



Just Future Programme – Cordaid  
Perception survey conducted from 11 to 24 March 2023

# Perceptions of security in the regions of Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu in Mali

////// Restitution of Q3 field survey



SIPRI and POINT SUD  
Cordaid Funding

**JUST FUTURE  
PROGRAMME**

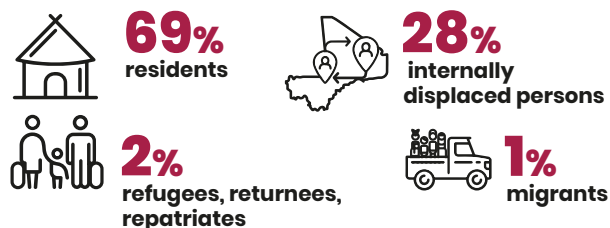
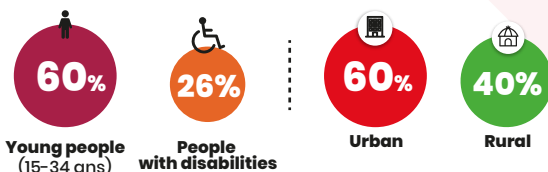


## Methodology

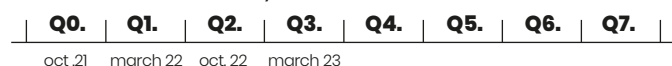
As part of the “Just Future” programme, funded by Cordaid, SIPRI and its partner POINT SUD are conducting perception surveys among a representative sample of 528 people in 16 communes and 18 localities in the regions of Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao in Mali.

In line with the expectations expressed by CORDAID towards the categories of the population with the least voice, particular attention was paid to the inclusion of women, young people, people with disabilities and displaced persons or refugees.

The **sample** was therefore distributed as follows:



Historical timeline of the surveys:

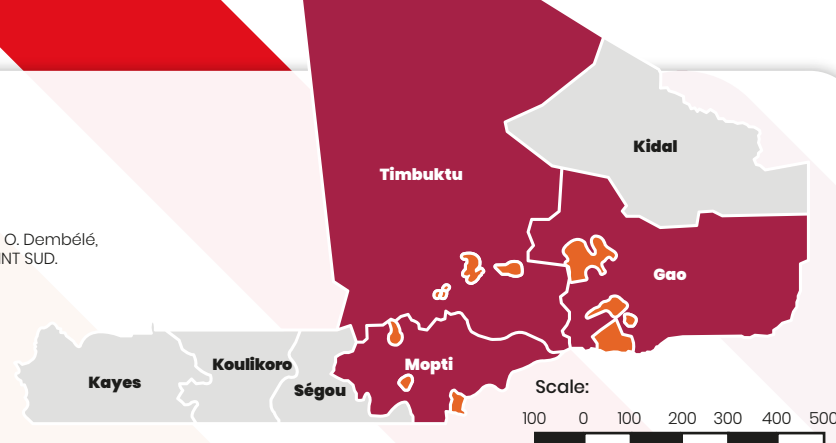


Perception survey conducted from 11 to 24 March 2023 – This project is funded by Cordaid

## Survey areas

/// Source: mapping of Mali, carried out by Dr. O. Dembélé,  
Coordinator of the “Just Future” project at POINT SUD.

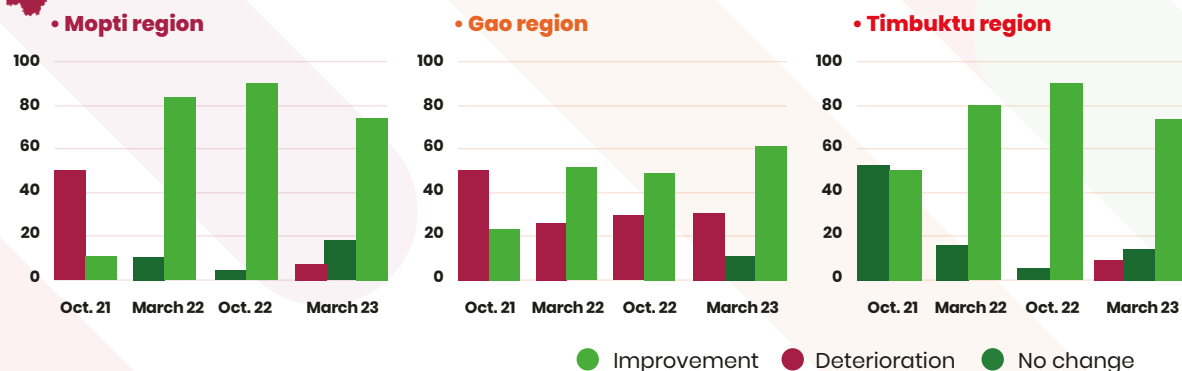
- Borders of the study communes
- Regional borders



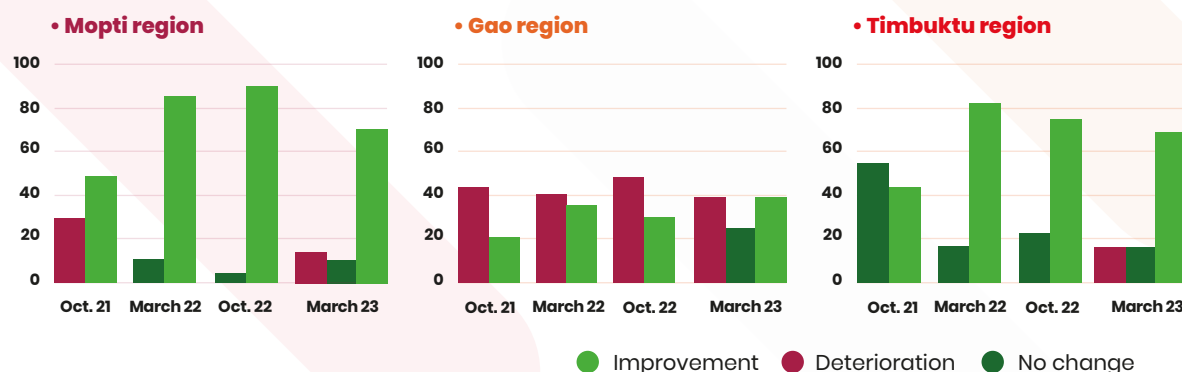
## Perceptions of insecurity



### Perceptions of the security situation at national level



### Perceptions of the security situation at local level





## Main sources of insecurity

- Attacks, robberies and threats against the people **21%**
- Presence of non-state armed groups **21%**

There has been an increase in the number of internally displaced persons arriving from the Ménaka region to Gao. This internal displacement results from clashes between jihadist groups and has become a concern for the people in Gao. The concerns are related to logistical issues in providing shelter and support (housing, provision of water and food, schooling) along with the additional risk of exacerbating community tensions.

- Proximity to combat zones **40%**
- Absence of defence and security forces **34%** **43%**
- Absence of local authorities (mayors) (especially in rural areas) **29%**

- Gao region
- Timbuktu region
- Mopti region

**Young men and adults** consider themselves to be particularly exposed and targeted by jihadist groups on account of their social/professional activities and travels.

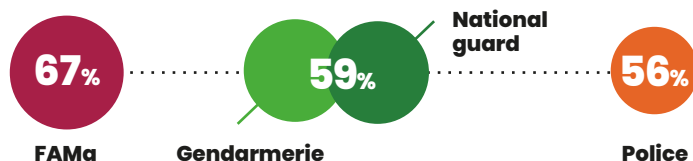
**Women and young girls** are also victims of gender-based violence when not abducted as "spoils of war" or forced into marriage by non-state armed groups.

## Relations between people and state security forces

The perceptions collected reflect the respondents' subjective impressions. They provide information about how people understand and interpret what they see, believe, think and feel, and most importantly, how they make sense of their environment.



### Security actors perceived as being most visible and present at local level

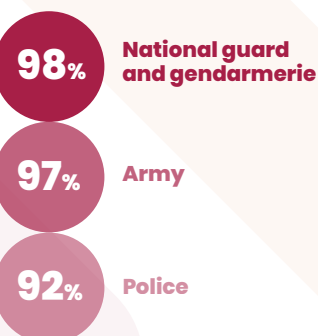


Perception survey conducted from 11 to 24 March 2023 – This project is funded by Cordaid

Despite the persistence of an insecure environment at the local level, there is a high degree of trust in the state security forces. This trust indicates that respondents need protection and a line of contact with the security forces. Particular needs for higher visibility of security forces and regular patrols in areas beyond the major roads and urban centres were expressed, as these are often insufficiently manned.



### Confidence in security actors



### Actors considered to be sources of insecurity



There is a greater presence of self-defence groups in rural areas, and trust in them varies depending on the locality. The population's trust in them in these two regions has been eroded by their arbitrary conduct (racketeering, threats with weapons) and discriminatory behaviour toward the people.

MINUSMA is perceived as not responsive to attacks against civilians and it is also a primary target for jihadist groups.

The defensive aspect of the military mandate is little understood by the local population, while the civilian component is more visible and better perceived in the areas where it is deployed (food aid and drinking water, local employment in Gao and Timbuktu).



### Limitations in the relationship with defense and security forces

This remains a sensitive issue for the respondents due to the following limitations and criticisms:

- **Lack of response or late response** of forces after attacks and robberies committed against people and their properties, particularly in suburban and rural areas.
- Direct contact with the forces prevented **by a fear of reprisals** by jihadist groups.
- **Lack of trust and fear of a lack of anonymity** when exchanging information with the forces.
- Persistence of **arbitrary behaviour** in daily interactions with the police force and gendarmerie (particularly corruption, lack of transparency of procedures, inappropriate behaviour towards young women).



In March 2023, in the regions of Gao and Timbuktu, the respondents reported cases of community discrimination due to the forces' lack of knowledge of the local context as well as to a lack of discussion with the communities concerning their perceptions of insecurity.

Certain socio-professional categories such as farmers and transporters believe that they are particularly at risk of discrimination and violence from the forces.

## Local civil society and security issues



**76%** of respondents believe that certain local actors of civil society have a role to play where issues of security are concerned. The most frequently cited actors, in order of frequency are:



**Youth associations**

80 %



**Women's associations**

72 %



**Religious associations and organisations**

65 %



**Community associations and organisations**

39 %

### Civil society's roles and activities

In order of frequency by region:

- Information meetings about local security (Mopti)
- Direct contact and exchanges with the forces (Gao)
- Management and reduction of local tensions and conflicts (Mopti, Gao)
- Informing national and local political authorities of the daily situation (Timbuktu)



## Limitations faced by local civil society on security issues

**Significant limitations** continue to be observed in terms of their **ability to function and take action** in the field:

- Severity of insecurity and a prevailing fear of reprisals.
- Lack of funding
- Lack of unity
- Lack of transparency
- Limited access to security information



## Conclusion

- This first survey conducted in 2023 confirms that insecurity affects both the rural areas and the cities. However, the **increasing presence of the forces in urban areas as opposed to their limited deployment in rural areas often leaves the people unprotected**. Furthermore, the people also describe themselves as being "neglected" by the state authorities.
- Faced with insecurities on a daily basis, **the people are calling for the state security forces greater and to improve their responsiveness**. A more developed territorial network by installing security checkpoints and increasing joint patrols is eagerly awaited to ensure continuity in protection, including in the most remote communities.
- People express the **need to be listened to by the forces and have a dialogue with them**. The high level of insecurity perceived in certain localities is giving rise to a **climate of mutual mistrust** which is detrimental to the exchange of information and to ensuring that the voices of local communities are heard.



## Recommendations

- **Assist with the collection of information from communities** about the development of the security situation in their local area by setting up **unobtrusive and secure mechanisms** (applications, focal points, relays by local actors of civil society trained in doing so).
- **Support the implementation of a local police force** to promote discussion between the people and the forces, and to build mutual trust.
- **Prioritize training in supporting and protecting witnesses, respecting human rights and combating gender-based violence** in order to guarantee equal access to the forces, and implement **clear and systematic rules of engagement** with civilian communities.