



USAID
DU PEUPLE AMERICAIN



eai EQUAL ACCESS
INTERNATIONAL



Analysis of the Dynamics Around the Influx of Displaced Persons.

Departments of Bouna, Doropo, Téhini (Bounkani) and Kong (Tchologo)



Table of Contents

Executive summary.....	2
Background and rationale	4
Methodology and stakeholders.....	5
I. Dynamics in the Bounkani region.....	5
II. What are the special features of the Kong department?.....	18
III. Some programmatic implications and avenues for action.....	21





Executive summary

Since the beginning of 2022, northern Côte d'Ivoire has seen a massive influx of people fleeing clashes between jihadist and self-defense groups in Burkina Faso. The arrival of these populations, often with their herds of animals, in the Bounkani and Tchologo regions is generating new dynamics and posing major challenges. This study, carried out in May and June 2023, highlights these dynamics to provide a better understanding of their impact. It shows that these arrivals may overwhelm health and sanitation capacities and add pressure on natural resources and basic socio-economic infrastructures. They also pose challenges in terms of existing economic opportunities and, more generally, cohabitation. There are also risks of the development of social phenomena affecting children and women.

Host localities face major challenges in terms of availability and long-term access to socio-economic infrastructures, such as health centers, housing, potable water and food resources, livestock management, and the management of potential security risks. This crisis is taking place in a context where violent conflicts over land use and occupation have escalated over the last decade. These conflicts have already affected both inter- and intra-community cohabitation and social cohesion. Managing these challenges has also created resentment towards the government and its representatives. Faced with the various challenges, both host and displaced communities have developed responses to reduce risk. The displaced¹ have developed migration routes and strategies that consider cultural proximity, economic opportunities, security risks, host communities' acceptance of foreigners, and dispersion to multiple villages and camps to avoid exerting strong pressure on already limited and disputed resources. This strategy has led a significant number of asylum seekers to head for localities far from the borders. Host communities do their best to assist those they consider to be relatives, while noting that their presence will pose enormous challenges to cohabitation in the short, medium, and long term if anticipatory measures are not developed and supported. In response to these perceived risks, this study offers a detailed analysis and a set of recommendations to the National Security Council (CNS) and to the Resilience for Peace (R4P) project.

Main recommendations:

To the CNS and the government

- Strengthen border surveillance and controls. Set up arrival registration centers and adapt monitoring and early warning mechanisms to the current security context.
- Humanitarian action coordination units need to integrate development structures to analyze medium- and long-term challenges from the outset. Such coordination would enable current

¹ While understanding the different nuances between the terms refugee and displaced, the government of Côte d'Ivoire has not yet adopted the use of refugees to describe those entering the country. EAI and the authors recognize this and are using terminology such as displaced or seekers of asylum until recognition is official.





interventions to be calibrated so that they anticipate and lay the foundations for a sustainable strengthening of community resilience.

- Locally elected representatives need to be involved so that development plans for coming years take these new dynamics into account. This will also help host communities to develop strategies for peaceful cohabitation in the regions.
- Beyond the transit sites², which have limited capacity, set up emergency humanitarian programs to support host communities. This may help avoid exacerbating existing fragilities, avoid further exposing localities, and prevent the development of fertile ground for extremist groups. This could reduce the vulnerability of communities and improve the image of the State. Examples are building or rehabilitating housing in localities far from transit centers, drilling boreholes, improving health centers and school capacities, etc.

To the Resilience for Peace project

- Prevent conflicts linked to crop damage by supporting the construction of cattle pens in villages that have received large numbers of cattle. Discuss with host communities the need to dedicate areas to specific uses. Draw up zoning plans on a consensual basis.
- Support a partnership between herders and farmers to produce organic fertilizer for women in gardening associations.
- Support community leaders in setting up permanent, inclusive frameworks for reflection and decision-making.
- As part of the activities of Kong's Permanent Dialogue Committee, symbolically initiate days of welcome for asylum seekers, involving authorities and political elites. This committee could act as a facilitator and advocate for greater flexibility on the part of host communities.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns before, during and after such events.
- Given the perceived risks of political instrumentalization of the situation of asylum seekers, initiate information and awareness-raising campaigns promoting living together in different local languages. These messages must consider the sensitivity of each context.
- Set up mechanisms to quickly deconstruct *fake news*.

² The government of Cote d'Ivoire has currently created two transit "camps" to host asylum seekers.





Background and rationale

The offensives launched by the Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie³ (VDP), in the South and South-West of Burkina Faso against Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) have multiplied since the end of 2022. VEO attacks on Defense and Security Forces (FDS) positions and civilian populations (whom they accuse of complicity) have sharply deteriorated the security situation along the border with Côte d'Ivoire. This insecurity that has forced many people to displace to the Ivorian border regions. According to figures announced by Côte d'Ivoire's CNS, at the beginning of February 2023, almost 9,000 people had crossed the border to seek refuge in the departments of Ouangolodougou, Kong, Tehini, Doropo and Bouna⁴. At the end of June 2023, UNHCR estimated the number of asylum seekers at 26464. “The main reasons for the departure of asylum seekers from Burkina Faso and Mali are armed conflicts / generalized insecurity, threats, intimidation, and attacks by non-state armed groups in the villages.”⁵

To date, the situation presents risks of conflict and deterioration of the security situation. There are risks linked to community cohabitation, which is already heavily affected by land disputes and crises, sometimes violent, over access to natural resources. In the Bounkani region, asylum seekers of Fulani origin arrive with large herds of cattle. Their cohabitation with Lobi farmers is already starting to generate tensions and exacerbate mutual resentment between these populations. Host communities and administrative authorities fear that this situation will trigger open conflict, with a high risk of VEO infiltration and the development of trafficking and various illicit activities. International organizations and the CNS have set up several registration systems for displaced persons, to ensure better control of individuals, reduce the risk of infiltration and offer responses tailored to their needs and those of the host communities. However, these measures and official communications surrounding the presence of the displaced have not alleviated multi-faceted concerns, amplified by rumors, in host localities.

To understand the risks of conflict and to promote better integration of displaced populations into host communities, this research documented perceived and/or manifest risks and possible solutions. It focused on the departments of Bouna, Doropo, Tehini and Kong. The first section presents the situation in the Bounkani region, the second outlines the dynamics specific to the Kong department, and the last discusses programmatic implications and possible courses of action.

³ These village defense committees have been subsidized by Burkina Faso's government as a means of increasing security presence. They in turn have been accused of human rights abuses and stigmatization of communities such as the Peuhl.

⁴ Rapport de la réunion du Conseil National de Sécurité du 02 février 2023

⁵ (UNHCR Cote d'Ivoire, 2023)





Methodology and stakeholders

This study focused on the localities of Bouna, Doropo and Tougbô (Bounkani) and Ouangolodougou and Kong (Tchologo), which are cited as having received the largest number of displaced persons. For a significant number of displaced people, Bouna, Doropo and Tougbô were only the first stop on their journey. One purpose of this study was to identify and understand the reasons behind these new migrations. The study seeks to understand why certain host communities have been receptive, and why the displaced have targeted those regions and communities. The research also looked at the dynamics generated, and host communities' perceptions of displaced person's settlements and movements. The localities to which the displaced have moved include Bouko, Assoum 1, Niandégué and Panzarani. In Kong department, the displaced remained, voluntarily, or not, in the first localities to receive them. Most have now been redirected to specified locations in the host villages.

Dependent on current dynamics, and constraints linked to the availability of relevant actors, the research team focused on certain secondary localities and sought to document the different migratory strategies and how they contributed to the reception and integration of asylum seekers.

The data for this study is based on direct observation in the field and on formal and informal individual interviews. The panel of people interviewed covers a wide range of stakeholders in the reception and care of displaced persons: administrative and customary authorities, host communities, Peuhl, Lobi, Komonon, Loron and Koulango community leaders and of course, displaced persons themselves. Data was collected in Bouna, Doropo, Bouko, Danao, Tougbo and Bolé in the Bounkani region. And in Sahandala, Lègba, Sikolo and Kong in Kong department. In all, more than 150 people were interviewed for this study.

I. Dynamics in the Bounkani region

1- Multiple collateral effects of the security crisis in Burkina Faso

The displacement of populations from Burkina Faso to northern Côte d'Ivoire is the result of three closely related situations. Firstly, a group of displaced people, mainly members of the Peuhl community, have gone into exile because they believe they are being targeted by self-defense groups: the *Volontaires pour la Défense de la Patrie* (VDPs) and the *Koglweogo* (traditional hunters):

"When the president decided to arm civilians, all Peuhl became targets all over Burkina Faso, especially in areas where there had already been attacks. The VDP started to target the Peuhl because people everywhere say that Peuhl are jihadists. They say that if there have been attacks





*and then you're still there, it's because you're with them. When you're Peuhl you're also considered a terrorist.*⁶

It would appear, however, as corroborated by many people in the localities of Bouna and Danoa, that there are two distinct waves of displaced people of Peuhl origin. Some recently arrived from Burkina Faso to seek safety, after having suffered atrocities by vigilante groups in their villages. This wave appears to be smaller in terms of numbers than the second, also made up of members of the Peuhl community who began their migration much earlier, to protect themselves from a possible expansion of attacks:

*"It's true that some of them have lost parents. Their relatives were killed in front of them. But most of the people we received here took to the road before it happened to them, because they knew that if it happened, they wouldn't be able to leave. When you've heard what's happened next door and you know it's likely to happen there again, you look for somewhere else to go."*⁷

In addition to these two distinct waves of displacement, there have been two other episodes involving other communities. These displacements followed a response by jihadist groups to offensives by the Burkinabe FDS and their VDP and Koglweogo auxiliaries:

*"When the VDP came, they recruited young people from other ethnic groups. Young Mossi, Lobi and Dogossè joined their group. They spend some time with you, give you guns and then carry on. So, when the jihadist groups fought back to defend the Peuhl who were being hunted by the VDP, all those who collaborated with them were also targeted."*⁸

This situation triggered a first wave of migration from non-Peuhl communities. This was the case in the village of Alidoukou (Burkina Faso), where almost the entire population took refuge in Bolé (Côte d'Ivoire). The forced recruitment of young people by the VDP to bolster their ranks, and the seizure of their property forced many of them into exile:

*"The VDPs have started forcibly recruiting young people in every village they pass through. Since those who created them can't give them everything, when the president announced the requisition of everything needed to fight the jihadists, the VDPs started to get their hands on people's possessions. Animals, farm produce, motorcycles, and all that. It wasn't just about the Peuhl anymore, was it?"*⁹

The displaced populations followed different migratory routes:

"I don't know if Peuhl and then Mossi, and then Dogossè and then Lobi who have left Burkina Faso can live together because each sees the other as his enemy. If you see that we haven't taken the

⁶ Interview with Peuhl leader

⁷ Interview with Peuhl leader

⁸ Focus group with displaced

⁹ Interview with Peuhl leader





same roads, that's why. And if you ask me, all the Peuhl who came back through Tougbô there, continued elsewhere.¹⁰

2- Plurality of migratory routes and strategies

Depending on their ethno-cultural origins, the displaced have followed different migratory paths and developed different strategies.

2.1- **Migration routes based on cultural origin and relationships.**

Migration routes differ between Peuhl and other communities. Ethnic tensions are similar on both sides of the border, so, to avoid preexisting resentments, the displaced have followed different migratory routes. Starting out in the south and south-west of Burkina Faso, the Peuhl headed with their cattle for the nearer Doropo department. A large wave headed for the town of Bouna along the Ivorian Burkinabè border, reaching Vonkoro, a village on the border with Ghana. Some, who had already established contact with relatives, settled in the sub-prefecture of Niandégué. Others continued to Bouna, hoping to establish themselves there. To transport their herds of oxen, they relied on a network of smugglers that had developed along the Ivorian Burkinabè border amidst the declining the security situation:

"There's a gentleman in Batié. He's in the VDP. He's helped a lot of Peuhl get out with their animals. When you want to leave the country, you go and see him. You pay something. You take the road to wait for them somewhere. He entrusts your animals to his sons, who accompany them to Kpèrè, and then you pick them up and continue. Some have spent two weeks on the road before arriving here.¹¹

A secure route from Batié via Tantama, Kpèrè, Tame Koulou and Massiou has enabled many cattle owners to reach Vonkoro, and exfiltrate large herds of oxen:

"You manage to get to Kpèrè to wait for your oxen so you can continue with them yourself. In a situation like that, who's going to leave all their wealth to someone?"¹²

The departments of Bouna and Doropo were chosen for several reasons. First, the existing presence of the Peuhl community in these two departments. With its long tradition of transhumance, the north-east of Côte d'Ivoire is home to a large Peuhl community. This makes it easier to find a well-integrated, long-established relative. Second, despite conflicts that have arisen between Lobi farmers and Peuhl herders, livestock herding remains a socially accepted activity in this part of the country. There is a shared interest in this activity. In recent years, it has become clear that in addition to the Peuhl, the Lobi and Koulango have large herds of oxen, which are often supervised by Peuhl:

¹⁰ Interview with displaced person

¹¹ Interview with Peuhl leader

¹² Interview with Peuhl leader





"Today in the Bounkani region, you can't say that cattle-raising is only a Peuhl affair. Everyone, Koulango, Malinké, Lobi, has cattle and use Peuhl to look after them" ¹³

Finally, many feel that resentment against the Peuhl is stronger in the Kong department. Several villages are openly opposed to the settlement of Peuhl or exercise strong control over this community. Conversely, they feel that in the Bounkani region, the Peuhl community is accepted and trusted by local authorities, despite past violent episodes between herders and farmers. The Peuhl community also enjoys strong support from Koulango landowners. Even if their arrival is perceived by Lobi communities as a risk that may increase herder-farmer conflicts, Bounkani offers the Fulani community a better chance of integration. In Doropo, the arrival of the "new" Peuhl, with their cattle, is seen as an economic opportunity by those in charge of the local abattoir:

"We're happy that there's a lot of cattle. It's going to help boost meat production. We usually process 1,500 head of cattle a year. But last year, we barely processed 750, because it was difficult to get animals from Burkina Faso or Mali, due to insecurity." ¹⁴

In the department of Doropo, the sub-prefectures of Danoa and Bouko have welcomed a significant number of Peuhl. In addition to the above, there were three other reasons for choosing these destinations. In Doropo department, Bouko is perceived as an area that offers the greatest accessibility for cattle:

"The Peuhl always start by looking for a place where their cattle will be safe and comfortable, before looking for a place for their family. Here in Bouko, we have dedicated spaces for cattle. You can let them graze without any problem." ¹⁵

Secondly, settling in the Bouko sub-prefecture may maximize one's chances of being among the first occupants of the transit camp being built by the Ivory Coast government for asylum seekers. For those whose herds have been accepted by the communities, this offers the advantage of having their livestock nearby:

"The camp is less than 17 kilometers from Bouko. Someone can set up there and then come and look at his cattle every day." ¹⁶

Finally, unlike several other localities in the region, Koulango leadership is not contested by the Lobis in these two localities. Arbitration and conflict resolution mechanisms thus integrate cultural diversity and enable cases of crop damage to be addressed objectively. Koulango leaders enjoy the confidence of all parties. This reduces the risk of crop damage giving rise to serious tensions.

In Bouna, thanks to the mediation of Peuhl association leaders and the agreement of Koulango landowners, many Peuhl and their cattle were registered and redirected to the localities of Assoum 1, Assoum 2, Yalo and Niandégué, within a 20-kilometer radius of the town. Most of the women and

¹³ Interview with community leader in Bouna

¹⁴ Interview with community leader in Bouna

¹⁵ Interview with Bouko community leader

¹⁶ Interview with Bouko community leader





children, presented as widows and orphans, were installed in unfinished houses in the Zongo district, considered to be the Peuhl quarter of Bouna.

Other communities, mainly farmers, have moved to the Tougbô sub-prefecture. These Dogossê, Mossi, Komonon and Lobi communities have largely settled in the localities of Tougbô, Bolé and Môrô Môrô in the department of Téhini:

"Here in Bolé, it's the Komonon, Mossi and then the Lobi who have come here"¹⁷ ; "There are two or three Peuhl who came here, but they left. The Komonon, Dogossè and Mossi settled here."¹⁸

This choice is explained in part by the cultural proximity between the populations:

"There are many who have relatives here. (...) from the same families. One brother lives here, the other is on the other side of the border."

Second, the chances of socio-economic integration are greater as the populations are traditionally farmers:

"We produce maize, and they produce maize here too. So here, in a short space of time, you can do something you're already used to doing."

Finally, the successful experience of displaced people from the 2021 crisis resonates:

"In 2021, we had relatives who came here. They were well received. Many of them have fields here and have built houses here. In a short space of time, they are well integrated."

2.2- Migration strategies according to migration trajectory

The Peuhl have two main strategies. The first is to contact a relative already settled in the region, and the second is to send members of the community on a reconnaissance mission to assess the risks and opportunities that the arrival of Peuhl might bring, and the chances of successful integration. The latter strategy has been the most widely used by Peuhl who have settled in the Doropo department:

"When I asked around, I learned that before arriving here, they sent emissaries to get information. They are aware that their activity poses problems, and they also know that the region has a long history of violent conflict between herders and farmers. (...) All those who are here were first in Batié several weeks ago. As the situation there began to deteriorate, they decided to head for Côte d'Ivoire. But if you look carefully, they haven't gone to all the villages in the sub-prefecture"¹⁹

On arrival, they are directed to the leaders of the Peuhl community, who take charge of finding them accommodation. Sometimes, these leaders will meet them at security checkpoints to facilitate

¹⁷ Interview with community leader in Bolé

¹⁸ Focus group with community leaders in Tougbô

¹⁹ Interview with administrative authority





formalities and avoid road hassles. This gesture of solidarity makes these leaders de facto guardians of the Peuhl they have helped. The community leaders to whom the new arrivals turn act as guardians until they entrust them to other members of the community:

"Among those who come, there's always one who knows the community leaders in the locality. So, when they arrive, they have a contact that is a community chief. The Peuhl go to the Peuhl chief, the others go to the Mossi chief."²⁰

The people who have found refuge in the departments of Bouna and Doropo are not always economically similar. Some arrived without their belongings. Others, who began their migration in advance, took their belongings with them:

"Those who have arrived in our sub-prefecture are not needy people. Many of them are wealthy. They had time to get out of the hot zones before the conflict hit their locality. They're just looking for a safe space for their livestock and families."²¹

3. Supporting the integration of asylum seekers: mechanisms developed by host communities and displaced.

The reception and support of asylum seekers is different in urban and rural areas. In the towns, the onus is on community leaders. In Bouna and Doropo, the Peuhl and Mossi communities mobilized to welcome members of their respective communities who were displaced. Members of these communities have accompanied people seeking economic integration:

"There are Peuhl women here in Doropo, thanks to acquaintances, who have been given places at the market to sell or work in restaurants."²²

In Bouna, the Lobi community seems to have disassociated itself from this display of hospitality. They claim not to have done anything, as they were not "officially" informed of the arrival of asylum seekers in the town:

"It's true that sometimes when you're at the station, you see vehicles full of Peuhl arriving. But at no time did the Royal Court inform us of anything. So, we didn't do anything."²³

In the rural areas of Tougbô and Bolé, because of their cultural proximity, the culture of transnational migration and the density of interactions that unite communities on both sides of the border, community leaders and heads of households in the host communities have unanimously mobilized to welcome asylum seekers and have not subjected them to overly restrictive rules. They actually mobilized to make housing available to them free of charge:

²⁰ Interview with administrative authority

²¹ Interview with administrative authority

²² Young Peuhl leader

²³ Lobi community leader





*"You won't find a single family in the village here that hasn't received asylum seekers. When you don't have room at home, you look for a house for them. (...) The chief of the land has decided that the asylum seekers themselves can look for a house. And when they've found one, they inform their guardians so that they can go and negotiate for them."*²⁴

They have the same access to water points as the host communities. In Bouna, Tougbô and Bolé, whatever the state of the house they live in, they pay no rent:

"Here, nobody pays 5 francs".

In Tougbô, a local awareness campaign involving heads of household and leaders encouraged the host community, especially young people, to show tolerance towards new arrivals. The awareness campaign even covered the use of language that might cause issues.

In return, refugee communities strive to comply with their hosts' instructions:

*"When we arrived, we were told we had to register. We did. After that, there were other censuses, and we're here every time. Some of them started asking their guardians for a land to farm. If he has it, he'll give it to you."*²⁵

4. Potential or obvious sources of tension.

The more that a community has experienced past crises and ethnic tensions, the more the arrival of displaced people is perceived as a potential source of conflict. In localities such as Bouna, which has been experiencing intra- and inter-community crises for several years, the arrival of these populations exacerbates resentment. The challenges posed by this situation are twofold.

At the intra-community level, two competing Fulani associations claiming leadership in the region see the situation as an opportunity to position themselves as the main defenders of the Peuhl cause. Rather than combining efforts to assist the displaced, their arrival is seen as an opportunity to legitimize their status. Each group believes that assisting the largest possible number of community members will reinforce its leadership in the region. Each group relies on its networks to mobilize financial, food and other resources to care for the displaced, who have "tacitly" pledged allegiance to the group by turning to it. With community leaders having already lost legitimacy with the community due to internal tensions, the current context reduces their collective vigilance. Leaders are less familiar with community members and control or awareness of their activities. Acts of insecurity involving members of the Peuhl community could increase.

This situation also seems to exacerbate fault lines within the Lobi community. In Bouna, the Lobi are divided into two factions, with each leader supported by a section of the community. One faction accuses the other of using the arrival of the displaced Peuhl to undermine its credibility and weaken its relations

²⁴ Tougbô community leader

²⁵ Focus group with asylum seekers





with the Koulango community. When the displaced arrived, one faction remained inactive, while the other, one of whose leaders is the President of the Regional Council, acted in favor of the displaced. This action was perceived as an act of treachery by some Lobi, designed to belittle, by showing that the community does not have the same regard and consideration for them. The issue of the displaced has fed resentment towards the Koulango by the Lobi. The hospitality accorded to the Peuhl by the Koulango is perceived by the Lobi as a strategy by Koulango landowners to regain control over the land and reduce Lobi control. They denounce the reception and settlement of Peuhl who own cattle:

"All these decisions have been made without our input. We haven't been involved in anything. The Koulango say they are the landowners. (...) We told the king that we can accept people but not cattle. They install them in the villages without informing us. They say the land belongs to them, so one day you come and realize that next to your field, there's a Peuhl who's settled there with his herd" ²⁶

In addition, the Lobi community blames the Koulango, and the government for a lack of consideration towards them in the construction of the Bouna transit site:

"The state has decided to build a transit camp for asylum seekers. The land belongs to a Koulango, we don't say no (...). but no one considered us. All around this area, there are Lobi villages. But the landowners have given in. For them, it's the most important thing. But none of the Lobi villages next to the camp have been involved. What's certain is that we're all waiting to see what happens. We've already told the king that we're opposed to the idea of creating a city exclusively for Peuhl with their cattle, because no Lobi will go and live in this center, especially since it's voluntary. People we can accept, but if it's animals, we're against it."²⁷

In Bouko, one of the sub-prefectures of the Bouna department, a long-term presence of displaced people could undermine social cohesion. This could generate tensions between host and refugee communities, and between host communities and authorities. A large part of the community already criticizes the authorities for having authorized the settlement of "new" Peuhl, without prior consultation, ignoring the episodes of tension that the department has experienced:

"My community told me they were against welcoming Peuhl into the village. 2016²⁸ is still fresh in their minds. But I reassured them that soon they will all leave for the center. Every three days I go round there, taking photos to reassure them that the work is progressing."²⁹

This community says it "tolerates" the presence of the displaced insofar as it is transitory. For them, this presence should not exceed three months:

²⁶ Focus group with community leaders in Bouna

²⁷ Focus group with community leaders in Bouna

²⁸ In 2016 an ethnic conflict resulted in multiple fatalities and displacement

²⁹ Interview with Bouko community leader





"It's true that some villagers said they didn't want the Peuhl to stay here. But I made them aware of this. I reassured them that in one to three months, they'll all be gone. I make them aware of this every day."³⁰

As such, the village chief and certain members of the community regularly visit the site to check on the progress of the housing construction work:

"In a week, I can make three visits to look at the state of progress."³¹

For this community, there is no alternative for those who have taken refuge in the village. Leaving any of them in the village once the transit site is complete could constitute a risk. This community considers the status of asylum seekers to be definitive:

"Everyone is going to leave. Even if someone wants to stay in the village, he'll go to the transit site for three years. Then he'll go back to his country. Now, if they want to come back here, we'll discuss the conditions. Because now they're asylum seekers, they have that status and it's as asylum seekers that we've agreed to receive them. So, there are no current conditions for them."³²

Furthermore, the arrival of displaced people, with or without livestock, puts additional pressure on natural resources and increases the risk of conflict. Like several other regions of the country, the Bounkani region faces challenges and conflicts between land users. These include the unstructured occupation of land to create villages, the practice of extensive agriculture and the failure of herders to respect certain rules. New arrivals, both farmers and herders, is perceived as problematic:

"Originally, herders were located far from the fields. But if every year the farmer decides to extend his field, he'll end up reducing the distance between himself and the herder. Sometimes a new village is created next to him, because in Bounkani, villages are created according to moods. Brothers who don't get along, the next day the other has created his village (...). Herders also have their share of responsibility. A herd is fifty cattle. Beyond that, you must find somewhere else to send them. These cattle are becoming numerous and need more grazing space"³³.

The region also faces a shortage of dams and other watering points for livestock. In times of drought, conflicts over these watering points are legion. They pit herders and farmers against each other, and herders against each other. In the department of Bouna, these conflicts sometimes pit herders against fishermen. Tensions over water are a definite risk that must be prevented now:

"At the moment, people are talking about it without perhaps complaining too much, because it's the rainy season. There's water, lots of surface water, the grass is green. But when the rains stop and food becomes scarce, aren't people's fields going to be taken over by cattle? How do we prepare for all this because it's going to happen?"³⁴

³⁰ Interview with Bouko community leader

³¹ Interview with Bouko community member

³² Interview with Bouko community leader

³³ Interview with community leader in Bouna

³⁴ Interview with an administrative authority in Bouna





What's more, many traditional transhumance corridors have been overtaken by agricultural fields. Some localities that seemed to be spared by this situation are beginning to perceive risks.

Over and above the risks associated with pressure on natural resources, in localities that have welcomed displaced farmers, some host communities are increasingly concerned about the spiritual consequences the displaced may bring. In Bolé, traditional authorities fear that certain practices are undermining the spiritual balance of their locality, and by extension the survival of the community:

"There are trees here that we don't burn. Some trees, when you cut them down, it only affects you. Some of them may affect the whole village. Some send mosquitoes and scorpions into the village. Out of ignorance, the foreigners cut them down for firewood. Some have asked for space to make a field. They set fire to them to clear land without knowing the consequences" ³⁵

Rather than opposing the presence of the displaced, magic-religious practices have been used to request flexibility from the deities:

*"We've made sacrifices where we've asked for things to be toned down a bit as they're here temporarily. But we don't know what will happen if it lasts a long time. What we've done is temporary."*³⁶

There are also concerns about specific acts of defiance towards village authorities, planting the seeds for future conflict:

*"There's an area next to the dam where it's forbidden to plant crops, because the cattle go through there to access water. If you make a field there and the cattle destroy it, you can't complain because everyone in the village here knows that. But there's a person who has now given this place to make a field. That's the problem. We need to sit down and talk about it. Yesterday, a young man told me that. I went to have a look. If we don't sort it out, when the others see it, they too will go and plant there, or they'll give it to someone else to make a field, and that's when the problems will begin."*³⁷

5. Perceived effects of the massive influx of displaced persons on basic social services

Challenges and needs differ from one locality to another. The main challenge identified, in both urban and rural areas, is that of housing. In Bouna, Doropo and Tougbô, the need for decent housing is crucial:

"There are no more houses to accommodate asylum seekers. Even unfinished houses are occupied. If this continues, it will be really complicated."

While in Tougbô the displaced people are occupying houses free of charge, the situation is different in Doropo, where the displaced pay a contribution according to the condition of the house. The minimum

³⁵ Focus group with community leaders in Bolé

³⁶ Focus group with community leaders in Bolé

³⁷ Focus group with community leaders in Bolé





amount is 10,000 CFA (\$16.00). In Bouna, the displaced are provided with free housing for a period of three months. After this period, they may be required to pay rent. In rural areas, most displaced pay no rent.

Population growth in localities such as Tougbô is putting a strain on health infrastructures. The technical facilities of the dispensary and maternity ward no longer meet the needs of the population:

"There are only two beds. There are times when a patient is taken out of bed for a new arrival."³⁸

The host population and the medical profession also point to the health risks involved, since the displaced persons are arriving without any medical checks, unlike the arrangements put in place at the Doropo border crossing. At the Koguiéno border post in the Doropo department, a health post has been set up to carry out medical checks on those entering Ivorian territory and to administer any necessary vaccinations. There are no such facilities at other entry points:

"Because of Covid, we closed the borders. Now we're letting everyone in without taking any precautions. There are localities where there have been deaths. We know how people like to protect their dead. We don't know if any of them have been in contact with them. There are diseases over there that don't necessarily exist here, and vice versa. There are people who come with pathologies that a health center of this level can't handle. They must be referred. But how are they going to get there?"³⁹

It should also be noted that no provision has been made to address the psychological state of the displaced. The upcoming school year is also creating concerns. Communities are beginning to wonder about the capacity of schools to absorb school-age children:

"There are lots of school-age children. What will their situation be at the start of the next school year? There aren't enough classrooms for those who are here »."⁴⁰

6. Perceived risks of infiltration by violent extremist groups and illicit activities

The perceived risk differs from place to place. In Bouna, Doropo and Tougbô, host populations are convinced that there is already infiltration by VEO members who take advantage of the situation to stock up on supplies and find ways to finance their activities. In Bouna and Doropo, the risk lies in the livestock sector. From the point of view of certain players, the risk of this situation being used by trafficking networks is high:

"Some farmers, as soon as they arrived here, wanted us to give them access to the cattle yard as if they wanted to sell some or all of their cattle. We realized that the cattle they had didn't belong to

³⁸ Focus group with community leaders in Tougbô

³⁹ Interview with medical staff in Tougbô

⁴⁰ Focus group with community leaders in Tougbô





*them, because a Peuhl does not behave this way. We didn't accept them. They stayed here for a few days and then left.*⁴¹

For the Lobi community, the openness shown by the Koulango community and the government risks provoking a larger wave of displaced Peuhl with their cattle:

*"Today, we don't take into account the feelings of the general population. We let the Peuhl come in with their cattle, in large numbers. What we're forgetting is that if we keep showing them that it's not a problem for us, it's going to encourage more of them to come. They talk to each other all the time. Those who are already here will tell the others that they are accepted."*⁴²

In Doropo, cases of cattle theft involving local youths are regularly reported:

*"What's happening is that young people have taken advantage of the recent influx to steal people's animals. (...) It's not in large quantities. And when they steal them, they kill them and come and sell the meat on the market."*⁴³

To the authorities and communities of Tougbô, the locality seems to be becoming a refuge for fighters involved in the conflict on Burkinabe territory. The arrival in recent weeks of new waves of displaced persons, mainly youth, is a source of concern and raises questions:

*"Since the situation began, we've seen a lot of women and children coming in. We were already asking a lot of questions. But in the last few days, a lot of the new arrivals are youth. We're all wondering where they've been so far. What were they doing there? Why are they coming now? Unfortunately, no mechanism has been put in place by the State to verify this and provide answers to the community."*⁴⁴

For the communities, these could be young people who fought alongside the VDPs. They may have become VEO targets because of the departure or collapse of the VDPs in their home localities. Others believe that they could be accomplices of the VEOS who are working towards their social acceptance. This situation is worrying for the communities, as the only Ivorian FDS checkpoint on the border with Burkina Faso was closed following an incident between FDS and civilians:

*"There was an incident at the checkpoint. It was so serious that their FDS chief, who is in Korhogo, came here and closed the checkpoint. Since then, asylum seekers have been entering Côte d'Ivoire without being searched, even though most of them come with a large amount of luggage, and their comings and goings are neither controlled nor regulated."*⁴⁵

Some people see the situation differently:

"I've asked around, and I've heard that their leader says it's a way for the state to show its goodwill towards asylum seekers and to facilitate the intervention of special forces in the event of

⁴¹ Interview with an actor involved in the management of the Bouna cattle park.

⁴² Focus group with Bouna community leaders

⁴³ Community leader in Doropo

⁴⁴ Interview with a member of the Tougbô community

⁴⁵ Interview with a member of the Tougbô community





*attacks. But we think it's to protect the FDS. And it's us civilians who are exposed, because we don't know what these people are carrying."*⁴⁶

During the day, but much more at night, people who have taken refuge in Tougbô regularly head for the Burkina Faso border on motorcycles. They claim to be retrieving luggage and stocks of food they have left behind. The host communities, on the other hand, believe that they are going to the villages from which they were chased to retrieve things they want to hide and secure on Ivorian territory:

*"To transport normal luggage, you don't need to wait for the night. It's even better to do it during the day if you've nothing to hide. But it's at night, after midnight, that they move."*⁴⁷

Some people expressed concern to the research team that some of the displaced might take advantage of the freedom of movement to supply the VEOs with food or fuel. In fact, a significant fuel trade has developed in the locality, which is worrying the administrative and military authorities, as well as the communities:

*"We can deliver 45,000 liters of fuel today, but tomorrow it's all gone (...) It started a while ago, but nobody was paying attention. Now we're all wondering about it"*⁴⁸

Faced with this situation, at an institutional level, the sub-prefect took a decision to restrict movement during the night: "

*We have instituted a curfew. From 8.30pm onwards, no more motorcycles or cars will be allowed to move in the village.*⁴⁹

The displaced populations share the same concerns. However, for security reasons, they are more reserved. They were unsure of our status as researchers and say they have no guarantee that the information they share will not put them in danger, and they fear for the protection of their identity.

7. Current initiatives, possible solutions and implementation methods

The initiatives underway cover housing, food assistance and socio-economic integration. All the localities that have received displaced persons have mobilized to make lodging available even if the houses are unfinished. The community leaders, to whom the asylum seekers instinctively turned, contributed most to this outpouring of generosity. They solicited the support of other community members to house displaced people themselves, provide them with a house, or to provide food.

In Moro Moro, in the Tougbô sub-prefecture, a displaced person from the 2021 crisis has built shelters to house many displaced people.

At the institutional level, a needs assessment has been carried out by the National Security Council. In response to the housing problem, the government has launched a program to build transitional housing

⁴⁶ Interview with a member of the Tougbô community

⁴⁷ Interview with a member of the Tougbô community

⁴⁸ Focus group with Bolé community leaders

⁴⁹ Interview with administrative authority





for displaced persons in the departments of Bouna and Ouangolodougou. The program will construct 2,000 homes, 1,000 in the Bounkani region and 1,000 in the Tchologo region. For the CNS, which is piloting the program, these homes are intended to cater for the most vulnerable households in the region, both Peuhl and non-Peuhl. However, for the host communities themselves, this offer remains insufficient and presents risks. They identify a risk in terms of cohabitation with neighboring ethnicities, and issues that may arise between communities of different cultural origins in the transit camp. In Tougbô, the communities are questioning the choice of the CNS; in their view, this response does not consider the sociological realities of the communities:

"The government asked for a place here to build houses for asylum seekers. The chief of the land gave four hectares. And then we hear that they're not going to build any more houses here. They're going to build them in Bounkani and Ouangolo. We've heard that Ouangolo hasn't even started yet (...) With what they went through before arriving here, the government thinks that the Dogossè, the Komonon, and the Lobi are going to leave Tougbô and go as far as Bouna to live with the Peuhl. If they've taken different routes, there's a problem. And we're going to ask them to live together!"⁵⁰

II. What are the special features of the Kong department?

Unlike the departments of Doropo, Bouna and Tehini, the arrival of displaced people in Kong department is more recent. Migration peaked in May and June 2023. This is due to the department's relative remoteness from the border, the saturation of localities such as Ouangolodougou due to demographic pressure, the department's perceived exposure to attacks (Kong department has seen the deadliest attacks on Ivorian territory to date) and the perceived hostility of local communities due to past events that have left their mark on collective memory.

1- Migration subject to constraints

1.1. Geographic and demographic factors

Bordered to the north by the department of Ferkessédougou, to the east by the department of Téhini and to the west by the department of Dabakala, the department of Kong is the last in the Tchologo region to record the arrival of displaced persons. Compared to Ouangolodougou and Tehini, Kong is geographically further away from the border with Burkina Faso. In addition, accessibility is more difficult due to a river that separates it from Burkina Faso:

"It's harder to get to Kong because the shortest way to get here is to cross the river. But you can't cross the river at any time of the year. You must wait for the water level to drop. When you're in danger, you don't necessarily look for the nearest corner, but the one you can reach most quickly.

⁵⁰ Focus group with community leaders in Tougbô





As a result, the displaced first headed for the easiest localities, such as Tougbô, Bolé, Doropo, Bouna and Ouangolodougou, to secure their families and possessions. As the fighting in Burkina Faso has intensified, the number of displaced people has intensified the difficulties already present, and tensions over access to natural resources and basic social services have multiplied. As the water level in the river dropped, displaced populations chose to head for the Kong department. Between May and July 2023, Kong department officially received more than 1,500 displaced people. Almost all of them took refuge in the Sikolo sub-prefecture, which became the third sub-prefecture in the Tchologo region to receive displaced populations. Three quarters of the displaced people who headed for the Kong department have settled there.

The first group came from the Ouangolodougou department. The largest number came directly from Burkina Faso, crossing the river to reach the department via the towns of Kafolo, Sahandala, Tindalla and Tchambé. A small number reached the department via Tougbô and Bolé, in the Bounkani region. The reluctance of some communities to move to Kong department is explained by past attacks. This department has suffered the most jihadist attacks (2020 and 2021). Although the current security situation appears to be under control, with the massive presence of the FDS, displaced communities are afraid to settle there for fear of becoming targets or being forced to move again. For example, at the time of this study, no displaced persons had settled in Kafolo, even though many transited Kafolo to find asylum in other villages.

1.2. Historical factors

In the wake of the traumatic Kafolo attacks of 2020, the people of Kong department have become even more hostile to the arrival of people from neighboring countries, especially those from localities that have suffered attacks by jihadist groups. They accuse them of acting as informers, and of using Côte d'Ivoire as a rear base for armed groups. In 2021, displaced persons from Burkina Faso, following attacks by jihadist groups, had difficulty being received in this department. Despite the small numbers of asylum seekers, few localities were willing to take them in. As a result, during this latest wave of migration, the displaced people have focused on localities that have welcomed and accepted the long-term settlement of displaced people in 2021, such as the Sikolo sub-prefecture.

2- Profile of asylum seekers in Kong and migration patterns to this department

The people who have found refuge in Kong department are mainly farmers. Many of them have chosen this department to increase their chances of gaining access to land for their activities. Composed mainly of Malinké, whose main activity is trade, Kong department offers considerable potential in terms of land availability. However, the community fears that this settlement will be lengthy and does not intend to make arable land available to the displaced. On a department-wide





scale, fewer than a dozen herders have been registered. This migratory trend can be explained in part by the fact that indigenous communities have very strong control over non-indigenous communities, particularly the Peuhl, who have cattle. The local population has expressed hostility to the arrival of displaced people with herds. This resentment found a favorable ear from the CNS, which decided to stop transhumance in the northern part of the country. For the most part, communities have rejected requests from herders to settle down.

3- Supporting the integration of asylum seekers: mechanisms developed by host communities

The different reception and integration of displaced persons is unique in the Kong department. Local communities require all new arrivals to present themselves to traditional authorities before entering. In some places, they demand to be informed before refugees arrive:

"Here, before you even welcome someone who has just arrived, you must first introduce them to the village chiefs and notables. When your relative tells you he's coming, you inform the village chief or the chief of the land. When he arrives, before sending him to you, you must introduce him or inform the village chief or land chief first; even if he arrives at night."

This provision is a requirement on the part of host populations to "tolerate" the settlement of displaced persons in their locality. In this way, they want to ensure total control over movements in their locality and reassert their authority in the eyes of non-native communities. In contrast, in the Bounkani region, it is possible to offer a home to a displaced relative before informing the village authorities. At times, they were welcomed, assisted, and resettled without the knowledge of traditional authorities, who may be informed after the fact.

Unlike the Bounkani region, where host communities welcomed the displaced into their homes and provided assistance, Kong adopted a different approach. Relative or not, no host household has the right to house a displaced person over a long period of time. Accommodation and food assistance must be provided over a relatively short period. Host households accommodate displaced people for only a few days, and if possible, provide them with a space, however small, in which to build a makeshift shelter. In this way, they have made available plots of land in the plots they own and have not requested new plots for the displaced. By this, host populations hope to force the displaced to move to other localities or make their hosts send them away.

4- A high risk of cohabitation conflicts emerging

For months, the issue of asylum seekers in Kong department was considered a taboo subject. Administrative authorities, executives, local elected representatives, and communities seemed unwilling to allow Kong department to be cited among the localities where displaced populations had





taken refuge. As a sign of their hostility, none of the displaced were settled in the host villages. On arrival, they were systematically directed towards the camps, where mainly non-residents reside. These communities were also instructed not to draw attention to themselves by circulating information that they had received displaced persons. The logic behind this attitude was to create as little visibility as possible around the displaced, so that it would be easier to evict them. This strategy is said to have been inspired by the region's leaders, who feel that the time has come to recover the land from those to whom it has been allocated, or to renegotiate the conditions of transfer. This situation has intensified with the arrival of displaced persons, including potential land-seekers. For these authorities, land occupation in Kong department is "dangerously" close to the situation in the west of the country, where, they say,

"non-indigenous populations have dispossessed indigenous communities of their land forever."

The communities say they accepted the settlement of displaced persons following lengthy negotiations on the part of the region's political authorities to,

"Not to give a bad image of the department to the world. Kong department is home to the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Minister of Defense".

III. Some programmatic implications and avenues for action

To the National Security Council

- Set up consultation processes for every stage in the construction/occupancy of transit camps:

Views diverge on the transit camps, and communities and CNS's interpretations differ. The CNS has established specific criteria for the accommodation of the most vulnerable households, but some communities believe the camps are for all the displaced. From the community point of view, when the camps are complete, no displaced should still be living in the villages. Now the communities, who were expecting the government to help care for the displaced people they have hosted, fear that they will be forced to look after them indefinitely. The construction of a single transit site near Bouna, to accommodate displaced persons of all cultural origins, does not consider sociological realities. Despite guarantees from the CNS or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), some displaced will refuse to settle on the site, preferring to stay in host villages. They believe that existing divisions from their countries of origin will put them at risk in a mixed ethnic population.

Communities believe that it would be better to negotiate access to land for some of the displaced. In addition, resentments will grow as host communities see support materialize for the displaced while their needs are not addressed. National or international bodies involved in aid to the displaced must ensure that the localities along the river are as well-equipped as the transit site in terms of basic socio-economic infrastructure, such as access to potable water, health centers and the construction or





rehabilitation of classrooms. A framework for exchanges between the leaders of the local communities and representatives of the community settled on the site should also be created.

- *Extend the mandate of coordination mechanisms:*

In addition to administrative and military authorities, the regional coordination mechanisms for the displaced should include certain traditional authorities and community leaders, to address not only the needs (which are specific) but also the challenges (which are part of a longer timeframe). In a region like Bounkani, misinformation can have serious consequences. Similarly, a challenge perceived as minor can become a source of violent conflict. Therefore, synergy of action and a preventive approach must be a daily practice to reduce risks. Another suggestion is to create or revitalize early warning committees in each village that has received displaced persons.

- *Reinforcing vigilance around the livestock sector:*

This research raises a major concern shared by communities: The Bounkani region has recorded several cases of cattle theft in the past so vigilance around the livestock sector needs to be reinforced. To this end, just as a mechanism has been developed to register individuals, a mechanism needs to be put in place to enable better traceability of herders and their cattle. Logistical support and human resources could be provided to the technical structures in charge of the livestock sector, to gather as much information as possible on animal herds from Burkina Faso.

- *Reinvigorate or strengthen information-sharing mechanisms between civilians and the FDS, while protecting the identity of informants:*

With the arrival of the displaced, there are strong community suspicions about people, particularly youth. Many who have found refuge in Côte d'Ivoire continue to regularly visit the areas they claim to have fled. This is creating a strong sense of fear and mistrust. Some administrative authorities fear the formation or reconstitution of VEO sleeper cells in and around the region. Communities also feel that, in the current context, information-sharing mechanisms need to be adjusted to prevent sleeper cells from taking hold.

- *Reinforce border surveillance and control of asylum seekers by setting up registration centers:*

The challenge for the CNS is certainly great insofar as a significant number of displaced people do not enter through border crossings. For the communities, in the current security context, the risk is great of letting people enter, sometimes with a large quantity of luggage whose contents are unknown, without checking them. The communities invite the CNS to find an alternative, because while offering hospitality to populations in distress, they hope not to endanger themselves and their loved ones.





- Equipping CCMs to document contexts:

The complexity of the current context calls for greater vigilance regarding the dynamics at work, and the implementation of rapid responses. The contribution of all players, both civilian and military, is essential. CCMs in localities where the arrival of displaced persons is a regular occurrence need to be given training, and information-sharing mechanisms need to be reviewed to adapt them to the current context and its possible evolution.

For the Resilience for Peace project

Natural Resource Management:

- Faced with the ever-increasing arrival of livestock herds and the challenges this poses in the villages of the Bouna and Doropo departments, R4P can create, with host communities, management associations of herders by locality for better regulation of the sector. This initiative should involve community leaders, cattle owners, and herders. Supporting the construction of cattle parks in villages can prevent the problem of field destruction.
- The continuous arrival of new populations, whose length of stay remains unknown, can provide an opportunity to discuss with host communities the need to dedicate spaces to specific uses. They could draw up zoning plans by consensus, clarifying which spaces are sacred or set apart for specific purposes and which can be used and for what.
- To prevent and reduce crop damage conflicts, the project could initiate actions to boost fodder production, by introducing high-yield forage species, demonstrating their scope and training stakeholders. This activity could be an economic opportunity for youth. Properly trained and supervised, they could set up small production units. In addition, they would be able to produce in large quantities and satisfy a demand that is set to grow as the dry season approaches. This would also reduce conflicts between farmers and herders.
- In these localities, issues related to access to water is particularly acute during the dry season. To prevent conflicts, the project could set up Village Natural Resource Management Committees in villages that have received large numbers of displaced people. These committees should establish consensual rules for access to and use of natural resources, adapted to each locality.
- Support land security by creating a one-stop land office in Kong department. With their land certificates in hand, host communities will be able to legally establish short-, medium- or long-term leases on their land and lease to displaced persons without fear of losing ownership of their land.

Governance





- The chieftaincy crisis in certain localities may affect their ability to address new challenges posed by the arrival of displaced persons. Communities could take advantage of this lack of cohesion to call into question fundamental values, rules, customs, and principles, as is the case in Bolé. In Tougbô, the chieftaincy crisis makes it difficult to coordinate actions and decisions. Even though Resilience for Peace is not a social cohesion project, we need to work with the administrative authorities to support community leaders in setting up an inclusive decision-making framework.
- As part of the activities of the Permanent Dialogue Committee (CDP), the project could initiate symbolic days of welcome for displaced persons, involving authorities.
- Support partnerships between herders and farmers to produce organic fertilizer for women in gardening associations.

Media

- Given the perceived risks of political instrumentalization of the situation of the displaced, there is an urgent need to initiate information and awareness-raising campaigns promoting living together, produced in local languages, particularly in the Kong department.
- Communicate the added value of the cattle parks in terms of community cohesion, to generate collective support even in localities where the project is not involved.
- Host communities need assistance in communicating their taboos and values perceived as underpinning the peace of their communities to new arrivals. Media could send experts to suggest approaches adapted to each context.
- Plan cultural days in localities bordering transit sites and those that have received large numbers of asylum seekers. These cultural days should focus on specific themes such as access to natural resources.

Entry points for action- What to remember and do in R4P localities?

The needs of communities and the challenges posed by the arrival of displaced persons are highly contextualized to localities. In addition to the above actions, other specific actions can be carried out in R4P localities.

In Tougbô and Doropo, in the Bounkani region, the arrival of displaced persons is less a question of natural resource pressure, but health risks, pressure on basic socio-economic infrastructures, competition for existing economic opportunities and the risk of the development of social phenomena affecting children and women. Many of the displaced live in unsanitary conditions, in unfinished houses without latrines, exposed to the elements. This makes them more vulnerable to diseases





transmitted by fecal material⁵¹. The risk is the same for all, whether they are host communities or displaced. The project could initiate awareness-raising campaigns on the risks associated with open defecation and lobby the State or other non-governmental organizations to construct latrines. Communities could unite, with the support of the project, to build latrines, targeting areas where many displaced have settled.

Faced with food insecurity, the project could, through its NRM and livelihoods components, support the establishment of collective fields using high-yielding, low-fertilizer, short-cycle varieties. It could also encourage the organization of host communities and displaced persons into associations to enable them to benefit from support.

The displaced include many women and children who have come without a head of household. In Doropo, women and Qur'anic teachers arrived with dozens of children in their care. In an environment where economic opportunities are limited, the chances of these women finding activities that generate resources sufficient to support so many children are minimal. The risk of exposure to violence is high. The children may be forced into occupations that expose and endanger them. The project could strengthen its actions to prevent gender-based violence and provide a sustainable response to the issue of talibé children in Doropo. Just as it has developed a program entirely dedicated to gender-based violence, it could develop a special program to work on sustainably addressing this phenomenon, which affects the departments of Bouna, Doropo, Kong and Tengréla.

In Bouna, resentments are strong and call for caution in interventions, as they could exacerbate existing lines of tension and taint the project impartiality. The arrival of mainly Peuhl displaced has intensified the resentment of Lobi towards the Koulango and Peuhl communities, to the point of disassociation. The strategy should be to carry out targeted awareness-raising campaigns highlighting common interests and the risks associated with deteriorated relationships.

In Kong department, the challenge is to prepare host communities for the sustainable settlement of the displaced as the transit site cannot accommodate everyone. In collaboration with administrative and traditional authorities, the project could prepare messages and organize awareness campaigns on living together, with land as a factor for rapprochement and development. In this way, sustainable settlement implies the possibility for new arrivals to carry out activities and participate in the socio-economic development of the community. Following the example of the R4P advocacy work carried out to obtain plots of land for women's associations, the project could make a plea to the village and land chiefs of Sikolo and Sahandala to grant plots of land to asylum seekers for their activities. Apart from a few localities where the project does not intervene, the advantage in this locality is that the displaced have settled on a small scale in villages and camps. Rather than allowing them to disperse widely,

⁵¹ Fecal peril corresponds to the risk of contamination by fecal micro-organisms (present in stools) that are responsible for infection and/or resistant to antibiotics.





which would make it difficult to monitor their activities, authorities could define a precise area, which they could demarcate, divide up and allocate to those applying for plots of land for farming. In addition, in Lêgba, an informal camp on the outskirts of the village of Sahandala, the project could support the rehabilitation of a hydraulic pump to alleviate access to water conflicts.

