



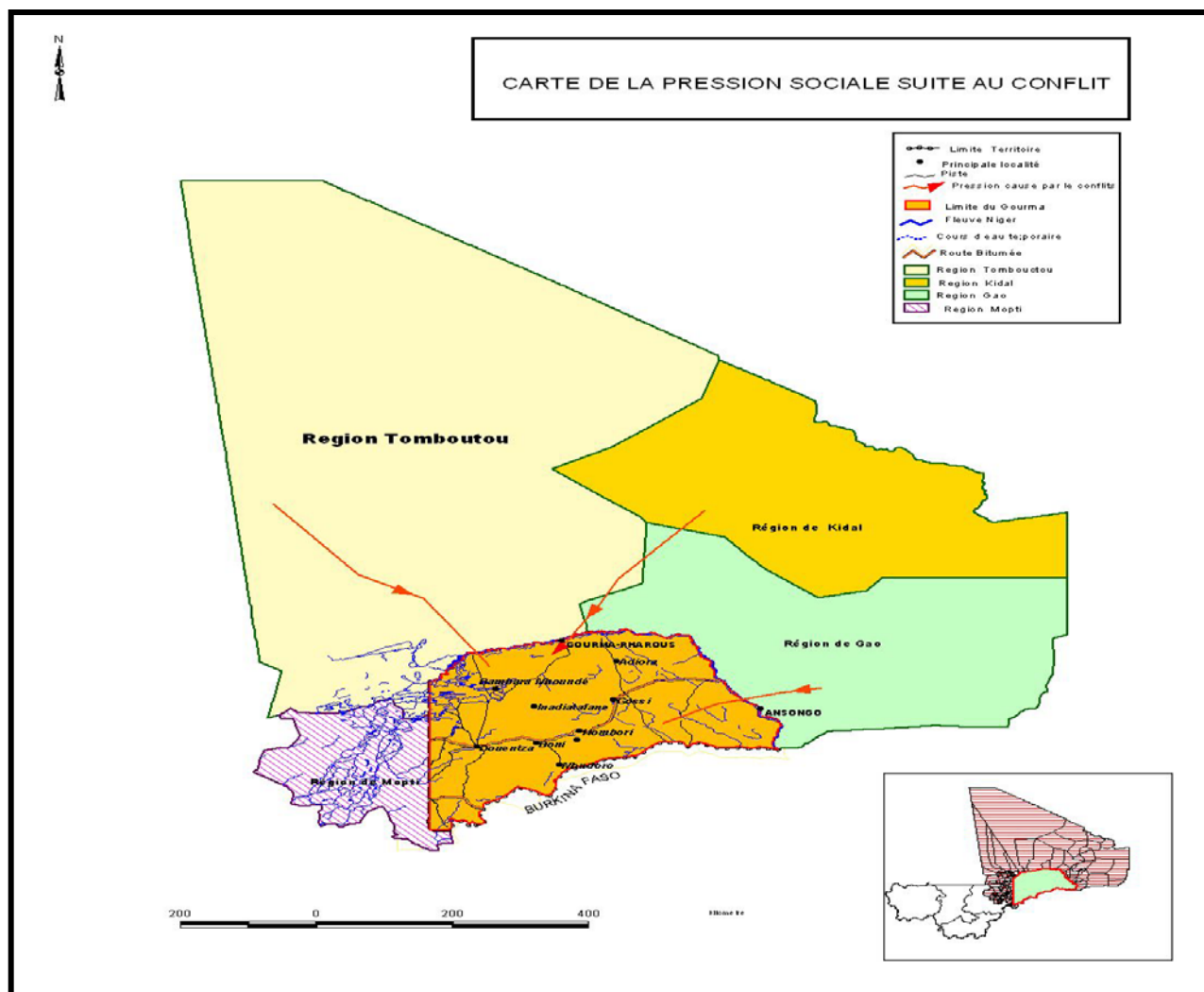
NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR REFLECTION AND DATA SHARING ON POST-CONFLICT RECONCILIATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN THE MALIAN GOURMA

Bamako, 21-23 May 2013

Re-establishing peace and social interactions within the
Gourma communities: a nationwide priority.

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Map showing the regional impact of the conflict in the Gourma region



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INTRODUCTION

Given that humanitarian aid is compulsory during the post-conflict period.

How can it be used efficiently?

How can we prevent it from aggravating existing social tensions?

These are the current problems that concern us in the Malian Gourma

EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

Historical reminder:

- January 2012: beginning of the MNLA military activities
- March 2012: Capture of the city of Gao by the MNLA militants. Some community leaders and the youth join the MNLA movement.
- End June 2012: MUJUAO and Ansar Dine islamic groups chase off the MNLA militants. The MNLA leaders flee, leaving the young people without guidance. Without any MNLA leader, many of the youth choose to join the islamic groups

EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

The islamists motivate the young men by providing them with:

- weapons of war
- a salary of 15000 CFA/ day for a single person or 25000 CFA/day for a married man.
- 50000 CFA to anyone who provides information on:
 - Cigarette and alcohol points of sale
 - Alcohol and/or cigarette consumers
 - Individuals working with the malian militaries or authorities
 - Individuals working with white people
 - Hiding places belonging the civil servants, NGO employees, and catholics
 - Sacred places

EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

July- December 2012:

- Almost all the main villages, campsites and important hamlets of Gourma have been captured by the armed islamic groups.
- All the means given to their collaborators are used to oppress the local population.
- Life is hard, many people who at first were not willing to move away, feel now compelled to go.

EVOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT

January 2013:

- Because of their military supremacy, some of the islamists decide to capture the city of Mopti
- Some extremists of Gourma decide to enrol young coranic students and place them on the frontline battlefield.
- They capture the city of Kona, located at 55km from Mopti, which is the administrative centre of the fifth region
- The French air-force intervenes and blocks the islamic groups' progress.

SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT

- Civil and military victims
- Social pressures and conflicts induced by the military war
- Increase of insecurity and theft
- Community migration (refugees, immigrants). These induce pressures and destabilisation in the areas they leave, transit and go to.
- According to the mayors of Gourma, an estimate of 100 000 out of 279 829 people have moved away because of the war.

SIX CATEGORIES OF DISPLACED PEOPLE/REFUGEES

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND FIRST TRENDS

- **Talking with people:**

We talked to village chiefs, self-defence group members,
... over tea

- **Phone interviews with:**

- refugees
- our contact people who had joined armed groups during the conflict
- mayors and other local authorities who have either remained or moved to secured towns whilst staying updated about the situation in Gourma.

These surveys and interviews have helped us to determine six motivations for migration:

- Migration based on fear of reprisal.

This category includes people that are afraid of reprisal due to their skin colour or their links with the local government.

They have fled without luggage and their belongings have been stolen either by armed groups or their own youth.

- Migration due to risk management and opportunities
 - This category includes people who have survived previous conflicts (1980-1990 droughts and rebellions)
 - They are aware that they can be granted refugee status and its consequent advantages.
 - However, some of their young people stay behind to watch over family belongings and some engage in banditry
- « *One should not keep all his eggs in a same basket* »
a family chief told us.

■ Migration of pastoralists who are hoping to be allocated more livestock, individual land, natural resources and/or infrastructures during post-conflict reconstruction

- They have entrusted their livestock to other shepherds.
- Some animals have been stolen, either by the caretakers or by armed groups.
- Their tenants hope to benefit from the post conflict aids to claim stolen animals.

■ Migration post-conflict due to illegal business with armed groups

- The category is mainly composed of young people, who have indulged in trafficking stolen products (cars, weapons, drugs) or products freely distributed by humanitarians during the conflict.
- These people have worked closely with the armed groups.

■ Migration post-conflict due to employee subordination and/or compromise with armed groups

- This category includes people that worked for the armed groups and have taken part in:
 - - armed robbery
 - car robberies
 - cattle robberies
 - rape of women
- Some of its young members come from the Gourma communities.

■ Migration post-conflict due to providing shelter to armed groups and helping impose regulations based on the islamic law

- Some of its members have ill treated and abused people of their community, insuring the application of severe new rules such as constant veiling of women, smoking ban, music ban on public places.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT

- **Bush fires**

The massive exodus has reduced the man-power required to prevent and fight fires leading to the loss of grazing lands.

- It represents an important area loss for grazers and elephants.

- **Wildlife**

Already vulnerable to climatic changes, wildlife has all the more savagely killed.

- Many bustards and Dorcas gazelles have been poached.
- Seven elephants and three hippos have been killed because of their tusks and meat
- This number of elephants would have been much greater if it had not been for the existence of the Mali Elephant Project, and its support to local communities in protecting elephants against poaching.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE CONFLICT

- The on-going social tensions existing between communities and caused by the conflict are a threat for the future generations.
- The limited natural resources of the Gourma region are dependant of a common sustainable management plan. The latter can be implemented only if there are healthy relations within and between the communities.
- **Without the healing of social tensions and consideration of the environmental impacts of reconstruction activities, the Gourma will be heading towards further environmental degradation**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS FOR THE POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

- People do not often consider environmental impacts during a war; neither do they make it a priority during the post conflict reconstruction period.
- For instance, during the 1980-1990s conflicts, new infrastructures (settlements, water boreholes and wells) have been placed on paths used by elephants, not only blocking the route but increasing human impact and degrading resources, as management plans and rights of access were not worked out first.

IN SUMMARY, WE CAN MAKE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION:

The Gourma region is currently subject to natural resources mismanagement and social tensions.

MAIN PROBLEM

All these factors could lead to a social crisis amongst the communities and ethnic groups in Gourma.

People who have joined the armed groups:

- are being rejected by the civil population and wanted by the military.
- where will they go, which attitude will they have, what will be done with their weapons?

These have fled the communities, not daring to return.
What will become of these young men?

TO CONCLUDE...

Social exchange and dialogue should be urgently encouraged amongst communities and ethnic groups to restore a healthy social environment. This will give ground to a socio-economic development of the region and the enable sustainable management of natural resources.

QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TACKLED DURING THE WORKSHOP

1. How can we calm the social pressures amongst communities and ethnic groups in this region?
2. How can we insure the safe return and professional reintegration of the young people who have been committed theft in their community?
3. How can the post-conflict reconstruction effectively:
 - reunite the various communities,
 - facilitate the reintegration of migrants and
 - preserve natural resources of the environment from which people are dependant.
4. Which measures should be taken to reduce environmental impacts during the post-conflict reconstruction?

THANK YOU!