

Introduction

The Project 21 Factsheet aims to provide essential and recent data from the Protection Monitoring activities in crisis affected areas of Central Sahel and Chad*. The notes are designed to share Project 21 information and insights in a concise way. Child protection in the spotlight this month: June kicked off with the **Annual meeting for child protection in humanitarian action**, held this year in Panama city from June 3 to 7. June 12 is the **International day against child labor**. June 16 celebrates the **African child**. These events make it worth taking a closer look at the state of child protection in the Central Sahel and Chad, in particular through the data collected by Project 21. Find out more about our recent analyses in our just released **quaterly Protection Note!**

*Data for Chad in 2023: Lac Province

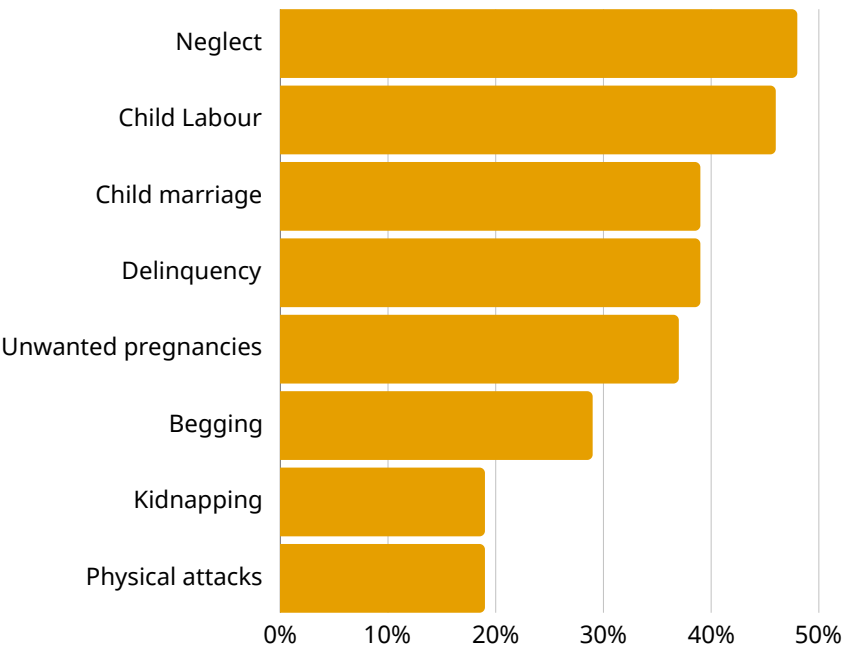
Key Findings

- **46%** of KI report that children are subjected to **child labour**. Along with **neglect**, **child marriage** and **unwanted pregnancies**, child labour is one of the most reported incidents affecting children in areas where protection monitoring was conducted at the 1st quarter 2024 in Central Sahel and Chad.
- **44% of households** in surveyed areas report that children **do not attend school regularly**.
- **2 KI in 10** report presence of **unaccompanied and separated children**, with **60% of them unassisted**.
- **Forced displacement and family separation** are reported **4 times more often** in communities with high **restrictions to free movement**.

Aggravation of the root causes

In Q1 2024, key informants reported incidents specifically affecting children in line with structural risks already identified in previous years. Almost **1 in 2 mentions neglect and child labour**. **39% report forced and early marriages** and **37% report cases of unwanted pregnancy** between January and April 2024. The crises in the Sahel region over the past 10 years have exacerbated poverty that is a core cause of threats to children's well-being and protection. While social protection and education are essential to put an end to this phenomenon, **44% of households** surveyed in Q1 2024 revealed that their **children do not attend school regularly**, and 30% of these for financial reasons. This is the second main reason given, after school closures (32%), which are mainly due to conflict [1].

Figure 1. Most reported protection incidents affecting children (KI, Q1 2024)



The impact of conflict on child protection in the Sahel

In March 2024, **children represented 54% of all refugees and asylum seekers registered by the UNHCR in West and Central Africa** [2]. In Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the number of children forced to flee their homes has risen from around 321,000 in 2019 to 1.8 million today [3]. Forced displacements increase the **risk of family separation**. Around 1 in 10 KI identifies such a threat, while more than **2 in 10 report the presence of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)** in their communities, with higher trends in the regions of Menaka in Mali and Sahel in Burkina Faso. In the first quarter of 2024, 60% of KIs state that the UASC identified in their communities do not receive any assistance. In addition, children face threats including **violent attacks** and the risk of **recruitment and use by armed groups and forces**, as reported by 10% of KI in affected communities.

Higher risks in areas affected by movement restrictions

The vulnerability of children is particularly heightened by movement restrictions. In 2023 [4] and Q1 2024, violations of children's rights were higher in areas where more than 50% of respondents reported **restrictions to free movement**. The impact is even more significant in areas where more than 75% of respondents mention movement restrictions. In Q1 2024, in these specific areas, the interviewed respondents perceive increasing risks compared to the regional average: **+27 percentage points of child marriages; +14 %p of unwanted pregnancies; twice as many child abductions; 4 times more mental health and psychological distress**.

Figure 2. Presence of UASC in the community and UASC with no assistance (KI, Q1 2024)

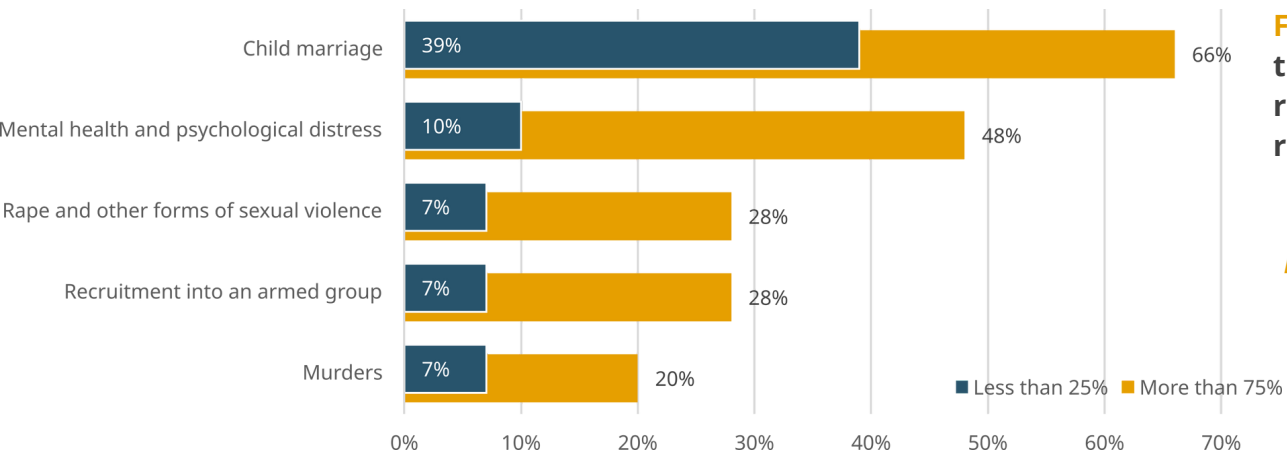
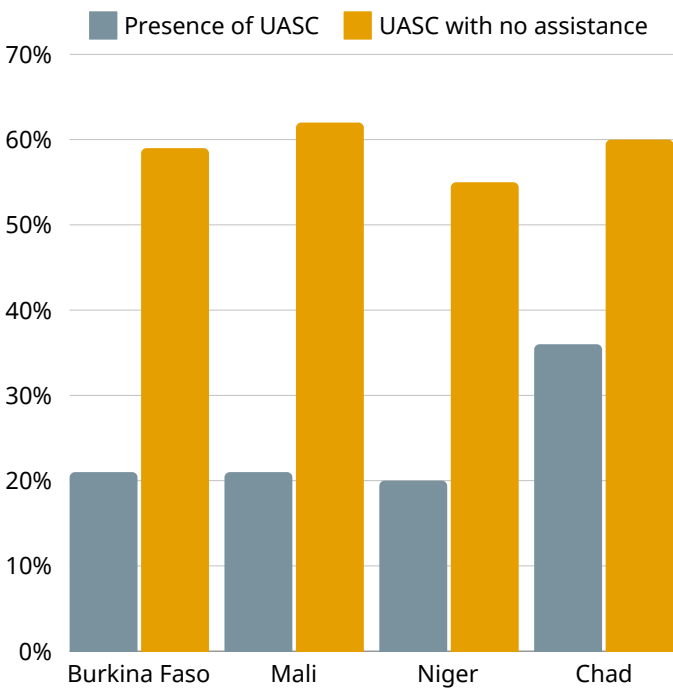


Figure 3. Indicators in areas with less than 25% or more than 75% of respondents mentioning movement restrictions (HH, Q1 2024)

[1] Project 21, Education Factsheet, January 2024
[2] UNHCR, March 2024
[3] Save the Children, March 2024
[4] Project 21, Regional Protection monitoring Report 2021-2023

Project 21 is an ecosystem of harmonized, inter-agency, and multi-country Protection Monitoring tools designed for on-going analysis of protection situation and risks in Sahel.

Protection analysis for an informed response to the Sahel crisis

EXPLORE DATA

