

Regional Summary 1/2

Context

In the Central Sahel and the Lac Province of Chad, insecurity remains the foremost factor severely affecting the fragile protection environment. The intensification of ground and aerial military operations and activities of non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Burkina Faso and Mali, coupled with inter/intracommunity tensions and conflicts, exacerbates insecurity as the primary driver of forced displacement, exposing numerous communities to protection risks.

Challenges in accessing affected communities, blockages of certain localities, and attacks on convoys in Burkina Faso, potential rain-induced floods in Niger, inadequate and increasingly limited access to social services in Chad, as well as the withdrawal of the stabilization mission in Mali, all risk further exacerbating protection risks in the coming months. Since April 2023, eastern Chad is also affected by the crisis in Sudan.

Violence against civilian populations continues to rise, corresponding to an increase in protection incidents. Between May and June, the majority of violence against civilians (344 events) were attributed to NSAGs, primarily in Burkina Faso and Mali (source: ACLED). Project 21 monitoring notes an escalation in feelings of insecurity (30% in March-April; 34% in May-June), particularly in Mali (57%), within communities affected by tensions related to Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) issues.

In this context, threats to the right to life (17%), freedom, property, gender-based violence (24%), and the abduction/kidnapping of women and children (13%) constitute the main protection concerns. Tensions and conflicts have also increased over the past few months, increasingly involving civilian populations in rights violations.

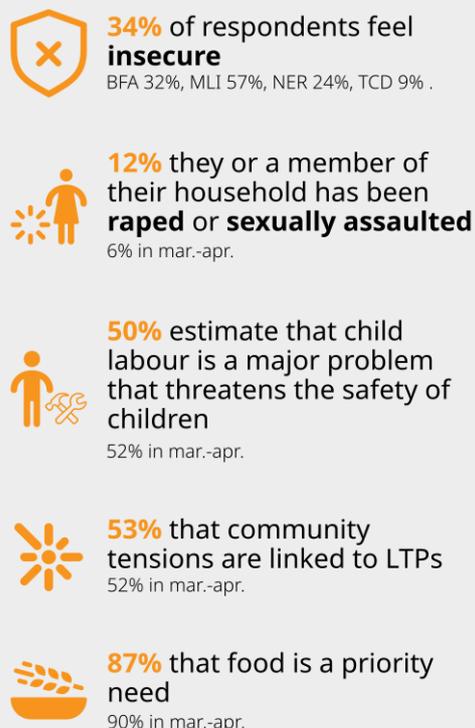
Protection situation

Between May and June 2023, two major protection risks have been identified:

- Kidnappings and abductions of women and children stand out as a significant concern. The deterioration of security conditions and context of displacement particularly expose children to this threat: over **1 in 5 respondents** indicate that kidnapping is a problem jeopardizing the safety of children. Incidents have seen an increase of 11% between March-April (12%) and May-June (23%) of the same year, and a +17% rise compared to May-June 2022 (6%). Following abductions, many women and girls fall victim to physical and sexual violence.
- Gender-based violence (GBV) is on the rise. **20% of respondents report an increase in incidents of rape between May and June, while 34% indicate a surge in domestic violence.** Movement restrictions and challenges in accessing healthcare services, especially for survivors of physical and sexual violence, are also major protection concerns. Insecurity, the diminishing availability of safe spaces for women and girls, and inadequate social services are disproportionately affecting women and girls.

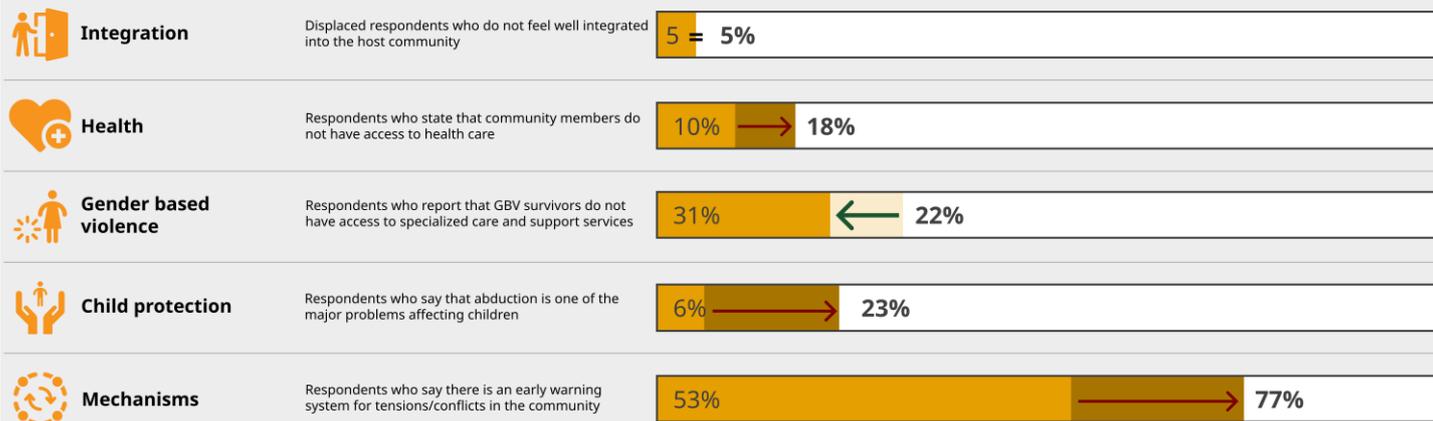
Key figures

In monitored communities:



Key protection indicators

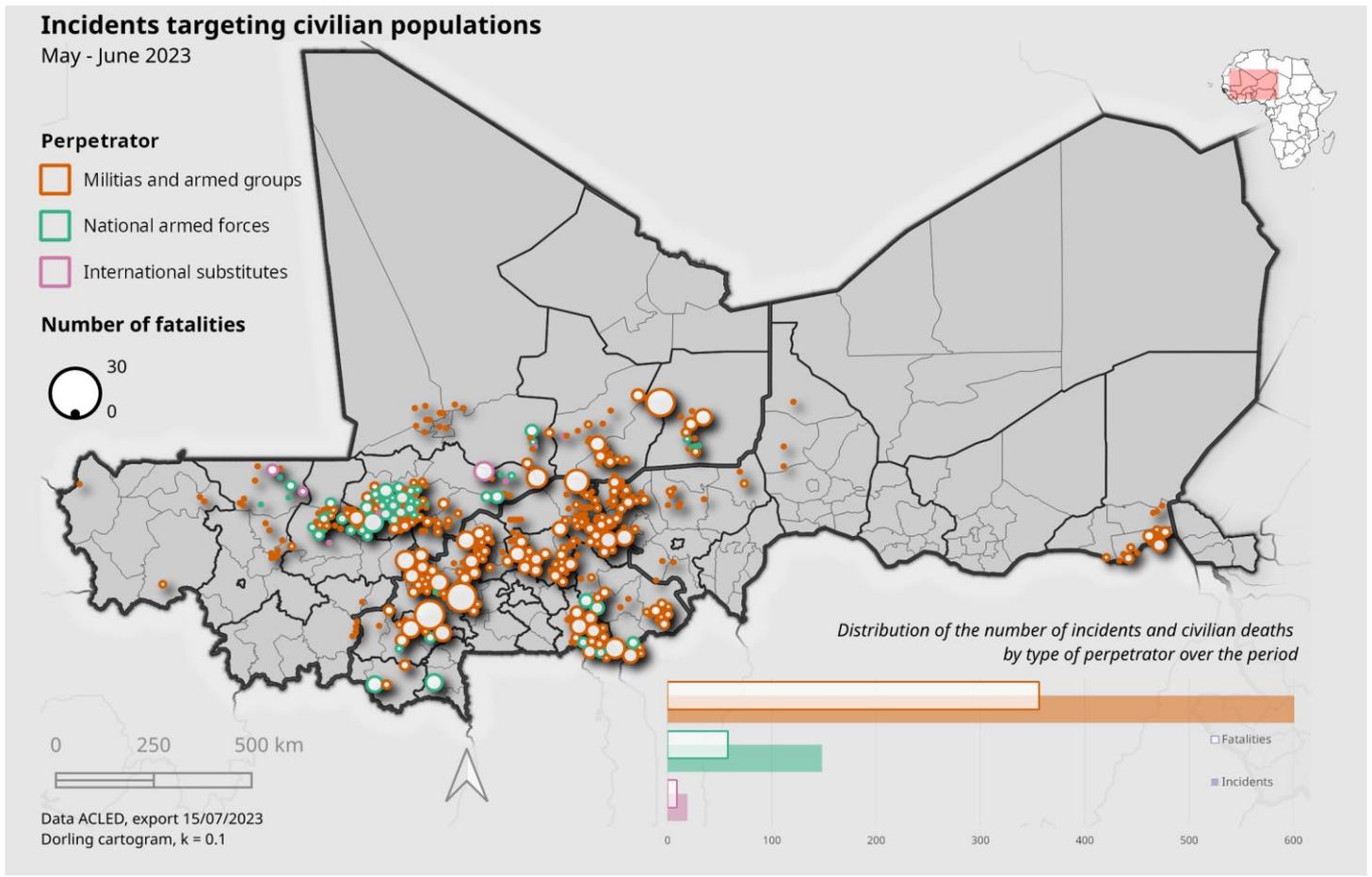
over the period **may-june 2023** compare to **may-june 2022**



Regional Summary 2/2

Key Highlights (May – June 2023)

- Amidst the backdrop of increasing internal displacement in the Central Sahel, a trend of kidnappings and abductions has emerged. While incidents related to abductions do not constitute the primary violation of rights to freedom and life of civilian populations, they remain a major concern. Particularly notable in Niger (22%) and Mali (18%), this issue appears to be a modus operandi for conflict parties. Burkina Faso is also impacted by this phenomenon, though to a lesser extent.
- Between the first half of 2022 and the first half of 2023, Niger has seen a 28% rise in documented abduction cases. In Diffa, 1 in 3 communities is affected, as is 1 community in 2 in Maradi. Similarly, in Mali, respondents from Ségou (36%), Gao (22%), and Mopti (17%) also report instances of abductions (also see Mali Advocacy note).
- Abductions affect the lives of vulnerable civilian populations and constitute severe infringements on rights to freedom and life. In areas severely affected by violence and armed conflict, women and children are increasingly at risk.
- Linked to the abduction trend, incidents of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are on the rise in the hardest-hit localities, including Diffa (34% GBV / 33% abductions). Women and girls are victims of both abductions and physical/sexual violence (rape) following the abductions. 32% of respondents state that women and girls are at risk of assault when traveling outside the community. Alarming, 1 in 5 respondents note that survivors of GBV lack access to support services that are non-existent/insufficient, distant, and understaffed. Prioritizing access to incident reporting structures and specialized services is imperative.
- In more than 1 in 10 communities, children face risks of abduction and kidnapping. Insecurity, motivations of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) for ransoms, the fact that children and women constitute the majority of displaced populations, threats of family separation and child abandonment, attacks on schools, and the phenomenon of children being recruited by armed groups, all exacerbate the vulnerability of many children.
- Responses remain inadequate and must contribute to alleviating the constraints and threats associated with the integration of displaced persons. Amid inter/intracommunal conflicts, difficulties with integration are primarily explained by tensions around access to resources (53%), notably in Chad (89%). Specific challenges related to land access are increasing during the rainy season and agricultural work period (41%), stemming from land unavailability and high rental costs. Mistrust and suspicion of connections with NSAGs are a source of integration challenges for displaced persons, according to 1 in 2 respondents.
- According to 18% of respondents, community members do not have access to healthcare. Access to clean water remains a priority in the monitored communities, where 75% of respondents are dissatisfied with their access to water. In 2022, more than 1 in 3 respondents lacked access to clean drinking water.



Burkina Faso

Context

In the conflict-affected regions, attacks on supply convoys have significantly disrupted, and in some cases halted, road traffic, thus impeding humanitarian access, particularly between the Central-North and Sahel regions. These attacks have delayed and complicated the delivery of essential items such as food and fuel. Further jeopardizing the livelihoods of civilian populations, the shortages resulting from these attacks expose them to heightened protection risks exacerbated by deprivation and the absence of socio-economic opportunities. Two new municipalities in the Cascades region have been identified as “under blockage” by the Access Working Group. Additionally, the explosive threat has escalated during May and June 2023. Data collected by P21 indicates that the number of deaths and mutilations caused by improvised explosive devices is twice as high over the two months compared to the January-April 2023 period. The threat of explosives has higher incidence in the border regions between Burkina Faso and Mali (Boucle du Mouhoun, North, Sahel) and between Burkina Faso and Niger (East, Sahel). Recent security developments have deeply influenced the conflict dynamics and protection environment in Burkina Faso, where blockages, forced displacement, discrimination, and stigmatization remain contextual threats. Throughout May and June 2023, one of the at-risk communities became the target of tensions and violent acts, including physical and verbal assaults, kidnappings, and targeted assassinations. In the Northern region of Burkina Faso, bordering Mali, these incidents led to the displacement of over 550 civilians to Ouahigouya, the regional capital. These events required the intervention of defense and security forces (FDS), as well as local authorities, to secure civilians and their belongings.

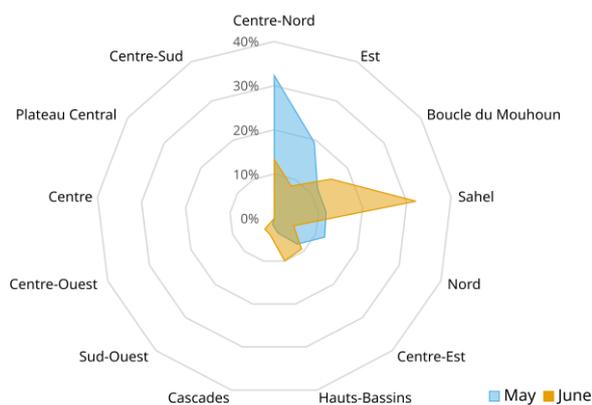
Main threats

- The number of documented protection incidents during May and June has increased by 250% compared to March/April 2023. P21 has documented a 328% increase in violations of personal freedom and security; 303% increase in violations of the right to life; 232% increase in violations of the right to property; 216% increase in gender-based violence; and 160% increase in violations of physical and/or psychological integrity. These data confirm the trends observed since January 2023.
- In Burkina Faso, the threats prominently affecting civilian populations fall into several categories: (i) attacks on civilians and civilian objects; (ii) theft, extortion, eviction, forced expulsion, and/or destruction of personal property; and (iii) abductions, kidnappings, forced disappearances, arbitrary and/or illegal arrests and detentions.

Response

- The prolonged and intensified crisis continues to erode the individual capacities of civilian populations to cope with the threats affecting them. In a context of socio-economic stagnation, or even decline, and widespread inflation, affected families are increasingly struggling to bear the costs associated with the care and support of internally displaced family members and/or victims and survivors of protection incidents. Nonetheless, communities and civil society still possess capacities that protection actors need to further support. Indeed, these capacities could help overcome access constraints and facilitate the delivery of assistance to affected and vulnerable communities.
- In the Central-North and Sahel regions, cash transfers remain suspended. In this context, the international community and the Government of Burkina Faso continue to commit to serving those affected by the crisis. The Government is working on the development of a protocol to govern cash transfers, and protection actors continue their efforts for the effective domestication of the Kampala Convention.

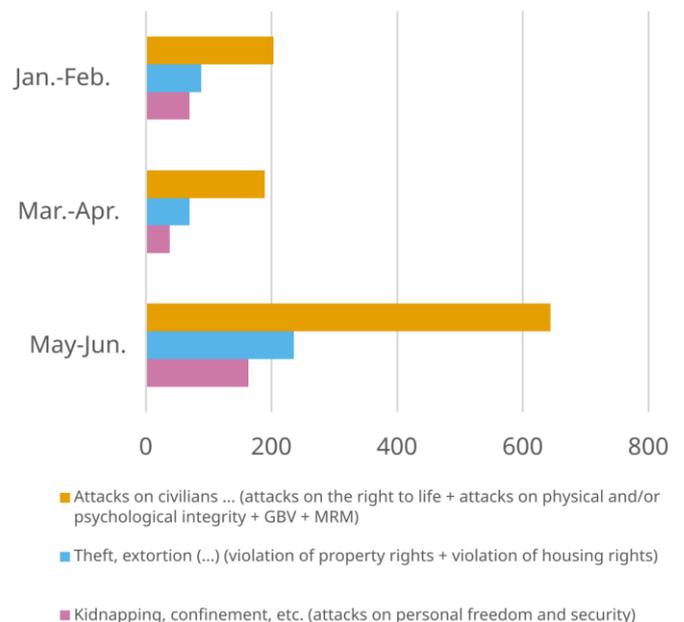
Breakdown of protection incidents by region | BFA | May - June 2023



Impact

The most affected regions by these threats remain the six priority regions according to the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan. During the reporting period, the number of documented protection incidents in the border regions between Burkina Faso and coastal countries has increased by 138%, particularly in the border regions between Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (+860%). Communities established in these regions are vulnerable due to the growing presence of individuals with specific needs within their families, enclaves established by Non-State Armed Groups (NSGAs), and their complete dependence on humanitarian assistance. The onset of the rainy season foretells additional challenges, potentially caused by strategies that NSGAs might employ to resupply as their mobility is restricted by weather conditions, as well as the impact on emergency shelters provided to internally displaced persons.

Trend in the incidence of protection risks | BFA | January - June 2023

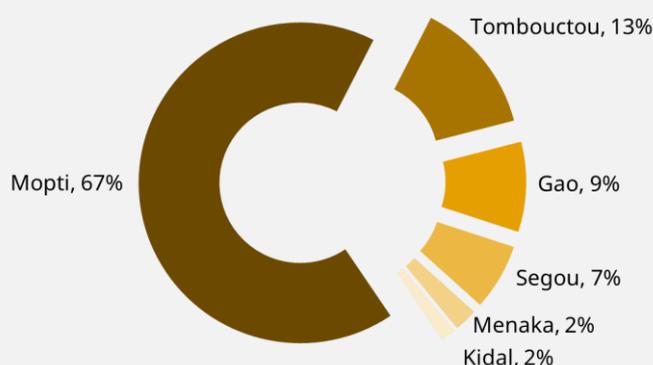


Mali

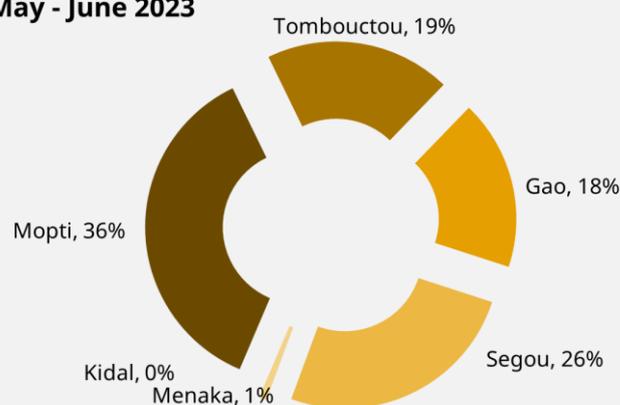
Context

During May and June 2023, 2,093 human rights violations were recorded by the protection monitoring, while 2,827 human rights violations had been recorded in the first four months of the year. This increase is primarily due, on one hand, to the intensified operations of the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) following an attack by non-state armed groups (presumed radical) on 22 April, targeting the gendarmerie and FAMA camps in Sevaré. On the other hand, it's also due to clashes among NSAGs in the north, particularly in the Gourma Rharous area. Several villages accused of cooperating with FAMA have been attacked. Following the 18 June referendum on the new constitution, some protection incidents have been reported, including the abduction by NSAGs of the village chief of Segué (Bankass district) and his four advisors for having voted. They are reportedly still in captivity.

Breakdown of documented protection incidents by region | MLI | May - June 2023



Breakdown of kidnappings, hostage-takings and enforced disappearances by region | MLI | May - June 2023



Main threats

- Protection Monitoring and Humanitarian Mine Action Partners have recorded incidents related to explosive devices, resulting in more than 15 direct civilian casualties (injured and killed), including children, in May. These incidents occurred in the districts of Niono, Bandiagara, Ségou, and Gourma Rharous. In May, the GBVIMS documented 1,028 Gender-Based Violence (GBV) incidents, marking the highest number recorded since the beginning of the year and indicating a 21% increase compared to April.
- Intrusions by Non-State Armed Groups (GANEs) into villages and hamlets have been documented, notably in the Ménaka region, where 13 men were reportedly killed in the hamlet of Mougaye, Tedermene district, from 9-10 June 2023, as well as instances of livestock theft. These violations have compelled populations to move towards localities they perceive as safer.
- Kidnappings, particularly of community and religious leaders, economic operators, and women by NSAGs (presumed radical) and self-defense militias, have also been registered (also see Mali [Protection Monitoring Dashboard](#)).

Impact

- The ongoing conflict continues to impact the daily lives of residents, especially children, a significant number of whom are now out of school and exposed to various protection risks (enlistment in armed groups, sexual exploitation, early marriage, accidents involving explosive devices, abductions, injuries, and killings, among others). In May, child protection actors discussed the proliferation of drug consumption among children. Notably, in certain localities such as Ségou, girls consume drugs more than boys. In other areas like Gao, there has been an observed increase in consumption due to the arrival of waves of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), while in Tombouctou, children's consumption appears to stem from parental drug use.
- Regarding insecurity, 46.6% of households surveyed in May reported movement restrictions affecting their ability to travel, move outside their communities, commute to work, and visit markets. For the 88.9% of surveyed households that rely on trading agricultural, livestock, and craft products, these movement restrictions exacerbate their vulnerability.

Response / Access to services

- In 75% of localities in the northern and central regions, services addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are either unavailable or scarcely accessible.
- HMAP partners have been tracking and identifying victims of explosive devices, but assistance has been constrained due to a temporary gap between projects. The request for the withdrawal of the MINUSMA (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) runs the risk of exacerbating this gap, as UNMAS (United Nations Mine Action Service), which funds the majority of response actors in this field, is linked to MINUSMA in Mali.

Niger

Context

The security dynamics across the four humanitarian regions have been characterized during this period by ongoing attacks by non-state armed groups and militias against civilians, as well as interethnic tensions and conflicts (Tillabéri region). The interethnic violence that erupted in the Tillabéri region is a major protection concern due to the persistent tensions between conflicting ethnic groups and the number of recorded victims (at least 20 deaths), along with the risk of escalating retaliations. The atrocities committed by non-state armed groups within communities have significantly contributed to a crisis of trust among community members causing victims and ongoing interethnic tensions and conflict.

Main threats

At least 620 security and protection incidents (abductions, assassinations/murders, assaults, etc.) have been reported in the four monitored regions (Diffa, Maradi, Tillabéri, and Tahoua) between May and June 2023. 95% of the victims are civilians (men, women, and children). Specifically, abductions for ransom and sexual violence suffered by victims at the hands of kidnappers persist in Diffa and Maradi regions.

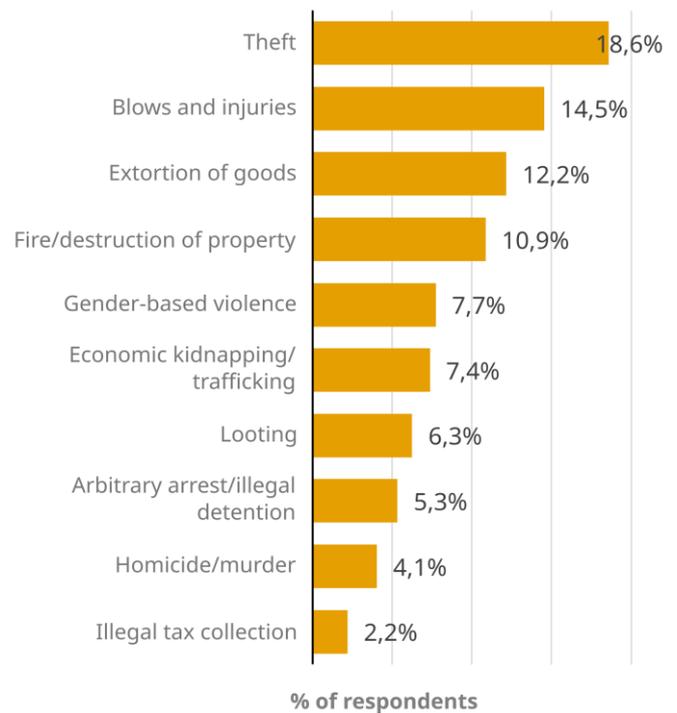
Impact

The security context with the aforementioned threats continues to have detrimental consequences on civilian populations who are trapped in the midst of widespread violence in their residential areas. The immediate impact is the resurgence of massive internal displacements observed during this period in the Diffa, Tillabéri, and Maradi regions. These displacements lead to the loss or abandonment of livelihoods, shelters, and essential belongings of individuals. This further amplifies fear and anxiety among the displaced individuals and host communities, while also increasing the vulnerability of households, families, and communities to protection risks, such as Gender-Based Violence, Child Protection, and social cohesion issues.

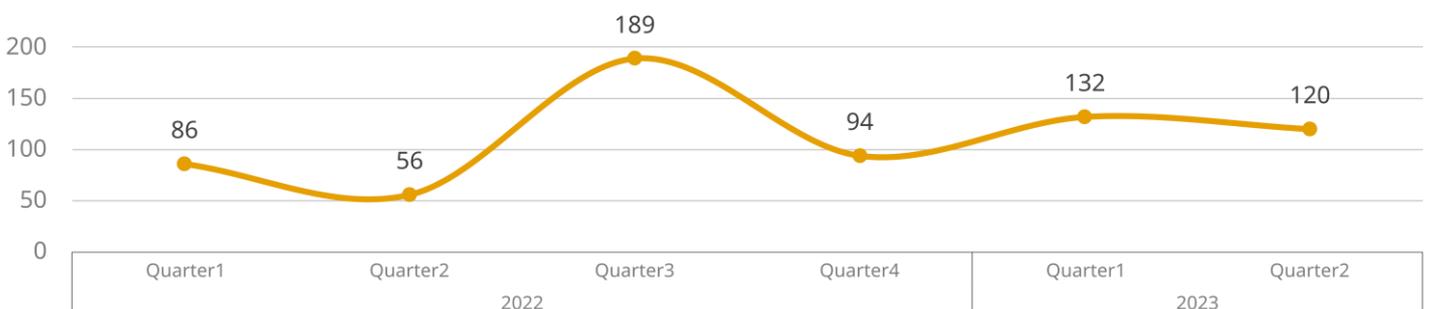
Response

In the face of growing gaps and protection needs, humanitarian and protection actors are implementing prevention and response actions at the community level for the affected populations. These efforts include activities such as raising awareness about social cohesion and addressing protection cases (e.g., Gender-Based Violence, people with special needs) in the four regions (Diffa, Maradi, Tillabéri, and Tahoua).

Top 10 protection incidents | NER | May - June 2023



Number of abductions | NER | January 2022 - June 2023



Chad

Context

- Over the reporting period, the trend of previous months continued with a decrease in incidents committed by non-state armed groups in May. The documented incidents are caused by civilian populations, community conflicts, and acts of banditry/criminality.
- Conversely, the month of June witnessed an upsurge in incursions and attacks by non-state armed groups.
- In the Lac region, concerns related to access to social services (health, education) persist and worsen the protection situation.
- During the data collection period, P21 monitoring noted the displacement of displaced populations from certain sites, a concern also noted by the Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM). There is a major concern about where internally displaced families are moving to.

Main threats

- Protection incidents in May were primarily characterized by physical assaults, sexual assaults, early marriages, and rape. These incidents mainly involve the civilian population as primary perpetrators. Women and girls have been the primary victims of these violations.
- In June, the main incidents reported were cases of physical assaults, abductions, and homicides/murders. These three types of incidents constituted 75% of all reported violation cases.
- The increase in abduction cases compared to May could be explained by various incursions by non-state armed groups (NSGAs) that were recorded. Men and boys were the primary victims of the violations committed during this period. However, even with the noted rise in NSGA activity, it is important to highlight that 71% of physical assaults were committed by the civilian population during community conflicts related to natural resources.

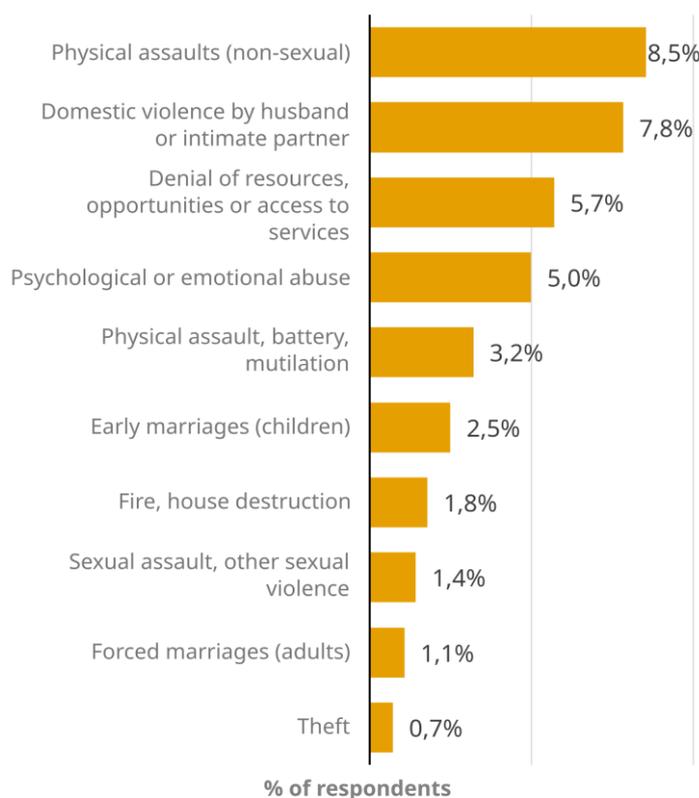
Impact

- Incidents of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are being reported less frequently to the relevant authorities. Additionally, there are challenges in accessing healthcare due to distance and the lack of free medical services, which particularly affects vulnerable women and girls. This is occurring in a context marked by abductions and increasingly unsafe spaces for them.

Response

- Strengthening community-based protection remains the primary response in light of the numerous protection incidents involving the civilian population.
- Capacity and response to address urgent healthcare needs remain limited and sometimes non-existent.
- The interventions of the Rapid Response Mechanism serve as an alternative due to the limited capacity of partners, often constrained by inflexible operational zones.
- The strengthening and extension of P21 monitoring to other regions of the country addresses the need for enhanced data to analyze the protection situation.

Top 10 of GBV | TCD | May - June 2023

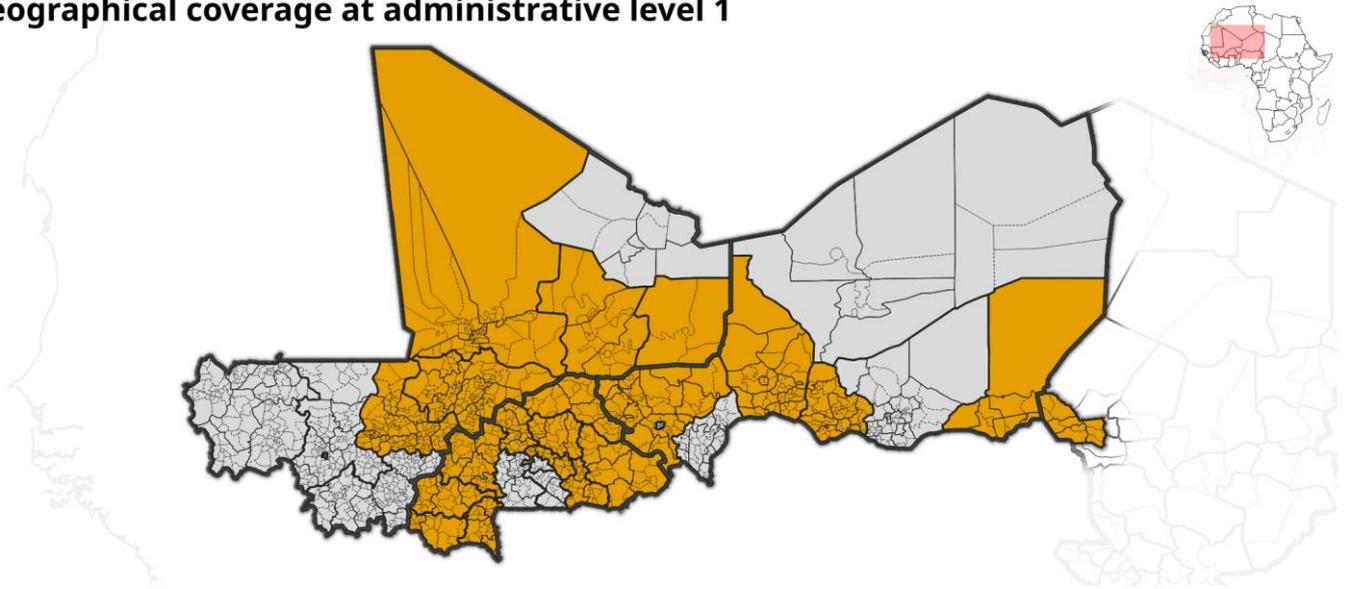


Project 21 (P21)

Project 21 is an ecosystem of harmonized, inter-agency, and multi-country Protection Monitoring tools designed to regularly analyze the protection situation and risks in four Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and the Lake Chad region in Chad). Data collection from affected communities is conducted through interviews with key informants and heads of household among displaced populations and host communities. Data is collected monthly in the villages by protection monitors and via phone in physically inaccessible areas. In 2022, P21 monitors conducted nearly **15,000** interviews in 2,400 municipalities in the region. The analysis for the period covered by this report is based on a total of **6,000** interviews conducted between **May and June 2023** in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Chad (Lac Province).



Geographical coverage at administrative level 1



Data collection from P21 partners by administrative level 3

April 2022 - March 2023

