DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

CHALLENGES IN EASTERN CHAD

'States Parties shall seek lasting solutions to the problem of displacement by promoting and creating satisfactory conditions for voluntary return, local integration or relocation on a sustainable basis and in circumstances of safety and dignity.'

Article 11 of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa

SUMMARY

Between 2005 and 2007, a combination of regional conflict (notably in Darfur) and national crisis (insecurity, along with inter-community and political tensions) led to the internal displacement of about 180,000 people in eastern Chad and, in particular, in the regions of Ouaddaï and Sila. The situation has since changed. Today, incursions by the Janjaweed militia and conflict between government forces and Chadian rebels have ended. The Chadian government is now seeking to put an end to the distinction between displaced persons and host communities.[1] Internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently have the choice between three durable solutions: local integration, relocation or voluntary return to their home village.

Our organizations aim to provide assistance to the displaced, returned and host communities in eastern Chad. The goal of this joint report is reflect on the decisive actions that could provide durable solutions for displaced communities, taking into account the rights and needs of the people concerned.

The information contained in this report is based on our permanent presence in Sila and Ouaddaï, as well as numerous interviews held with members of displaced, relocated and repatriated communities (98 individual interviews and 59 group discussions between October and November 2011), authorities and humanitarian aid workers at the various IDPs sites, and host villages and home villages in Sila and Assoungha. Interviews focused on reasons motivating the choices of IDPs (integration, relocation or return), the amount of information and assistance they had received to help them with their choice, living conditions in IDPs sites or home villages (security and means of subsistence), as well as their perception of the government's contribution to providing for conditions that would allow for the successful implementation of more durable solutions.

Even if the causes of the initial displacement have now been contained, creating the right set of circumstances that will ensure that choices for settlement have a truly long-lasting outcome is difficult. Several challenges remain:

- The Chadian government has publicly recognized that it is responsible for setting up an appropriate framework for durable solutions, ensuring security, rule of law, respect for human rights and access to basic services, land and means of subsistence. However, very little has been done by the government to make this a reality. In fact there is hardly any state presence and still little evidence of any significant rehabilitation.

- Crime (made worse by the circulation of arms and general sense of impunity) has had a negative impact on the work of non-government organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations (UN), and has reduced humanitarian access to certain areas, threatening the implementation of programs intended to assist returns.

- Populations claim a lack of protection against crime and inter-community tensions.

- Humanitarian aid lacks coordination, a common overview of the regions concerned, and a common reflection on the needs to be covered and strategies to be adopted.

- The humanitarian community has faced difficulties in understanding and analyzing the details of the current situation, the lingering local and regional tensions, people's intentions and their sources of livelihood. It is thus struggling to set up programmes which meet humanitarian needs and strengthen the resilience of the communities.

- IDPs now have new expectations due to a growing awareness of their civil and economic rights as citizens and an increasingly urban lifestyle. These new aspirations were not anticipated in initial plans.

- Regions affected by internal displacement are faced with immense humanitarian and development needs, but lack funding and local development capacity to meet these needs.

- This report includes detailed recommendations for the Chadian government, UN agencies, donors, and the humanitarian and development community in order to tackle these challenges, including:

- Greater involvement by the Chadian government in developing the region and promoting durable solutions to displacement. The state could be a driving force for this by providing for greater presence of state representatives, increased financing for the Global Recovery Program for eastern Chad (PGRET) and regular reporting on its contributions, and more active guidance for the process on the basis of its priorities.

- Improving security in eastern Chad will be key to enabling humanitarian and development aid workers to meet the needs of the population. Only the state can restore authority and the rule of law by deploying security forces and strengthening the justice system, ensuring that Chad's existing security mechanisms have the means to function effectively.

- Recurring tensions and inter-community disputes must be resolved through consultation with communities, and support to inter-communal dialogues and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as application of legislation on pastoral migration routes.

- Interventions must be better coordinated, with information available for the different areas of the region summarized and mapped (presence of State services, NGOs and movements of the populations) to enable a better common understanding of the context.

METHODOLOGY

The information and data contained in this report come from our permanent presence in Sila and Ouaddaï in eastern Chad, as well as numerous interviews with IDPs, returnees, authorities and humanitarian aid workers in the areas where we are involved.

Our organizations used the same questionnaire to carry out 98 individual interviews and 59 group discussions between October and November 2011 in the following venues:

• In Sila: at the Aradib and Habile sites in Koukou, at the Koloma, Gouroukoune, Koubigou, Gassiré, Ganachour and Sannour sites in Goz Beida, as well as the return villages of Gondji Baka, Djédidé, Djenou, Arangou, Djorlo, Arangou 2, Am Hiteb and Amharaz.

• In Assoungha: at the sites of Arkoum, Alacha, Goundiang and Hilé Déyé, as well as the relocation villages of Borota and Hileket.

• Interviews focused on reasons motivating the choice made by these people to integrate locally, relocate or return to their home villages, the amount of information or assistance they had received in order to make this choice, their living conditions (livelihoods and security) at the sites and home villages, as well as their perception of government involvement in providing for durable solutions.

CONTEXT

Between 2005 and 2007, a combination of regional conflict (notably in Darfur) and national crisis (insecurity, along with inter-community and political tensions) led to the internal displacement of about 180,000 people in eastern Chad.[2] This was in addition to the estimated 250,000 refugees who had already arrived from Sudan since 2003. Ouaddaï and Sila were the regions hardest hit by the incoming wave of IDPs.

The situation has since changed. Today, incursions by the Janjaweed militia and combat between government forces and Chadian rebels have ended. However, humanitarian aid organizations are still negatively affected by insecurity, and parts of the population are still suffering from inter-community tensions and crime. Security varies depending on the place and the season (pastoral migration, incidents linked to certain groups of criminals, etc.). This is made worse by the poverty and the general lawlessness that prevail throughout eastern Chad.

> 'For the time being I am staying at the refuge site but I regularly go back to my home village to cultivate the rain-fed crops, or to visit relatives who are ill or suffering the loss of a loved one.'
>
> Displaced woman wanting to integrate the Goundiang site (Assoungha)

IDPs currently have the choice between three solutions: integration, relocation and return. The main criteria in their decision include: security in their home village, access to land, access to basic services and economic opportunities. Decisions also depend on age, ethnic origin, village of origin, the reason for displacement (following an attack or to avoid an attack), and means of livelihoods in the home village and at the IDPs site. The diversity of criteria makes it difficult to establish categories (by village of origin, for example) and match them with the choices made. Quantifying these choices is also a challenge as humanitarian aid workers do not have reliable data covering the entire region, with a breakdown of persons opting for each of the solutions. The context is also constantly changing. For example, 2011 was a bad crop year, a factor that may also influence the choices of IDPs as to where they will relocate.

> 'I would like make this my home because it is safe, healthy, has drinking water and will allow me to educate my children. My village is unsafe and there are no basic services.'
>
> *Displaced woman originally from Koumou and opting to stay at the Habile site (Sila)*

Some IDPs opt for integration, deciding to settle permanently at the IDP camp or in the nearby vicinity when sites are not big enough to offer land for all those who want it. These new locations later become extended districts of nearby villages, such as Koukou or Goz Beida. People generally make the choice to stay at the sites when their home villages are judged to be unsafe or lacking in basic services that are available in their current location, while cultivating land in surrounding areas (or, in some cases, cultivating their own

land if their home village is nearby – thereby contributing to a 'pendulum return' movement). A large number of IDPs in the Sila region have chosen this option.

Relocation occurs when people choose to settle in larger villages closer to their homeland. This often happens when IDPs deem their home villages too dangerous to return. The new relocation villages enable them to move closer to their homeland while offering them improved security, access to land or to basic services. A lot of IDPs living in Assoungha have chosen this option.

Others decide to return to their home villages if security seems acceptable and they will have access to land there. This return movement (often preceded by pendulum returns) first began on a voluntary basis in 2008 and increased during 2010 and 2011.

Integration and relocation are often chosen due to a lack of other options. Most IDPs would prefer to return to their home villages if security, access to infrastructure and basic services were guaranteed.

In 2011, the Chadian government announced its intention to 'provide the conditions necessary for the integration or reintegration of IDPs and make 2011 the year of voluntary return.'[3] It also promised to 'ensure durable returns,' adding that 'durability will depend on the capacity of the Government, with the assistance of international partners, to guarantee the safety of areas of return, rule of law, respect for human rights and access to basic services, land and means of subsistence'.[4] The above assertion correctly identifies the needs of populations in eastern Chad, as well as the conditions to be created for these needs to be effectively and sustainably met. However, several challenges must be overcome in order to achieve this.

Our organizations provide assistance to displaced, returned, relocated and host communities in eastern Chad. The objective of this report is to promote collective thinking and decisive action on durable solutions, guided by the needs and rights of these communities.

'We are grouped together in this village so that we can benefit from social services: being grouped means that our children can go to school and receive healthcare, along with their mothers. NGOs only get involved in areas where there is a high concentration of people and we are used to receiving NGO services. We therefore do not want to return to our home villages. The military presence in this village also reassures us.'

Heads of different villages regrouped and relocated in Borota (Assoungha)

ROLE OF THE STATE

The primary responsibility of national governments to provide a suitable framework for durable solutions to the question of IDPs is recognized by numerous instruments, including the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention, ratified by Chad in July 2011) and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.[5]

Of the three possible solutions detailed in the previous section, the Chadian government has stated its preference for returns and has publicly recognized its responsibility to provide the conditions for durable returns, including by ensuring security and the rule of law, access to basic services, and means of livelihood. This must be driven by the state through extending its presence in the area, pushing the process forward at local and national levels, designating its priorities and funding them. However, the political discourse has not yet led to any significant actions.

To date, the government has set up two state institutions with a mandate for IDPs: CONSAHDIS (*Coordination Nationale de Soutien aux Activités Humanitaires et au Détachement Intégré de Sécurité* /National Coordination of Humanitarian Activities and Integrated Security Deployment) and the CNARR (*Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Réinsertion des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés* /Chad National Refugee Authority).

Unfortunately, these institutions do not have the resources to effectively fulfil their mandates and meet expectations. CONSAHDIS is supposed to supervise the Integrated Security Deployment (DIS) and oversee projects in favour of the return and/or relocation of IDPs and host populations,[6] as well as manage the refuge sites.[7] However, it only has one representative based in the east (in Abéché) and is thus unable to execute its mandate.[8] By the same token, the CNARR is intended to manage refugees, coordinate assistance to IDPs and maintain a census, but it too is understaffed.[9] In Sila, the CNARR only has one representative in Goz Beida and three in Koukou. It is therefore only able to carry out periodic assignments in return villages and refuge sites where continual presence and action is ideally needed.

The Global Recovery Program for eastern Chad (PGRET), developed with the support of partners including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), was officially approved in September 2010. The PGRET aims to provide for the needs of IDPs and host communities in areas of return,[10] with human and financial resources provided by the government.[11] The PGRET is a strong and positive sign by the Chadian government that it intends to improve the living conditions of its citizens, to ensure that returns are sustainable and to start a process that will enable citizens to benefit from their fundamental rights in the long run. However, more than a year after the adoption of the PGRET, the government has still not followed up on its promise to strengthen security, justice, health and education services.[12]

> 'I heard that the government was going to help people who want to return to their villages, but up until now, they have done nothing.'
>
> *Displaced man in Habile who wants to integrate the IDP site*

The lack of state representatives in the region is an obstacle for donors and NGOs working in development. UN agencies and NGOs, which should ideally be intervening in support of state action, find themselves having to choose between inaction and substituting for the state (for example, by providing assistance that should be the state's responsibility, such as healthcare).

Most people questioned for this report about the PGRET claimed never to have received any information about the program (only 15 of the 98 people interviewed individually had heard of it). People living in Koukou claimed to expect nothing from the government and they had limited faith in its promises. This lack of trust in the government's capacity and intention to protect people and their possessions and to deploy state services is a major obstacle to permanent returns.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO AREAS OF RETURN

The nature of insecurity has changed since the initial waves of displacement that took place in eastern Chad. Incursions by Janjaweed militia and combat between government forces and Chadian rebels have now ceased. Criminality remains a major threat, made worse by the free flow of arms,[13] a general state of lawlessness and a climate of impunity. NGOs and the UN are regularly targeted by criminals, both in urban and in more isolated areas. These security incidents are sporadic and local, often the result of criminal gangs who operate in a certain area for a limited time. Their frequency and unpredictable nature have made humanitarian and development aid organizations hesitate before getting involved in areas of return or setting up programmes intended to assist with more permanent returns.

In 2010, the Chadian government requested that the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) withdraw and committed itself to providing for the safety and protection of humanitarian aid workers and the populations living in eastern Chad. The government has since instituted a 'security belt' in the east. This has three levels and makes use of the National Chadian Army, the joint Chadian-Sudanese force, the National Police Force (*Gendarmerie*), the Chadian National Guard and Mobile Forces, and the DIS.[14] The BSM (*Bureaux de Sécurisation des Mouvements*/Bureau for Security and Movement) are responsible for coordinating security activities between the different areas.[15]

However, several factors limit the capacity of this mechanism to effectively secure the region. The DIS was weakened by the withdrawal of MINURCAT before it was fully independent and operational.[16] To counter this, the UNDP and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) set up a joint program to support the DIS and strengthen the capacity of the CONSAHDIS to manage human resources, training, follow-up of programmes, strategy, and budgetary planning.[17] However, this initiative has not been as effective as intended, due to a lack of funding.[18] The government has renewed the DIS initiative for 2012, but future support by the international community for this mechanism is currently under discussion.[19] In the future, international support for the DIS may be reduced,[20] or the DIS may disappear altogether and parts of it may be integrated into the police force and national *gendarmerie*.

The BSM should be providing an analysis of security developments in the area and deciding on measures to be taken, but it is limited to managing escorts due to the failure of those with the required authority and skills to attend meetings (as well as a misunderstanding of humanitarian principles and the role of the BSM).[21] Domestic security forces are also having a hard time providing for public safety.[22] Further drawbacks for securing the region include problems with the judicial system in Chad, old and outdated facilities, lack of training for magistrates and prison staff, low implementation rate of court decisions, and a culture of impunity.[23]

Attacks on the humanitarian community in the Sila region generally increased between 2010 and 2011:[24] the number of hold-ups and carjackings remained the same (five), while the number of armed robberies increased (four in 2010

compared to eight in 2011). The nature of the crimes committed also varied according to the season: carjackings and movement-related incidents tended to take place during the first part of the year, while there were more burglaries during the second half of the year (mainly August and September) when movement is more restricted due to the rainy season. Incidents continued to primarily target NGOs.

Given the context, humanitarian aid workers have tried to adapt their working methods in different ways to maintain access to populations in unsafe circumstances. However, the strategies adopted all have their limitations. In Sila, for example, some NGOs use escorts provided by the DIS to go to areas of return. However, as the DIS has little material and human resources, the escorts are not regular and sometimes end up being cancelled, making it difficult to provide regular assistance. Other NGOs that work without escorts make use of motorbikes to get around the problem of vehicle theft and attacks, but this bars them from any activities requiring heavy materials (such as drilling). Others have chosen to work 'remotely', lessening the impact of the assistance provided. It is also difficult to plan long-term assignments in the more far-off villages.[25] International humanitarian NGOs have even withdrawn from certain border areas in Sila (Dogdoré and Adé) due to the lack of security. The safety issue hinders the transition towards development, as development work requires a certain freedom of movement and a safe working environment.

Effective security in the region will be a key element (if not a pre-condition) in order to be able to meet the needs of the people and ensure the implementation of solutions with long-lasting effect. However, security is part of the Chadian government's sovereign responsibility and so there needs to be a political will to end the problem of displacement, starting with the immediate securing of the region (including border districts and areas of return). This should be treated as a priority, as it is by the PGRET.[26]

PERCEPTIONS OF INSECURITY AND INTER-COMMUNITY TENSIONS

'If the government provided for security in my village, I would go back.'

Displaced woman originally from Triaya, living at the Gouroukoun site (Sila)

Inter-community tensions and violent crimes, made worse by the free circulation of arms and a general climate of impunity, are currently major concerns for the communities affected by displacement.

People's perceptions of security must be considered in light of the trauma suffered during displacement and in light of the possibility that threat levels may be exaggerated for self-interested reasons. Those having opted for integration or relocation often have a more negative view of the security in their home village than those having chosen to return. Security also varies depending on time and place. These various factors, as well as a lack of reliable and detailed statistics on crimes affecting civil populations and inter-community conflicts throughout the region, make for a difficult analysis of the security context. However, the communities working with our organizations and the people questioned for this report clearly expressed a need for protection against inter-community tensions and criminality.

IDPs who have chosen to live at the sites or to relocate mention insecurity in their home villages as one of the main reasons for not going back on a permanent basis. These communities have often lost their animals and possessions during their displacement and would no longer be capable of resuming their pastoral activities. They also fear that if they return to their villages to participate in agricultural activities, they would once again be exposed to community tensions (often between the farmers and animal breeders). When men and women fled their villages at different points during the violence, they subsequently had varying perceptions about security. For example, in Assoungha, the women interviewed said that they had suffered more violence than the men who fled before the attacks. The women were therefore more reticent to return to their home villages. The security measures deployed are not always adapted to the threats perceived by the population; military forces are not always mandated to respond to animal theft or damages to crops by animals, but there are no local police to deal with these problems.[27]

'Some of us lost our fields in the villages once we left to go to the refuge sites, other communities took them over and now refuse to give them back. Some plant crops but then the breeders bring their animals.'

Woman originally from the village of Arkoum, relocated to Hile Ket (Assoungha)

In Sila, the security in villages closer to the border with Sudan is different to that in other villages, such as in Ouadi Habile and Habile Ouara where many more incidents have been recorded.[28] In these areas, returnees claimed that tensions still remain between farmers and animal breeders especially during pastoral migration, when wandering animals can damage fields. In certain areas, community relations may be hindered by nomads from other areas, who are not a part of the local dispute resolution mechanisms. Several people questioned also spoke of petty crime, mainly taking place on the main roads linking the towns (Goz Beida, Koukou, Abéché and Kerfi) and at the weekly markets. This affects merchants, especially women, and as a result impacts on household purchasing power and on the economy of entire villages, as small businesses and markets are often the only source of revenue. This type of crime continues because there are not enough security guards and guard posts to cover the area. People interviewed expressed their strong hope that the government would provide greater security.

The government and traditional authorities have taken some positive action. People originally from Mafakata, now living at the Aradib site, have mentioned that the Chadian Mobile National Guard (GNNT) in Aradib has given its telephone number to the farmers in the villages and surrounding areas so that they can call if there is conflict with animal breeders. In Hadjer Hadid, the sub-prefect has made efforts to prevent conflict between farmers and animal breeders by encouraging the farmers to harvest their crops as soon as they are ready, to avoid damage caused by wandering animals. Two reconciliation mechanisms have also been set up in Sila: the committee for reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation, created by order of the governor,[29] and the joint committee for the cohabitation of farmers and animal breeders.[30] In Ouadi Habile, the chief of the township is looking to strengthen the social ties between the Arabs of the *ferricks* and the IDPs through the joint reconstruction of shelters for the displaced.[31]

However, the historic influence of traditional authorities in dispute resolution has been undermined by the proliferation of arms (communities tend to resort to arms rather than negotiate), the loss of social cohesion following displacement, pervasive cronyism and corruption.[32] There are no other mechanisms to compensate for this. State structures for the prosecution of criminals are either lacking or ineffective in eastern Chad.

Any solution to the displacement may only be durable if physical security (i.e. the absence of threats to the physical integrity of people) and legal security (i.e. the presence of protective measures and respect for human rights) can be assured and people are protected against the threats which caused the displacement in the first place and which may trigger further displacements.[33] A large part of the population currently considers itself to be unprotected from the violence that is caused (sporadic incidents in certain areas) or may be caused (fear of renewed conflict) by inter-community tensions.

> 'The government needs to help settle conflicts in a friendly manner. It needs to mark out corridors for pastoral migration.'
> *Male returnee in Arangou 2 (Sila)*

COORDINATION

A lack of coordination between the government, international agencies and NGOs in interventions aimed at supporting the return or local integration of IDPs currently hinders the creation of conditions for a durable outcome.

At several IDP sites in Sila, coordination waned once the agreement between the UNHCR and site-managing organizations (the World Lutheran Federation (FLM) in Habile and Aradib and Concern Worldwide in Goz Beida) came to an end in December 2010. The CONSAHDIS, mandated by the government to manage the sites,[34] has not been able to fulfil this role as it has no representative in Abéché. The CNARR has tried to fill this role, but it has neither the mandate (from the Chadian government or the UNHCR) nor the resources. In Koukou, the CNARR only has one person to manage the sites whereas the FLM had seven employees for the same task. In Goz Beida, there is only one CNARR representative who is unable to manage the refugee camps and six IDP sites at the same time. As a result, information (such as demographic data) is nonexistent and coordination meetings that were once held on a weekly basis are now held irregularly by the UNHCR.[35]

In areas of return where humanitarian and development aid organizations are present, coordination is weak or nonexistent. Even though mapping exists for the presence of humanitarian aid workers at IDPs sites and refugee camps (albeit sometimes inaccurate), there is no mapping for their presence in areas of return. Efforts made by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the early recovery cluster to map the various actors and their activities have proved unsuccessful due to a lack of response from operational personnel and a lack of follow-up by OCHA and cluster leads. As some areas of return are linked to different bases, work is sometimes duplicated (such as protection in the villages of Tiero and Marena),[36] while other villages remain neglected (such as Dogdoré and Am Dam). There is also no mapping of the state presence (administrative authorities, health, social, animal breeding officials, etc.). The information available for these areas through studies and missions are not compiled or analyzed, though such a synthesis could promote a shared understanding and knowledge of the context with all its nuances.

This is partly due to the lack of an effective forum for the coordination of programs and strategies. The early recovery cluster, instituted in Chad to provide for an 'integrated, coordinated and appropriate response for the return, reintegration and improvement of living conditions for IDPs, returnees and host communities',[37] functions in N'Djamena, Goz Beida and Abéché. However, a lack of leadership and commitment by stakeholders (government, UN, NGO and financial backers) to cluster activities limits its usefulness.[38] Other relevant clusters, such as the protection cluster in N'Djaména, are not inclusive enough, while poor consultation and a lack of involvement from cluster members results in very little ownership of the strategies. In Assoungha, consultation meetings between humanitarian aid workers and authorities, as well as inter-agency meetings in Adre or Hadjer Hadid serve as a means to exchange information but do not lead to many decisions or much concrete action.

More dynamic initiatives, such as the working group on returns in Koukou, which bring together members of NGOs and the UN, focus on concrete issues and provide real added value in terms of the coordination of interventions and discussion of issues. However, their contribution remains limited to coverage of a small geographic area.

What is generally lacking is an effective overview of all the regions concerned, with a mapping of needs, of the actors involved and their activities in the different areas, as well as a joint reflection on needs still to be covered, challenges to be overcome and strategies to be adopted. Taken together, these shortcomings prevent any effective response.

ADAPTING INTERVENTIONS TO AN EVER-CHANGING CONTEXT

It is difficult for the humanitarian community to understand and analyze the current context, particularly continuing tensions, people's intentions, factors that influence choices as well as survival mechanisms of the different communities (IDP, returnee, relocated and host). This makes it difficult to set up suitable programmes which meet humanitarian needs, strengthen the resilience of the communities and favour more durable livelihoods.

A lack of reliable data on the real number of returnees and their type of return (pendulum or permanent) is typical and reveals the lack of detailed information available on the current context. Figures provided by the UNHCR on returnees in 2010 and potential returnees in 2011[39] are a mere approximation intended to facilitate planning and budget allocation. Several obstacles make it difficult to know the exact number of IDPs who have returned or been relocated, including: doubts on the accuracy of initial figures (which prevent any reliable comparison), limited access to certain areas due to insecurity, a lack of resources, spontaneous departures from the sites (making tracking difficult), pendulum returns (some people may be accounted for several times over), households divided between sites and home villages, or the manipulation of figures by village chiefs when collecting and handing over the data. This lack of precision makes it difficult to organize assistance in an effective manner, both at the sites and in villages where IDPs have returned.

This also makes it complicated to ensure that actions intended to accompany returns are truly adapted to the wishes and development of the various communities (host, IDP, relocated and returnee), that they are sustainable and that they will not make the communities even more vulnerable.

There are several issues linked to the 'Do No Harm' approach:[40]

- Should operational players be pro-active and anticipate returns or should they rather be reactive so as not to influence the decisions of IDPs?

- How can one be sure that providing aid in areas of return where the causes of displacement have not been resolved will not make these people more vulnerable? This has to be considered, as aid may influence the choices made by these people and attract them back to certain areas (creating a pull factor). Furthermore, if these areas are insecure it will be difficult to follow up with those who return, in terms of their needs, their relations with the host community, and any further threats (such as reviving the psychological trauma suffered during displacement).

- How will aid impact the recomposition of the area?

In this complicated context, humanitarian actors need to to avoid undertaking ad hoc activities developed outside the strategies and approaches agreed with all the other stakeholders involved. For example, the UNHCR worked in line

with the government's wish to promote returns; it organized several convoys to transport IDPs from Koukou to their home villages and publicized this step.[41] This assistance took place outside any coordinated strategic approach,[42] raising questions as to how useful it was and whether it may have given rise to unintended negative effects. It was carried out in places where returns were already taking place without assistance between the sites and the home villages.[43] It also stopped during the rainy season, after having transported only a limited number of those who wanted to return, while others with the same intention had to remain at the IDP sites without any information as to when the service would resume. Some of the people who had signed up for the convoy said they were waiting for the service to start up again, even though they could perhaps have decided to return to their villages without any transport assistance.

Furthermore, given the limited data available on the resilience of returning communities and their capacity to recover, it is also complicated to come up with exit strategies for humanitarian workers and to identify links between the relief, rehabilitation and development phases (known as LRRD). For example, which income generating activities should be developed? How does one make the switch from free basic services (which the communities are used to receiving at the IDPs sites) to a cost-recovery system?

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

IDPs have the right to receive information and be consulted about whether to return, integrate locally or relocate, and to participate in the process of finding sustainable solutions.[44] Useful information for Ensuring that they are able to make a free and informed choice means providing them with details of the situation at their home village, what possible alternative options available, and the consequences of these options.

At the various IDP sites where interviews were conducted, the communities generally described receiving information about their home village via their families, from other IDPs from the same village who went back to cultivate the land, or from traders. They had not received 'formal' information on possible options for durable solutions (for example via an awareness campaign or meetings with the authorities). However, they generally knew the following: that the government wanted to end assistance at the sites; that they could voluntarily opt for integration, return or relocation (although some of the IDPs in Assoungha believed that the end of assistance at the sites would mean their closing); that assistance with transport would be provided. Unfortunately, they didn't always understand the implications of these choices. The main sources of information mentioned were the UNHCR (especially in Koukou) and the NGOs (especially in Goz Beida) directly or via village chiefs. The government was not mentioned as a source of information. Heads of villages had better information than other persons interviewed, which indicated that community leaders do not share all the information. The women interviewed also tended to be less well-informed than the men. All persons questioned wanted to receive more information, mostly from their village chiefs.

The drafting of the PGRET was based on several field assessments,[45] which should have included consultation with the people concerned to a certain extent. The PGRET anticipates that the people participate in and even contribute to its implementation;[46] however, out of the 98 people interviewed, only 15 had heard about the programme. The high-level mission planned for May 2011 to consult and get beneficiaries involved[47] never took place. The visit by the Special Representative of the President and CONSAHDIS Coordinator in eastern Chad in November 2011 focused on security issues, with the PGRET not mentioned in the mission report.[48]

The aid provided over the years has led to a culture where some people are now accustomed to receiving assistance. Communities' will or capacity to contribute to their own development has been reduced.[49] Humanitarian and development aid workers have noticed that some communities are reluctant to get involved in programmes aimed at making them independent and requiring them to take on a certain degree of responsibility. This makes it even more challenging to ensure ownership, accountability and sustainability of aid programmes.

CHANGING LIFESTYLES AND ASPIRATIONS

NEW EXPECTATIONS

The displacements themselves and life at the sites have changed the outlook and the lifestyles for a lot of IDPs: many lost their livelihoods during the crisis (in Sila, most were breeders but lost their animals); they have become used to living in sites with a high population density, resulting in a phenomenon of urbanization; and many would like to carry on benefiting from the better conditions that they have experienced at the sites.

Their needs, in terms of basic infrastructure and services (such as water, health and education), as well as security and access to jobs, are similar to most of the people living in Chad. However, unlike those living in other underprivileged regions of Chad, the IDPs have become aware of their human rights (both civic and economic) following their stay at the sites and through contact with the host populations, refugees and humanitarian aid workers. This growing awareness has given rise to new expectations regarding their living conditions and protection, and influences their choices. It requires a greater presence of state services and appropriate mechanisms for dialogue between the communities.

URBANIZATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF URBAN LIFESTYLES

The government has chosen a two-step approach for the implementation of durable solutions: the first step entails encouraging the return of a maximum number of people to their home villages or nearby locations before the second step of assisting with the local integration of people who have chosen not to return.[50] However, levels of integration and relocation have been much greater than planned, giving rise to a phenomenon of urbanization that was not anticipated. This has taken place on a large-scale in places like Sila, where there has been integration at sites surrounding Koukou and Goz Beida, and Assoungha.

The government has undertaken some initiatives to facilitate integration. Plots of land in Aradib were allocated to 4,000 people following a request by IDPs to the CNARR and UNHCR. Land allocation was later reviewed and plots reallocated in order to provide bigger plots to households. As a result, 164 families have been reallocated plots further away from watering points.

In Habile and sites around Goz Beida, authorities are currently preparing new plot allocations. In Habile, according to UNHCR and CNARR records, between 3,800 and 5,000 families[51] have opted for integration, unfortunately there are only 600 plots of land available (which should be marked by early

2012). Discussions are underway to provide solutions for those families who won't receive plots,[52] though the criteria for plot allocation have not yet been identified. In Goz Beida, those wanting to integrate have asked the authorities to officially recognize the current plot where they are living as belonging to them and over the next few months a formal urbanization plan will be implemented resulting in the allocation of plots to IDPs.[53] In Assoungha, the government has also distributed plots of land (smaller than originally planned due to a lack space) for relocated populations at the relocation sites of Borota and Hileket.

Such high levels of integration raise questions about the consequences for host towns. Villages, such as Koukou, Goz Beida, Borota and Hileket, have been transformed into urban concentrations despite a lack of suitable infrastructure. This increase in the population has weighed heavily on the towns and host populations, reducing access of host communities to land (the sites have often been set up on land that was previously used for crop growing). It has also given rise to tensions due to the sharing of resources, such as water in Borota and Hileket, and environmental problems linked notably to the use of heating wood. A positive consequence, however, has been the impact on the economy, as many new markets have started to appear in the area.

FINANCING THE TRANSITION

Regions affected by internal displacement often suffer from general poverty and have huge humanitarian and development needs, like a lot of the other regions in Chad. Getting funding to cover these needs and move forward with development, thereby making return, integration or relocation more durable, remains a major challenge.

Development donors are not (or are only very slightly) involved in the area. The early recovery sector of the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) did not receive any funding for 2011.[54] Current funding mechanisms make a distinction between humanitarian relief aid and more long-term development endeavours, with no room for the NGOs to envisage and develop projects for transition.[55] The PGRET is currently the main framework for the discussion of funding for early recovery activities. It is a three-year program (2011–2013) with an estimated value of $91.5m. The Chadian government has committed to contribute $27.5m and donors are expected to provide $59.5m.[56] But, as the government did not involve donors in the elaboration of the programme and has not made any financial contributions to date, donors are not involved in the programme and have not contributed to it. The round-table discussion announced in December 2010 by the Ministry of Economy and Planning to review the resources never took place. The government's contribution in 2011 in implementing the PGRET will influence the willingness of partners and donors to support this programme in 2012.

CONCLUSION

IDPs have begun to adapt themselves and choose between integration, relocation and return. However, the situation in eastern Chad remains volatile: insecurity persists with high levels of crime and inter-community tensions, while a bad agricultural season may cause many to flock back from villages to IDP sites. Several challenges need to be overcome in order to implement solutions that are both effective and durable. These include: the lack of decisive action by the state; the insecurity for humanitarian aid workers and populations in areas of return; a lack of coordinated intervention; a limited understanding of the context and its changes; the emergence of new expectations from communities; the handling of growing urban development; and a lack of funding for transitional stages. In the absence of well-planned, concerted and decisive action by the government, UN agencies, donors and the humanitarian and development community, efforts to implement durable solutions will remain sporadic and localized and the transient period between relief and development will continue.

Responsibility for the successful implementation of durable solutions lies largely with the Chadian government. After indicating a firm political will to create the conditions needed for the integration, return or relocation of IDPs, the government now has to commit fully to creating these conditions by dealing with the underlying causes of the conflict, restoring the rule of law, providing for public services and instituting effective security measures.

UN agencies, donors and the humanitarian and development aid community must actively support these efforts by remaining informed and intervening in a suitable and coordinated way, taking into account the wishes and needs of the communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Greater involvement by the Chadian government in developing the region and instituting durable solutions

- The CNARR and CONSAHDIS should have more representatives in the east so that their mandates can be effectively fulfilled.[57]

- Regular reports should be submitted by local authorities and ministries in charge of executing the PGRET[58] on progress and difficulties encountered in their work, at the request of the Ministry of Economy and Planning and the CONSAHDIS.

- A person should be appointed by the Ministry of the Economy and the Plan and/or the CONSAHDIS to participate in all discussion forums on durable solutions and to follow up on decisions with relevant ministries.[59]

- The ministries concerned should map the presence of health and education authorities in the region.

- The UN, along with humanitarian and development aid workers, should encourage the government to take on its responsibilities and ensure effective involvement in their interventions. This should include deciding whether to continue with certain clusters or replace them with sectoral coordination headed by the government.

2. Improvement of security in eastern Chad

- The government should implement the provisions of the PGRET related to restoring security, protection, the rule of law, and the authority of the state.[60]

- Resources should be provided by the Chadian government and the international community to the CONSAHDIS (staff and capacity for handling human resources, training, follow-up of budgets, strategic planning and programmes), so that it can effectively support the BSM and DIS as long as they are in place.

- The CONSAHDIS, Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Defence should decide on how the DIS is to continue, in order to ensure that all that is achieved by the DIS is not lost (in terms of trained personnel, for example) and to keep up the level of protection provided to people.[61]

- In discussions with the Chadian government, donors should insist on the importance of securing the region, in order to allow for the implementation and durability of financed projects.

3. Promotion of inter-community dispute resolution

- Communities (host, IDP, integrated and returnee), and in particular women members, should be consulted on a regular basis by local authorities and local representatives of the Ministries of Land Administration, Defense, Interior and Public Safety, and the CONSAHDIS in order to understand their protection needs.

- The CONSAHDIS and the Ministries of Land Administration, Defence, Interior and Public Safety, as well as local authorities, should provide support for inter-community dialogue and traditional inter-community dispute resolution mechanisms, based on the needs identified by the communities concerned (for example, in the form of transport, training, equipment and community liaison officers).

- Farmers and animal breeders should be made aware of the need to respect pastoral migration routes, which should be recorded, marked out or introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture, where their absence is a source of conflict.

- The UN and development and humanitarian aid workers should ensure that disputes between communities and other points of contention are taken into account in all strategies and interventions, in order to appease tensions, ensure long-term stability and prevent new outbreaks of violence.

4. Increased community involvement

- Local authorities and representatives of CONSAHDIS and CNARR should regularly consult with IDPs, returnees, relocated and host populations regarding their needs and perceptions in relation to durable solutions.

- Local authorities and representatives of CONSAHDIS and CNARR should regularly communicate with IDPs, returnees, and relocated and host populations regarding government action in relation to durable solutions.

- Women should participate in the consultation and communication mechanisms.

5. Improvement of the coordination of interventions and understanding of the context

- OCHA and/or cluster leads should summarize the information available for the different areas of the region and actively share these analyses, in order to contribute to a better common understanding of the needs of the populations.

- Cluster leads should revive cluster activities by strengthening their leadership, making sure that all contributions by participants are taken into account, in order to encourage their participation in implementing the decisions taken, and reinforcing inter-cluster activities so as to provide effective forums for common reflection.

- The UNHCR should map out relocation and return movements.

- OCHA and/or cluster leads should revive efforts to map the presence of NGOs and their activities in areas of return in order to improve operational coordination. A combination of all maps indicating the presence of the State, NGOs, services available in the villages, as well as relocation and return movements will provide for a better understanding of movements as a whole.

6. Provision of appropriate financing for transition

- Financial, material and human resources need to be contributed by the government to the PGRET.

- The government should submit a public report on its contributions in order to stimulate more funding for the programme.

- Donors should set up flexible mechanisms enabling funding for the transition between relief aid and more long-term development efforts.

NOTES

1 Speech by the Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Chad to MINURCAT, forum for dialogue between government and humanitarian representatives, Hadjer Hadid, November 2010.

2 For more information about the causes and conditions of displacement in Sila, see Intersos (2011) 'Chad: Assessment of the movements and living conditions of people in the Sila Region, Kimiti, April 2011'

3 Joint press release, 'High-Level Meeting on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons in East Chad,' 2 March 2011.

4 Invitation to the High-Level Meeting on Durable Solutions 1 March 2011, dated 25 February 2011, p 3.

5 Principle 28.1: 'Competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish conditions, as well as provide the means, which allow IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity to their homes or places of habitual residence or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country.'

6 It is also responsible for the supervision and guidance of programmes in the east, placed under the responsibility of the CONSAHDIS, for a 'dispute discussion, prevention and resolution mechanism' programme and for participation in a monitoring system in charge of recording the return movements of IDPs (Order 3409/PR/2010 of the Presidency of the Republic of 21 December 2010). This Order was recently replaced by Order 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/RS/2012 (of 3 January 2012), but the prerogatives of the CONSAHDIS remain the same.

7 Interview with CNARR representatives in Koukou and Goz Beida, October 2011.

8 Interviews with NGOs and CNARR representatives in Koukou and Goz Beida, October 2011. Order 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/RS/2012 of 3 January 2012 provides for the creation of regional delegations and sub-delegations of the CONSAHDIS in Abéché, Goz Beida, Farchana/Hadjer Hadid, Haraze, Goré and Maro.

9 Decree 839/PR/PM/MAT/2011 of the Presidency of the Republic, 2 August 2011.

10 The PGRET has four main missions: 'To contribute to the restoration of state authority, security, protection and to improve governance, respect for the rule of law and social cohesion; to create conditions that will improve the lives of those affected by providing for the delivery of effective basic social services: health, education, water, sanitation, hygiene and housing; to strengthen and develop socio-economic activities that will give rise to self-sufficient communities, create jobs and generate revenues for those affected by the conflicts and displacement; to ensure the integration of people and the environment into socio-economic recovery initiatives and the strategy adopted for the area covered by the programme,' PGRET document, September 2010.

11 The estimated cost of the PGRET is $91.5m for three years (2011–2013). The Chadian government has committed to contribute $27.5m.

12 Interviews with government, UN and NGO representatives.

13 Growth strategy and poverty reduction document.

14 The withdrawal of MINURCAT became effective as of 31 December 2010. The security belt includes: the national Chadian Army (ANT) at the first level, stationed in garrison towns along the Chad-Sudan border, as well as combined Chadian-Sudanese forces stationed along the same border; the second level is comprised of the National Police Force (*Gendarmerie*), the National Guard and Chadian Mobile Forces (GNNT) stationed in major towns beyond the border between the area where the DIS operates and the garrison towns; the third level includes the DIS stationed in and around the refugee camps, the IDP sites and in the towns, working in conjunction with local security forces, such as the National Police Force. The DIS currently includes 1,000 men and women from the National Police Force and *gendarmerie* whose mission peacekeeping and upholding the law in refugee camps, IDP sites and main towns of the neighbouring regions, as well as to help ensure the safety of humanitarian aid workers (DIS sustainability plan and Decree 1131/PR/08).

15 The mission of the BSM is to oversee the safety of humanitarian aid workers and their possessions within a security area, to decide on methods for their movement and on personal and material security measures adapted to changes in security conditions (Governmental Order 005).

16 Interviews with UN and government representatives.

17 Joint DIS Support Programme document.

18 Joint DIS Support Programme steering committee meeting, 23 November 2011.

19 The Joint Support Programme has been renewed for 2012 by a decision of the steering committee. Discussions are currently underway to revise the work plan, finalize the budget and find further funding.

20 The DIS is a special force with a mandate linked to the presence of refugees and IDPs. It has benefited from significant support from the international community since its inception.

21 Interviews with UN representatives.

22 Action sheet of the Project for the Reform of Chad's Internal Security Forces (PAFSI).

23 Action sheet of the Project for the Reform of Chad's Internal Security Forces (PAFSI) and Chad's Judicial System (PRAJUST).

24 According to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). These figures concern area 'SLA 5', i.e. Goz Beida/Goz Amir, Koukou and Dogdoré.

25 Interviews with NGOs.

26 'Essential institutions such as the police, gendarmerie and judiciary need to be reinforced in order to provide for better security and the protection of local populations and humanitarian aid workers,' Global Recovery Program for Eastern Chad, September 2010, p 22.

27 The people interviewed at Borota deplored the fact that the military forces present were unable to respond to these threats, even though similar events were at the source of the violence in 2005.

28 In the border townships, people have a more positive perception of inter-community relations.

29 This committee applies traditional dispute resolution laws and involves the communities.

30 This committee is supported by the NGO EIRENE (http://www.eirene.org/english). It includes traditional chiefs but not the communities.

31 Interview with a CNARR representative, October 2011.

32 Interviews with communities and NGOs.

33 Framework for durable solutions.

34 Interviews with CNARR and UN representatives, October 2011.

35 Interviews with CNARR, NGOs and UN representatives, October 2011.

36 Report from the working group meeting on the return to Koukou on Wednesday 21 September 2011.

37 Among other things, it aims to institute a framework for coordination and consultation with the government, UN agencies, local and international NGOs, donors and civil society to discuss policies and practices for return, reintegration and early recovery, as well as to ensure the coordination and harmonization of interventions by partners on the basis of mandates and the expertise of cluster members. Terms of reference for the early recovery cluster in Chad, version 2.

38 Meetings with NGOs, October–December 2011.

39 In February 2011, the UNHCR announced that following the return of 50,000 persons to their home villages (or other relocation villages) during 2010, the number of IDPs had been assessed at 131,000. The UNHCR estimated that 50,000 more would return during 2011. These figures were revised at a later date estimating the number of IDPs at 125,000 and the number of returns at 56,000 as of 31 August 2011.

40 The concept of Do No Harm takes the potential impact of relief or development projects into consideration by seeking to understand the potential effects of programming decisions and institutional policies on a particular context, in order that organizations can conduct their activities in the least harmful way. For more information see: http://www.donoharm.info/content/conflict/concept.php

41 UNHCR (2011) 'Displaced Chadians rush home before rain', http://www.unhcr.org/4decd7176.html

42 According to the UNHCR representative Stefano Severe.

43 Interviews with NGOs, Koukou, October 2011.

44 Articles 9(1)(k) and 11(2) of the African Union Convention for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa; Principle 28 of the Guiding Principles for Internally Displaced Persons.

45 Global Recovery Programme for Eastern Chad, September 2010.

46 The PGRET provides for a significant contribution by the beneficiaries: over three years it is intended that they contribute 3 billion CFA, that is $4.6m of the total $91.5m (5.02 per cent).

47 Terms of reference for the high-level field mission (23–25 May 2011), 6 May 2011.

48 Assessment report on security in humanitarian areas a year after the departure of MINURCAT, No 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/MSN/11, 20 November 2011.

49 Interviews with NGOs.

50 Interviews with government representatives, October–December 2011.

51 3,826 households according to the UNHCR, 5,000 families according to the CNARR in Koukou.

52 Interviews with local authorities, Koukou, October 2011.

53 Interviews with local authorities, Goz Beida, October 2011.

[54] Other projects linked to early recovery were financed via other sectors.

[55] Only the European Union has stated that humanitarian aid funding (Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection – ECHO) may be followed by development funding by the European Commission, which provides both an exit strategy for ECHO and also enables the NGOs to develop long-term vision and projects.

[56] The PGRET provides for a significant contribution by the beneficiaries: over three years it is intended that they contribute 3 billion CFA: that is $4.6m of the total $91.5m (5.02 per cent).

[57] Order 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/RS/2012 of 3 January 2012 provides for the creation of a regional delegation and sub-delegations of the CONSAHDIS in Abéché, Goz Beida, Farchana/Hadjer Hadid, Haraze, Goré and Maro.

[58] Ministries of Public Safety, Justice, Defence, Land Administration, Promotion of Freedom and Human Rights, Water, Health, National Education, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, Employment, Water and Environmental Resources and Social Action,

[59] Order 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/RS/2012 of 3 January 2012 provides for the creation of a humanitarian affairs department to attend all humanitarian cluster meetings.

[60] Follow-up indicators for the implementation of the PGRET include the number of police brigades and national guards currently in place, the number of magistrates, judges, court clerks and judicial police officers currently in service, the updating of a judicial map for eastern Chad, the number of courts, justice houses and detention facilities built and operational, the number of light weapons recovered by the security and defence forces, the number of traditional leaders who have been trained in dispute settlement and the number of legal aid officers available for consultation.

[61] Order 001/PR/CONSAHDIS/RS/2012 of 3 January 2012 anticipates that the Strategic Planning Department will come up with 'projections for the future and the outcome of the CONSAHDIS and DIS'.
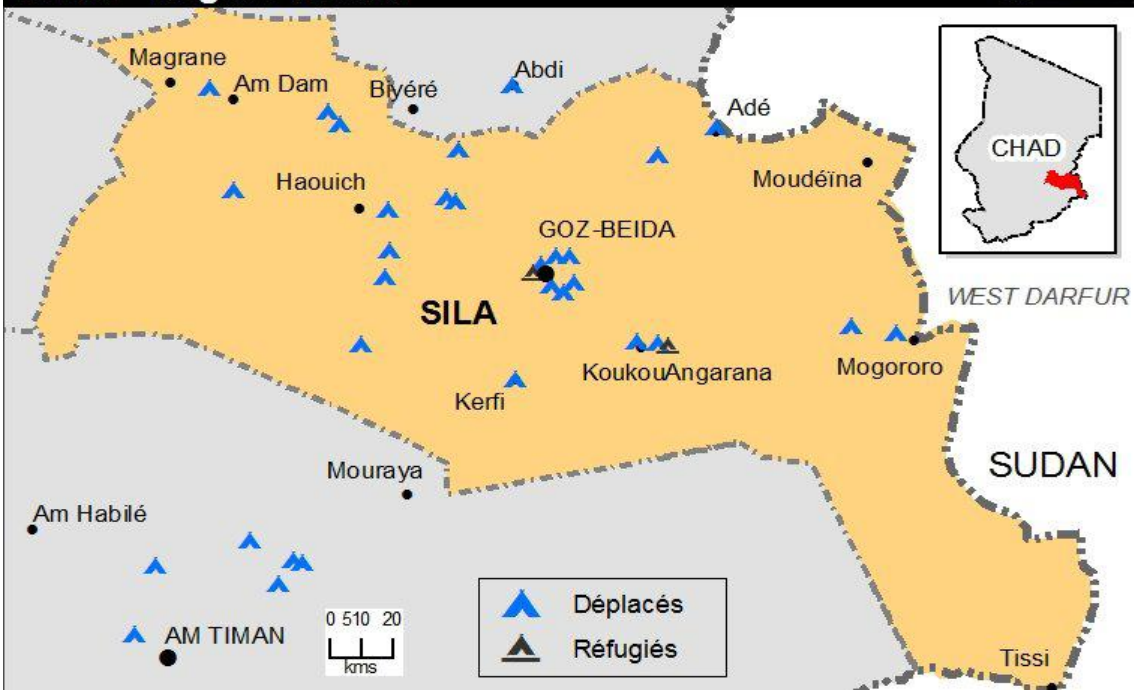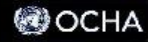
APPENDIX

Tchad, Région du Ouaddai – Ouaddai region, Chad

Camp de réfugié – Refugee camp

Site des déplacés – IDP site

Cheflieu de region – Regional capital

Tchad, Région du Sila – Sila Region, Chad
Déplacés – IDPs
Réfugiés – Refugees

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