



IDPs in eastern Chad: is it time to go back home?

'There is no place like home and we want to go back where we grew up. But as long as there is no security, we will stay in sites. Our greatest wish is to go back to our home villages.'

* An old man displaced in the site of Habilé, eastern Chad, February 2009.

1. Summary

More than two years after massive displacements in eastern Chad, approximately 165,000 Chadians are still living in sites for the internally displaced. They were forced to flee their homes as a result of inter-ethnic clashes and targeted violence. They are still highly dependant on humanitarian assistance. One in five of the local population in eastern Chad is internally displaced.

The Chadian state has not been able to adequately protect civilians and to address the climate of banditry and impunity that permeates in eastern Chad. Therefore, the United Nations has devised a three-pronged mission to support the Government of Chad in its primary responsibilities to protect civilians and to provide humanitarian assistance. The European Union military component, EUFOR, was handed over to the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) in March 2009. However, despite the fact that it has contributed to making many civilians feel safer, it has been ill-suited to secure the area properly, and has failed to address banditry and criminality.

Driven by the lack of access to land, food, and income-generating activities on sites, some of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) have decided to return home. However they have done so in very unstable conditions and without the required support from traditional leaders, needed to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts.

Overall returnees are still in a minority, and most of the IDPs fear going back home. Traumatized by the violence of forced displacement, and having witnessed family members being shot and their homes burnt, security is of primary concern for IDPs. The ongoing insecurity in eastern Chad and the loss of IDPs' land (through occupation by others), are major obstacles for sustainable returns.

The ongoing conflict in Darfur, inter-communal violence, the wide-spread proliferation of small arms, and increased banditry are issues that need to be addressed in order to create the conditions for stable and voluntary returns. Land management and cohabitation in villages and sites have become major issues in an environment where inter-communal tensions are exacerbated by the scarcity of resources.

The Government of Chad and some donors have demonstrated a clear willingness to start the returns process in the best possible conditions. But conditions for returns are

still highly precarious and it is important that actors do not prematurely pressure returns for political objectives, as this could provoke further violence. Numbers of returnees must not be used as the main measure of success for the MINURCAT mission, as it creates an unhelpful dynamic and a pressure for governments and UN to encourage returns before the conditions for safe return exist.

2. Introduction

The series of crises which have forced 250,000 Sudanese and 180,000 Chadians to leave their villages in search of safety, are deeply-rooted in a variety of inextricably linked factors. The crisis in Chad cannot be understood as simply an overflow from Darfur, yet the two crises are closely related situations.

Since 2003, the security situation in eastern Chad has deteriorated at an alarming rate due to repeated cross-border incursions of Janjaweed militias, rebel military offensives, and inter-ethnic conflicts. About 170,000 Chadians were displaced during violent inter-ethnic clashes between November 2006 and March 2007 and about 10,000 were displaced due to natural disasters. This resulted in an exacerbation of the humanitarian situation. The Chadian State was not able to respond to the IDPs' immediate assistance needs, and so called on the UN agencies for support.

In September 2007, the international community took a stand in eastern Chad: the UN devised a three-pronged mission consisting of a UN component, MINURCAT, a Chadian police/gendarme force, the *Détachement Intégré de Sécurité* (DIS), and a military component, EUFOR, aimed at supporting the Chadian government to 'create security conditions conducive to a voluntary, secure and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons [...] by contributing to the protection of refugees, displaced persons and civilians in danger'¹. EUFOR has been present on the ground for a year and has contributed towards making many civilians feel safer through its deterrent activities, for example patrolling, destroying unexploded ordnance, and positioning themselves around camps and sites during rebel and government fighting. But EUFOR is a military force and not a police force, and therefore is inherently ill-suited to dealing with banditry and criminality. The civil component of MINURCAT has been designed to address impunity and to establish rule of law by supporting the Government of Chad and the DIS. However as of 31 March 2009, only 670 out of a total of 850 DIS elements were fully deployed.²

The overall security situation for civilians remains far from stable. The State has a weak presence in the area and conflicts for scarce resources are increasingly resolved through weapons rather than through traditional conflict resolution and payment of the 'dia'³. Furthermore, on the military side, in January 2009, eight of the main rebel groups joined forces as the Union des Forces de la Résistance (UFR) under the leadership of Timan Erdemi. Their declared objective is to launch a new offensive from their base in Sudan, in order to seize power.

¹ Oxfam International (September 2008) 'Eastern Chad: Mission incomplete'.

² About two years after the creation of MINURCAT, the 850 DIS are almost fully deployed in refugee camps and IDP sites. Both the UN and the Chadian Government share responsibility for the delays due to lasting negotiations on the establishment of the list of gendarmes and police officers trained by the UN to join the DIS; moreover, the governmental decree that authorises the DIS to deploy in eastern Chad was only signed on the 26 September 2008, by the President of Chad. Logistical impediments (for example, construction and rehabilitation of police stations) have also caused major delays in DIS deployment in its operational zones.

³ The Muslim concept of 'dia' involves a payment to the family of a murder victim or victim of a crime based on the decision of local leaders.

From 2007 onwards, it has been noted that a number of IDPs have in fact already moved back to their regions of origin. This movement has taken a pendulum-like form in zones where the land was cultivated. This is particularly noticeable where the land is accessible and close to the sites, or where it is protected by natural boundaries during the rainy season⁴. Beneficiaries also noted that food distributions in IDP sites were irregular and inadequate, not to be relied upon as the sole source of sustenance⁵. Permanent returns have been identified mainly in areas far from the border and sporadically in villages close to the border, where security is still highly volatile.

Returns data remain unstable, fluctuating according to the level of insecurity, land access, and inter-communal relations. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in 2008 that about 40,000 IDPs had returned home. However this figure was later retracted and the returns recognised as 'seasonal' returns as well as some returns from earlier displacement due to drought in the area of Am Dam⁶.

It is understandable, that on a basic level, voluntary returns to areas of improved conditions will be an indicator of an improved situation. An international mission entered Chad with an explicit objective of creating the conditions for return of IDPs, and throughout the deployment of the mission, politicians have claimed that large-scale return is in progress. In March 2009, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Kouchner, used returns to justify EUFOR performance as the largest ever EU military mission in Africa.⁷ The 1861 resolution on Chad/CAR, voted for by the UN Security Council on 14 January 2009, stipulates that returns will be considered by MINURCAT as an exit strategy. Using returns as the main indicator of performance however, places undue pressure on both returns as a whole and on MINURCAT. Furthermore this wording and directive has nurtured an existing concern among NGOs that some actors may be tempted to hasten returns for political reasons.

In an attempt to alleviate the congestion of IDP sites around Goz Beida and Koukou and to relocate IDPs in areas where the State can provide security, the Governor of Dar Sila has recently announced a controversial programme of 'Villagisation' as a long-term solution for people living in the sites. Concerns have been expressed that IDPs themselves have not been consulted and resettlement in artificially created villages may not be entirely voluntary. Through this initiative, the Government of Chad recognises its primary responsibility to protect and support the welfare of IDPs. But IDPs must be protected against forcible return or resettlement in any place where their life, safety, liberty or health would be at risk, according to the Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement. The reconstruction phase is a critical period and issues around security, land ownership, and access to natural resources (water, land, wood) need to be resolved prior to any resettlement.

⁴ URD (2008) 'Report On The Humanitarian Situation In Eastern Chad', URD: France.

⁵ In Goz Beida and Koukou, the World Food Program (WFP) stopped food distributions in IDP sites from September 2008 to March 2009. WFP distributed two months of rations in July 2008, and in November 2008, a month's ration to Gassiré and Kerfi IDP sites, identified as vulnerable areas by WFP. NGOs warned that this breakdown in food distribution could cause severe food insecurity in IDP households with limited access to land, and could provoke a rise in malnutrition (ref. NGOs' letter to WFP in Chad, September 2008).

⁶ OCHA (October 2008) 'Summary IDP protection strategy, East Chad 2009', OCHA: New York.

⁷ Interview given by Bernard Kouchner, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, to the 'Le Figaro' newspaper: 'On our initiative, Europe has succeeded in bringing security to Eastern Chad. Thanks to the 3,000 Eufor troops (coming from 17 European countries) a quarter of the displaced persons have been able to go home and the attacks by Janjaweed Arab militia against the Darfur refugees have stopped.', 9 March 2009.

This report is based on interviews with focus groups and leaders carried out over three weeks in early February 2009 in the four IDP sites of Habilé, Aradib, Gouroukoun, and Gassiré.

3. Forced to flee

'The situation was getting worse and worse. First of all, some armed men came and took our crops. After that, they came and took our cattle, they attacked and robbed us in the market, and then, one day, a big group attacked the village. The attack began at 3.00 am and we left around midday. The attackers were Janjaweed.'

* Woman displaced in Gassiré site, eastern Chad, February 2009.

The first wave of Chadian displacements happened around the end of 2005 when a combination of attacks by Janjaweed-like mounted raiders from Sudan, Chadian rebels, and Chadian ethnic militias (both Arab and non-Arab) occurred in the region of Ouaddai (south of the Abéche-Adré road in the Dar Assoungha). The African ethnic groups – namely the Dadjo, the Mobeh, the Massalits, and the Kajaks, targeted by these attacks – were displaced from their villages located along the eastern border of Chad.

In 2006 and 2007, inter-communal relations deteriorated dramatically, with dozens of villages looted and burned, leaving civilian areas in the region of Dar Sila depopulated and overflowing with IDPs. 95 per cent of the Chadian IDPs are located in Dar Sila,⁸ sheltering in 14 sites in the vicinity of three major humanitarian hubs, Goz Beida, Koukou, and Dogdoré.

4. Temporary or permanent returns?

'Some people from our site have gone back, but mainly to work on crops and they later came back. They say there are still armed people around'

* Women displaced in Habilé site, eastern Chad, February 2009.

4.1 Oscillating returns data

Several studies assessing return areas show discrepancies in the numbers of returns reported. The actual numbers of returnees are difficult to measure due to the complexity of returnees' movements. Data collected on numbers of returns needs to be updated frequently in order to get the most accurate picture possible.

In November 2008, based on the profiling exercise carried out by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and its implementing partners in Dar Sila and Ouaddai, OCHA reported that since the beginning of the crisis, about 40,000 IDPs managed to return to their villages of origin or settle in new locations (Louboutigue, Borota, Goungour, Abdi, and Haouich). However, this number was later retracted and OCHA acknowledged that these returns were often only temporary or from earlier displacement (e.g. Haouich) due to drought in the area of Am Dam.⁹

In March 2009, the latest figures provided by OCHA based on UNHCR data, report that about 27,000 IDPs returned to their home areas, including the districts of Assoungha (11,827),¹⁰ Koukou (4,281),¹¹ Goz Beida (1,929), Kerfi (8,192 permanent returnees

⁸ UNHCR – UNFPA (November 2008) 'Enquête auprès des personnes déplacées internes à l'est du Tchad'

⁹ OCHA (2008) 'Summary IDP protection strategy, East Chad 2009', OCHA: New York.

¹⁰ OCHA (2008) 'Résultats provisoires de dénombrement zone retour l'Assoungha', OCHA: New York.

¹¹ OCHA (2008) 'Chiffres provisoires de dénombrement villages retour de Koukou', OCHA: New York.

after drought in the area of Am Dam), and Modeina (786 households).¹² But these figures are not completely up-to-date, and agreed numbers do vary: for example, the study carried out by the NGO InterSOS in the same area (Ouadi Khadja, area of Modeina), shows that the data provided by OCHA are higher and that about only 500 households have returned temporarily and permanently from Sudan and surrounding areas.¹³

4.2 Return areas and underlying causes of returns

The concentration of people and the overexploitation of land around camps and sites have motivated some households to return temporarily and permanently to their home villages. Returnees' movements are mainly driven by a secure environment, planting and harvest seasons, and commercial opportunities. According to the IDPs interviewed, returnees also go back and forth to sites to benefit from the humanitarian assistance there, and to receive irregular food distribution.

Permanent returns have been identified, especially in areas far from the border and with easy access to humanitarian hubs (Kerfi, Goz Beida, and Koukou). One such village is Louboutigue in Dar Sila, where assistance, security (through the nearby presence of national forces and traditional leaders), and land management have been coordinated to ensure services and safety for returnees.

Louboutigue

Louboutigue is a village in Dar Sila, some 60km southeast from the main town, Goz Beida. From March 2008 onwards, approximately 389 families (3,280 persons) have returned to Louboutigue by their own means. They have mainly come from the IDPs' site of Habilé near Koukou, and small number from the IDPs' site of Koloma, near Goz Beida. Several NGOs are involved in rehabilitation projects in Louboutigue, for example the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) which focuses on water and sanitation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which focuses on health, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), which focuses on education, International Relief and Development (IRD), which focuses on food distribution, and UN agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNHCR, and WFP. The main reasons given for returning home, by the returnees, are that they feel better at home, combined with the lack of space and limited access to arable land available at the IDPs' sites¹⁴.

The area is secured due to the proximity of the humanitarian hubs of Koukou, Goz Beida, and Kerfi, the fact that the areas are far from the border, and the presence of Chadian gendarmes and the intermittent patrolling of MINURCAT.¹⁵

However many of the return areas do not benefit from such ideal conditions. In villages close to the border (Borota, Adé, Modeina, and the general area around Ouadi Khadja), there are fewer permanent returns. Some of the returnee households start to rebuild their houses and barns or to store their crops but the situation is still highly volatile: returns mainly correlate with the sporadic movements of the National Army

¹² OCHA (February 2009) 'Statistiques provisoires des populations retournées dans le Dar Sila', OCHA: New York.

¹³ UNHCR – InterSOS (January 2009), 'Mission d'évaluation returnees monitoring. Canton Ouadi Khadja'. <http://websig-tchad.intersos.org>

¹⁴ OCHA (2008) 'Briefing note on Louboutigue', OCHA: New York.

¹⁵ OCHA (April 2009) 'Rapport de mission à Louboutigue', OCHA: New York.

(ANT) and are motivated primarily by seasonal and commercial opportunities, and land access.

The returnees' households are vulnerable and are usually headed by single mothers. Men have left the households to work in main towns or even in Sudan, or for enrolment and recruitment into the ANT or other armed groups. For those who venture back home, they are hosted by the local population (e.g. Assounga) and are therefore difficult to locate and assess.

In many cases, the returns take place in precarious conditions, without the needed support from the traditional authorities to resolve inter-communal tensions around land occupation. For example Sila and Assounga, the lands abandoned by Dadjo and Massalits two years ago, are now occupied by Ouaddaians and Mimi. There is also the issue of the identification of transhumance trails¹⁶, and returns also often take place without the protection of national military and administrative authorities to ensure safety.

5. Why most of the IDPs do not go back?

'Many of us have tried to return to the villages but they came back in sites because armed men are still around and there is no protection. There are many weapons out there; hidden by men on camels and horses. We are afraid to be attacked if we go back to the village.'

* Woman displaced in Aradib IDP site, eastern Chad, February 2009.

5.1 Insecurity

According to the groups surveyed in the four IDP sites of Habilé, Aradip, Gouroukoun, and Gassiré, insecurity is the main obstacle mentioned by IDPs to not going back to their villages of origin. Banditry is a major threat for civilians: small groups or individuals, heavily armed, occupy abandoned areas and take advantage of the absence of the national authorities to circulate and operate in total impunity, attacking those willing to go back to their fields.

The Chadian State does not have the capacity to provide protection in such a vast territory, and by focusing on the border to prevent rebel incursions; the Chadian forces have left many areas with no protection.

EUFOR mandate and resources were not adapted to all areas of concern and to prevent isolated individuals or small groups of armed bandits from assaulting traders, women, farmers, and NGOs. As of 31 March 2009, only 2,100 out of a total of 4,900 MINURCAT soldiers were effectively deployed in eastern Chad. Very little returns areas benefit from intermittent patrols and remote villages close to the border are not secured by deterrent patrolling. With the same mandate and a crucial lack of equipment for covering a wider area, MINURCAT could fall into the same weakness that EUFOR had.

5.2 Inter-communal tensions

'We are afraid to go back because the "Arabs" are there and armed. Our land is now where their cattle graze'

* Woman in Gouroukoun IDP site, eastern Chad, February 2009.

¹⁶ Transfer of livestock from one grazing ground to another with the changing of seasons.

Local conflict resolution mechanisms were traditionally used to address tensions between nomads and agriculturalists around scarce resources. Increasingly these have disintegrated,¹⁷ and conflicts are now resolved with Kalashnikovs. A vast area of eastern Chad has become a no-man's land where self defence and the use of weapons rule.

The proliferation of arms leads in some areas to armed conflict resolution, which can result in lethal consequences. For example, in November 2008, violent disputes erupted between Tama and Zaghawa around cattle stealing in Birak (north-eastern Chad, a few kilometres from the Sudan border), which resulted in more than 50 civilian deaths and many injured. Houses were burnt and more than 700 families were forced to flee their homes towards the highly insecure border area.¹⁸ In July 2008, unprecedented violence in the Kerfi IDP sites between Moros and Dadjos resulted in the death of at least one man and injuries to several people, forcing humanitarian organisations to pull out of Kerfi due to the danger, and to rethink their operational strategies.

There is none, or very little dialogue between communities, and therefore there is the potential for a violent upsurge in conflicts between communities, if there are no conflict resolution mechanisms set up to facilitate long-term returns.

5.3 Lack of basic services

Humanitarian assistance, brought by NGOs and UN agencies, provides basic needs in terms of water, health, food, and education. Such basic services were already noticeably lacking in villages of origin and are now only available in IDP sites. Many IDPs interviewed mentioned the lack of basic services in the villages of origin as an obstacle to long-term returns. They now want to get the same level of assistance in their villages of origin, as is provided in sites.

The role of NGOs is to provide life-sustaining basic services when they are not readily available. Humanitarian aid in eastern Chad has indeed become, in some areas, a 'pull factor' – camps and sites with minimum conditions (clean water, sanitation, primary health care, basic education) attract and keep people – this is accentuated by the State's inability to provide such services. Therefore, the Government of Chad must take its responsibility to provide life-saving services in villages of origin, in order that NGOs can create safe havens at IDP sites, that do not invite permanence. This will then support IDPs to voluntarily return to their home villages. It should be also noted that, in the long-term, some of the IDPs may also remain displaced permanently and that the current areas of displacement will need long-term attention from NGOs.

The lack of consistent information about the security situation in villages of origin discourages IDPs to return; many of the villages have been abandoned and burned down. In the recent survey by UNHCR and UNFPA, only 30 per cent of the people assessed knew about the security situation in areas of origin.¹⁹ Therefore, the main sources of information are rumours shared in the markets and from those who venture out, to return on a temporary basis. The regional authorities, supported by

¹⁷ Local conflict resolution systems include negotiations between Chiefs under the auspices of the local Sultan and in case of murder, the payment of the 'Dia'. The Chadian government also regulates transhumance, pasture, and arable lands through a nomad administration. However, these mechanisms have been disrupted by the consecutive crises, massive displacements, and exacerbation of local tensions.

¹⁸ HCR (2008) 'Rapport d'évaluation à Birak : Mission inter agences du 16 au 18 novembre 2008'.

¹⁹ UNHCR – UNFPA (November 2008) 'Enquête auprès des personnes déplacées internes à l'est du Tchad'.

humanitarian organisations, should provide accurate security information to IDPs about the return areas in order for them to make an informed decision about their return.

6. Return projects

'We know that everybody is talking about returns now. But returns are conditioned by security. If there is no security, we will not return.'

* Male leader in Gouroukoun IDP site, eastern Chad, February 2009.

6.1 The Government of Chad: 'Villagisation'

There are more than 100 villages in Dar Sila. Many of these villages are far from the main towns with limited access to road, and therefore the regional authorities recognise that they have limited capacity to guarantee security and basic services across the region.

In an attempt to provide protection and relieve pressure on natural resources around Goz Beida, the Government of Chad, through the initiative of the Governor of Dar Sila, has proposed the 'Villagisation' project as a long-term solution for the displaced people in the area. The project plans to resettle IDPs coming from the most remote areas in new villages established closer to main towns, where the State can guarantee their security and have easier access in order to provide basic services. The Government of Chad acknowledged its lack of technical capacity in providing assistance for resettlement, for example water, health, and education, and has requested that NGO's assist with the technical provision of these services.

The project will start in four pilot villages: Kerfi, Arangu, Koukou, and Louboutigue. The Government of Chad is willing to support agricultural and income generating activities by providing land to the resettled population and returnees, and by rebuilding road access to these four sites.

The project however, has not yet been discussed with the IDPs, and is planned to start in June 2009 at the beginning of the planting season. There is concern among the humanitarian community that the national authorities will accelerate the returns process, resulting in an inadequately planned and haphazardly executed project, in terms of infrastructure and land management. Moreover, inter-communal dialogue must be strongly promoted by national and traditional authorities. The area identified by the Government of Chad (Ouadi Bahr Azoum) to pilot the 'Villagisation' project is inhabited by Arabs groups. IDPs themselves, and humanitarian and development organisations, must be fully involved at every stage of the project to ensure that all resettlement is voluntary, sustainable, and takes place in the best possible conditions.

6.2 Donors: Programme d'Accompagnement à la Stabilisation à l'Est du Tchad (PAS)

With the deployment of EUFOR and MINURCAT, a national coordination mechanism to support the International Force (CONAFIT, Coordonation Nationale d'Appui au déploiement de la Force Internationale à l'Est du Tchad) was created by the President of Chad, in November 2007. The CONAFIT is tasked, *inter alia*, to organise the aid and assistance of the international community for reconstruction and development in the east of Chad. When it takes place, this could constitute a major contribution to preparing the ground for the returns of IDPs and to ensure sustainability of returns. However, at the end of 2008, the CONAFIT had only just started to deploy liaison officers in a few locations in the east of the country.

The European Commission (EC), in close collaboration with the CONAFIT, will identify and fund projects to support and promote returns in home areas. About 10 million euro will be allocated to stabilise and resettle IDPs in villages of origin, rehabilitate public infrastructures, and restore the rule of law. These projects will be set up mainly in Dar Sila and Assoungha Provinces in eastern Chad, implemented by some of the development and humanitarian NGOs operating in the area. The projects already identified will support activities such as water-sanitation, road construction, health, inter-communal dialogue, and justice²⁰.

However, many NGOs refused to participate in these projects as the omni-presence and the involvement of the CONAFIT in identification and implementation of the projects could endanger and diminish their independence. The CONAFIT civil component is not yet operational and its close affiliation with the military component could blur the lines between military and humanitarian operations.

There is a contradiction between the donors' willingness to start rehabilitation, and development programmes and the ongoing security situation in eastern Chad: the State has a weak presence in the area and cannot ensure security to civilians and to humanitarian and development organisations. Insecurity is widespread, already reducing humanitarian access to deliver life saving aid.

7. Conclusions

Despite the efforts of the Government of Chad and the international community to secure the area, eastern Chad is still highly precarious and unstable. Threats have changed since the beginning of the crisis in 2003; bandits are more than ever threatening civilians on a daily basis, acting in total impunity. The lack of national authorities in some areas, the proliferation of small-arms, and the growing inter-communal tensions have brought a strong feeling of insecurity for civilians.

The latest profiling exercises, carried out by the UNHCR and its implementing partners in the regions of Sila and in Assoungha, have shown that a fluctuating number of IDPs have started to return to their home villages, in pendulum-like form, motivated by seasonal movements or the preservation of their fields. However, some of these returns have become permanent, mainly in villages far from the border which is a highly volatile area where security depends on the sporadic presence of the State.

Sustainable security in villages of origin determines voluntary returns, much more so than the level of assistance provided. As long as there is no long-term security, IDPs will not return home permanently and all actors operating in eastern Chad must understand this dynamic in order to ensure returns happen under the best possible conditions.

The UN mission in Chad, MINURCAT, must play a key role by protecting civilians and supporting the Government of Chad in its efforts to establish the rule of law and justice. MINURCAT and the national authorities must also support traditional leaders in the promotion of inter-communal dialogue in areas of returns where the growing tensions over scarce resources between nomads and agriculturalists have not been addressed.

IDPs are already temporarily and permanently returning to some home villages, but insecurity remains widespread in most of eastern Chad, and limits voluntary and sustainable returns. Therefore, the Government of Chad, the EC, the United Nations, and donors should be cautious not to promote projects that could accelerate returns in

²⁰ Cadres stratégiques et opérationnels du PAS

bad conditions. Moreover, numbers of returnees must not be dictated by political imperatives and justify the performance of missions, especially MINURCAT. Benchmarks such as a strengthened judicial system, amount of crimes investigated and resolved; and decrease of banditry should be used as main indicators of performances.

8. Recommendations:

The Government of Chad:

- The Government of Chad, with the support of the international community, has the main responsibility to protect its citizens and to put an end to the climate of banditry and impunity that permeates eastern Chad.
- Disarming armed groups and individuals in eastern Chad. The proliferation of small-arms inside and outside IDP sites needs to be addressed, through coordinated and voluntary disarmament programs, implemented by the Government of Chad with the support of the international community.
- The Government of Chad and traditional authorities, with the support of MINURCAT, must facilitate inter-communal dialogue in an impartial way in order to resolve the current tensions with Chadians in the East and re-establish traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.
- IDPs' decisions should not be influenced through projects that are implemented in safe areas without prior consultation with IDPs. A permanent forum should be constituted with all stakeholders, on which IDPs should be duly represented, and the wider NGO community systematically consulted on projects before they start to check relevance, safety of the environment, and respect for the UN Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement.

MINURCAT:

- MINURCAT must expedite its rule of law section by supporting the Chadian Government to develop its judicial system (through nomad courts in return villages) as delays could have negative impacts on civilian protection; without the presence of the administrative authorities and an effective judicial system, civilians will not feel permanently safe, and bandits will remain free to attack civilians.
- If returns are to be safe and sustainable, a clear strategy and close collaboration between a wide range of national authorities and humanitarian and development actors is needed. Likewise, all actors on the ground must adhere to the UN Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement, and must ensure that all return is voluntary. The UN agencies and MINURCAT must assist the Government of Chad to develop a national return and reintegration framework and to adopt national legislation on IDPs consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- Numbers of returnees must not be used to justify the performances of MINURCAT at the time of its evaluation. Returns must be supported wherever they take place but must not be used as the only indicator of success for the MINURCAT mission, as it creates an unhelpful dynamic and a pressure for governments and UN to encourage returns before the conditions for safe return exist.

The International Community:

- The European Commission must ensure that projects for returns only take place in areas where security conditions are such that sustainable return is possible, and must ensure that in the funding of such return projects, the EC is not developing a false impression of security, or incentives for return of populations to insecure areas. Donors should play an active role in forum for returns.
- All actors involved in the returns project, especially the EC and France, must monitor closely their cooperation with the CONAFIT when identifying and implementing projects, and must ensure that the independence of implementing partners is fully respected.
- The root causes of the conflict need to be addressed to create the best possible conditions for voluntary and sustainable return. The International Community, particularly those present and with a significant influence in Chad (France, the EU as the broker of the 13 August agreement, the AU, USA, China, and Libya), must support an inclusive and transparent dialogue between all parties involved in the conflict, including Government, opposition parties, armed groups, traditional leaders in the East, and civil society seeking to reach a long term solution by peaceful means. This process must address grievances from all parties, and must also address issues relating to inter-ethnic violence, the mismanagement of natural resources, political representation, and democratic reform.

Oxfam International is a confederation of thirteen organizations working together in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice: Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam-in-Belgium, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam France - Agir ici, Oxfam Germany, Oxfam GB, Oxfam Hong Kong, Intermón Oxfam (Spain), Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam New Zealand, Oxfam Novib (Netherlands), and Oxfam Québec. Please call or write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org.

Action contre la Faim is a non-governmental, non-political, non-religious, non-profit organisation. It was established in France in 1979 to deliver aid in countries throughout the world. The aim of Action against Hunger is to save lives by combating hunger and diseases that threaten the lives of vulnerable children, women, and men. The goal of all Action contre la Faim programmes is to enable beneficiaries to regain their autonomy and self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. While carrying out its activities, Action contre la Faim respects the 6 key principles of independence, neutrality, non-discrimination, free and direct access to victims, professionalism, and transparency. For further information, visit www.actioncontrelafaim.org.

CARE is one of the world's largest private international humanitarian organizations, which mission is to serve individuals and families in the poorest communities in the world, through emergency relief and development programs. CARE aims to improve basic education, prevent the spread of HIV, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity and protect natural resources. Working in nearly 70 countries CARE is reaching over 55 million beneficiaries each year. CARE places special focus on working alongside women as they are the first victims of poverty. For further information, visit <http://www.care.org>.

Cordaid is a Dutch development organisation with a network of almost a thousand partner organisations in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America. Cordaid's counterpart organisations work on various themes, including health care, quality of urban life, access to markets and peace and conflict. Annually 170 million euros is spent on initiatives in the South. Of that, over 30 million euros is available for emergency aid. A small part of the budget is spent in the Netherlands on lobby, public support and consciousness-raising. For further information, visit www.cordaid.nl.