

# Humanitarian Protection in the Liptako-Gourma region (2020-2022)

Local protection and humanitarian mechanisms

- : Research coordinated by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).
- : Implemented by the Center for Democratic Governance (CGD), the Laboratory of Studies and Research on Social Dynamics and Local Development (LASDEL), and POINT SUD.
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Arts and  
Humanities  
Research Council

Foreign, Commonwealth  
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# Methodology

As part of the "Humanitarian Protection in the Liptako-Gourma region" research project, two cycles of qualitative and quantitative research were carried out in July-August 2020 and June-July 2021.

The aim of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of humanitarian protection programmes, focusing on local protection systems and the links between local and humanitarian mechanisms.

## 4 research areas

- Analysis of the threats, risks, and vulnerabilities of the Liptako-Gourma populations
- Identification of local protection mechanisms and the social norms and rules on which they are based
- Study of humanitarian protection responses and the interaction between humanitarian responses and local mechanisms
- Assessment of the impact of the responses and their appropriateness to the identified needs



## Research team

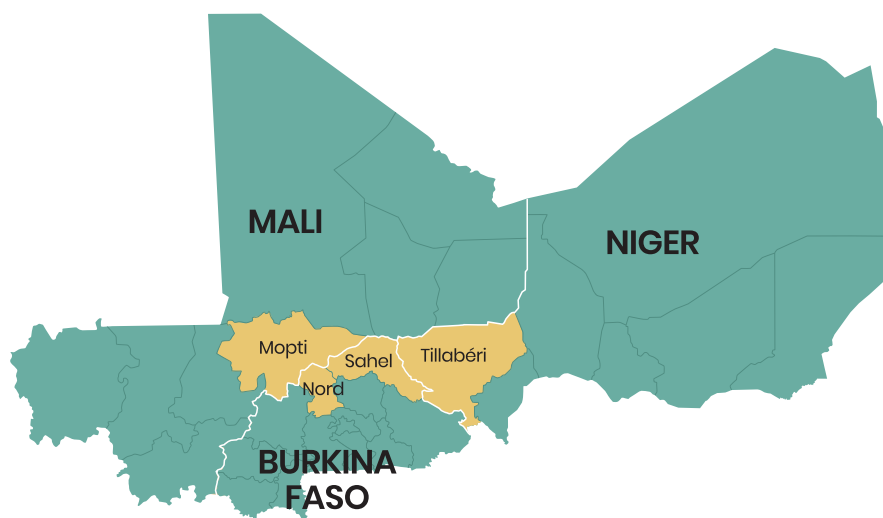
**18** facilitators in 2020 + **20** facilitators in 2021 + **12** researchers

## Data collected:

**2775** questionnaires      **63** focus groups      **246** in-depth interviews

## Surveyed localities // Liptako-Gourma region

Cartography by Abdourahamani Mahamadou, Niger - May 2023



## Legend

- International border
- Survey region
- National territory

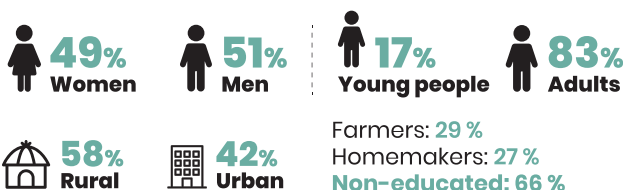
## Regions

**2020** : 4 regions (Nord and Sahel in Burkina Faso, Mopti in Mali, and Tillabéri in Niger)

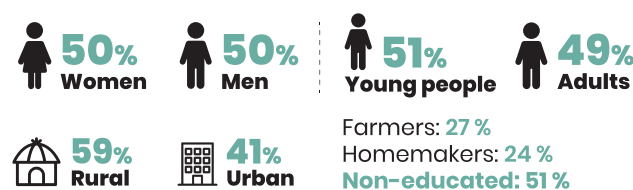
**2021** : 3 regions (Nord in Burkina Faso, Mopti in Mali, and Tillabéri in Niger)

**In 2021** : the Sahel region of Burkina Faso had to be abandoned a few days before the teams' departure for security reasons following the Solhan attack.

## The sample // 2020



## The sample // 2021



## Between the two surveys, the proportion of preventive displacement increased:

**In 2020**: 78% of respondents were in post-incident displacement and 18% in preventive displacement.

**In 2021**: 67% of respondents were in post-incident displacement and 26% in preventive displacement.



## The limits

- **Inaccessibility of localities**: deployment of defence and security forces, deterioration of the security situation.
- **Survey conditions, interviews and focus groups**: saturation, fear of speaking up.
- **Language barriers with the internally displaced persons (IDPs)**

# Risks, threats and vulnerabilities

In 2020, **41%** of respondents put **security issues as their main concern**. In 2021, **security and economic issues were at the same level (34%)**.

- In 2020: respondents' main problem was economic in Mali and Niger, and security in Burkina Faso.
- In 2021: respondents' main problem was economic in Mali, and security in Burkina Faso and Niger.



## Main governance issues

**Lack of infrastructure** (roads, electricity, water, etc.) is mentioned as the main governance problem (43% in 2020 and 48% in 2021).

The second biggest problem is access to public services (29%).

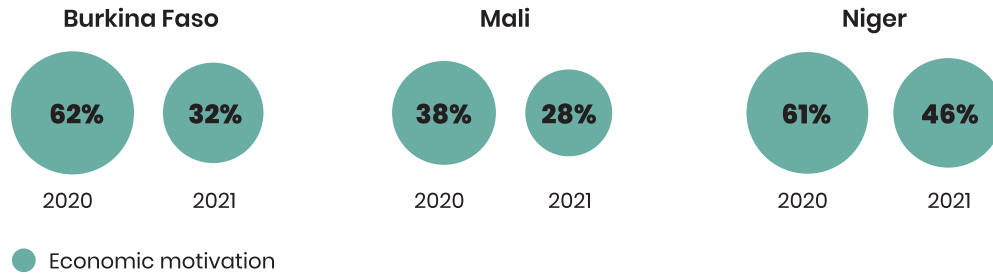


## Main economic issues

**Unemployment and lack of economic opportunities** were mentioned by 60% of respondents in 2020 and 59% in 2021.

The second problem is limited access to farmland (33% in 2020 and 31% in 2021).

## • What is the main reason people engage in conflict?



### Owning livestock is a vulnerability factor.

“The armed men now set distances not to be exceeded. Here, they told us not to exceed three kilometres. But fertile land is further away. The agreement allowed us to farm, but they didn't tell us to stay within a certain distance. And that's what they're telling us now. The surrounding land is infertile, but we have no choice.”

Interview with a religious authority, Mopti region, July 2021.

### The impact of the crisis on gender

- Increased economic contribution by women
- Questioning the dignity of people in need: women are more in contact with humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and state social services, while men avoid them because of frustrating remarks
- Insecurity drives young girls to leave



## Main security issues

The main problem mentioned is **banditry and armed and unarmed robbery (45%)**.

### Burkina Faso

- Proximity to combat zones
- Attacks/threats against the population
- Criminal activities

### Mali

- Proximity to combat zones
- Attacks/threats against the population
- Presence of armed non-state actors

### Niger

- Proximity to combat zones
- Criminal activities
- Attacks/threats against the population

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### Increase of violence

2021 was marked by an increase in violence against civilians.

**In 2020**



of those surveyed said **they could move freely** outside their community.

**In 2021**



of those surveyed said **they could no longer move around** outside their community.

### Reducing violence

According to the people surveyed, the fight against violent extremism must involve all communities, which implies restoring trust between them and strengthening social cohesion by multiplying spaces for exchange and dialogue.

**3 main actors mentioned:**

- Every citizen
- The government
- Defence and security forces

# Protection mechanisms

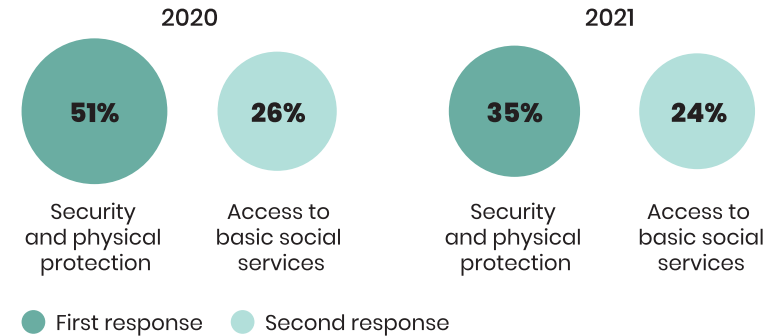
**Many protection actors:**

State, community actors, national and international NGOs, and United Nations organizations.

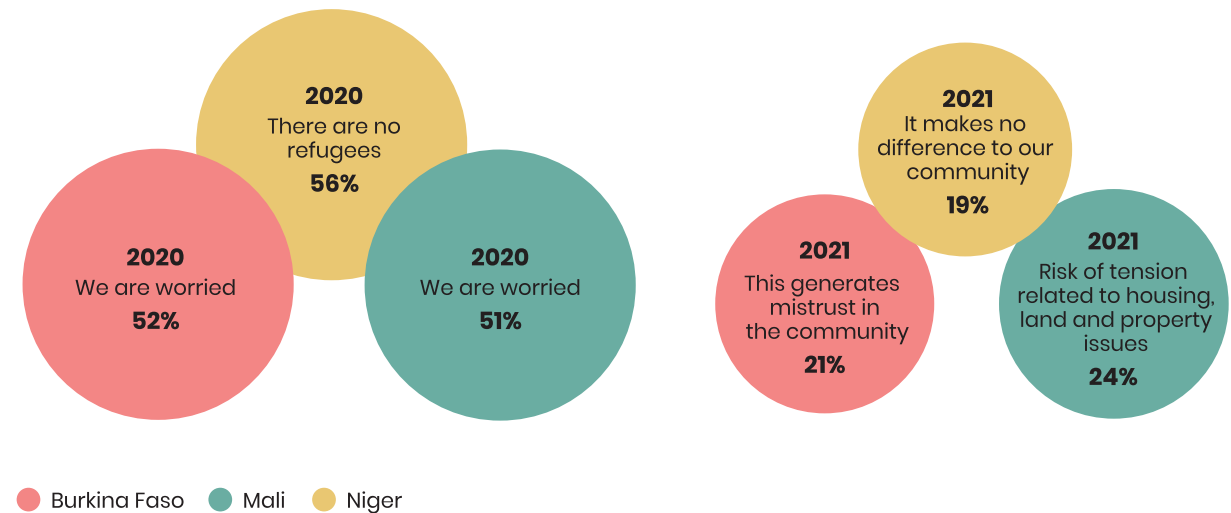
**Protection means first and foremost:**

1. Security and physical protection
2. Access to basic social services
3. Psychological protection

**• What does 'protection' mean to you?**



**• If you are a member of the host community or a resident, how do you feel about the presence of refugees and displaced people in your community? (Primary response in percentage)**



## Humanitarian Protection in the Liptako-Gourma region (2020-2022)

### Local protection mechanisms

#### • In the event of a protection incident, who will you report it to first?

2020

**50%** Family

**24%** Community leader

**9%** Defence and security forces

2021

**46%** Family

**18%** Community leaders

**14%** Defence and security forces

● 1<sup>st</sup> choice ● 2<sup>nd</sup> choice ● 3<sup>rd</sup> choice

- Family solidarity is paramount, and victims first seek to reach relatives who are in safe areas.
- Community solidarity precedes that of the state and NGOs.
- The role of traditional and customary authorities is fundamental in welcoming and settling people. These authorities support the administration in the reception and management of IDPs and participate in reception and management committees.

“ In our village, when someone flees, they go to their parents. It's the parents who inform the village chief and ask for solutions. The village chief gives his support. He passes on the information to the mosque and youth leaders. Everyone gives their support. Everyone gives what they can. During the harvest too, everyone gives a little millet.”

Interview with a local authority, Mopti region, Mali, June 2021.

### Social tensions

- Traditional mechanisms running out of steam as the crisis continues.
- Lassitude among host populations due to heavy pressure on their economic resources.
- Frustration among beneficiaries in the distribution of aid, with dissatisfaction over distribution lists. The inequality of treatment created by the aid provided is even more acute in a context of impoverishment: host families support IDPs without being integrated into the humanitarian response.
- Food insecurity and destruction of the local economic fabric.

“ Initially, the local population rallied round to help the displaced on their arrival. It was thanks to the solidarity and mutual aid of the host populations that the displaced had food, water and shelter before the state and humanitarian aid arrived. However, with this year's displaced persons, mobilization is very low. People have become poorer and don't have the means to help even if they want to. I've noticed that only a few groups have been able to mobilize. Otherwise, it's the nationals of the displaced populations who have organized themselves to provide basic necessities.”

Interview with a municipal official, Tillabéri region, Niger, June 2021.

## Humanitarian mechanisms

The number of people receiving humanitarian aid remained stable between 2020 and 2021, as did the level of satisfaction with the aid received, 42% in 2020 and 43% in 2021.

Aid was mainly received in the form of food assistance, housing and hygiene kits, and cash.

#### Main problems linked to interaction with humanitarian organizations:

- not knowing how to contact them
- not being consulted in the decision-making process
- not being used to interacting with them

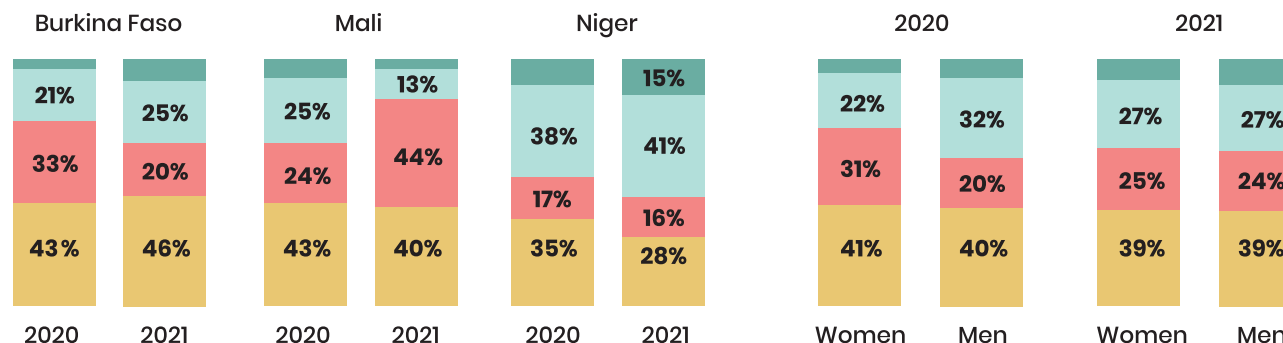
The majority of respondents say that aid 'often' meets the needs of the community and respects local cultural codes.

**The main channels of information are:**

- family and neighbours
- radio
- representatives of displaced populations

The most sought-after information is general information on available services.

**Do you consider yourself informed about the protection services available to you?**



Very well informed Fairly well informed Not at all informed Not very informed



## Main results

- Structural poverty encourages widespread insecurity.
- **Young people (aged 15-24) are more affected by the lack of economic opportunities**, with the risk of adopting negative strategies (recruitment, early marriage, migration).
- **Humanitarian responses are recognized as effective and complementary to local systems**, which meet the majority of the needs.
- **Accountability systems are weak:** lack of consultation and rumours about humanitarian assistance (extortion, favouritism, misappropriation).
- Displacements take place in already highly vulnerable areas, increasing pressure on local resources.



## Recommendations

- **Improve transparency** and communication about the availability of aid.
- **Consolidate endogenous protection mechanisms**, which are considered more effective by local populations.
- **Support host communities**, who sometimes experience their support for IDPs as an injustice when their resources are diminishing, and the prolongation of the crisis exacerbates their vulnerability.
- **Strengthen coordination mechanisms between NGOs and between NGOs and governments** to support humanitarian mechanisms that are recognized as effective and complementary to local mechanisms.



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