28.62 %	13.35 %	47.48 %	38.89 %
United Nations	6.6 %	2.34 %	19.33 %	0.51 %

77.40% of respondents said they have access to protection services (81.64% of men and 72.75% of women). When they do not have access, it is either because the person says they “do not have the power to decide” (21.47%) or “do not know the services that exists” (19.63%), particularly migrants (66.67%) and nomads or transhumants (100%). Finally, the social barrier was mentioned by 12.88% of respondents.

54.93% of respondents recognised the existence of a state or non-state mechanism to resolve tensions and conflicts, especially in Burkina Faso (66.11%) and Niger (67.71%). In contrast, the proportion is low in Mali (27.16%). When they exist, 86.33% of respondents believe that the system effectively prevents or resolves tensions and conflicts (Burkina Faso 91.6%, Mali 68.22% and Niger 86.54%).

1) *The different types of humanitarian aid*

In the six months preceding the survey, 29.26% of respondents in Burkina Faso, 36.29% in Mali and 62.24% in Niger received humanitarian aid (40.97% overall). Aid was provided to 52.58% of IDPs and 55.56% of refugees. It consisted of food assistance (cash or vouchers in kind) to 75% of respondents, (100% nomadic, 86.27% IDPs, 79.17% returnees, 80% refugees and 57.73% residents); household and hygiene kits (35.74%), money (30%), shelter (19.07%), water, hygiene and sanitation (12.41%); IGAs (9.81%) and access to health care (5.93%, including 100% of migrants surveyed). 41.85% of respondents who reported receiving humanitarian assistance were “satisfied”, 16.48% “somewhat satisfied” and 25.19% “very satisfied”. In Burkina Faso and Niger, the majority of respondents were satisfied (51.9% and 43.51% respectively) and in Mali, very satisfied (31.37%).

2) *Local protection mechanisms developed by direct victims of insecurity*

Despite the unprecedented security situation, resident and internally displaced populations are developing resilience mechanisms.

For example, IDPs are trying to replicate the previous village organisation in temporary hosting sites in Burkina Faso. For fear of reprisals, some communities, such as in Thiou, prefer not to go to the local market¹⁸. People are also turning to self-defence organisations.

In general, displaced people are welcomed in host communities and they are shown compassion, as the following comments illustrate:

For example, there are individuals in the community who have given their plots to the UNHCR [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] so that it can

¹⁸ Interview with an NGO worker in Thiou. This information is evident from what the young people from Thiou said about the community during the focus group discussion.

build shelters; I met the chief of the village of Wendou, an old man of about 90 I think, with whom I had the chance to talk and he told me that he is very much at ease with them. I have not heard any particular complaints from IDPs that they are not accepted, so there is a rather positive cohabitation and mutual tolerance between the different communities. (Interview with a deputy mayor of Markoye conducted on 13 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

At some temporary hosting sites in Burkina Faso, consultation frameworks for IDPs have been set up and the advisers, the village chiefs often regain some of their prerogatives:

There are communication mechanisms between the different parties and this helps a lot in the exchange of information. There are committees for displaced people, for example, the committees of the different communities; the complaints committees that are being set up. It allows us to know if there is something wrong, it goes back and it allows us to record them. (Interview with a humanitarian NGO worker conducted on 7 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

To minimise the risks and threats, people limit their movements (particularly in Mali), and their economic activities, contributing to their impoverishment:

The only solution that everyone has adopted is simply to stay at home, to stop travelling, because there is a serious threat of death every time. When you die in these conditions, your own relatives will not dare to go looking for your body. This is why people are getting poorer every day [...]. We changed our habits a lot, because we used to go to a lot of fairs in the region. But with the frequent attacks on convoys, we have significantly reduced our movements. (Focus group with women held on 7 August 2020 in Mopti)

We limited our travel to hostile areas, we limited our visits to fairs and markets, we also limited agricultural practices in places away from the village [...]. We have abandoned our daily freedoms such as traditional dances, cultural ceremonies, we have greatly reduced the frequency of movements at weddings and baptisms. (Focus group with women held on 11 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass circle)

We have not changed our daily routine. Because in spite of the conflict, we go about our business, even if very timidly. It's true that we are afraid in the fields, but it's also a matter of life and death. If we don't grow crops, who will look after our family? You can't reach out to donors all the time. That is why we are calling on humanitarian organisations to put an end to this conflict rather than turning us into idlers [...] I do not support what my predecessor said, because there has indeed been a change in our way of life. In the past, our traders participated in the various fairs and markets in the locality. These are the big fairs in the villages of the commune of Baye, Tori and Diarrassagou. The income from these fairs has an impact on the socio-economic development of the locality. But now all these areas have become no-go areas due to the occupation of jihadist groups. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass cercle)

The local mechanisms developed by the populations to protect themselves from armed groups in the insecure areas studied take several forms. Depending on the situation and the actors involved, the strategies deployed by communities to protect themselves are active cooperation, passive complicity, discretion, resignation, flight, invocations or *du'a*, and the incitement of young people to leave the country in order to escape the multi-faceted influence of jihadists.

For reasons that often pre-date the security crisis in the villages, some cooperate with armed groups on an individual or family level. Due to economic difficulties linked to poverty, youth unemployment and

the absence of reassuring prospects, the idleness of the non-agricultural seasons can encourage people to join armed groups.

On a religious level, the coexistence of several forms of Islam in Niger constitutes a “powder keg” likely to cause inter-religious tensions. This is one of the keys to understanding “insecurity” in North Tillabéri. In the rural commune of Diagourou (Téra), religious differences were clearly cited as the main cause of insecurity in several villages bordering Burkina Faso. For example, in Bouppo, a village in Tera where two branches of Islam, the Wahhabis and the Qadiriyya, cohabit, there are already more or less latent conflicts. The former have allied themselves with armed Islamist groups of the same persuasion to better position themselves while ensuring their own protection. They reportedly let their young people fight alongside the Islamist groups and attacked their opponents, namely followers of the Qadiriyya, burning their mosque and eventually driving them out of the village.

Passive accomplices are those who receive threats and blackmail from armed groups. They are ordered to be informants in the villages. These “forced informants” find it difficult to leave the village because of the size of their household or for social and/or economic reasons. They are forced to collaborate with the armed groups to whom they provide the requested information in order to protect their lives. Passive complicity contributes to a general climate of mistrust in villages under the control of armed groups.

Discretion here means being careful about what you say or do in public spaces, limiting your movements as much as possible, controlling your actions, measuring the scope and possible implications of your words. This strategy avoids attracting the attention of possible accomplices of armed groups “hidden” in village communities. The arrival of an outsider in the village, even in the official framework of a research project, is very quickly acknowledged by the populations and integrated into the process of discretion.

There is a certain resignation among people who, without being “informers”, adopt behaviours and practices that allow them to protect themselves from armed groups without having to leave their villages. They accept shaping their ways of being and doing by adapting their social and spiritual way of life to the demands of the armed Islamists.

People who refuse to cooperate, collaborate or resign themselves are forced to leave their villages to protect themselves. Thus, some are forced to flee at short notice, while others arrange and plan their departure. People who feel forced to leave their village include those who have been directly threatened with assassination or kidnapping. This type of displacement may occur as a result of an assassination attempt in which the person manages to escape. In this situation, the threatened person then leaves without informing anyone, leaving behind family members who join them in the following days. In the majority of cases, the destination is not disclosed.

When the departure is planned, it is common for family members to consult and agree on the need to leave the village. In this situation, the family begins by taking some of the belongings to the chosen destination before the displacement. Sometimes families split into two groups for strategic reasons. One of the two, made up of young people, stays in the bush to look after the animals. The second group, consisting of the elderly, women and children, leaves the village to seek refuge elsewhere. This strategy allows the young people to take care of the animals and send the most vulnerable members of the family to a safer area. Often, some people are forced to flee far away to settle in the main towns of the commune, department, region or even in Niamey. This extract from

an interview with a displaced person from Inatès (Ayorou) brings to light the factors that impact the choice of destination:

They tortured me in Inatés. So I left to come and live in Ayorou. At the moment people have told me that they are looking for me and I don't know why they are still looking for me. Also, three months ago, they came to kill the person I was staying with here in Ayorou and injured his child. They had followed him from Inatés to come here to kill him. They killed him only because he had been chosen as the village chief of the P... of Inatés. Now I have to leave Ayorou to save my life, even if I don't yet know my destination. (Interview with a displaced person from Inatès conducted on 6 August 2020 in Ayorou)

3) Local protection mechanisms deployed by the authorities of the areas hosting refugees and displaced persons

Local, customary, religious and communal authorities have played a central role in the reception and settlement of refugees and displaced persons. Depending on the situation, these authorities have allowed or facilitated the provision of mosques, schools and many other public spaces, but also housing and plots of land belonging to people of good will. In addition, these authorities have also initiated awareness campaigns and preaching sessions that have helped to facilitate relations between refugees, displaced persons and host populations. They constituted the first institutional level of support for these refugees and displaced persons while waiting for external interventions by the state and its donors.

Traditional leaders play a role in protection through the use of mediation and reconciliation techniques. They have the power to decide on a loan or donation of land in the event of a land dispute for example. The deliberations are exclusively reserved for insiders, often the elderly. The legitimacy of the customary leadership is recognised by the vast majority of the populations of the four communes surveyed in Burkina Faso:

The customary chief is the father of all the inhabitants of the village. As a father, he has an obligation to be involved in managing the conflicts of his inhabitants. Chiefs are involved in almost every conflict. (Interview with a member of the Thiou Youth Peace Dialogue Framework conducted on 7 August 2020)

Religious leaders also play an important role in local conflict management, especially when a conflict is between two parties from the same religious community or between people from different religions.

Religious leaders are often called upon to manage a conflict, but especially in cases when the people involved are of the same religion; otherwise it is complicated. It used to be easier, but now with the insecurity, it has become even more complicated. (Interview with a religious leader conducted on 14 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

In the localities surveyed in Burkina Faso, men of certain castes – blacksmiths and shoemakers – or griots are also involved in conflict management. They are essential actors in social regulation and conflict prevention.

a. *Conflict resolution mechanisms*

Dialogue and reconciliation committees exist or are set up in villages to reduce tensions and threats. While the elderly are often responsible for carrying out community dialogue, young people are also involved in guarding villages and patrolling the areas. Protection is also sought from village defence committees or hunters (as in the Koro area of Mali) who act more quickly than the national defence and security forces. Some respondents report that conflicts have been resolved through dialogue and mediation, but also through joking relationships and inter-community dialogue, particularly between Dogon and Fulani.

In the cercle of Koro in Mali, dialogue between communities has helped to calm the situation and reduce attacks, allowing people to resume agricultural and livestock herding activities. The situation is more complex in border areas such as Bargou and Bih, where the presence of armed men is still reported.

Mali: Agreement between the Fulani and Dogon communities

The people of the Koro cercle have made several attempts to reach an agreement to end the crisis. Although an agreement was signed for an immediate ceasefire in 2018¹⁹, two years later the cercle is still facing insecurity, cattle rustling and massive displacement of the population, even though the agreement was supposed to allow farmers to cultivate their fields. According to the village chief of Bankass, a large meeting took place in Kany Bonzon, supposedly the mother village of all Dogons. Other testimonies collected in Bargou and Kiri mention this agreement but consider it precarious: “The Fulani came to our village and told us that it was safe to go and farm. But I don't trust them because they are always armed. You want peace, but you are armed and we are totally unarmed. For me, something is unclear.” (Interview with the village chief of Bargou conducted on 4 August 2020)

A head of family from Bargou doubts the sincerity of this agreement: “They [the armed men] don't come here to talk; we sent our people to talk. They told us that they accepted. All the same, we put our weapons aside. But a few months later, they came with weapons on the eve of the rainy season. That's not an agreement. Since you've been here, have you seen anyone with weapons?” (Interview with a head of household conducted on 4 August 2020 in Bargou)

However, the village chief of Bankass considers it a first step. In Koro, the communities have started meeting again, and in Bankass, negotiations are underway to meet with members of the Fulani community to discuss the mechanisms to be put in place, but some respondents think that mediation from Bamako is necessary.

“When two people are in conflict, it needs someone else to mediate. Because both protagonists will think they are all right.” (Interview with the displaced village chief of Tôlé in Bankass, conducted on 6 August 2020)

Conflicts can be resolved through mediation between the parties or through traditional mechanisms such as *toguna* or *cousinage à plaisanterie*.

¹⁹ Peace agreement between the Dogon and Fulani communities from the Koro cercle, 28 August 2018.

b. Protection mechanisms facilitated by the relatives of displaced people and host communities

Protection mechanisms can be community-based or institutional, with each displacement generating a chain of solidarity at all levels. Initiatives are developed at the local level to address the needs of displaced people, and these mechanisms are based on a traditional form of solidarity. Thus, the initial emergency aid is provided by families and local communities, before the state authorities or other actors take over. Family ties represent the first level of protection: solidarity for displaced people takes the form of hosting them in a family, the provision of food, access to drinking water and clothing.

There is a solidarity that is organised around these people. An active solidarity: people have volunteered to welcome them, to house them, others have given up their homes, others bring water, food, clothing, cooking utensils... These contributions, this solidarity, is organised rapidly around these people, but it is not much, it needs the support of the state and partners. (Interview with a customary authority from Oudalan conducted on 9 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

Yes, there are IDPs at departmental level. Usually it's their relatives, so it's a good relationship. Many of them even stay with host families, a sign of good cooperation. We have not yet had any problems with this cohabitation. (Interview with an administrative authority conducted on 9 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

In the Mopti region, in Sokoura, many of the displaced people come from Bankass, Bandiagara and Doundou, and they often arrive having lost all their possessions.

When they arrived, the village chief and the inhabitants mobilised themselves to welcome them, to look for houses for them and they collected funds for them and afterwards the NGOs also helped them, but even now they need help. We are all tired, imagine if people fled to your home, that would be a very critical situation and right now, the situation is the same. (Interview with a housewife conducted on 12 August 2020 in Sokoura, Mopti cercle)

In the host localities, relatives and others are providing solidarity and protection nets for refugees and displaced populations. Some refugees and almost all displaced people have relatives who have been in the host areas for several years, often long before the insecurity. These family networks are very active in receiving and settling populations fleeing insecurity. Thus, the populations of the host areas have provided assistance to their refugee or displaced relatives in various forms:

- carts for carrying their luggage to their destination;
- uninhabited houses;
- undeveloped plots of land for them to build shelters on;
- crop fields for those who want to farm;
- canoes for fishers who wish to continue their activity.

In this context, as the interviews revealed, a form of solidarity to rehabilitate IDPs is organised within the host population. Thus, depending on the locality, the traditional leaders organise the availability of fields for displaced persons, set up grazing areas for others, and also donate a few head of cattle to restart their agropastoral activities.

On the part of the IDPs, they appreciate these protection mechanisms because at this level, they feel truly integrated within the population, within the community. Some have been given land to farm, housing, which allows them to integrate and contribute to development. (Interview with an administrative authority from the Oudalan province conducted on 8 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

In addition to help from relatives, refugees and displaced persons have also benefited from the support and goodwill of others while waiting for aid from the state or its partners. This support mainly consisted of:

- housing small displaced families, in some cases, with a small contribution to cover rental costs;
- lending fields to those who wanted to cultivate;
- making undeveloped land available for them to settle on.

Families take in displaced people from the countryside and share food supplies with them, but this poses problems for people with limited resources:

For example, in my family, if seventeen people arrive here with me it's a problem. You can't chase them away. We will have to share the food we have so that everyone can find something to eat. An empty sack cannot stand upright. (Interview with a village chief conducted on 6 August 2020 in Bankass)

Food supplies in families are insufficient. We have to share them with people who come to the village. We have problems in this sense. Even if someone gets sick, prescription costs are a problem. (Interview with a head of household conducted on 5 August 2020 in Kiri)

In Kiri, the village chief and his advisers coordinate the reception of displaced persons by the local population. Women play a very active role in the reception of displaced persons:

Every time there is a wave of displaced people arriving, we are informed so that we can help our husbands to support them because it is really difficult for us. Often, we, the women, our parents and brothers we have little gifts that we keep for ourselves. But we put it all in to receiving the displaced people (clothes, cereals, medicines, etc.). (Interview with a female village leader conducted on 5 August 2020 from Kiri)

These mechanisms are very fragile in view of the scale of the waves of displaced people in the various localities. Even in a medium-sized town like Bankass, supporting displaced people is a heavy burden for families. A village chief explains that aid is crucial in the first few hours when the displaced people arrive, often exhausted and hungry. Some villages provide crop fields to help displaced families become self-sufficient. Sick people are also most often cared for by community health centres.

You can see for yourself the state of destitution that we are in. If a stranger arrives, it is announced to each head of household. Often we even welcome sick women and children. As president of the Community Health Association [ASACO] I often advocate for emergency treatment. We also have a village contribution fund. (Interview with the President of the ASACO from Bargou conducted on 4 August 2020)

Traditional protection mechanisms also concern access to certain social services or administrative procedures for acquiring food donations.

c. Access to land

Traditionally, access to arable land is subject to customary law, according to which it is the land chief who defines the terms²⁰. The problem today is that there are too many demands for land in the context of displacements. In the village of Kiri, land is loaned to displaced people:

When we welcomed families here, they had lost everything in their village in Thiou. But the village council decided to help them. Now, these displaced people are doing the livestock herding, farming and everything else that the others are doing. (Interview with a customary leader conducted on 4 August 2020 in Bargou)

d. Support provided by local civil society organisations

Local branches of civil society organisations, associations, groups and even *fada* youth projects also contribute to the management of displaced persons and refugees.

- Youth organisations
In Ayorou, young people, through the Communal Youth Council, have organised themselves into a Central Security Watch Committee. The members of this committee organise awareness-raising sessions for the population, particularly young people. Their awareness-raising messages focus on the need to report, without exposing oneself, any suspicious situations or individuals. The efforts of young people are supported by those of women.
- Women's groups

Women's groups focus on preventing the recruitment of children and young people into armed/terrorist groups through prevention.

4) Humanitarian protection mechanisms: external responses

The persistence of violence increases the vulnerability of populations and has serious humanitarian consequences. The region is home to a considerable number of NGO-led humanitarian interventions, complementing existing local protection mechanisms. These humanitarian protection interventions are mainly aimed at helping the populations concerned to meet their basic survival needs (food, water, health, shelter) on the one hand, and to ensure their security through protection activities on the other.

a. Formal mechanisms

For 65.48% of respondents, protection services exist in their localities: 79.07% in Burkina Faso (74% in the Nord region and 82.06% in the Sahel), 60.41% in Mali and 51.56% in Niger. These are organised by state authorities (72.42%) and local NGOs (70.34%).

With regard to the courts, in Burkina Faso the departmental (county) court is a legal provision linked to the judicial system.

²⁰ Often different from the village chief.

The departmental court is only called upon if local attempts to manage the conflict fail. The departmental court is quite far from the populations. You always try to solve problems internally, but when that fails, you have no choice. (Interview with a leader of a women's group from Banh conducted in Ouahigouya on 4 August 2020)

Here, the departmental court is called on when the actors in the conflict come from several villages; otherwise we call on our village chief and other actors such as the CVDs [village development councillors]. But if there are several actors involved, we are obliged to refer the matter to a structure that covers the entire locality. (Interview with a member of a local conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanism in Thiou on 6 August 2020)

The comments of the interviewees indicate that the departmental court is not the first structure to which the population has recourse in the event of conflict. Local actors are approached first, but if this fails or if there is a foreign element (involving a person or group from another village), then the departmental court is called upon.

The village development councillors (CVD) are genuine representatives of the municipal councillors²¹. While they are part of a legal and modern system, they rely on social and/or cultural capital. Their relationship with the administration is essentially limited to contact with the mayor, and councillors use traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Some respondents report a politicisation of some of the incumbents:

The CVD is often called on by the parties involved in the conflicts. If it is a conflict that it can handle, it does so, but if not, it connects the people involved to the right people. (Focus group with inhabitants in Kain held on 7 August 2020)

The mayor is a very important part of conflict resolution. The results of the study show that the mayor and municipal councillors play a key role in conflict management. Being mostly from the area, the mayor and the councillors have sufficient knowledge to talk about the difficulties that the populations face.

The councillors lived with us in the village, when we have a problem with someone, we go to see them; even if they can't help, they will lead us to the right person. The councillors are supposed to be there for everyone but when you are not from the same party as them, contact can be difficult [...]. There are conflicts that councillors can resolve, especially if the conflict has nothing to do with customs. They are usually respected people in the village. So in this capacity, they are involved in conflict resolution. (Focus group with inhabitants of Kain conducted on 7 August 2020)

b. The state in humanitarian protection

Humanitarian protection is provided by both central and decentralised technical services. In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity and the Family handles the issue of refugees and displaced persons. It is deployed in the field through its technical services such as the permanent secretariat of the National Emergency Relief Council [secrétariat permanent du Conseil national des secours d'urgences] (SP/CONASUR). The latter is chaired in the administrative provinces

²¹ Formal mechanism provided for by the General Code of Local Authorities, art. 222 and the implementation decree 2007-032/PRES/PM/MATD of 22 January 2017 provides in its article 11 that the CVD can take the initiative on all issues affecting the development of the village and issue detailed recommendations, particularly in the areas [...] of preserving social peace in the village.

by the provincial high commissioner. Other ministries involved are territorial administration, security, economy and finance.

In Burkina Faso, the State has taken several decisions aimed at providing humanitarian assistance and protection to populations that are victims of insecurity. To reduce food and economic vulnerability, they are selling food at moderate prices and distributing free food to displaced people. Committees for peace and security watch have also been established in villages. However, these mechanisms and institutional aid are often criticised by the populations who report their politicisation and mismanagement by local elected officials and state representatives.

No, these mechanisms do not really benefit the people who need them most, because the leaders do as they please. In order to benefit from this mechanism, you need to have someone in that department who helps you to have it, otherwise these mechanisms are shared illegally. (Comments from a participant at focus group with young people held in Koro on 14 August 2020)

Some internally displaced people interviewed in Burkina Faso condemned the management of aid, stressing its politicisation.

There is a problem with identification and registration because we see people who are not displaced but who are benefiting from aid. They don't even have displaced people they are hosting. This is understandable since the work is left to the CVD. And as you know, the work of the CVD is political; I say it is politicised because the CVD does not have the approval of everybody. It has been the CVD for some time and people are fed up. Others have disputed this. The aid goes to those who are related to them or who are from the same political side. A water point was made here by the Red Cross but it has been politicised. Getting the key is complicated. They say that it is thanks to the governing party that we got this. (Interview with a religious leader conducted on 7 August 2020 in Ouahigouya²²)

IDPs not living on temporary hosting sites complain about their situation and call for an improvement in the identification or registration process for displaced persons. The difficult conditions facing these displaced persons and the frustrations over the perception of politicised aid can lead to violence between displaced persons in the sites or to their turning to terrorist groups.

Extracts from a focus group discussion with mothers held on 7 August 2020 in Mopti

P4: Those responsible for distributing the food discriminate. They call up people of their choice. If you are not one of them, it would be better not to come, because you won't get anything, even if your name is listed a hundred times.

P5: Exactly, if you are not on their "own" list, you will not receive support.

P1: It's not like in the days of CARE MALI when everything ran smoothly. Everyone on the list was served in turn. It was CARE MALI staff who handled the distribution themselves. But since locally recruited staff have been involved in this, it has changed.

Who are the staff? Are they from the mayor's office or advisers to the neighbourhood chief?

P5: Nobody really knows. Sometimes we are called to the neighbourhood chief to register our names, sometimes it happens in a street. But none of this has led to anything concrete for us.

P6: We have been registered many times, in exchange for payment of registration fees that they set at 200 F, 400 F, 500 F. I even paid 1,000 CFA francs, another time I paid 2,000 for four women in our family.

P5: That's right, if you don't pay, they won't put your name down. At first, they asked for 1,000 F then after 200 F. Nothing came of it.

²² The perception of the politicisation of aid or the mismanagement of aid came up in about ten interviews.

P3: In some places, they demand 100 F per family member to register you.

You don't know any of them?

P3: We don't really know them. They come in pairs and often liaise with the neighbourhood chief. While one takes care of registration, the other collects the registration fee.

P2: We don't know them. But we get registered every time, to no effect..

P6: Exactly, we haven't received anything yet. Even the other day, we were queuing up to register; we almost fought to keep our place in the queue.

P4: Those in charge of distribution are discriminating, even racist. They only serve those with whom they have ties, affinities.

P6: We always line up, but when it's your turn, they just say there's no more food. They lock their vehicles and turn their backs on you.

In your opinion, if aid were distributed properly, would it ease tensions?

P1: Exactly, if it were done properly, there would be no problems between people. However, if those who deserve it don't receive it, while others are regularly served, tensions will never reduce.

P3: When we complain about the blatant unfairness during these operations, it is not well received by the beneficiaries who think we are selfish. That's is not likely to reduce tensions.

P4: If everyone was treated equally, if there was less bias, people would get along better.

P5: Exactly, they need to be fair; this will avoid frustrations among the inhabitants. Often, injustice is carried out in an obvious way, without any shame. People who come late are regularly served at the expense of those who have been there since the early hours.

c. Agencies, NGOs and projects active in humanitarian protection

Humanitarian assistance is also provided to displaced communities by international organisations. NGOs are also confronted with the deteriorating security situation, the inaccessibility of certain areas due to anti-personnel mines, ambushes, attacks on humanitarian convoys and kidnappings, etc.

Humanitarian aid tends to respond to needs, but does it take into account all the needs of these people? No, I don't think so because of the information that often comes back to us; it's true that what the humanitarians send can neither cover all their needs nor respond to all the needs, but the minimum is assured and that's what's essential. (Interview with an administrative authority conducted on 14 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

NGOs also used to come a lot. All of them worked here. World Vision, the state built the school, Care Mali and also the Danish Demining Group (DDG). But now, only the DDG is left in the field. This causes many difficulties. (Interview with a head of household conducted on 4 August 2020 in Bargou)

Since the beginning of the crisis, many NGOs pass through. There has been a lot of distribution of supplies. So many people are arriving, the number of displaced people increases every day. The NGOs that I know here have provided aid. These are NGOs like the Red Cross, ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross], World Vision (which is working even now). ODS Mali is used to working here. They explained to us a little bit about how things are done to protect these children. It is COOPI [Cooperazione Internazionale Italia] that does this work. They look for foster families for children who have lost their parents in the conflict. I know all this is done in the framework of humanitarian protection. The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue [HD] has organised many meetings to raise awareness in the population. There is Search for Common Ground

and Yam Giribolo Tumo²³ [YAG-TU]. (Interview with a pastor of the protestant church in Bankass, conducted on 6 August 2020)

All these partners are involved in several fields such as health, education and economic promotion at a local level. Support is provided either in kind (construction of wells, meeting places, facilitating access to fertiliser for agriculture) or by training the inhabitants in sewing, forest conservation techniques, market gardening, etc.

It seems that it is the coordination of aid that poses a real problem, since many testimonies indicate that information on the availability of aid is quite often transmitted by the mayor's offices or the cercle council, which work with the local prefects and sub-prefects. People feel left out of the management of humanitarian aid. Cases of diversion of humanitarian aid by local authorities have also been reported in Mali.

In the Mopti region, the humanitarian situation is worsening with forced population displacements due to the violence. The main finding is that humanitarian missions are limited to medium-sized towns and that in order to deliver aid to certain localities such as Kiri, Bargou or Bih, the system relies on local elected officials and prefects. People complain that they are left out since the receipt of aid is handled by the mayor's offices. According to the testimonies collected, humanitarian aid is not satisfactory and the respondents believe that it is diverted for private purposes:

I myself am a member of the Koro communal council. But the mayors divert the aid to their own account. Many of them have built villas and bought cars. I spoke about it at a cercle council meeting because it's not fair. We learned that agencies send aid but mayors only give a tiny fraction. If it were given to Christians, the aid would be well distributed. (Interview with the pastor of the catholic church in Kiri on 5 August 2020)

Other more serious accounts indicate that food destined for humanitarian aid is for sale in the shops of traders in Koro.

Because of this conflict, there has been a lot of changes in terms of humanitarian NGO intervention for protection. There are humanitarians for the protection of children, humanitarians to fight against hunger, humanitarians to reduce gender-based violence, humanitarians to raise the standard of living of the population by reducing diseases (construction of latrines for displaced people), first-response humanitarians, etc. (Focus group with men held on 12 August 2020 in Ogotena, Bankass circle)

There are many other humanitarians who intervene to reduce the suffering of people. I know of humanitarians who are repairing displaced people's houses, while others are building timberless, vaulted houses for displaced people. I know of humanitarians who set up tents for displaced people in the localities. Through humanitarians, many displaced people have received donations and household kits for their families. (Focus group with young people held on 13 August 2020 in Oroboye, Bankass cercle)

Direct support for populations that are victims of insecurity takes the form of distribution of food and non-food items (foodstuffs, clothing kits – headscarves, turbans, loincloths, etc. –, coronavirus protection kits – hand washing devices, gel, masks). They also receive shelter kits (sheets, mats, solar lamps, tarpaulins, wood, iron, kettles, plates and mosquito nets, cups, ladles, pots and pans) to help them get settled. The aid also concerns access to health care structures, the construction of latrines, the

²³ Yam Giribolo Tumo in the Dogon language is translated into English as Association for the promotion of women.

creation of water points, as well as rehabilitation activities through IGAs such as feeding small ruminants or the distribution of carts and canoes. However, the crisis has reduced the number of IGAs. Money transfer operations strengthen the distribution of material goods. Covering several areas, the distributions focus on the basic necessities that allow displaced populations to settle in and cope with the shock of displacement. The NGOs also provide capacity-building activities, training and awareness-raising on peace, security monitoring and the promotion of social cohesion.

DRC is particularly involved in, among other things:

- food distributions (millet, oil, rice, etc.);
- distribution of kitchen utensils;
- distribution of shelter kits;
- distribution of agricultural kits (improved seed, motor pumps, wheelbarrows, training in cultivation, etc.);
- training/awareness-raising of communities in security monitoring, investigation, collection and transmission of strategic information on security and humanitarian protection.

B. Interactions between local mechanisms and humanitarian protection responses

This section focuses on the forms of interaction noted by actors between local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses. These interactions are divergent on some points and complementary on others.

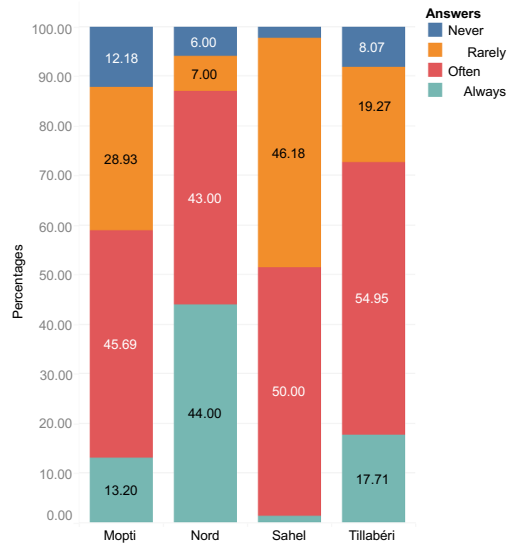
When respondents face problems in their relations with humanitarian organisations, the main reasons are:

- **48.1% say they do not know how to contact them** (42.9% of men and 53.47% of women; and 57.55% in Niger);
- **39.38% say they are not consulted in decision making;**
- 31.41% say that it is not their habit to interact with them;
- 26.5% say that humanitarian organisations do not organise meetings/assemblies with the community or its leaders;
- 43.32% think that humanitarian organisations interact with public authorities and local elected officials; 24.57% directly with beneficiaries and 16.14% with traditional authorities.

1) Complementarity between local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses

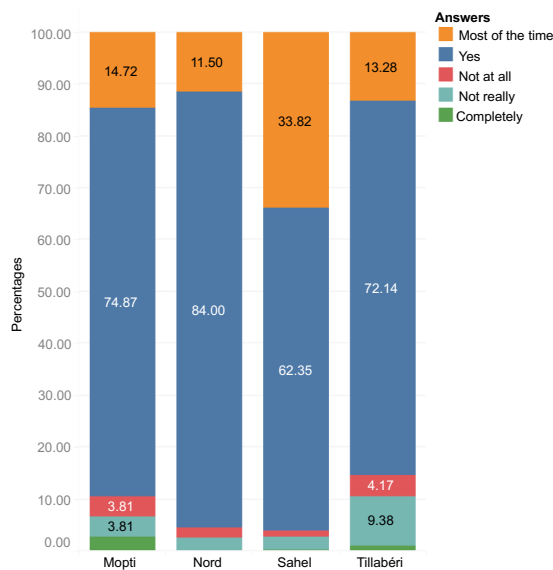
For 49.09% of respondents (49.18% of men and 49% of women), the activities carried out in the framework of humanitarian protection meet the primary needs of communities; 27.24% “rarely”; 16.16% “always” and 7.51% “never”.

Chart 20. Response of humanitarian protection activities to community needs



According to 72.23% of respondents, protection activities respect local cultural codes (74.87% in the Mopti region, 84% in the Nord region, 62.35% in the Sahel region and 72.14% in the Tillabéri region). 65.4% consider that humanitarian protection helps to strengthen existing local protection mechanisms.

Chart 21. Respect for local cultural codes in protection activities



The security situation is forcing local conflict prevention and humanitarian protection systems to change. They tend to become obsolete in places in the Nord and Sahel regions where insecurity is very high and mistrust is growing between communities that used to live together and share conflict resolution mechanisms. The strategy of the terrorist groups is to attack the guarantors of the social order: religious representatives, traditional leaders and local elected officials.

These mechanisms are based on traditional mechanisms, because they have the same objectives of helping displaced people and people in difficulty. [...] Traditional or modern mechanisms have the same objectives because they are all protective and help people at risk and in difficulty; the difference is in how to do it. [...] There is no conflict between these

mechanisms. They are all there for the same purpose. (Focus group with men held on 7 August 2020 in Kiri, Koro cercle)

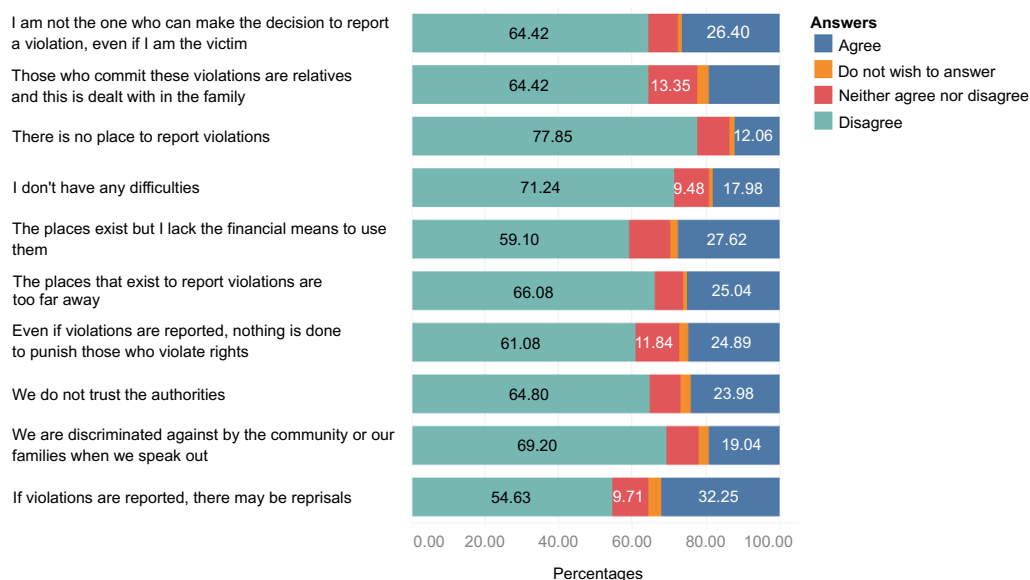
As for the choice between traditional justice and modern justice brought by the courts, almost all the respondents said they preferred traditional justice and would refer to the village chief or religious leader in the event of a problem, before turning to the modern courts. As one respondent from Oudalan put it: “Here, the first point of contact is with the religious leaders before resorting to the administrative services to bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.” In concrete terms, village chiefs, marabouts and imams have more power to influence the actions of the populations in the area than civil servants. Insecurity also causes traditional and religious authorities to flee localities when their lives are threatened²⁴.

For 61.99% of respondents, judicial institutions are operational in their localities, including a civil court (58.14%, except in the Tillabéri region), and a customary court (56.67%, but 91.1% in Niger). The answers are the same for men and women. Disaggregated by status, migrants favour the religious court at 50%, nomads and returnees the customary system at 80%, IDPs the state system at 47.08%, and finally refugees the state or customary system at 44.44%.

Table 6. What do you think is the most impartial justice system?

	Total	Men	Women	Burkina Faso	Mali	Niger
State	38.16 %	39.01 %	37.29 %	43.7 %	35.79 %	32.81 %
Customary	39.3 %	38.86 %	39.75 %	37.78 %	37.82 %	42.97 %
Religious	18.82 %	18.39 %	19.26 %	14.07 %	24.11 %	20.05 %
None of these	3.72 %	3.74 %	3.7 %	4.44 %	2.28 %	4.17 %

Chart 22. Behaviour in the event of a violation of rights



[In the case of rights violations,] it must first be recognised that most do not know. Firstly, it must be recognised that many people do not know their rights. There are people who were born, grew up, and did not have the chance to learn what their rights and duties are because as yet, there are people who think that it is normal to get their children married

²⁴ During a focus group discussion, it emerged that the Fulani chief of Thiou had left the locality. Just as in the Sahel, the emir of Liptako is said to reside in Ouagadougou.

at such and such an age²⁵, they do not know that it is a violation of their rights. For those who do know, I have seen many people going to the prefecture. I was at the prefect's home last week and there are a lot of people who come to ask x or y questions about their rights or something else. To seek mediation or to complain. (Interview with an association leader conducted on 7 August 2020 in Gorom-Gorom)

While local protection systems exist in some localities, there are currently areas where all state officials have fled due to security threats. Judicial actors have often left, as is the case with the Djibo court, which suspended its activities for “security reasons” in April 2018. Similarly, these areas are not suitable for aid workers:

The difficulty of access is the first of our difficulties. We have problems accessing certain areas. People are left to fend for themselves. People do not feel safe to go to work. No one wants to send their staff there because no one wants to have a colleague's death on their hands. For example, in Winigin²⁶ there were displaced people, needs, but we could not intervene. (Interview with a humanitarian NGO worker conducted on 6 August 2020 in Ouahigouya)

In many ways, local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses are complementary, and on several levels:

- In terms of security monitoring, local actors have benefited from training/awareness-raising on what to do to protect resource persons.
- As regards the reception and accommodation of refugees and/or displaced persons, local mechanisms are automatically activated while waiting for the involvement of partners and the start up of external responses.
- On a religious level, religious leaders carry out awareness-raising activities for groups at risk of joining extremist groups.
- Civil society structures (women's and youth associations/groups, etc.) and local customary, communal and religious authorities provide protective responses.

2) Elements of divergence between local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses

In terms of contradictory elements between local mechanisms and external humanitarian protection responses, we note among other things that:

- the fact that the mayors and canton chiefs, in Ayorou for example, are not part of the departmental security council is a factor in its dysfunction, lack of effectiveness and efficiency;
- in order to protect themselves from armed groups, local mechanisms developed by the population such as passive complicity, discretion and resignation are likely to strengthen these groups.

²⁵ It should be noted that in the Sahel region, early marriage, i.e. the marriage of minors, is a very common practice.

²⁶ Winguin is a village located between Ouahigouya and Titao.

3) People's perceptions of protection mechanisms

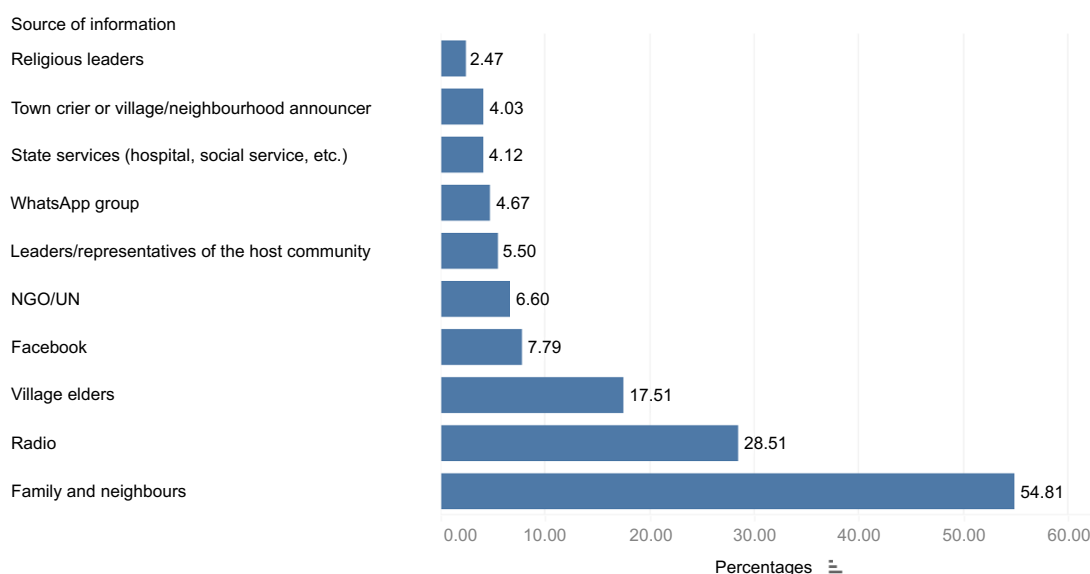
40.74% of respondents considered that they were “not very well informed” about the protection services available to them (43.4% in the Mopti region and 45.88% in the Sahel region); 27.01% “fairly well informed” (38.02% in the Tillabéri region; 44.44% of refugees); and 25.72% “not at all informed” (39% in the Nord region; 66.67% of migrants).

We are informed through telephones and local radio. [...] We have information from our young hunter brothers who go back and forth between the villages and Koro. [...] Information is also passed on to the village chief and neighbouring families [...]. Yes, if projects come here, they have to go through the village chief and the village chief informs us too, but often we are not involved, it's with the men only. (Focus group with young women held on 12 August 2020 in Koro)

The main means of receiving information are:

- Family and neighbours: 53.95% (44.69% of men and 63.48% of women; all regions except Sahel: no at 52.06%)
- Village elders: 19.65% (73.47% for returned IDPs)
- Leaders/representatives of displaced persons: 17.91%
- Radio: 23.37% (80% for nomads/transhumants on the move)
- Town criers or public announcers for the village/neighbourhood: 9.1 %

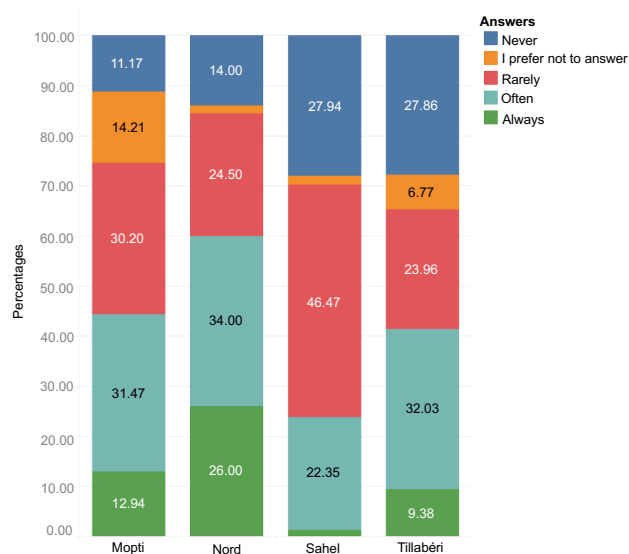
Chart 23. Sources of information



60% of nomads and transhumants on the move wish to be made aware of protection issues. This is also the case for 71.43% of IDPs and returnees and 55.56% of refugees.

31.71% of the respondents think that their opinion is not sufficiently taken into account in the definition of aid programmes; 29.67% that it is often, 20.79% never and 10.93% always.

Chart 24. Taking into account the opinion of the population in the definition of aid programmes



25.87% of the respondents think that local authorities have the most influence on the definition of aid and protection programmes (27.65% of men and 24.04% of women). For residents, it is the customary chiefs (25.79%). Comparing the three countries, the majority of respondents in Burkina Faso felt that it was local authorities (42.96%), while in Mali it was young people (30.46%) and in Niger it was traditional leaders (46.61%).

Chart 25. Influence of actors on the definition of aid and protection programmes (% total)

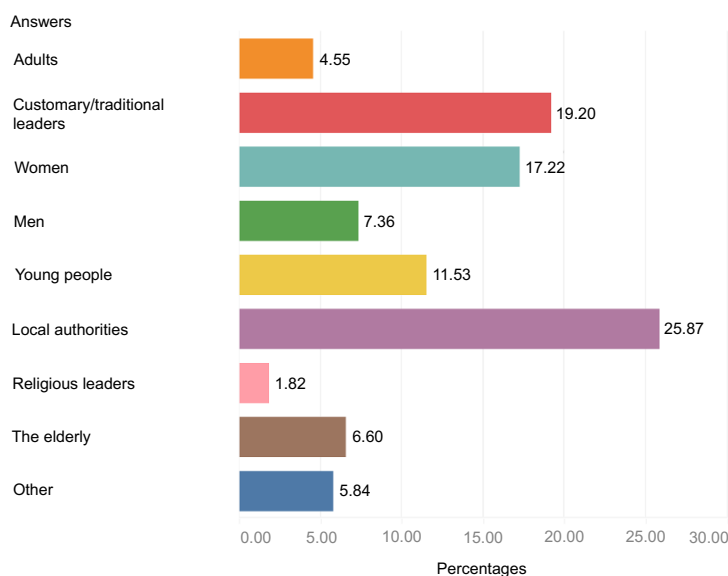
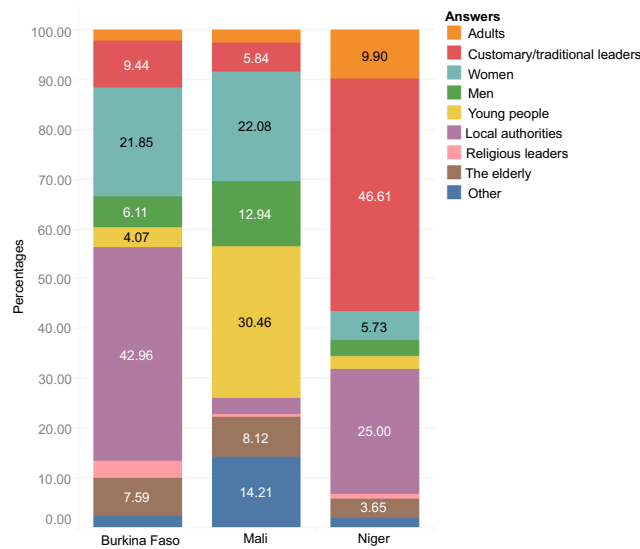


Chart 26. Influence of actors on the definition of aid and protection programmes (breakdown by country)



78.91% of respondents said they did not know how to make a suggestion or complaint to humanitarian protection agencies. When they know where to lodge a complaint, 78.52% say they have access to complaint mechanisms, 28.15% prefer to lodge a complaint with the leaders/representatives of the displaced persons, and 14.42% at community meetings.

C. The impacts of the humanitarian response

The impacts of humanitarian responses are multiple and multifaceted.

1) Positive impacts

The positive impacts are mainly in the following:

- The support/aid provided to refugees and displaced persons contributes significantly to the improvement of their living conditions. They are actively involved in prevention and community resilience in the context of security crisis. Thanks to them, communities have been stabilised (maintained) in officially recognised sites, thus avoiding mass and unorganised displacement.
- Humanitarian aid helps to reduce tensions between refugees and autochthons. This prevents refugees from engaging in certain behaviours such as theft, criminal acts, begging. Without these supplies, food would be unavailable to displaced populations.
- Training/awareness-raising, the creation and running of various local committees that handle issues relating to the fight against insecurity are of vital importance in reducing it.

2) *Negative impacts*

The restriction or prohibition of vehicle movement has a negative impact on the geographical scope of humanitarian interventions and their level of satisfaction. This has considerably reduced the scope for intervention.

According to the current order, no humanitarian vehicles may leave a 10 km radius of the town of Ayorou. This order was issued following repeated attacks on the national police and gendarmerie camps. Also, in the event of an alert, all our activities in the main town of the commune are suspended until the alert is lifted. (Interview with a humanitarian worker conducted in August 2020 in Ayorou)

In this security context, which is deteriorating day by day, many young people feel obliged to migrate to the main towns, then to the capitals and finally to countries in the sub-region such as the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (RCI).

D. Annex

AHRC-DFID-SIPRI-DRC Questionnaire

Humanitarian research programme on the protection of people in war and conflict zones in the Liptako-Gourma region

QUESTIONNAIRE				
CONSETEMENT				
CST	Note to the facilitator: Please inform the applicant: (a) the subject and objectives of this study; (b) how this research will be conducted; (c) the type of data collected and how this data is processed; (d) the recipients of this study; (e) the EU General Regulation (No. 2016/679) on Data Protection and Individuals' Rights; and the fact (f) of voluntary participation in this study.			
	Contact:			
	I declare that I have been sufficiently informed about the study and have had the opportunity to ask any questions I felt necessary to understand it. I agree to participate in the AHRC-DFID Liptako-Gourma study and understand how my data will be processed as described in this information notice.	Code: 1 = Yes; 0 = No If CST = 0 then the survey is over. [Please look for another person.]	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. IDENTIFICATION				
ID	Survey ID	Facilitator code: _ _ _ _	Household code : _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Questionnaire number : _Q_ _ _
1.1	Name of facilitator		_____	
1.2	Name of respondent (confidential)		_____	
1.3	Country		_____	
1.4	Name of the region		_____	
1.5	Name of the cercle/province/department		_____	
1.6	Name of the commune		_____	
1.7	Name of the village/neighbourhood		_____	
1.8	Place of residence		Code: 1. Urban; 2. Rural	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.9	Date of the survey		_ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ (DD/MM/YYYY)	
1.10	Start time/end time		_ _ : _ _ - _ _ : _ _ (HH : MM – HH : MM)	
1.11	Did anyone put you in direct contact with the respondent (mayor, village chief, etc.)?		Code: 1. Yes; 2. No	
1.12	Gender of respondent		Code: 1. Male; 2. Female	
1.13	Age of the respondent		_	
1.14	Marital status		Code: 1. Single 2. Married 3. Separated 4. Divorced 5. Widow(er)	
1.15	Number of children		_	
1.16	1.16.a	Completed educational level of the respondent (last qualification completed)	Code: 1. Not in school 2. Primary 3. Middle (lower secondary school) 4. Secondary (high school) 5. Higher education (university) If 1.16.a = 1 go to 1.17	
	1.16.b	Type of school attended	Code: 1. Formal state or private school 2. Official Franco-Arabic school 3. Denominational school: Koranic/Biblical school 4. Both (denominational and formal)	

1.17	What is your main (socio-professional) job/activity?	Code: 1. Farmer 2. Livestock herder 3. Fisher 4. Trader 5. Salaried employee (non-civil servant) 6. State employee 7. Artisan 8. Not in paid employment 9. Housewife 10. Student 11. Other		
1.18	1.18.a	Do you have a particular social role in your community?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No If yes go to 1.18.b; if no 1.19	
1.18	1.18.b	If so, which one? (one possible answer)	Code: 1. Community leader 2. Religious leader 3. M/F involved in an association or community group 4. Member of a women's group 5. Member of a youth group 6. Member of a professional confederation 7. Other to be specified _____	
1.19	If you wish, can you tell me what your religion is?	Code: 1. Muslim 2. Christian 3. Traditional/animist religion 4. Other _____		
1.20	If you wish, can you tell me to which ethnic group you belong?	_____		
1.21	1.21.a	Status of the household/respondent	Code: 1. Resident 2. Nomad/transhumant on the move 3. Internally displaced person 4. Refugee 5. Asylum seeker 6. Stateless 7. Rejected 8. Migrant 9. Internally displaced person or returned refugee If 1.21.a = 1 go to 1.21.b If 1.21.a is not 1, go to 1.21.c	__
	1.21.b	If you are a resident, why did you move here?	Code: 1. From the locality 2. Family reason 3. Work 4. Forced displacement 5. Studies 6. Other	__
	1.21.c	If you are displaced, what type of displacement fits your situation?	Code: 1. I am displaced post-incident 2. I am displaced preventatively 3. I am nocturnally displaced (pendulum displacement) 4. I was displaced and then re-displaced to another community 5. I was displaced post-incident and I returned 6. I was displaced preventatively and I returned 7. I prefer not to answer	

II. What are the threats, risks and vulnerabilities of the Liptako-Gourma population?		
2.1	Which of the following problems is of most concern to you and your family?	Code: 1. Economic problems (unemployment, lack of resources) 2. Governance problems (corruption, absence of the state, lack of justice/basic social services) 3. Security problems (violence, presence of armed state and non-state actors, banditry) 4. Social and protection problems (access to housing, education, health, etc.) 5. Climate problems/limited access to natural resources (deforestation, floods, drought/desertification, erosion...) 6. I don't know 7. Other (please specify) __
2.2	What are the most important economic issues for you and your family? Give 3 choices and rank them in order of importance with most important (1), important (2) and less important (3)	Code: 1. Unemployment/lack of economic opportunity 2. Poor harvests 3. Limited access to agricultural land 4. Limited access to grazing land 5. Restricted access to fairs and markets 6. Scarcity of fisheries resources 7. Premature excess mortality of livestock 8. Other (please specify) __
2.3	What are the most important governance issues for you and your family? Give 3 choices and rank them in order of importance with more important (1) important (2) less important (3)	Code: 1. Limited access to administrative services (civil registration, mayor's offices, etc.) 2. Limited access to justice and police/gendarmerie services 3. Lack of infrastructure (roads, electricity, water, etc.) 4. Access to public services (schools, hospitals, social services, etc.) 5. Absence of state authorities 6. Discrimination 7. Corruption 8. Social/hierarchical injustice 9. Other (please specify) __
2.4	What are the most important security issues for you and your family? Give 3 choices and rank them in order of importance with most important (1), important (2) and less important (3)	Code: 1. Banditry, armed and unarmed robbery 2. Violence between communities 3. Violence within the community 4. Presence of militias and armed groups 5. Absence of security forces 6. Presence of security forces 7. Presence of and cohabitation with displaced persons 8. Presence of mines or unexploded ordnance 9. Circulation of small arms and light weapons 10. Military operations 11. Levying of illegal taxes 12. Presence of traffickers 13. Problem of cohabitation with displaced persons 14. Problem of cohabitation with the host community 15. Gender-based violence 16. Other (please specify) _
2.5	For you and your family, what are the most important issues related to basic social services? Give 3 choices and rank them in order of importance with most important (1), important (2) and less important (3)	Code: 1. Limited access to housing 2. Limited access to civil registration services 3. Limited access to education 4. Limited access to health facilities 5. Limited access to psychosocial support 6. Limited access to water and food 7. Other (please specify) _____

<p>2.6</p>	<p>Have you or any member of your family experienced the following?</p> <p>Code: (for each)</p> <p>1 = yes 2 = no</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discrimination related to age 2. Discrimination related to gender 3. Discrimination related to socio-professional status 4. Discrimination related to religion 5. Discrimination related to your ethnic group 6. Conflicts between communities/villages 7. Conflicts between farmers/farmers 8. Conflicts between farmers/herders 9. Conflicts between herders/herders 10. Armed highway bandits [coupeurs de route] 11. Physical aggression 12. Retaliatory attacks on villages 13. Murders, assassinations 14. Theft, looting 15. Abductions 16. Gender-based violence 17. Sexual violence 18. Early/forced marriages 19. Torture and inhuman treatment 20. Arbitrary arrest/illegal detention 21. Forced recruitment 22. Discovery of mines or unexploded ordnance 23. Presence of small arms and light weapons 24. Collection of illegal taxes (racketeering, extortion)
<p>2.7</p>	<p>Who are the main victims of violence that you know?</p> <p>Code (for each answer):</p> <p>1 = yes 2 = no</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children 2. Women 3. Men 4. Elderly 5. People with a disability 6. Religious minorities 7. Ethnic groups 8. Foreigners 9. Displaced persons 10. Local, traditional or religious authorities 11. Defence and security forces 12. Livestock herders 13. Farmers 14. Other (please specify) ___
<p>2.8</p>	<p>What do you think about the presence of refugees and displaced people in your community?</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no refugees or displaced people 2. We are happy 3. We are concerned 4. We are indifferent 5. I prefer not to answer <p>If 2.8 = 3 go to 2.9, otherwise go to 2.10</p>
<p>2.9</p>	<p>If you are concerned, why?</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mistrust in the community 2. Risk of tension related to housing, land and property 3. Risk of inter-community tensions 4. Pressure on basic social services (education, health) 5. Pressure on livelihoods 6. They get the help and we don't 7. Lack of socio-economic opportunities 8. Concerns for community health 9. Other (please specify) ___ 10. I prefer not to answer
<p>2.10</p>	<p>Can you move freely outside your community?</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. I prefer not to answer
<p>2.11</p>	<p>Do you feel safe?</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. No 3. I prefer not to answer <p>If 2.11 = 2, go to 2.12, otherwise go to 2.13</p>
<p>2.12</p>	<p>If you do not feel safe, what are the reasons?</p> <p>Code (for each answer):</p>	<p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proximity to combat zones 2. Absence of state authorities 3. Presence of armed state actors 4. Presence of armed non-state actors

	1 = yes 2 = no	5. Destruction of public infrastructure 6. Occupation/destruction of houses 7. Extortion of property 8. Illegal/arbitrary detention 9. Levying of illegal taxes 10. Attacks/threats against the population 11. Criminal activities 12. Gender-based violence 13. Ethnic, religious and/or social discrimination 14. Presence of mines and explosive devices 15. Presence of small arms and light weapons 16. Other: (please specify) _ 17. I prefer not to answer
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III. What are the local protection mechanisms? What social norms and rules are they based on?

3.1		How do you adapt your living habits to the situation of insecurity? Code (for each answer): 1 = Yes 2 = No	Code: 1. I stopped some of my activities 2. I joined a self-defence group 3. I joined a religious group 4. I bought a gun to defend myself 5. I have changed or limited my travel 6. My husband/wife/children do some of my activities for me 7. I moved to a safer area 8. I have not changed my habits 9. Other (please specify) _____
3.2		What does "protection" mean to you? Give 3 choices in order of priority	Code: 1. Security and physical protection 2. Psychological well-being and protection 3. Respect for the rights of the individual 4. Protection of children 5. Protection against sexual and gender-based violence 6. Protection against mines and explosive devices 7. Access to basic social services (such as education, health, water, justice, civil registration, economic resources) 8. I have heard of it but I don't know what it means 9. I've never heard of it 10. Other (please specify) _____
3.3		In the event of a protection incident, who would you report it to first? Give 3 choices in order of priority.	Code: 1. Family 2. Friends or neighbours 3. Community leaders 4. Local elected officials (mayors and councillors) 5. Local authorities (governors, prefects and sub-prefects) 6. Defence and security forces (army, gendarmerie, police, national guard) 7. Militia or non-state armed group 8. Justice 9. International forces/United Nations 10. Member of the Local Community Protection Committee (LCPC) 11. Religious leader 12. Social worker/NGO/Local association 13. No one, because I don't know who to speak to 14. Other (please specify) _____ 15. I prefer not to answer
3.3	3.3.1	Who do you think women will report it to first?	Code: 1. Family, friends and neighbours 2. Women's association/organisation 3. Justice system 4. Traditional or customary leader 5. Religious authority 6. Other (please specify) _____
3.3	3.3.2	Who do you think young people will report to first?	Code: 1. Family, friends and neighbours 2. Youth association/organisation 3. Justice system

		<p>4. Traditional or customary leader 5. Religious authority Other (please specify) _____</p>
3.4	Are judicial institutions operational in your area?	<p>Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know 4. I prefer not to answer</p> <p>If 3.4 = 1 go to 3.5, otherwise go to 3.6</p>
3.5	If so, which ones?	<p>Code: 1. Civil court 2. Military court 3. Customary court 4. I prefer not to answer</p>
3.6	Which of the justice systems do you think is more impartial?	<p>Code: 1. The state system (court) 2. The customary system 3. The religious system 4. None of these</p>
3.7	When you have difficulties in reporting violations, give your level of agreement with the following statements: Code: (for each answer) 1 = Disagree 2 = Neither agree nor disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Do not wish to answer	<p>Code: 1. I am not the one who can make the decision to report a violation, even if I am the victim. 2. There is nowhere to report violations. 3. The places that exist to report violations are too far away. 4. The places exist but I lack the financial means to use them. 5. Even if violations are reported, nothing is done to punish those who violate rights. 6. If we report violations, we could face reprisals. 7. We do not trust the authorities. 8. We are discriminated against by the community or our families when we speak out. 9. Those who commit these violations are relatives and it is dealt with in the family. 10. I don't have any difficulties</p>
3.8	Are there any protection services in your area?	<p>Code: 1. Yes 2. No</p> <p>If 3.8 = 2 go to 3.12</p>
3.9	If so, who organises it?	<p>Code: 1. Local protection committee 2. State authorities 3. Local NGO 4. International NGO 5. Community groups 6. United Nations 7. Other (please specify) ___</p>
3.10	Do you have access to it?	<p>Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I prefer not to answer</p> <p>If 3.10 = 1 and 3 go to 3.12</p>
3.11	If no, why not?	<p>Code: 1. Social barrier 2. I do not have the power to decide 3. Cost too high 4. Too far away 5. Insecurity on the way to/near the service 6. Poor quality services 7. Discrimination within these services 8. I don't know what services exist 9. Other (please specify) ___</p>
3.12	Is there a state or non-state mechanism to resolve tensions/conflicts?	<p>Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know</p> <p>If 3.12 = 2 go to 3.16</p>
3.13	If yes, which?	_____

3.14	If yes, does the system effectively prevent or resolve tensions/conflicts?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know If 3.14 = 1 and 3 go to 3.16
3.15	If not, why not?	_____
3.16	In the locality where you live, are you represented by members of your community?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I prefer not to answer
3.17	How are women represented in these community bodies?	Code: 1. Less than 1 woman for every 4 representatives 2. Approximately 1 woman for every 4 representatives 3. Approximately 1 woman for every 3 representatives 4. Approximately 1 woman for every 2 representatives 5. More women than men are represented (>50%) 6. I don't know 7. I prefer not to answer
3.18	How are young people aged 15-25 represented in community management structures (community bodies, management committee, etc.)?	Code: 1. Less than 1 young person for every 4 representatives 2. Approximately 1 young person for every 4 representatives 3. Approximately 1 young person for every 3 representatives 4. Approximately 1 young person for every 2 representatives 5. More young people than old people are represented (>50%) 6. I don't know 7. I prefer not to answer

IV. Logics of engagement and proposal for resolution

4.1	What do you think are the two main reasons why people engage in conflicts?	Code: 1. Economic motivation 2. Political motivation 3. Social marginalisation 4. Religious motivation 5. Psychological vulnerability 6. Influence of social group 7. Need for recognition/status 8. Honour and moral/family obligation 9. Revenge/reparation 10. Coercion/threat if they do not engage 11. Need to defend oneself 12. Other (please specify) ___
4.2	Reducing violence requires: (Give your level of agreement with the following statements): Code: (for each answer) 1 = Disagree 2 = Neither agree nor disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Does not want to answer	Code: 1. Strengthening the customary justice system 2. Strengthening peace and citizenship education 3. Strengthening the role of community actors 4. Creating work opportunities for young people 5. Reducing access to weapons 6. Assisting in the integration of displaced persons 7. Strengthening the role of women 8. Strengthening the role of young people 9. Promoting dialogue/mediation between people (parties in conflict) 10. Regulating access to and the use of natural resources in an equitable manner
4.3	Which actors do you think would be best suited to reducing violence?	_____

V. Interaction between humanitarian protection responses and local protection mechanisms (positive, neutral or negative) and the suitability of the assistance offered to meet needs		
5.1	In the last six months, have you received humanitarian assistance?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No If 5.1 = 2 go to 5.4
5.2	If so, what kind?	Code: 1. Legal assistance 2. Access to care/health care 3. Money 4. Psychosocial support/psychological first aid 5. Support for savings and credit 6. Food assistance (cash, vouchers or in kind) 7. Livelihood support (particularly IGAs) 8. Household item and hygiene kits 9. Shelter 10. Water, hygiene and sanitation 11. Education 12. Professional training 13. Dialogue activities, reconciliation 14. Other to be specified: _____
5.3	If you have been a direct beneficiary of a humanitarian protection programme, are you satisfied with the assistance you received?	Code: 1. Not at all satisfied 2. Not very satisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Somewhat satisfied 5. Very satisfied 6. I prefer not to answer
5.4	Do you face any of the following problems in interacting with the humanitarian organisations operating in your area? Code: (for each answer) 1 = Yes 2 = No	Code: 1. We don't really understand what they are saying to us. 2. It is not our habit to interact with them. 3. We are afraid of the consequences if we talk to them. 4. We do not know how to contact them. 5. We are not consulted in decision-making. 6. Organisations do not respond to our questions/needs. 7. Organisations do not hold meetings/assemblies with the community or its leaders. 8. The way of communicating is not respectful. 9. Humanitarian organisations do not intervene in our locality. 10. Humanitarian organisations don't talk to people like me. 11. No particular problem 12. I prefer not to answer. If 5.4.9 = Yes go to 5.6
5.5	In general, who do humanitarian organisations in your area interact with?	Code: 1. Directly with the beneficiaries 2. With public authorities/local elected officials 3. With community organisations 4. With traditional authorities 5. With the religious authorities 6. With the defence and security forces (gendarmarie, police, military) 7. With non-state armed groups 8. With none of these 9. I don't know
5.6	Do you think that the activities carried out in the framework of humanitarian protection meet the most important needs of your community?	Code: 1. Always 2. Often 3. Rarely 4. Never
5.7	Do you think that protection activities respect local cultural codes?	Code: 1. Not at all 2. Not really 3. Yes 4. Most of the time 5. Completely If 5.7 = 3, 4 and 5 go to 5.9
5.8	Why?	_____

5.9	Do you consider that protection programmes favour one social group over another?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I prefer not to answer If 5.9 = 2 and 3 go to 5.11
5.10	If so, which?	_____
5.11	Do you think that humanitarian protection helps to strengthen existing local protection mechanisms (formal and informal)?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know 4. I prefer not to answer
5.12	Do you consider yourself informed about the protection services available to you?	Code: 1. Very well informed 2. Fairly well informed 3. Not very informed 4. Not at all informed
5.13	How do you generally receive information? Give the two main means of receiving information.	Code: 1. Village elders 2. Family, neighbours 3. Leaders/representatives of the displaced 4. Leaders/representatives of the host community 5. State services (hospital, social service...) 6. Religious leaders 7. Camp/site manager/organiser 8. NGO/UN 9. Radio 10. Notice boards 11. Text/phone message 12. Facebook 13. WhatsApp group 14. Town crier or village/neighbourhood announcer 15. Other (please specify) ___ 16. I prefer not to answer
5.14	What kind of information would you like to receive?	Code: 1. General information on support/services available 2. How to access the services available (cost, hours, etc.) 3. Legal assistance 4. Awareness-raising on protection issues (civil registration, child protection, gender-based violence [GBV], etc.) 5. Other (please specify) ___
5.15	Do you feel that humanitarian protection actors take your opinion sufficiently into account when defining their aid programmes?	Code: 1. Always 2. Often 3. Rarely 4. Never 5. I prefer not to answer
5.16	In your opinion, which actors have the most influence in defining protection assistance programmes?	Code: 1. Adults 2. Women 3. Young people 4. The men 5. The elderly 6. Customary/traditional leaders 7. Religious leaders 8. Local authorities 9. Other (please specify) ___
5.17	Do you know how to make a suggestion or complaint to humanitarian protection agencies?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know If 5.17 = 2 and 3, go to 5.19
5.18	If so, do you have access to complaint mechanisms?	Code: 1. Yes 2. No

5.19	Who would you prefer to make a complaint to?	Code: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leaders/representatives of the displaced persons 2. The leaders/representatives of the host community 3. A local committee (host and displaced communities) 4. A complaints management committee 5. Government officials 6. Complaint/suggestion boxes 7. At community meetings 8. NGOs/UN 9. A toll-free number/phone line 10. Other (please specify) __ 11. I prefer not to answer
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