



Central Mali Project for Security and Development  
Perception survey conducted from 25 October to 8 November 2021

# Governance, development and security in the regions of Bandiagara, Douentza, Mopti, San and Ségou

//// Report of the field survey



SIPRI and POINT SUD  
Financed by the European Union



CENTRAL MALI PROJECT

# Methodology

Within the framework of a project financed by the European Union (EU) delegation in Mali, SIPRI and its partner, POINT SUD, conducted perception surveys among a representative sample of 1800 households from the regions of central Mali.

Since 2019, data has been collected every three months in 15 cercles, 60 municipalities and 120 villages by a network of 30 facilitators. The ninth survey was carried out from 25 October to 8 November 2021.



## Education

**58%** of the sample is illiterate and **20%** has reached primary school level, 1st cycle. **58%** of respondents have been being educated at primary school and **24%** at Koranic school.

## Employment/trades

**57%** of the sample is made up of farmers/market gardeners, **20%** of housekeepers and **8%** of tradespeople.

# Survey localities

/// Source: Décentralisation/cartographie du Mali [Decentralization of Mali/Cartography of Mali], compiled by O. Dembélé, Technical coordinator, Point Sud, 5 Oct. 2021



# Governance

The survey coincided with the deployment of new authorities in the regions—prefects and sub-prefects—following appointments made by the Council of Ministers on 8 September 2021.

## Presence of agents and institutions

The presence of state authorities and state representatives varies depending on the security situation.

- Mayors, prefects and sub-prefects are generally present but some are forced to reside outside of their place of duty, particularly in the cercles of Mopti, Bankass and Tenenkou.
- All the authorities of the cercle of Youwarou reside in Mopti.
- Education and health agents are generally present.

## Level of satisfaction

The greater the insecurity, the greater the dissatisfaction with state representatives and the stronger people's feeling of abandonment—especially in the cercles of Djenné, Mopti, Niono and Tenenkou.

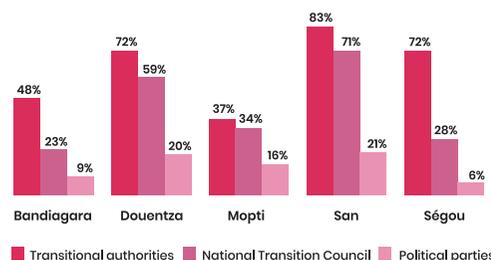
Traditional and customary authorities, village/ neighbourhood chiefs and religious leaders see to the day-to-day management of the communities.

## Level of trust

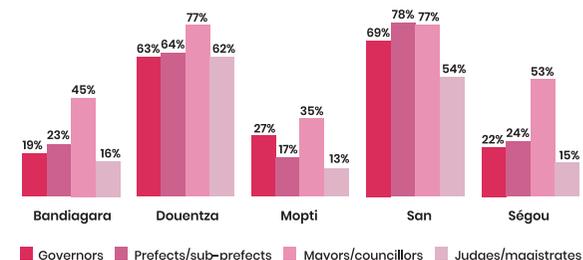


## Level of confidence in transitional authorities is generally high (57%)

Trust in political institutions



Trust in local authorities



## Access to services



- Satisfaction with provision of services is generally high, except for provision of electricity.
- In rural areas, most services are available within a day's travel.
- Access to services is worst in the cercles of Bankass, Douentza and Niono.
- There have been protests in Mopti demanding the resignation of the Director General of Electricity (EDM).

The cities have better access to services, but in rural areas the lack of security means that agents frequent these areas less and less, especially in the cercles of Koro and Tenenkou. In order of importance, these were the services to which the populations have the greatest access: health centres, water points, the village/neighbourhood chieftaincy, the primary school and the town hall. Only 11% of respondents say they have been asked to pay tax in the last three months.

## Justice

57% think the customary system is the most impartial.

29% think the religious system is the most impartial.

11% think the state system is the most impartial.

Justice may also be administered by the dozos (self-defence groups of hunters) or non-state armed groups.



In the event of minor conflict, serious crime or conflict concerning natural resources, populations turn first to the local/village chief and the traditional authorities.

# Development

Faced with insufficient harvests, food insecurity is a concern for the populations, and the price of food supplies has increased.

## Economic activities



**74%**  
of household  
incomes come  
from **agriculture**

**7%** from **livestock farming**  
**3%** from **fishing**  
**3%** from **craftsmanship**

### // Agriculture

**88%** of the surveyed households practice agriculture, including both those living in rural areas (**93%**) and urban areas (**66%**). Production is 'partially' (**59%**) or 'not at all' sufficient to cover families' needs.

### // Livestock farming

The vast majority of households (**79%**) keep animals, both in rural areas (**83%**) and urban areas (**78%**).

#### // Main problem affecting agriculture



Green: Climate  
Yellow: Lack of farm inputs  
Light Blue: The three reasons above in equal measure  
Red: Insecurity, conflict

#### // Main problem affecting livestock farming



Blue: Lack of access to food  
Yellow: Repeated theft of livestock  
Red: Insecurity, lack of access to food  
Light Blue: Theft, conflict, access to water/fields, climate

## // Fishing

**Fish products are used primarily to feed the family (59%).**

Lack of fish is a major problem, leading to price increases.

Fishing is an activity that is tightly controlled by jihadists, who impose fishing hours in certain localities and prohibit fishing in certain areas, especially those close to their bases.

## // Commerce

**Trade continues but it is more difficult in cercles where there is the least security (Bankass, Douentza, Koro, Niono and Baraouéli). Lack of security is the main obstacle (47%) followed by the poor state of the roads (31%).**



// Access to the market



// Difficulty, main obstacle

**79%** of households state that their main source of income has been affected by insecurity, even more so in urban areas (**97%**) than in rural areas (**75%**). The prices of the following products are among those that increased the most between June and October 2021: oil (**+85%**), sugar (**+27%**), rice (**+21%**).



## Social activities

Baptisms, weddings, funerals and collective harvesting activities continue, but the number of people attending is limited, and gatherings are prohibited in some areas under the control of jihadist groups.

Faced with a lack of economic opportunities, young men go to work in the gold mines in Mali and in the sub-region and return for the harvest season.

### Signing of non-aggression pacts

The signing of pacts between communities, or between communities and armed groups, is to the detriment of the state. The pacts' stipulations are not always respected and the localities that refuse to sign suffer retaliatory measures. Non-state armed groups directly threaten the cercles that host the most internally displaced people.



// Trust in members of my family



// Trust in members of my community



// Trust in members of other communities



## Education (8-18 years) and health

Nearly half of respondents say they send 'some of their children' to school (**49%**) compared to **15%** who say they send them all to school and **11%** who send none of them to school. **The same proportion of girls and boys attend school. The children continue to get vaccinated.** In case of illness, people go first to the local health centre (CSCOM), both in rural and urban areas, or to the clinic. The poor state of the roads is mentioned as an obstacle to accessing health care.

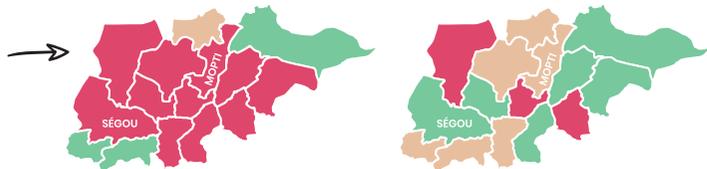
# Security

Daily life for the populations of central Mali is characterized by robberies and kidnappings of agents, traders, young men and livestock.

## Perception of security

// Security situation in Mali

// Security situation in my locality

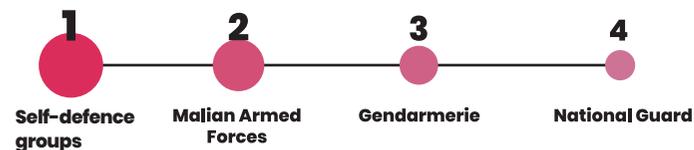


**55%** of respondents think the situation has worsened in Mali, especially in the regions of Bandiagara, Mopti and San.

■ has improved  
■ has not changed  
■ has worsened

However, **83%** of respondents say they are 'optimistic', with the lowest rates in the regions of San and Ségou, which are not the regions most affected by insecurity.

## The most active security agents



These forces are present in urban areas and on the main roads but less visible in rural areas.

## Trust in the security forces

Trust in the security forces is strong:

more than **85%**

in the National Guard, Malian Armed Forces and the Gendarmerie

**78%**

in the police

**65%**

in the self-defence groups

Only **35%** say they trust the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and **7%** the non-state armed groups. Trust in MINUSMA is stronger in rural areas (**38%**) than in urban areas (**19%**) and among women (**44%**) than among men (**26%**).

Except in the Mopti region, where **65%** of respondents say they do not trust them. This is also the region where they are the most present.

## Perception of insecurity

The most negative perceptions are found in the Douentza region, where villages say they are under threat from the dozos. Populations face demands to pay taxes as well as theft of livestock and redistribution of land.

**85%**

Respondents believe that **non-state armed groups** are a source of danger. The main reasons:

- Potential targets of non-state armed groups (National Guard, Malian Armed Forces, gendarmerie, MINUSMA)
- Corruption (police)
- Outlaw behaviour (self-defence groups)
- Arbitrary violence (non-state armed groups)

**38%** For MINUSMA

**36%** For self-defence groups

less than **10%** For the security forces

If some villages make agreements with armed groups, the villages that refuse to do so are threatened. The price to be paid for security is often very high for the villages, which must provide men and materials. Refusal to support self-defence groups may lead to sanctions against families or the village. Young men are considered to be the category of the population most at risk of recruitment or discrimination.

**37%** Neither in danger nor in safety

**27%** In danger

**15%** In great danger

**22%** In safety

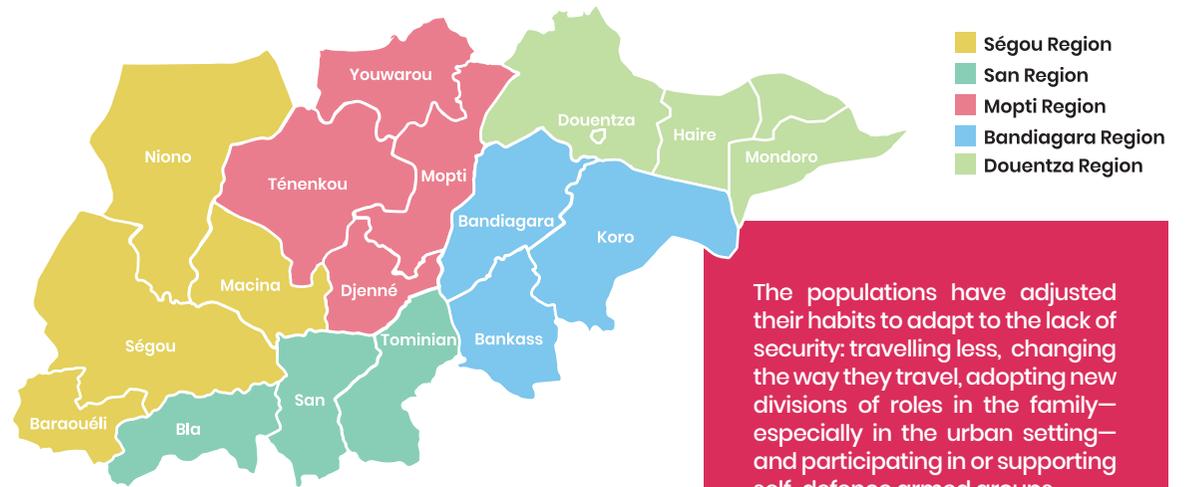
Despite racketeering and violations, the presence of defence and security forces is reassuring. The inhabitants of urban areas perceive themselves to be more in danger than the inhabitants of rural areas, confronted with more diverse threats including physical attacks and gender-based violence. Some roads are very dangerous and a lack of security on the roads is a major obstacle, especially for commerce.

## What is your assessment of your current situation?



## The main threats to the populations

- Poverty and unemployment → for 97% of respondents
- Lack of food security → for 96%
- Violence by non-state armed groups → for 51%
- Physical attacks → for 50%
- Violent theft, highway robbery → for 42%
- Conflicts between farmers and pastoralists → for 38%



The populations have adjusted their habits to adapt to the lack of security: travelling less, changing the way they travel, adopting new divisions of roles in the family—especially in the urban setting—and participating in or supporting self-defence armed groups.



## Conclusions

- **Traditional and customary authorities and local authorities ensure the daily management of communities in often difficult conditions.**
- **Rural areas are increasingly isolated from each other, as villages are under the control of non-state armed groups and it is increasingly dangerous to travel on roads.** Isolation and abandonment are also linked to the sharp decline in external support for non-governmental organizations. Support is becoming increasingly rare in localities where there is the least security.
- **Populations rely primarily on their own families: the first source of information and the first recourse in the event of a problem.**
- **At the end of an irregular and short rainy season, food security is the main concern of families.**

This publication has been produced with financial support from the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union. ©2022 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. All rights reserved. Licence conditionally granted to the European Union.

For additional information: [SahelandWestAfricaProgramme@sipri.org](mailto:SahelandWestAfricaProgramme@sipri.org)