

PROMOTING PEACEFUL TRANSHUMANCE IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



**SHINING LIGHT ON CONFLICT AND OPPORTUNITIES
FOR SOCIAL COHESION IN VAKAGA**

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Photograph taken by Timea Szarkova, Concordis Programme Manager, during an encounter with Sudanese Arab transhumant herders at a donkey-operated well and water point near Tissi.

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ACRONYMS

ACDA	<i>Agence centrafricaine pour le développement agricole</i> (Central African Agency for Agricultural Development)
ADR	<i>Agence de développement rural</i> (Rural Development Agency)
AG	Advisory Group
ANDE	<i>Agence nationale du développement de l'élevage</i> (National Agency for Livestock Farming Development)
CAMDCA	<i>Coopération agro-pastorale et minière pour le développement</i> (Agro-pastoral and mining cooperation for development)
CAR	Central African Republic
CBPP	Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
CPJP	<i>Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix</i> (Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace)
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
ECOFAC	European Union programme: <i>Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale</i> (Conservation and Rational Use of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa)
FACA	<i>Forces armées centrafricaines</i> (Central African Armed Forces)
FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FG	Focus Group
FNEC	<i>Fédération nationale des éleveurs centrafricains</i> (National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers)
FPRC	<i>Front patriotique pour la révolution en Centrafrique</i> (The Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic)
FSI	<i>Forces de sécurité intérieure</i> (Interior Security Forces)
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IPIS	International Peace Information Service
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MINUSCA	<i>Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations unies pour la stabilisation en Centrafrique</i> (United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic)
MLCJ	<i>Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice</i> (Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFCA	<i>Organisation des femmes centrafricaines</i> (Central African Women's Organisation)
PRNC	<i>Parti du rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine</i> (Party of the Rally of the Central African Nation)
PDRN	European Union programme: <i>Programme de développement de la région nord</i> (Development Programme for the Northern Region)
UFDR	<i>Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement</i> (Union of Democratic Forces for Unity)

USMS

Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité (Joint Special Security Units)

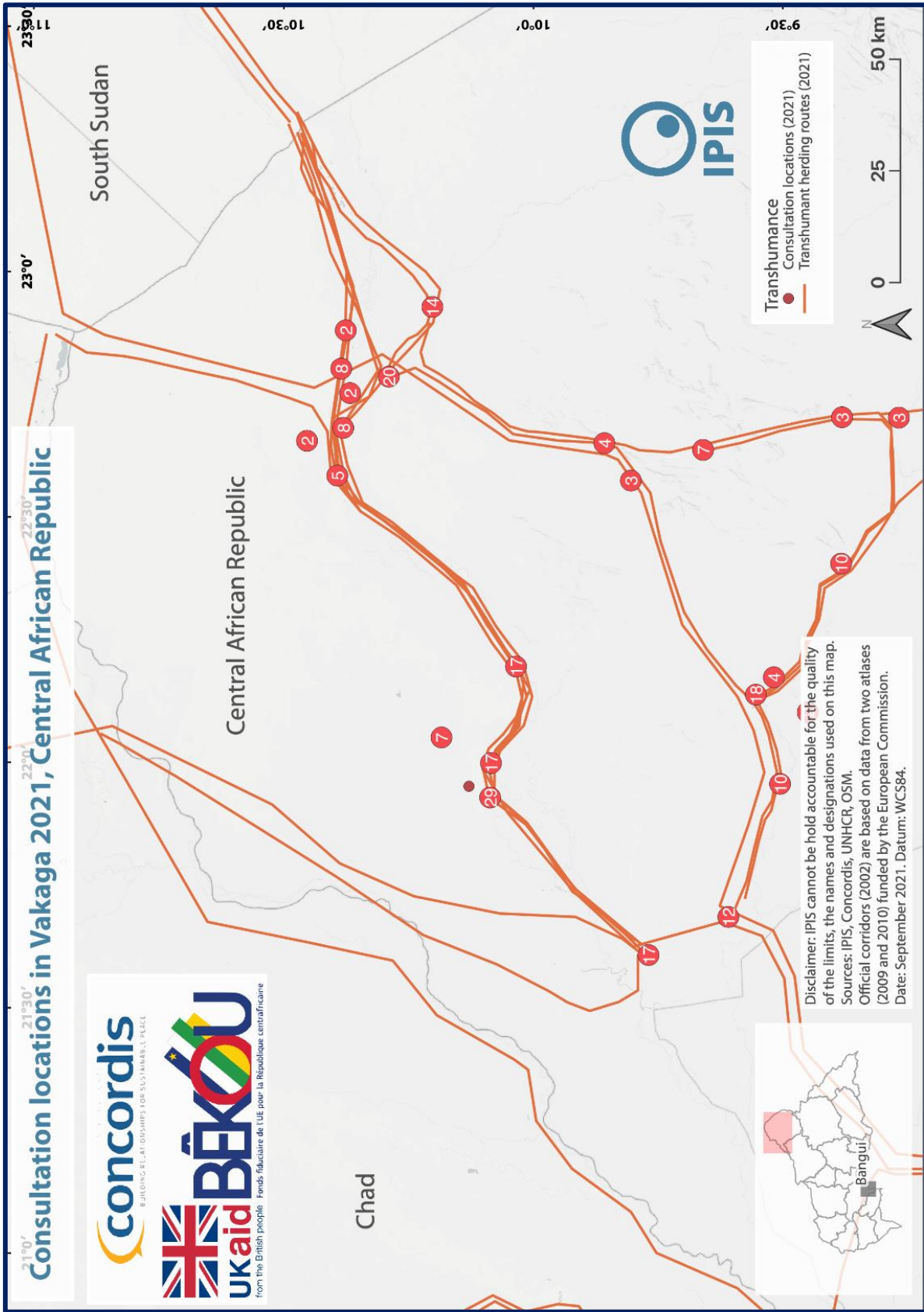
XAF

Central African Francs

ZCV

Zone cynégétique villageoise (village hunting zones)

MAP OF TRANSHUMANCE ROUTES AND CONSULTATION LOCATIONS IN VAKAGA, APRIL 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The northern prefecture of Vakaga covers 46,500km², 7.5% of the Central African Republic.

The climate is Sudano-Sahelian in the south and Sahelian in the north, with two seasons: a dry season from mid-November to the end of May, and a rainy season from June to early November.

With an estimated population of around 50,000¹, population density is just over 1 person per km², making it one of the least densely populated regions in the world.

The population includes historically established and majority ethnic groups such as the Gula, Runga, Kara, Sara and Yulu; more recently established ethnic groups and minorities such as the Hausa, Massalit, Borgo and Kadjaja; and many different ethnic groups of transhumant herders, Peuhl and Arabs from Chad and Sudan, including the Salamat, Tahacha, Hemat and Nadjimia. In most villages, the population is 100% Muslim. Some villages, such as Délembé and Sergobo, have a significant Christian minority (up to 40%).²

The intense rainy season creates fertile conditions for agriculture. Agriculture is the main economic activity in Vakaga, followed by fishing, which is also widely practised and favoured by the bi-annual climate, as fish take advantage of the high water periods to migrate to the floodplains and then become trapped in residual water holes in the dry season, known as the “great fishing” period³. Agriculture allows food self-sufficiency, with surpluses stored for the lean period at the end of the dry season.

Pastoralism has also adapted well to Vakaga’s biennial climate. Herders engage in seasonal mobility both within and across the international borders of the Central African Republic (CAR), moving their cattle throughout the year in search of good pasture, water sources and other conditions such as freedom from flies and disease (transhumance). As the most north-eastern prefecture in the CAR, Vakaga is at the centre of transhumance to and from the neighbouring countries of Chad and Sudan. In addition to sedentary communities and transhumant pastoralists, the prefecture is also home to semi-sedentary herders who live in Vakaga for much of the year but move their herds out of the CAR before the heavy rains arrive in June.

Insecurity in Vakaga has challenged the long-standing practice of peaceful transhumance, particularly since the military-political crisis of 2013. In this context, the

¹ There has been no published census data for close to 20 years and the accuracy of 2003 census data from which the figure of 52,255 is taken is questioned.

² Roulet, 2005.

³ Ibid

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) UK Aid Direct and the European Union's Bêkou Trust Fund funded a three-year peacebuilding programme entitled 'Promoting peaceful and safe seasonal migration in northern Central African Republic'.

Covering the prefectures of Ouham-Pendé, western Ouham, Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga, the programme consulted more than 2,500 people between February and June 2019, providing quantitative and qualitative baseline data against which to measure the impact of subsequent interventions. The 2021 consultation, which involved 4,600 encounters – in focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and surveys – reassesses the situation. It identifies ongoing and newly emerging trends and ways forward based on the needs, fears and aspirations of those consulted.

Following the consultation, facilitated workshops gave community representatives the opportunity to explore the issues raised and make recommendations to address them. These recommendations are included in the relevant sections of this report.

This report describes how **transhumance patterns** in Vakaga are changing. There are more people and more animals on the move, timings are less regular because of more erratic weather, routes are less predictable because of environmental and social pressures, and sources of support or drivers of insecurity along the way are less reliable because they are influenced by national and local politics. Yet the essence of transhumance remains unchanged: its purpose is to keep livestock alive and thriving by moving them to wherever sustainable pasture can be found.

As the report illustrates, the attitudes of settled communities in Vakaga towards transhumance are complex and multifaceted. All sedentary communities – and most sedentary individuals – depend for their livelihood on the crops they grow. Where these are threatened with damage or destruction, the threat is existential. With hundreds of people and thousands of animals on the move, no community reports that its current experience of transhumance is entirely free of conflict. Yet no community – not a single one of all those consulted in 2021 – calls for an end to transhumance in the CAR. Some are willing to share their space with transhumants, others would prefer everyone to keep to their own agreed space. Some distinguish between the behaviour of different groups of transhumants, others report good relations with all those they come into contact with. All communities recognise the actual and potential benefits of peaceful transhumance, including **trade**.

The report highlights the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, differences between the needs and aspirations of sedentary and transhumant communities. But there are also striking similarities. Everyone wants better **communication** around transhumance – both sedentary and transhumant people want clarity about where transhumant

herders can go, when they move (as long as announcing this in advance doesn't threaten the transhumants' safety), what needs to be paid and to whom.

One area of disagreement between transhumant and sedentary communities is **national parks**. Transhumant herders are satisfied with their current dysfunctional status, recognising that it provides them with much needed additional grazing land as the number of migrating cattle increases, and allows them to stay away from other transhumant groups with whom they have a long or recent history of conflict. The sedentary communities want a return to the benefits they used to derive from the parks, including better security for the people and animals who lived in them, employment opportunities and, particularly from the hunting zones (*Zones cynégétiques villageoises* - ZCVs), income to fund services such as schools and health facilities. Organisations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, whose mission is to conserve wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education and inspiring people to care for nature, can help to realise other benefits from the parks, including the protection of fragile ecosystems and the support of key populations of endangered species. There are ways to manage this – and willingness in both sedentary and transhumant communities to respect this management – if there are also routes set aside for transhumance that give transhumant herders what they need, and if changes in land use are well communicated in advance.

Conflicts around transhumance can be reduced through communication and practical changes such as improving infrastructure around water points, but some level of conflict will remain. For the benefits of transhumance, including trade, to be recognized, transhumant herders need to come into contact with sedentary communities - and when they do, there will be problems caused by significant numbers of animals on the move, leading to conflict over the **use of natural resources**.

The consultation reveals encouraging similarities in approaches to **social cohesion** as a measure of how open sedentary and transhumant communities are to contact with each other. A majority of all groups have more social contacts than in 2019 and are willing to accept more opportunities when they arise, men and young people to a greater extent, women slightly less so. This is welcome news in the quest for peaceful transhumance.

Conflict dynamics between and within communities involved in and affected by transhumance are nuanced and complex. The report juxtaposes data from the consultations with factors such as historical convention and specific events to illuminate key conflict dynamics, recognising that in such a subtle and sensitive area, alternative interpretations are always possible. Everyone is to some extent protective of their own, suspicious of the other, defensive about their own behaviour and keen not to be blamed for things they don't do.

Where specific conflicts do occur, sedentary and transhumant communities have similar approaches to **conflict resolution**. The report looks in detail at the effectiveness of different options, on a spectrum from avoidance to violence, but what people want from all options is simple: they want conflict resolution mechanisms to be clear, fair, used and enforced.

While current solutions differ, communities have similar desires when it comes to **security**: they want the state to provide it. If it chooses to do so and proves capable of doing so well, they will be satisfied. If not, they will do it themselves (with the consequent increase in weapons and corresponding increase in feelings of insecurity) or find someone else to do it (one of the many complexities encountered in this report when examining the role of armed groups in transhumance). Relatedly, any increase in state security provision (and concomitant reduction in the militarisation of other parties) must not lead to an increase in **violence against the person**.

While women's voices were heard in all aspects of the consultation, and these voices are represented throughout the report, the need to address violence, including sexual violence, was voiced just as strongly by men in Vakaga.

Communities also expressed similar approaches to **service provision**. The report highlights strong views on where these are lacking, particularly from young people. Everyone sees the need for veterinary services and vaccinations, everyone wants better roads, schools and health services across Vakaga.

Detailed findings on each of the aspects of transhumance **highlighted** above are presented in a separate chapter of the report, in the order in which they appear in this executive summary.

KEY FINDINGS



Where insecurity is felt, including where the state is absent, both transhumant and sedentary communities recognise the need to carry weapons for protection.

Findings on barriers to peaceful transhumance

- The main obstacles to peaceful transhumance are armed bandits (178 mentions), the circulation of weapons (128), foreign transhumants (61), Sudanese Arabs (61), Central African armed forces (*Forces armées centrafricaines* – FACA) (48) and the absence of the state (10).
- A large majority of both sedentary (80%) and transhumant (87%) respondents say they have never had a conflict with a particular population, but over 40% of sedentary respondents say they have been victims of one of the groups they consider responsible for insecurity (e.g. foreign transhumants, armed bandits).
- Armed bandits cause security problems directly, by robbing both sedentary and transhumant communities, and indirectly by making sedentary communities fear transhumants, whom they associate with the crimes of armed bandits.
- Both sedentary and transhumant communities link the deterioration of relations between them since 2013 with the arrival of another group of transhumants, Arab herders of Sudanese origin, who are described as having in a completely different behaviour and whose aggressive behaviour affects relations between sedentary and transhumant populations.
- Sedentary and transhumant communities believe that the presence or absence of internal security forces (“the state”) is a key factor in determining whether transhumance is peaceful or violent.
- The absence of internal security forces is often filled by an armed group: some sedentary and transhumant groups see this as an improvement, others call for a return to an effective state presence.
- Transhumants who change routes do so because of security concerns, misunderstandings with settled communities, changes required where farmers have planted over previous corridors, and to avoid paying the high taxes demanded by those who control an area.
- Where insecurity is felt, including where the state is absent, both transhumant and sedentary communities recognise the need to carry weapons for protection.



Conflict dynamics analysed by geography show pockets of peace in all five areas.

- Conflict dynamics analysed by geography show pockets of peace in all five areas covered by the consultation, but factors such as the burning of one community's village by another community over an unresolved conflict continue to have a profound and lasting impact on conflict dynamics.
- Insecurity affects people and their livelihoods directly through the loss of or damage to crops and livestock, and indirectly by preventing the provision of services such as veterinary care and livestock vaccination, and infrastructure such as access to water, education and health services.

Findings that support peaceful transhumance

- Transhumant and sedentary communities consider trade between herders and farmers as essential. 98% of transhumant herders and 93% of sedentary community members buy or sell products from or to the other community.
- All communities need easy access to markets, which includes not having to travel long distances to the nearest market, safety on the way to the market and fair prices for a good range of products at the market.
- When asked who is the best actor is to guarantee their security, 50% of both sedentary and transhumant respondents name only FACA and almost 90% name FACA.
- There is a high level of social interaction between sedentary and transhumant communities: at least a third of respondents had attended a key social event (wedding, funeral, traditional dance or religious ceremony) of the other group and a significant majority would definitely or probably accept an invitation to such an event. Social interaction has also increased since the previous consultation in 2019.
- A majority (56%) of respondents would probably or definitely accept their child marrying someone from the other community, but a majority of those in settled communities would probably or definitely refuse, including almost 70% of settled women.
- All communities are willing to participate in dialogue workshops and recommend organising dialogues, such as migration conferences and transhumance planning meetings, that involve international, national and local stakeholders.
- Transhumant and sedentary communities want agreements on land use that are enforced, including zoning for transhumant corridors and areas for grazing, ploughing and parks.
- Sedentary communities want the return of parks and village hunting areas, with all the benefits they bring. Transhumants are willing to respect the return of parks if sufficient alternative corridors and infrastructure for transhumance are identified.
- Sedentary communities want advance warning of the arrival of transhumant herders. Transhumants are willing to give warning, and some say that they do: good communication between transhumants and local authorities is seen as the main reason for a more stable environment in Ouanda Djallé.
- Where conflicts arise, transhumant and sedentary communities prefer to reach an amicable arrangement. This often requires the involvement of others, including leaders from both communities, local authorities, conflict resolution committees and the Advisory Group (AG).

- Sedentary communities describe the role of the Advisory Group in their area as that of an intermediary who facilitates dialogue and non-violent solutions to conflicts.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Create and enforce regulations around transhumance

- Organise dialogues between key transhumance stakeholders, including:
 - a migration conference between key decision makers in the CAR, Chad and Sudan,
 - smaller migration meetings before or after the conference as required,
 - a planning meeting between the Advisory Group and the technical services including ANDE (*Agence nationale du développement de l'élevage* – National Agency for Livestock Farming Development), ACDA (*Agence centrafricaine pour le développement agricole* – Central African Agency for Agricultural Development), FNEC (*Fédération nationale des éleveurs centrafricains* – National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers), the association of agro-pastoralists, local authorities and mayors,
 - a meeting between the Advisory Group and the armed groups leaders to agree on an approach for safe and peaceful transhumance,
 - a meeting between leaders of sedentary and transhumant groups to agree on an approach for safe and peaceful transhumance.
- Establish a common approach to cross-border control of transhumance through dialogue and agreement between international authorities in CAR, Chad and Sudan.
- Use dialogue workshops to understand the barriers to following any existing rules and principles for transhumance and to establish clear rules and principles for all parties involved in transhumance.
- Find ways to give sedentary communities early warning of the arrival of transhumants, so that they have time to prepare. Transhumant leaders need to know which authorities to inform of their arrival, to ensure that leaders of settled communities raise awareness in these communities prior to their arrival.
- Establish a clear, fair and enforced system of fees and taxes related to transhumance, including compensation for damage to crops and livestock. End the practice of extorting unreasonable levels of taxes and compensation.

Agree on expectations of behaviour around transhumance and on how to socialise them

- In future consultations or dialogue workshops, seek to understand the reasons behind settled women being less open to social interaction with transhumant groups than men. Work with women and men to identify barriers that can be addressed and to implement solutions.
- Organise meetings between sedentary and transhumant groups, including:
 - a meeting between women representatives of sedentary and transhumant groups to agree on the behaviours required for safe and peaceful transhumance and how to reinforce desirable behaviours,
 - a meeting between leaders of sedentary and transhumant groups to agree on the behaviours required for safe and peaceful transhumance and how to reinforce desirable behaviours.
- Organise inter-community dialogues for peace and reconciliation between communities currently experiencing high levels of conflict, e.g. between the settled communities and the Misseriya.
- Organise a meeting between the leaders of the different transhumant groups to reach a consensus on how they should behave during transhumance.
- Find ways of accurately attributing responsibility for actions, distinguishing between the actions of transhumant herders and those of armed bandits, so that the undesirable behaviour of armed bandits does not affect relations between transhumant and sedentary communities.

Set out and enforce land use

- Establish and publicise agreements on land use around transhumance, including transhumance corridors, allocation of land for grazing, ploughing and parks, access to water points.
- Communicate land use changes in advance.
- Enforce the agreed use of land, including park areas.

Create a framework for resolving conflict around transhumance

- Establish a practice of direct dialogue between the parties to a conflict in order to find an amicable solution.
- Establish a process for involving third parties in conflict resolution.
- Expand the awareness, capacity and geographical reach of the Advisory Group to enable it to resolve conflicts, as it has done in areas such as Boromata.

Improve security for those engaged in and affected by transhumance

- Establish state security in CAR and across the border in Sudan (Darfur) to reduce the impact of armed groups on the social order between transhumant and sedentary communities.
- Reduce the likelihood of sedentary communities relying on armed groups for security and transhumant herders having to join armed groups to guarantee their security, by ensuring that the state provides adequate security at the local level.
- Tackle the problem of armed bandits by establishing state security across Vakaga.
- Find ways to solve the problem of insecurity and lack of trust in state security, so that transhumants agree to hand over their weapons to the village chief on arrival.
- Increase the number of FACA and police throughout Vakaga.

Provide access to water for all

- Reduce conflict over water by providing and maintaining access to water points.
- Negotiate access for all users, including for drinking, irrigation, washing, bathing and fishing.
- Find ways to protect watercourses from damage during transhumance.

Provide veterinary services

- Restore veterinary services across Vakaga to protect the health of livestock, including at border crossings.
- Reinstate cattle vaccination by government services or Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), e.g. Triangle Génération Humanitaire, including at border crossings.
- Ensure that both transhumant and sedentary communities are made aware of government or NGO vaccination programmes.

Make it easier for transhumant and settled communities to trade with each other

- Support the creation of markets where communities demand them.
- Provide security on the routes people use to get to markets.

Make it easier for transhumant and settled communities to interact socially

- Remove barriers to social interaction, e.g. ensuring that security is not a barrier to travelling to an important social event by providing security at a local level.

Agree on an approach to resume activities in the park and hunting area

- Organise a dialogue to agree on an approach to resuming activities in the park and hunting areas, involving representatives of both sedentary and transhumant communities.
- Reintroduce activities related to the protection and conservation of parks.
- Restore wildlife and game to hunting areas as a source of food and income.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Advisory Group can:

- Act as a connector between the different communities involved in transhumance because it has the trust of all parties.
- Ensure that communities are aware of its existence and its capacity to support them in resolving conflict.
- Expand numerically and geographically to be better able to manage and mediate conflicts before they escalate.
- Ensure that all communities feel they are represented in the Advisory Group.
- Provide support to transhumant and sedentary communities in conflict to increase the likelihood of an amicable settlement.
- Mediate in conflicts between individuals and communities.
- Provide training for all parties in peaceful dialogue and negotiation.
- Act as an early warning system in situations of escalating conflict and notify the security services in cases of more serious violence.
- Undertake conflict analysis and stakeholder mapping, and plan activities to address the identified drivers of conflict.
- Convene and facilitate workshops where key stakeholders agree on actions and policy recommendations to address root causes of conflict and barriers to economic prosperity, and to build resilient adaptation to the effects of climate change.
- Connect with meteorological services and push out warnings about extreme or unexpected weather events through their networks.

Concordis can:

- Support and sustain the Advisory Group to enable it to undertake both broad strategic interventions, including conflict analysis, stakeholder mapping and planning activities to address drivers of conflict, and more targeted interventions in specific conflict situations.
- Partner with the Advisory Group to advocate for the implementation of activities that address the drivers of conflict, and to promote collaborative dialogue with decision makers across Vakaga, CAR and beyond, including local authorities and national governments, donors and other organisations that can implement programmes.

- Train and coach Advisory Group members to facilitate local peace and dialogue processes.
- Train and coach Advisory Group members and wider group of community mediators to manage and mediate conflicts before they escalate.
- Train Advisory Group members to connect with meteorological services and distribute warnings of extreme or unexpected weather events through their networks.
- Support intercommunity trade by improving access to markets or the markets themselves, in response to community requests.
- Conduct follow-up consultations to measure the impact of activities, provide channels for community feedback and identify opportunities for further conflict transformation.
- Ensure, by presenting findings from this consultation, that the voices of those affected by the agreements are heard in and influence the outcome of the ongoing multilateral negotiations on the joint management of seasonal transhumance between the governments of the CAR, Chad and Sudan.
- Organise, facilitate and support dialogues, alone or in partnership with others, including those recommended in this consultation, where this is requested by key stakeholders and supported by local communities in Vakaga.
- Oversee the provision of services in Vakaga to meet the needs of the community, alone or in partnership with others, including but not limited to legal, infrastructure and veterinary services (including vaccination).

Local authorities can:

- Promote and support behaviours that reduce conflict between sedentary and transhumant communities, including transhumants notifying local authorities of their arrival, sedentary communities not farming land on transhumance corridors, transhumants staying away from cultivated fields, settled and transhumant communities agreeing on crop destruction, neither transhumant nor sedentary communities carrying weapons except when necessary.
- Communicate with transhumant communities, encouraging them to notify the local authorities of their arrival and informing them of local rules and agreements on the sharing of natural resources.
- Ensure that taxes on transhumance and compensation payments for damage to crops and livestock are fair and proportionate.

- Seek to replicate structures in place in other areas that increase the likelihood of peaceful transhumance, e.g. surveillance checks in Ouandja-Djallé to ensure that herders and farmers respect land use agreements related to transhumance.
- Promote and support behaviours that encourage cooperation between sedentary and transhumant communities, from trade to social interaction.
- Involve women in dialogue, conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, and in decision-making around transhumance at local level.
- Support the Advisory Group by ensuring that communities are aware of it and that it can work as intended, including travelling across Vakaga without security concerns to resolve conflicts in all areas.
- Provide boreholes for drinking water and access to water for livestock, and develop a maintenance plan for water points.
- Convene a meeting to negotiate access to water for all users, including for drinking, irrigation, washing, bathing and fishing.

National authorities can:

- Declare their support for a culture of peace and social cohesion in relation to transhumance.
- Support and strengthen conferences, meetings and dialogue workshops proposed by sedentary and transhumant communities by providing security, participation and assistance in the implementation of recommendations.
- Ensure that local authorities have the capacity to support peaceful transhumance, e.g. sufficient resources to communicate with all communities involved.
- Provide transhumant groups with up-to-date information on border controls, transhumance corridors and access to natural resources including water points.
- Establish an impartial and inclusive structure for managing conflicts related to transhumance.
- Declare their support for the Advisory Group concept, providing transport and security for participants and enabling them to travel to intervene early and often in conflicts, including those in remote areas.
- Provide security by deploying FACA throughout Vakaga, training them in non-violent communication and finding ways to address perceptions of marginalisation of certain groups.
- Create employment opportunities to reduce the conditions that lead young people to engage in crime, including banditry.

- Provide incentives for the disarmament and demobilisation of armed groups.
- Declare the rehabilitation of water points shared by transhumant and sedentary populations a national priority.
- Establish a consultative approach to re-establishing national parks and village hunting areas, including a dialogue workshop between stakeholders, including community, park and transhumant representatives.

International organisations can:

- Support and facilitate conferences, meetings and dialogue workshops proposed by sedentary and transhumant communities through funding, logistics and the provision of skilled facilitators.
- Use their influence, where possible, to encourage armed groups to intervene positively rather than interfering negatively in the pursuit of peaceful transhumance.
- Provide training in mediation and facilitation of community dialogue.
- Provide veterinary expertise and support for livestock vaccination programmes where needed.
- Support infrastructure development around water points.
- Support dialogue to negotiate access to water for all users, including for drinking, irrigation, washing, bathing and fishing.

FINDINGS

EVOLVING PATTERNS OF TRANSHUMANCE

In most focus groups, transhumant herders say they have not changed their routes. They continue to use traditional, known routes: the ones their grandparents and parents used, the ones they have always used. The reasons are based on the natural resources along the routes: they follow a watercourse or good grass. In some groups, participants say that they do not follow the same routes. Reasons given for changing routes include security, high taxes, misunderstandings with farmers, and farmers planting over corridors that herders used to use. Some of those in groups that report changing routes say they make decisions on a day-to-day basis, sending someone out in advance to find the next ideal place to camp, or using information from local authorities through a member of the group who goes ahead.

The number of cattle owned by transhumant herders varies. Asking about the number of cattle owned by an individual is a sensitive question and the number reported may not be the actual number owned. All transhumant participants in the focus groups said they owned their cattle. A group of Arab Rachid from Sudan said they had 60 cattle, a group of Falata Ekaye said that they used to have up to 400 in the time of their fathers, but disease had reduced this to 50 or 60. One group spoke of 700 oxen owned in unequal numbers by 13 people, another of the same number owned by one family. A group of Sudanese Arab Hemats said that each of them could own have between 100 and 200 heads of oxen. Of the respondents, 17% said they had less than 25 cattle, 31% between 26 and 50, 35% between 51 and 100 and 14% between 101 and 200. Only two respondents (2%) reported owning more than 200 cattle. The observers reported seeing a higher percentage of transhumants with less than 25 cattle (40%), a lower percentage with between 26 and 50 (14%) and two with more than 500 cattle.

The size of transhumant groups, in terms of people and livestock, as reported by herders in focus groups varies considerably. At the upper end, estimates range from 3,000 to 6,500 people, including men, women, young people and children. Others give more moderate group sizes of 100 to 500. In both cases, safety is cited as the reason for travelling together. Settled communities also report very different group sizes. Some mention groups of 1,000 to 1,500 transhumant herders, with an "impressive number" of oxen, sheep, goats, horses, camels and donkeys. Others speak of small groups of three to four people. The majority of transhumant herders say they travel with the same family or clan: where a reason is given, it is for safety. A minority travel in mixed ethnic groups. There appears to be no particular ethnic preference for either, e.g. some Misseriya report travelling with the same clan or family, while other Misseriya join mixed ethnic groups.

A significant majority of transhumant herders say they travel with their families, with only one mention of young men taking the cattle while the women stay behind to farm. However, sedentary communities say that, while some transhumant herders travel with wives and families, other men “never come with their families”.

Some sedentary groups say that the transhumant herders are accompanied by armed bandits who steal motorbikes and vehicles and kill people. Semi-nomads say they live with increasing insecurity caused by armed bandits disguised as transhumants. Transhumants say armed bandits carry out robberies and then flee into the bush, pursued by villagers who follow the tracks and, when they reach a camp, accuse the inhabitants of the crime.

Commenting on the state of transhumance, most transhumant focus group participants say they have suffered since the 2012/2013 crisis. Security and disease are cited as problems. Security is mentioned as affecting transhumant herders directly and indirectly. They face groups of unidentified bandits who ambush and steal their cattle, and they are affected by the insecurity that has devastated and deprived the populations with whom they trade. They lose their cattle to disease along the way because of the presence of mosquitoes and the lack of veterinary services. However, some of these groups say that the situation has improved recently (within the last two years), citing the Concordis Advisory Groups, some FNEC agents in Sikikédé, and sedentary communities who have resumed some cultivation as reasons for this improvement. One group said that transhumance had improved because of collaboration with and the acceptance by the local community.

A sedentary community in Birao said that transhumant herders stay longer in the Birao area and that, during this time, the sedentary farmers cannot sow, meaning they fall behind the agricultural calendar.

Local authorities in Nguéné Boura give a mixed assessment of the evolving patterns of transhumance. They continue to see the benefits of transhumance in terms of trade. They say that transhumance has improved in those (limited) areas where there has been a gradual return of the state and the associated deployment of internal defence and security forces. Beyond these areas, they report that, whereas transhumant herders used to come with their families, respecting farmers’ fields and complying with the social norms governing the practice of transhumance in the CAR, they now all come armed, on horses and camels, with Kalashnikov rifles, and refuse to comply with the rules of society, even though these are the same rules they followed before the crisis, when the state’s internal security forces were present in the area. Some kill the settlers’ goats as they pass. There are more problems now with the destruction of fields now because transhumant herders no longer announce their arrival. There used to be a system for resolving conflicts related to transhumance: transhumant herders were always willing to go to the local authorities with the owner of the field to find an

amicable arrangement. Now they do not cooperate in such cases of destruction and have no respect for anyone or for the local authorities.

TRADE

Of the questionnaires' respondents, 95% say they buy products or sell products from or to the other community, including 98% of the transhumant herders and 93% of the sedentary community. 99% of men and 92% of women say they trade with the other community. Older age groups are more likely to say they trade with the other community: 10% of those aged 18-25 say they do not trade. 98% of the sedentary community say they would accept trading with herders, as do 98% of those aged 18-25.

Transhumant herders say that trade between herders and farmers is essential, with herders buying food and medicines for their families' health and farmers buying goats, sheep and cattle. During transhumance, transhumant herders have to sell a certain number of cattle either to butchers in sedentary communities or to buyers from elsewhere, and in return the money from the sale of these cattle is used to buy basic necessities and food for their families.

Settled communities say they trade with transhumant women present in the market, and with men, including those who also offer oxen to butchers. Transhumant herders say they sell oxen when they need money or when an animal is injured and cannot move with the herd. They sell to butchers in sedentary settled communities or to buyers from elsewhere: butchers and those selling grilled meat on the street or in the market also take sheep and goats. Transhumant herders also mention itinerant traders in settled communities and, for livestock trade, transhumant breeders who buy and raise calves and livestock herders from different parts of the CAR and Chad who are attracted to Vakaga (specifically Sikikédé) by the large concentration of transhumant herders there and by the lively cattle market.

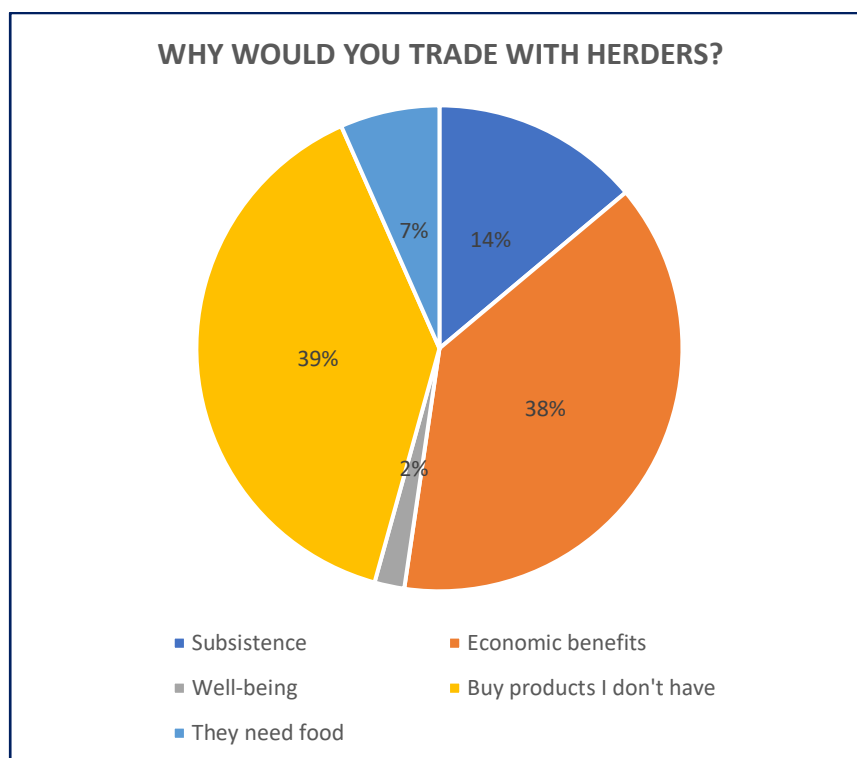
Vegetables and food crops are by far the most common products mentioned in the questionnaires as being sold to the other community, followed by meat (beef, chicken, goat and sheep), salt, milk and imported goods. Over 80% of the sedentary community respondents trade vegetables and food crops. In contrast, as might be expected given their livelihoods, over 75% of transhumant respondents sell meat, including beef, while only 25% mention trading vegetables.

Qualitative data provides a more detailed list of products traded. Transhumant herders report selling chickens, goats, sheep, oxen, horses and dairy products. They buy food including millet, sorghum, sugar, tea, fish, okra, beans, peanuts, salt and natron. They also buy soap, medicines for livestock and medicines for family health. The lists from the sedentary community focus groups are very similar, with most mentioning buying

beef, milk and oxen (for ploughing and eating) and selling millet, sorghum, okra, cassava and groundnuts. Settled communities also mention selling sesame and, in trade beyond transhumance, buying seeds, sugar and clothing.

Over 60% of sedentary respondents say that the products they grow are for both subsistence and trade, while 35% say that they are only for subsistence.

In quantitative research with sedentary communities, the main reasons given for their willingness to trade are 'to buy products I don't have' (39%) and 'for economic benefits' (38%)⁴. 21% of respondents gave answers related to their own or others' consumption (subsistence 14%, need for food 7%).



55% of respondents say that they only sell their products in a neutral place, such as a market or street, and 76% say that the places where they sell include a neutral place. Transhumant herders are slightly more likely to say that they go to others to sell, while sedentary populations are slightly more likely to say that others come to them.

There are very few mentions of recent changes in trade. One sedentary group says that trade has decreased compared to the period before 2021. One transhumant group says that trade relations have become good again in the last two years, while two others say that relations with the sedentary community are good, but the people who used to buy their livestock were robbed and they no longer have the money they used to have for economic exchange with them.

⁴ Question asked of settled community only.

What is working?

Transhumant herders say trade is going well. Economic exchanges between transhumant herders and sedentary populations are good. Transhumant herders sell oxen, goats, sheep and stock up on food, which they buy from sedentary people. They stay close to the villages to have access to markets, especially during Ramadan. Farmers can sell their crops at a good price without having to travel long distances to the cities. Butchers and *gargotiers*⁵ take oxen and small ruminants on credit from herders to enable them to withstand the shock and gradually resume their capital and previous activities.

The presence of transhumant herders attracts livestock traders from different parts of the CAR and Chad. This favours the development of the market and makes Sikikédé a key area for economic exchange in the Vakaga prefecture.

The price of cattle is lower in the CAR than in Sudan, so transhumant herders buy oxen and resell them on their return to Sudan at more or less double the price paid. Calves bought at a low price (25-30k Central African Francs (XAF), between 40 and 45 euros) are reared by transhumant herders for three to four years and then sold for between 200 and 250k XAF (over 300 euros). The breeders are close to the community leaders, which helps them access the market and sell their livestock at the livestock market. Transhumant herders also buy small ruminants (goats and sheep) during transhumance and re-sell them during the rainy season at a 100% profit. One group of semi-nomads says that, thanks to transhumance, they can buy sick cattle for 30k XAF (about 45 euros), cure them for 25k XAF (less than 40 euros) and sell them for 200 to 250k XAF (more than 300 euros).

Settled communities also say that transhumance allows mutual exchanges between transhumant herders and farmers, strengthens the local economy and household welfare, and develops social cohesion between both communities. Transhumant herders buy harvested products in large quantities and at a good price. This enables sedentary communities to meet households needs (schooling, soap, sugar, clothing), stock up on basic necessities for the rainy season, buy more seeds to increase production, save some money and send it to their sons who are away studying. Commercial exchanges have a positive impact by improving the living conditions of the settled people.

FNEC representatives say that the benefits of transhumance are clear. It brings trade and the availability of draught animals. The herders come with imported goods, which

⁵ Managers or owners of a food stand or small restaurant.

allows for mutual exchanges between herders and farmers, and strengthens the local economy.

What is not working?

Some transhumant groups mention elements of trade that are not working. One group says that although transhumance should be beneficial to both sedentary and transhumant communities in terms of economic exchange, this activity is currently not well organised due to the absence of state authority. Some groups mention the lack of a market in Vakaga village. Three talk about the impact of the crisis and relations with the settled population on trade: traders do not travel as much as they used to because of the goods they lost during the crisis; the cost of goods at the market was affordable before the crisis, but now everything has become expensive because of the conflict and relations with the population have become hostile. Now the population thinks that transhumant herders are the authors of the attacks that plague the area, which means that in some villages the economic exchange was not favourable when they arrived on market day, nor was the exchange of products, and the transhumant herders have lost all trust in the population. According to the reporting teams, these issues are most prevalent in Ndiffa, Gordil and around Bamara.

The Arab Rizegat, chief of a camel camp says he has a major problem because not enough people want to buy camel meat. He has sold a camel in Chad and is surviving on the money he made from this. If he can't sell more meat, he won't have no money to buy supplies, including medicine.

Some sedentary groups mention that access to market is difficult, forcing them to carry goods long distances or sell to passers-by at ridiculously low prices. Two groups mention the impact of insecurity on trade, with armed bandits robbing traders who go out on the roads to trade in neighbouring villages. One settled group described Sudanese armed bandits who rob the motorbikes of itinerant traders and then take refuge in transhumance camps, camouflaged by brothers from the Misseriya group.

Recommendations from the consultations regarding trade

- Facilitate access to markets for both transhumant and sedentary. Groups mention the lack of a market as an issue for trade in Dahal (Birao), Boldja, Madawa and Vakaga villages.
- Improve security to make it easier for people to trade by travelling to markets or to neighbouring villages. Workshop participants recommend regular patrols by internal security forces to promote the free movement of goods and people.



Concordis team with Arab Salamat semi-settled herders in a focus group held in Bachama 1

COMMUNICATION

What is working?

Local authorities say that what used to work, to the extent that the destruction of fields and conflicts between farmers and transhumant herders were minimised, is that transhumants would inform the Sultan of their arrival and wait for his signal to come. This gave people time to prepare before the transhumant herders arrived. Unfortunately, this practice of transhumants announcing their arrival is no longer in use.

The sedentary communities are consistent and clear that the communication they need from transhumant herders is indeed the announcement of their arrival. Several of the groups that commenting on this are women. The groups say that there is no warning mechanism to announce the arrival of the transhumant herders and that it is not the local authorities who warn them, but others including the chief of the herders himself, traders, motorbike drivers, people from Am Dafock (on CAR's border with Sudan) or neighbouring villages. Once they arrive in the village, transhumant herders leave their cattle in the bush and come to report their arrival to the local authority. Some call the local authorities to inform them of their presence.

An example of effective communication around transhumance was described by the Head of Agriculture and ACDA sector manager in Birao. He indicated that the main reason for a more stable environment in Ouanda Djallé is that the commitment of the local authorities to communicate with the transhumant herders. The herders send their representatives to the local authorities as soon as they arrive to introduce themselves.

Several transhumant groups described the ways in which they communicate about routes and timing. Four groups (three Peulh) reported communicating with the local authorities. One group of Peulh women said that before leaving Sudan, the ardo contacts the local authorities in Tiringoulou. Peulh men also said they get information from the local authorities through their ardo, who leaves the next day as a precursor and takes stock of the situation before arriving, which allows them to make decisions about the route. Other Peulh men seek information from the local authorities and youth leaders through an advance team before moving with all the livestock. Charafa men contact the mayors of the communes for information on security, their consent and the accessibility of the areas. One group said they get information from the host population through a trader who is used to using the axis by calling him on his phone. Another gets information about road safety from family members who are traders in Sikikédé and those who travel between Am Dukhun and Sikikédé.

Like those from the sedentary communities, a group of transhumant herders, talking about the resumption of park activities, which will require them to clear the area, want to be informed in advance so as not to be taken by surprise.

Transhumant herders also describe ways in which communication works in conflict situations. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter on conflict resolution mechanisms, but for now it should be noted that several transhumant groups, of different ethnicities and genders, express a preference for direct dialogue with those involved to find an amicable solution to conflicts such as the destruction of fields.

What is not working?

What is not working for sedentary communities is that they say they receive no official advance warning of the arrival of transhumant herders. Many groups say the same thing: there is no warning mechanism in place, no alert mechanism to announce the arrival of the herders, or it is not operational. The arrival of transhumant herders in the area is often unknown because they do not announce their arrival to the local authorities of the villages they pass through or to the Consul of Sudan. Several groups say that there used to be a system, but since the crisis of 2013, this system has disappeared. When they do receive advance notice of their arrival, it is from hunters, young traders or the chief of the transhumant herders himself. Local authorities agree that the practice of announcing the arrival of transhumant herders is no longer in use. This has led to an increase in the number of issues related to the destruction of fields.

Herders respond to criticism for not announcing their arrival by saying that the dry season is now starting much earlier and much faster than before: the cows, finding no pasture to graze, set out on the transhumance routes and herders are unable to stop them.

Upon arrival, some herders present themselves to the local authorities, while others don't but go into the village, buy agricultural products and return to their camps. Some sedentary groups say they only become aware of the herders' arrival when they go to their fields and see damage to their crops. One group of women listed those who do (Peulh) and those who do not (Salamats, Misseriya, Tahacha, Hemat) present themselves to the local authorities. One group of women said that the absence of internal security forces in some areas was the reason why transhumant herders did not report to the local authorities. They also mention the lack of an alert or communication mechanism between the different localities.

The only mention by transhumant herders of the lack of a warning mechanism to announce their arrival comes from a group of Misseriya who say they come spontaneously, without any communication channel, when they know the road is dry and they can move.

The importance of re-establishing state authority in the CAR is mentioned by one transhumant group in relation to the need for the CAR and Sudanese authorities to communicate and develop a joint strategy for controlling the border between the two countries.

Recommendations from the consultations regarding communication

1. Recommendations for improving the communication of information

- **Establish (and maintain) a mechanism to warn sedentary communities in advance, giving them time to prepare for the arrival of transhumant herders.** This needs to work across borders and between localities within the CAR. A group of men in Boldja described how communication should work. As the transhumance approaches, i.e. before the Peulh herders migrate to the CAR, their leader should inform the local customary authorities (Sultan, Mayor of Tiringoulou) or the head of the FNEC by phone of their arrival in an area chosen by the transhumant herders. The local authorities in turn inform the village chiefs, who will also sensitise their communities in advance about the social cohesion and coexistence that must exist between the two communities during the transhumance period.
- Establish **good collaboration channels between the mayors of the municipalities** as a source of stability in the Vakaga area. In the *acte d'engagement*⁶ workshop, participants asked the two mayors of the two communes to work better together and to share information about the movement of herders through the zone.
- **Publicise the availability of livestock vaccination.** Focus group data suggest that both transhumant herders and sedentary communities are unaware that the government or NGOs are currently vaccinating livestock. Vaccination programmes need to be publicised more effectively and in advance.
- **Communicate changes in land use in advance.** A transhumant group in Tiringoulou asks to be informed in advance when park activities will resume and when they will have to vacate the area, so that they are not surprised.
- **Share information** when NGOs start working on transhumance.

2. Recommendations for communication to agree on an approach to transhumance

⁶ Agreement negotiated between local authorities.

- **Establish a common approach to cross-border control of transhumance.** CAR and Sudanese authorities to communicate and implement a common border control strategy.
- Organise a **migration conference** between the key decision-makers of the three countries (CAR, Sudan, Chad). The conference should include the Ministers of Livestock, Ministers of Agriculture, Ministers of Defense, Public Security, Territorial Administration, Foreign Affairs, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Farmers' Organisations of Herders and Farmers, Leaders of Farmers and Leaders of Transhumant herders and the GC with the aim of regulating transhumance and making it a beneficial activity for all.
- Organise a **transhumance planning meeting between the advisory group and the technical services.** This should include in particular ANDE, ACDA, FNEC, association of agro pastoralists, local authorities, the mayors in order to discuss the issues related to transhumance and to regulate taxes in order to facilitate a peaceful transhumance that is beneficial to all (N.B. Also listed under service provision).
- Organise a **meeting between the Advisory Group and other transhumance stakeholders from Sudan and CAR** to discuss the conditions for organising the next transhumance.
- Facilitate a **meeting between the Advisory Group and the leaders of armed groups to advocate for safe and peaceful transhumance.**

3. Recommendations for communication in transhumance-related conflicts

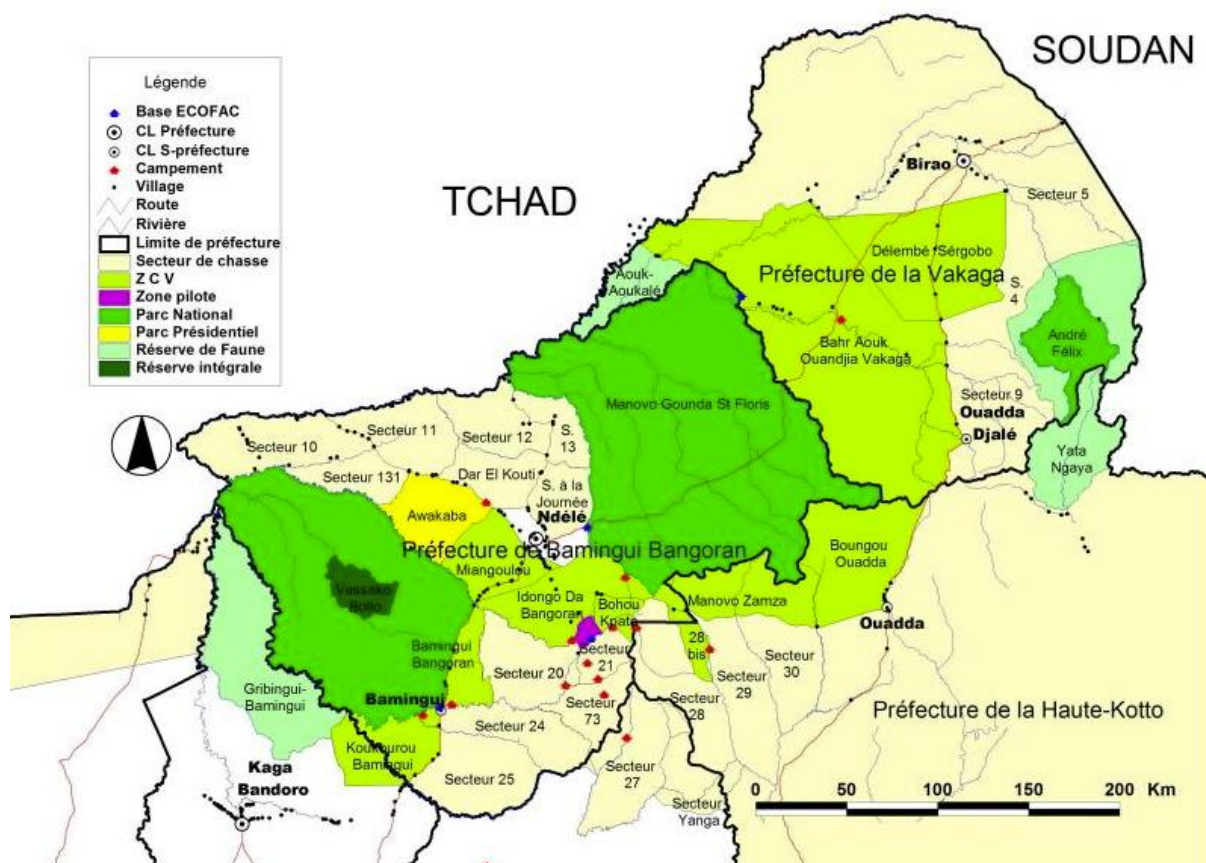
- Establish a mechanism for / practice of direct dialogue with stakeholders to **find an amicable solution to conflicts such as fields destruction.**
- Given the overwhelming openness of both sedentary and transhumant communities to **dialogue workshops**, national authorities could support these workshops by providing opportunities for communities to nominate topics for inclusion in the workshops, and by facilitating the organisation and conduct of the workshops and the implementation of recommendations.
- International organisations can **support and cooperate in dialogue workshops** proposed by sedentary communities and transhumant herders by providing funding, logistics and the provision of skilled facilitators.
- One sedentary group would like to see a **strong involvement of the members of the advisory group** in transhumance issues, because at the moment the herders do not have much trust in the local authorities and the advisory group can act as a connector to facilitate inter-community living between farmers and herders.

4. Recommendations to increase capacity for communication

- **Ensure that local authorities have the capacity to support peaceful transhumance.** Best practices in Ouanda Djallé, where local authorities are committed to communicating with transhumant herders, could be replicated.
- **Use internal security forces to re-enforce the use of transhumance practices once agreed,** e.g. early warning mechanism.

NATIONAL PARKS

The prefecture of Vakaga is home to a national park: André Félix (170,000 hectares) and three wildlife reserves: Yata-Ngaya (420,000), L'Aouk Aoukalé (330,000) and Ouandja Vakaga (130,000), which together cover 36% of the territory⁷. Focus group participants also mentioned the Manovo-Gounda-Saint Floris National Park (1,740,000) in the Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture, which borders Vakaga.



ECOFAUNE map of parks and protected zones in North-East CAR (<https://ecofaune.org/le-nord-est-de-la-rca>)

Two European Union programmes, the *Programme de développement de la région nord* (PDRN) and the *Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale* (ECOFAC) supported the ministry in charge of wildlife to manage the national parks and reserves. They also established and supported a system of community hunting areas to reduce the pressure from illegal hunting. These were managed by private operators with some assistance from ECOFAC. Local people would lease community hunting areas to professional hunting guides who would bring in safari clients from abroad. Hunting fees and taxes from the safaris would be paid directly to the local communities, with a portion going to the municipalities and the

⁷ [NATIONAL PARKS OF CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC \(national-parks-worldwide.com\)](http://national-parks-worldwide.com) accessed 3.3.22

state. The system provided a significant amount of money for local communities to invest in social services, including schools and health centres.⁸

When asked about the parks, most focus group discussions do not distinguish between national parks, reserves and hunting areas. The majority of settled focus group participants say that the parks no longer exist, having been destroyed or closed after the 2013 crisis. People in charge, trackers, and animals have all disappeared. One group (Matala Market) said the parks do exist, but park guards shoot at transhumant herders because they do not keep a good eye on the cattle that go into the parks to eat good grass. The transhumant focus groups all acknowledge the existence of the parks but said that the parks have not been functioning for some time and that the park infrastructure has been destroyed.

What is working?

Parks that are not currently functioning continue to serve as a natural resource for transhumant herders who use park land to graze their animals. They all say that they will only do this temporarily until the state and park authorities resume management of the parks, at which point they acknowledge that they will be asked to leave the area or promise to do so unconditionally. Reasons for using park land include avoiding disputes with other ethnic groups that restrict their movement to other areas, and addressing the serious problem of land scarcity caused by a larger number of breeders than in the past. The park plays a crucial role because transhumant herders do not have to search for water and grass for their cattle and are safe.

Some transhumants say they are not against the idea of a park, others say that the return of the park will have a negative impact on the smooth running of their activities. Some transhumant groups express a lack of trust in the park guards, saying that they allow trackers into the park who then kill their animals.

What is not working?

Almost all respondents who gave an answer say that the presence of a national park is to some extent important to them, although transhumant herders are much less likely to say that the presence of a national park is very important (45% vs. 79% sedentary).

Sedentary communities in focus groups unanimously want the parks back.

Benefits that are lost because the parks are not functioning include:

Parks / reserves

⁸ Bouché, Nzapa Mbeti Mange, Tankalet, Zowoya, Lejeune and Vermeulen, 2011.

- Parks are a national asset that contribute to the development of the local and national economies.
- The re-opening of the park will create jobs for the local community. Hiring of young people to carry out labour-intensive work will help reduce unemployment and poverty.
- Parks have a positive social impact. Giving young people jobs reduces the likelihood of them forming gangs and earning an income through criminal activity.
- The re-opening will lead to the departure of transhumant herders and will free up arable land near the parks in Gordil and Ndiffa for farmers.
- Reports from four focus groups, including with local authorities, youth leaders, settled men and settled youth, indicate that they regret that activities related to the protection and conservation of parks have stopped since the 2013 crisis.

Hunting areas

- The community benefited from the rebates paid by tourists and hunters, which paid for village pharmacies, teachers, the running costs of the town hall, health centres and help for the elderly.
- When the *Zone cynégétique villageoise (ZCV)*⁹ was still functioning, benefits included the payment of slaughter fees for certain protected species.
- The park exists so that local communities can hunt. Cattle that enter these areas bring dangerous diseases to the wildlife: the decline in wildlife is a problem for the villagers.
- International tourists would come and adopt the sons of the village¹⁰ or make donations to the villagers.
- The return of the hunting areas is being called for to put an end to issues of field destruction and Gender Based Violence (GBV), which some in two sedentary focus groups said was caused by the presence of herders in the park.
- Sedentary communities say that problems caused by the non-functioning of the parks include the killing of game by transhumant herders and poachers.

Recommendations from the consultations regarding national parks

National parks are a key factor in the stability of the Vakaga region. On the one hand, they exert pressure by reducing the space available for transhumance. On the other

⁹ A Zone Cynégétique Villageois (ZCV) is a village hunting area, where local villages benefit directly from levies as well as fines for poaching.

¹⁰ This is likely to be a reference to child sponsorship.

hand, if managed in a way that integrates the needs of all stakeholders, they offer opportunities for well-managed social cohesion and sustainable management of their ecosystems.

1. Organise a dialogue to agree on an approach to the (re)start of park activities. Although sedentary and transhumant communities have different views on the return of parks, both recommend organising a comprehensive dialogue that brings together all the actors operating in the area in order to take into account the concerns of each actor and reach a consensus before (re)starting park activities. Transhumant herders recognise that they are simply herders looking for pasture and have neither the means nor the legitimacy to oppose a park project. But they need to be involved in any dialogue both to secure their commitment to solutions and to ensure that those solutions take into account their understanding of the potential for inter-ethnic conflict if they are displaced from the park. Quantitative data supports a dialogue approach: 99% of respondents say they would accept a workshop between community representatives and park managers.



Although sedentary and transhumant communities have different views on the return of parks, they both recommend organising a major dialogue bringing together all the actors operating in the area to take into account the concerns of each actor and to reach a consensus before (re) starting park activities.

2. Re-draw the zoning of transhumance corridors and areas for grazing, ploughing and parks. Transhumant herders are asking for the zoning to be redrawn to take into account the way they now graze their livestock on what was previously prohibited park land and the growing number of cattle in the zone.
3. Re-establish national parks. All settled communities in the focus groups want the parks to be re-established. The national park needs to be re-established as a national asset that can contribute to the local economy and development.
4. Enforce the correct use of park areas. The sedentary communities say that the state must re-establish the demarcation between transhumant and agricultural areas. Transhumant herders must be prevented from entering parks. They must also respect the grazing areas and allow farmers to grow crops. To support this, park rangers need to be trained in conflict mediation and on how to guide transhumant herders through the official corridors.
5. Support the development of economic activities around the park. There may be opportunities for economic activities beyond core park activities, e.g. beekeeping.

USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

What is working?

Transhumants bring their livestock to CAR because of the country's natural resources. The chief of a camel camp says that he brings his family's camels from Geneina in Sudan to CAR because the really good pasture in CAR means that the camels produce really good milk.

Transhumance can happen peacefully. Gula farmers and Peulh transhumant herders from Sudan have a non-aggression pact that goes back many generations and is still respected today. A settled community of Gula farmers in Boldja said that for the past two years (2019-2021) they have lived in "perfect collaboration" with the Peulh transhumant herders. They report no major incidents, no destruction of fields. The herders stay away from the village, leaving the fields free for agriculture. A group of Peulh herders in Tiringoulou said that their relations with farmers were good and that they had no conflicts with sedentary people: they scrupulously respect grazing areas and have moved away from fields to graze their cattle.

The common factor when groups talk about what works is enforced agreement on land use. Settled communities talk about the way things used to be, with land set aside as a park, transhumant herders prevented from entering, transhumant herders respecting grazing zones and farmers free to grow crops in the fields. Park rangers want the parks to return and recommend that they be re-established. The transhumant herders want the government to re-zone a grazing area if the parks are re-established, and for this transhumant corridor to be respected by all. No group mentioned the existence of a current enforced agreement on land use. One group of transhumant herders said that they had moved into Gordil, which they recognised as park area, but only because they had the permission of the mayor's council and a the promise to release the area unconditionally once park activities were resumed.

Conflict is less likely to occur where natural resources are not scarce. In the Birao area, for example, sedentary communities report that the situation is less tense because of the abundance of water. Transhumant herders say that being able to stay in their usual corridor and stay away from villages avoids their animals trampling on the fields of settled communities and promotes acceptance by these communities as it reduces the destruction of fields, gardens and water points.

Where there are areas of conflict over land use, as reported by all the focus groups except the Gula farmers in Boldja and the Peulh herders in Tiringoulou, it works to have a conflict management mechanism in place. Hemat transhumant herders say that the existing mechanism for managing conflicts between two parties over the destruction

of fields works amicably in the presence of a local authority, either the mayor or the village chief.

What is not working?

Many conflicts arise over issues related to the use of natural resources. These include:

1. **Destruction of crops.** The majority of focus groups, both sedentary and transhumant, report the destruction of crops by transhumant animals. Settled communities report that cattle destroy crops such as manioc, millet, sorghum, and, to a lesser extent, onions, tomatoes, potatoes and carrots. Farmers say they have stopped growing slow-growing staples such as cassava. While most of the damage is caused by cattle, sedentary communities also report crop damage from mounted animals including donkeys, horses and camels. Damage is more likely to occur at night. One group mentioned that transhumance also has a negative impact on honey production and fishing, both of which are damaged by ox urine. Transhumant herders do not deny that crop damage occurs. In fact, they say that keeping herds away from villages reduces the problem, but does not eliminate it. Most speak of it as an unavoidable consequence of moving herds, which requires an effective remedy, but one group of Charafa said that the Misseriya were more aggressive and voluntarily let their cattle devastate the fields.
2. **Expansion of farming.** The complaint of a group of Peulh transhumant herders in Sikikede illustrates how the behaviour of sedentary communities contributes to conflict over land use. The group criticises the behaviour of farmers who have taken over all the fields, gardens and fishing grounds. The transhumant herders don't know where to go with their herds: the corridors they used in the past, and even camps and water points, have been farmed. When the transhumant herders return to Sudan, the sedentary communities use the herders' camps for cultivation: the transhumant herders find this strange because they will return to the same camp the following season. Some change their behaviour as a result: a group of Peulh Dankoe transhumant herders say they moved from Gordil to Vakaga village because there were more fields in Gordil than in all the corridors they used before.
3. **Increase in the number of herders.** A group of Peulh transhumant herders in Tiringoulou, who currently use a national park area for their herd, said that the number of herders today is higher than in the past. There is a serious problem of land and a need for the state to demarcate areas for grazing.
4. **Livestock theft.** Settled communities report the theft of goats, sheep and even cattle. Transhumant herders report that other herders sometimes steal their cattle, goats and sheep. They mostly blame the Misseriya for this theft, which usually occurs when they return to Sudan.
5. **Destruction of water points.** One community in Bamara village said that the destruction of their watercourse by transhumant herders was even more

inconvenient than crop destruction, as it removed a reserve source for fishing. A group of transhumant herders said that some cattle had fallen ill after drinking contaminated water.

6. **Fear of food insecurity.** Sedentary communities in two focus groups mentioned that food security was highly threatened or that they feared a food crisis in areas affected by violence. There were no recorded mentions of actual or feared food insecurity from transhumant groups.
7. **Lack of peaceful settlement of damages.** Some settled communities report that transhumant herders prefer to threaten and use weapons or flee after devastation to avoid paying compensation.
8. **Environmental impact.** For the most part, people do not talk about environmental issues. Where they do, it tends to be driven by food security and economic (income) needs. Several sedentary communities referred to the poaching of protected species in the context of the village hunting areas (*Zone cynégétique villageoise*) and communities also talk about cattle bringing dangerous diseases to wildlife, a decline in wildlife that is problematic for villages, and the killing of game by transhumant herders and poachers. A group of local authorities also referred to the killing of game and deplored the fact that since 2013, activities related to the protection and conservation of parks have ceased.



Ouandja River, near Bamara village

Recommendations from the consultations regarding natural resources

- **Define and enforce land use.** The sedentary and transhumant communities are asking the government to define land use in order to reach a common

understanding, to be enforced if necessary, on transhumance corridors, with separate areas for grazing, cultivation and park areas. Participants in the workshops also called for the designation of crop and livestock areas by mayors in collaboration with the technical services for livestock, agriculture and FNEC, with support from the Advisory Group.

- **Restore parks and village hunting areas (ZCVs).** There is a demand for clarity on land use and also for a return to the benefits of revenue generated from hunting areas. Focus group participants recall that when the ZCV was still functioning, they benefitted enormously from the payment of hunting levies and slaughter fees for certain protected animal species, which funded the construction of schools and health centres. The hiring of young people for labour-intensive work also helped to reduce unemployment and poverty, and hence herder-farmer conflict, as young people were less likely to resort to stealing or killing the cattle of transhumant herders.
- **Establish a communication mechanism to allow farmers to prepare for the arrival of transhumant herders,** e.g. to harvest in advance of the arrival of transhumant herders to avoid destruction of fields or looting of crops. This has been requested by sedentary communities, but there is no evidence that it is unacceptable to transhumant herders as long as it is not onerous and does not threaten their security by signalling their routes and timing in advance. The reporting teams point out that cattle will move of their own accord when pasture is exhausted and herders may not be able to delay the start to transhumance. Workshop participants also advocated for an early warning mechanism between the leaders of the transhumant herders, the Advisory Group and the local authorities along the transhumance corridors before the herders arrive, in order to take precautions in advance to avoid conflicts between farmers and herders.
- **Change behaviour to limit damage caused by transhumant livestock.** Sedentary communities ask transhumant herders to watch their livestock at night, when most crop damage occurs, and not to leave their livestock in the care of children who cannot prevent them from destroying fields. Transhumant groups deplore the cultivation of cattle corridors and camps.
- **Negotiate access to water for all.** Find ways to protect watercourses from damage during transhumance and mechanisms for all communities to agree on access to water points for drinking, irrigation, fishing, washing and bathing.
- **Set up a mechanism for peaceful conflict management.** All communities and workshop participants recognise the need for a conflict management mechanism to deal with conflicts over issues such as the destruction of fields. This is likely to be between two parties, farmers and herders, with the involvement of a neutral third party such as a local authority mayor or village chief, and the presence of the Advisory Group.



A borehole near Saffra, one of about 25 such water sources Misseriya semi-settled herders dig in river beds.

SOCIAL COHESION

The concept of social cohesion describes how norms of trust and belonging evolve over time through social interactions and, in particular, through mutually beneficial economic exchanges and the interdependencies that result.¹¹ As such, the benefits of maintaining social cohesion provide incentives to engage in constructive dialogue when conflicts arise and to prevent them from escalating into violence.

The consultation measured dimensions and levels of social cohesion between transhumant herders and sedentary communities in four dimensions. Commercial interaction (trade), conflict dynamics and conflict resolution mechanisms are covered in separate chapters. The focus here is on social interaction.

Social interaction

A series of questions about key social events were used as proxies to assess levels of social cohesion levels. The first eight questions asked about actual participation and openness to participate in four key types of events – weddings, funerals, traditional dance, and religious ceremonies – in the life of the other group.

	Wedding	Funeral	Traditional dance	Religious ceremony
	%	%	%	%
Sedentary: did attend over the past year	26	35	29	40
Transhumant: did attend over the past year	45	43	43	55
Sedentary: would attend if invited	74	81	78	80
Transhumant: would attend if invited	99	100	98	90

The results indicate a high level of social interaction between sedentary and transhumant communities: at least a third of respondents had attended a wedding, funeral, traditional dance or religious ceremony hosted by the other group and a significant majority would accept without hesitation or would probably accept an invitation to such an event.

The figures also show a significant increase in social interaction and openness to social interaction since the previous consultation: in 2019, for example, less than 10% of all respondents said they had attended a wedding ceremony hosted by the other

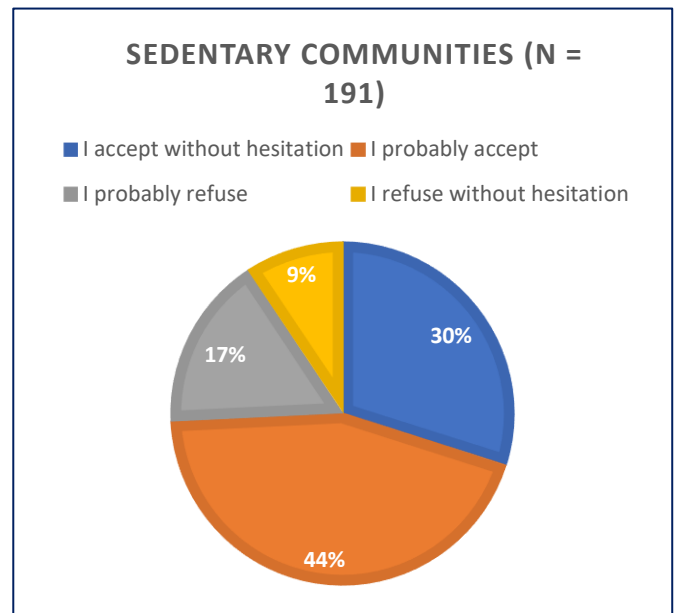
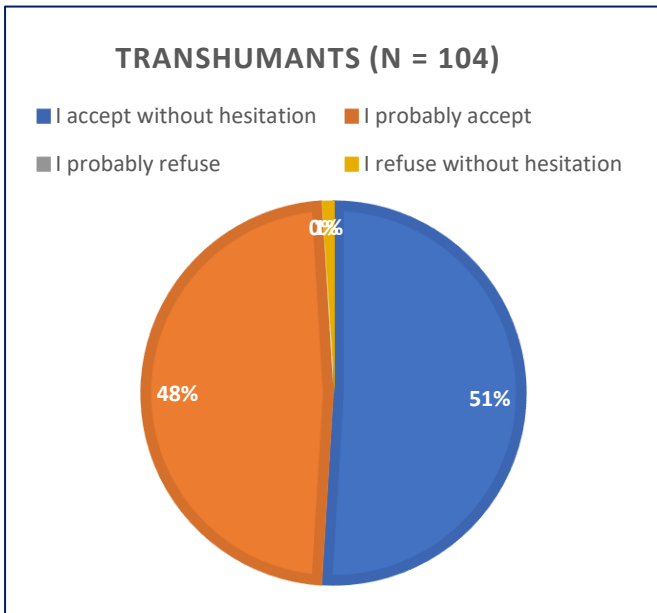
¹¹ United Nations Development Programme, 2020, p.18. For an introduction to the historical development of the term, see Jenson, 2010, pp. 3 - 16.

community, and just under 60% said they would or would probably accept such an invitation.

98% of the transhumant herder respondents said they would accept an invitation to attend an important social event in the life of the other community. This suggests a significant improvement in social cohesion compared to 2019, when three out of 13 transhumants (23%) said they would probably refuse to attend the wedding of someone from the other community. Similarly, almost 80% of sedentary community respondents in 2021 said they would definitely or probably attend a traditional dance of the other community if invited, compared to just over 70% in 2019.

Men are much more likely than women to have attended one of these important social events (e.g. 50% of men said they had attended a funeral vs. 26% of women). Young people (18-25) are also more likely to have participated than those over 25 (53% attended a wedding vs. less than 30% for older groups). Men are also much more likely than women to say that they would accept an invitation without hesitation (e.g. to a traditional dance 54% vs. 31%) and women much more likely to say that they would refuse without hesitation (e.g. to a wedding 10% vs. 2%). However, it should be noted that a large majority of women say they would definitely or probably accept an invitation to one of these important social events (e.g. 81% of women would definitely or probably accept an invitation to a funeral).

The data for transhumant and sedentary communities show two main differences. The first is that transhumant herders are much more likely to have attended a wedding, funeral, traditional dance or religious ceremony hosted in a sedentary community than the other way round. The second is that the percentage of people who say they would either immediately refuse or probably refuse an invitation is very low or non-existent for transhumant herders, but much higher for sedentary communities. For example, of the sedentary respondents, 19% say they would either immediately refuse or probably refuse an invitation to a transhumant funeral. Note again that a strong majority of participants from sedentary communities say they would accept without hesitation or probably accept an invitation.



WOULD YOU ATTEND A WEDDING CEREMONY HOSTED BY THE OTHER COMMUNITY?

Actual participation and willingness to participate differ between geographical areas, as shown in the tables below. While actual participation data show greater social interaction in Ouanda Djallé and Birao than in Boromata, Sikikédé and Tiringoulou, each region shows a majority of settled respondents willing to attend any one of the four main social events if invited. Note in particular the data for Sikikédé where, although only one in ten respondents had attended a wedding, funeral or traditional dance of the other community, all but one respondent said they would attend if invited.

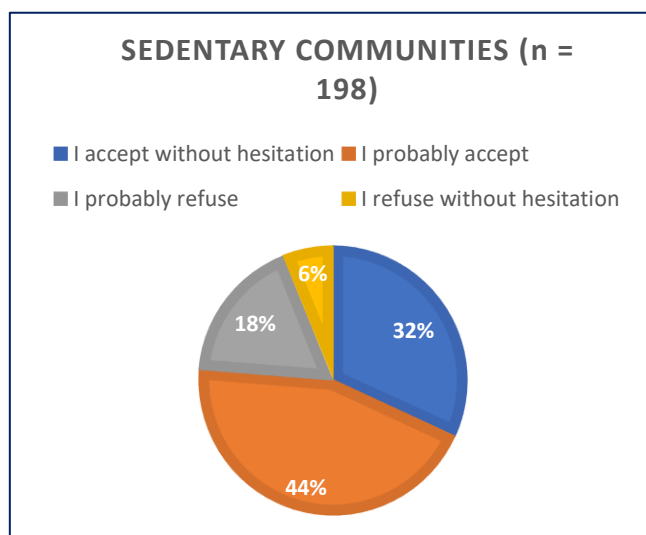
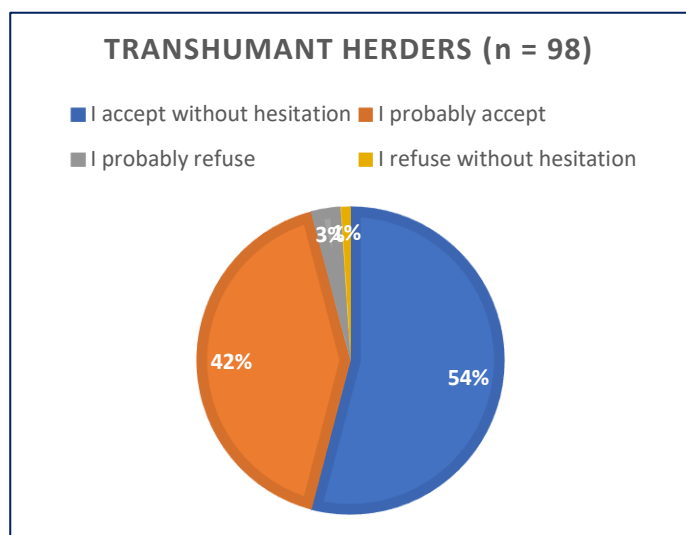
Did attend over the past year - Sedentary	Wedding	Funeral	Traditional dance	Religious ceremony
	%	%	%	%
Birao	40	47	45	44
Boromata	11	4	7	26
Sikikédé	10	10	10	50
Tiringoulou	16	23	23	34
Ouanda Djallé	35	62	35	58

Would attend if invited* - Sedentary *definitely & probably	Wedding	Funeral	Traditional dance	Religious ceremony
	%	%	%	%
Birao	80	80	80	71
Boromata	52	78	59	85
Sikikédé	90	90	90	90
Tiringoulou	69	77	77	84
Ouanda Djallé	85	92	88	84

Trust

The next three questions deal with social interactions that require trust (taking someone into one's home, allowing one's child to play with a child from the other group, allowing one's child to marry someone from the other group).

83% of respondents said they would definitely or probably agree to accommodate someone from the other community, including 75% of the sedentary community and 96% of the transhumant community. In contrast, a quarter of respondents from sedentary communities said they would refuse to offer accommodation to transhumant herders.



WOULD YOU ACCEPT OR REFUSE TO ACCOMMODATE SOMEONE FROM THE OTHER COMMUNITY?

As might be expected from responses to questions about key social events, settled women are much less likely than sedentary men to say that they would definitely or probably accommodate someone from the other community (65% vs. 88%).

In contrast to earlier responses, more 18-25 year olds say they would refuse without hesitation or probably refuse to accommodate someone from the other community than in the older age groups, although a substantial majority (77%) still say they would accept without hesitation or probably accept.

Responses were similar to the question:

Would you accept or refuse to let your child play with a child from the other community?

75% of men would probably or definitely let their child play with someone from the other community including over 70% of sedentary and over 90% of the transhumant populations. 70% of women would probably or definitely let their children play, including just under 60% (59%) of sedentary women and over 95% of transhumant women.

Only six of the 95 transhumant herders said they would definitely or probably refuse, while 35% of those from settled communities said they would refuse without hesitation or probably refuse.

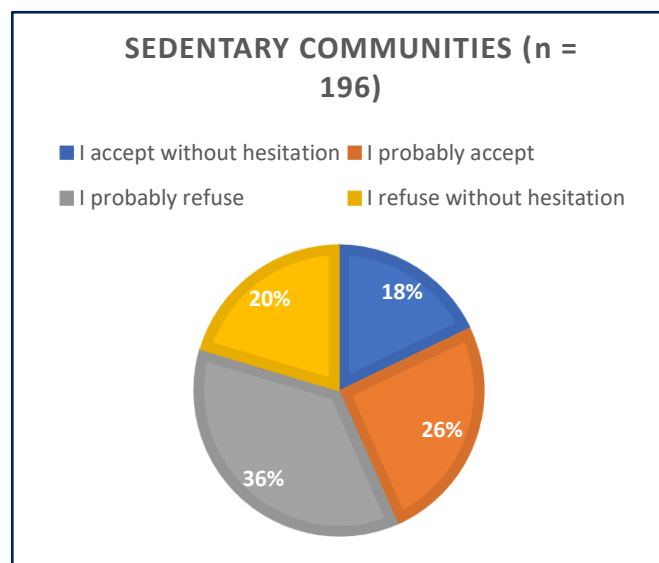
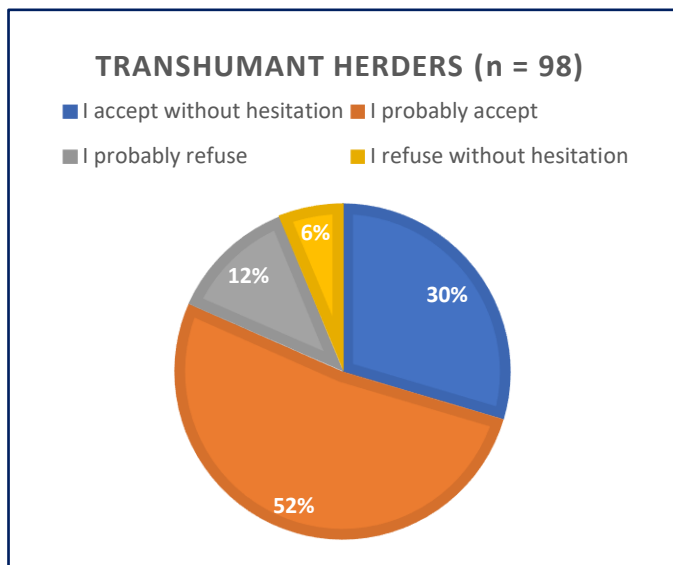
As before, settled men are almost twice as likely as sedentary women to accept without hesitation (36% vs. 19%), although a majority of settled women (59%) say they would accept or probably would accept.

There are some interesting patterns in the responses when broken down by age. Younger transhumants are more likely than those in the older age groups to say that they would have no hesitation in allowing their child to play with a child from the other community, but among sedentary communities the only age group in which a majority say they would probably or definitely refuse is 18-25 year olds.

Would you accept or refuse to allow your child to marry someone from the other community?

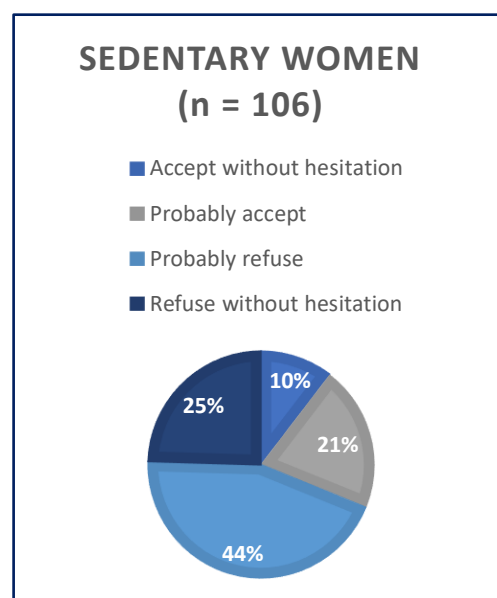
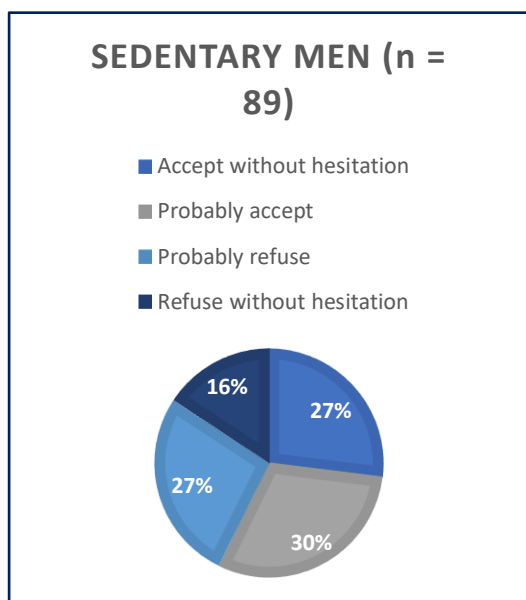
A majority (56%) of respondents say they would probably or definitely accept their child marrying someone from the other community, but this leaves 44% who say they would probably or definitely refuse. While almost a third of the 98 transhumant respondents said they would accept without hesitation and over 80% would accept or probably accept, including 70% of women, a majority of the 196 in sedentary

communities would probably refuse or refuse without hesitation, including almost 70% of women.



WOULD YOU ACCEPT OR REFUSE TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO MARRY SOMEONE FROM THE OTHER COMMUNITY?

There is a significant difference in response between settled men and settled women, with women much more likely to say they would refuse or probably refuse to allow their child to marry someone from the other community.



WOULD YOU ACCEPT OR REFUSE TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO MARRY SOMEONE FROM THE OTHER COMMUNITY?

In sedentary communities, young people (18-25) are much more likely than older people (50+) to say they would accept without hesitation (25% vs. 9%). In all age groups, however, a majority would refuse or would probably refuse. The reverse is true for transhumants: younger transhumants are more likely than older ones to say they would refuse, although a majority of all age groups would accept.

Although focus group participants did not talk specifically about weddings, funerals and other opportunities for social interaction, the qualitative data illuminate some quantitative findings.

What is working?

In all but the final question on trust (Would you accept or refuse to allow your child to marry someone from the other community?), a majority of those from both the transhumant and sedentary respondents say they would or probably would engage with the other community.

There are some positive comments about social interaction in the focus groups. Transhumant herders and the FNEC regional coordinator in Birao say that transhumance allows mutual exchange between transhumant herders and farmers, which among other benefits contributes to social cohesion between both communities. Both economic and social benefits are seen as beneficial to both communities. Women in Madawa say that the person who maintains social relations with transhumant herders is the village chief.

Where direct comparison with the 2019 data is possible, all findings from 2021 show an increase in social interaction and openness to social interaction and trust. This suggests a gradual improvement in social cohesion and the potential for a return to pre-crisis levels. Focus group participants say that, before the 2013 crisis, farmers and herders had a very good relationship, both socially and commercially.

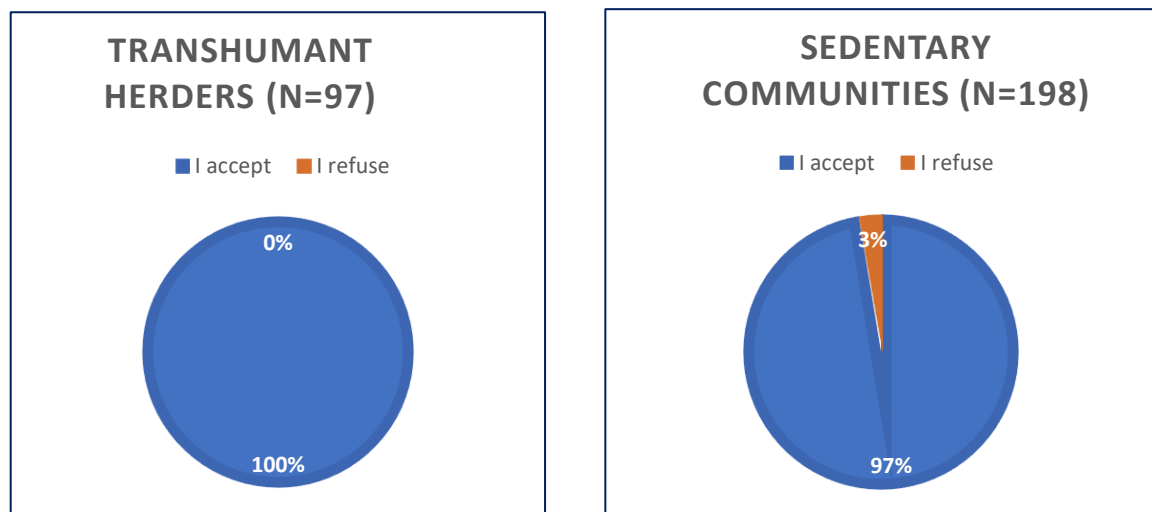
Broadly speaking, the picture of social cohesion that emerges from the data on social interaction suggests a general willingness to participate in important events in the life of the other group. This is particularly evident among the transhumant herders interviewed.

Amid this growing openness, the responses to one last question are noteworthy:

Would you accept or refuse dialogue workshops?

The question was designed to assess openness to tackling issues in a non-violent, structured and focused way. All transhumant herders surveyed and 97% of

respondents from sedentary communities expressed a willingness to engage in this way.



WOULD YOU ACCEPT OR REFUSE DIALOGUE WORKSHOPS?

What is not working?

In all but the final trust question (Would you accept or refuse to allow your child to marry someone from the other community?), a majority of women said that they would or probably would engage with the other community. In each case, however, women were much less likely than men to have engaged and much more likely to say that they would refuse or probably refuse to engage.

All but one of the negative comments recorded from the sedentary communities about social interaction came from women's groups. A group of Runga women in Birao say that today the climate of mistrust between the two communities is dangerously affecting their relationship at a social level. Transhumant herders who come without their families are the most belligerent, aggressive, drug-using and do not conform to the social norms that govern the practice of transhumance in CAR. Another group of women in Birao agrees that there is no social relationship between them because the transhumant herders are belligerent, while a Gula woman in Koubale says that there is no social relationship between the local community and the transhumant herders because of the herders' bad behaviour. Sara Massalite and Kara women in Matala say that social relations between farmers and transhumant herders existed before the crisis, but after the crisis participants say that they do not have social relations with the herders, only commercial and economic ones, and that the meeting place is the market.

A group of transhumant men say that the lack of state authority in Darfur has led to the emergence of groups of armed bandits who organise themselves to sabotage the

established social order between the Sudanese herders and the CAR communities of Sikikédé and Boromata.

Recommendations from the consultations regarding social cohesion

1. Recommendations for supporting social cohesion

- Workshop participants recommended that the State should declare its support for a culture of peace and social cohesion.
- Workshop participants recommend that the police and local authorities promote messages of peace, co-existence, reconciliation and tolerance.
- Establish state authority (security) in CAR and across the border in Darfur to reduce the impact of armed groups on the social order between transhumant and sedentary communities.
- Workshop participants recommend that the police and local authorities support the activities of the advisory group and collaboration between members of the council group and community leaders (group leaders, village chiefs).
- Find ways to address the barrier to social cohesion of some sedentary women who describe the behaviour of some transhumants as aggressive and threatening.
- Workshop participants recommend involving women in prevention and peacebuilding activities and decision-making at the community level and in parliamentary assemblies.

2. Recommendations for demonstrating social cohesion

- The population wants the internal security forces to change their behaviour, which is seen by some as discriminatory, and to set a good example by acting as agents of peace.

CONFLICT DYNAMICS

Factors shaping conflict dynamics in Vakaga

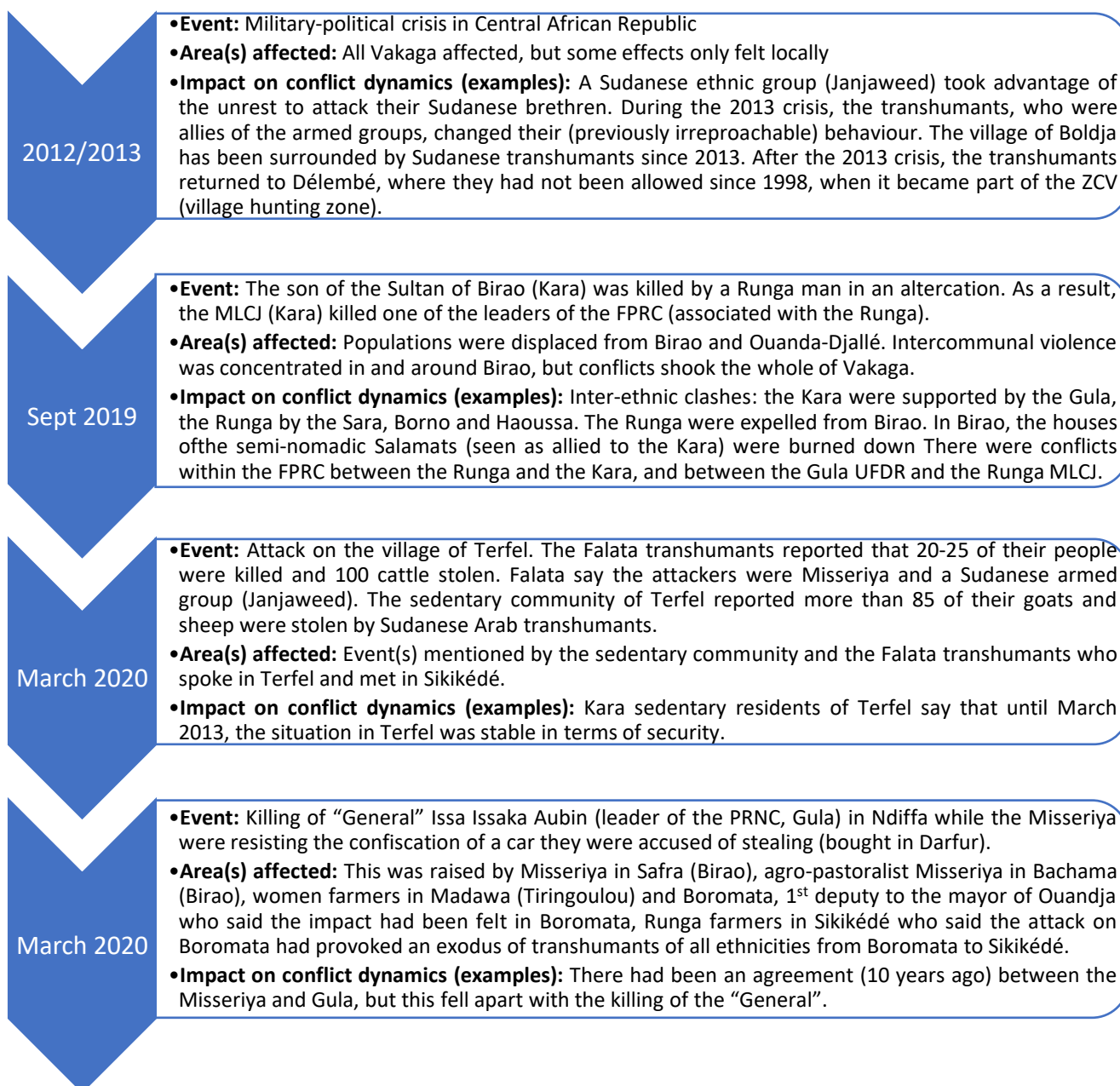
Factors described by participants in the 2021 consultations that have shaped the conflict dynamics in Vakaga include:

1. **Historical conventions.** Certain districts of Birao, for example, have historically been inhabited mainly by the Runga or Gula ethnic groups. When conflicts arise, sedentary communities feel they are forced to leave their area, which may then be occupied by another ethnic group. Transhumant participants say that the Kara identify themselves as the indigenous people of Birao and appropriate the land, giving them the right to behave as they please.
2. **Historical agreements.** Conflict is influenced by the creation of – and the failure to uphold – agreements between groups. One example cited by participants in the 2021 consultations is the non-aggression pact between the Runga and Salamats.
3. **Structures in place.** Structures in place – or the absence of structures in other places – affect both the causes and solutions to conflicts. For example, participants cited a structure that has been in place in the sub-prefecture of Ouandja-Djallé since 2004 to monitor herders to keep them off the fields and farmers to keep them off traditional transhumance corridors. The presence of this structure in Ouandja-Djallé is said to reduce conflict, while the absence of such a structure in other geographies is said to contribute to conflict.
4. **Specific events.** Certain events have had a profound and lasting impact on conflict dynamics. In 2007, for example, the village of Sergobo was burned down by Sudanese Arab Misseriya transhumants following a dispute between them and the settled population over the destruction of crops. The sedentary population was evicted. Conflict between the two groups has flared up in subsequent years, as described during the 2021 consultations.
5. **Significant, lasting change.** More gradual changes can also influence conflict dynamics. For example, interviewees described how, for more than a decade (since 2009), management of the Vakaga area has been dominated by armed groups rather than the state.
6. **Factors beyond borders.** Factors influencing conflict dynamics do not stop at international borders. For example, participants discuss the conflict between the Misseriya and Salamat ethnic groups in Sudan, which spilled over into CAR in 2016.

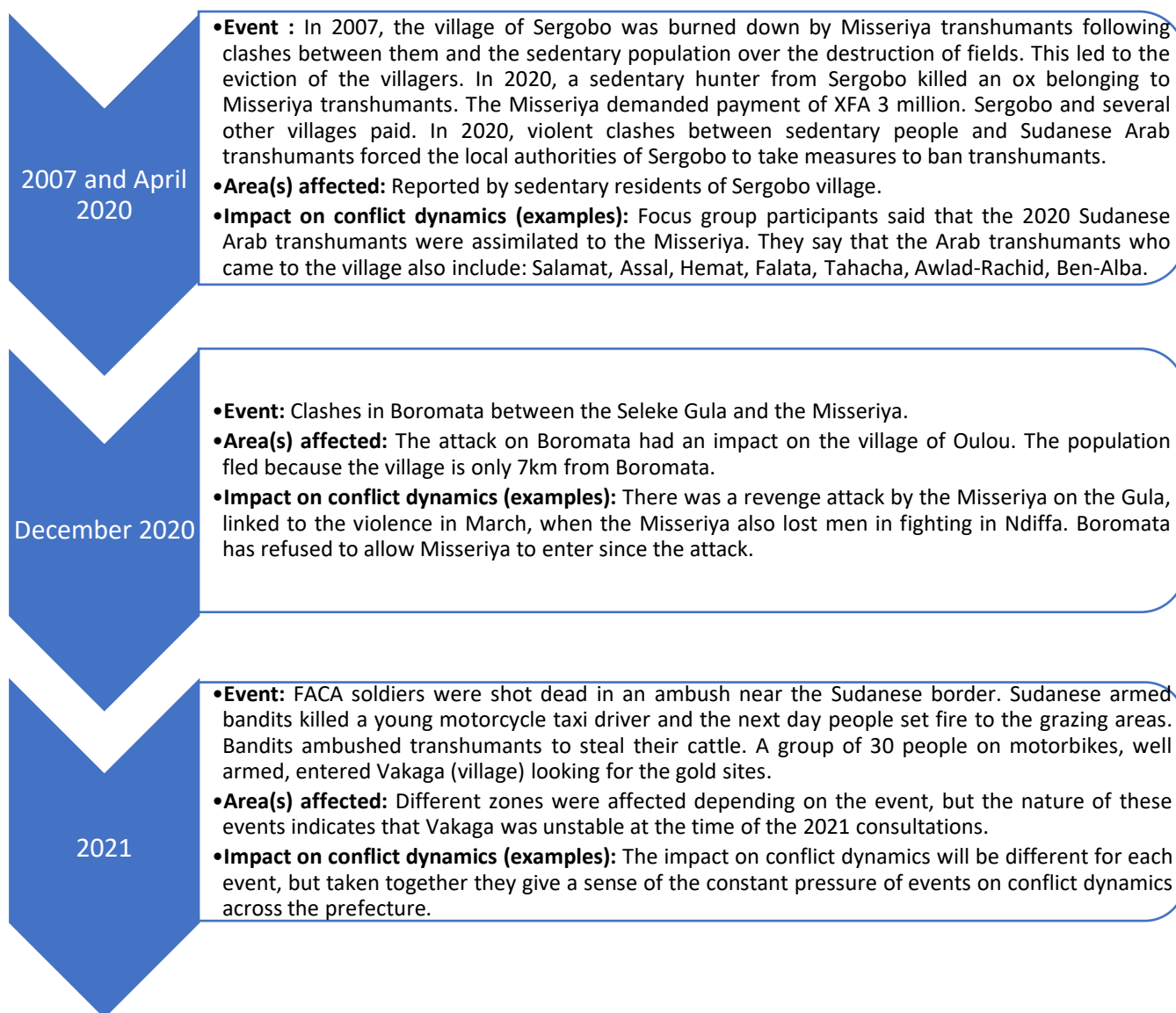
Specific events that shape conflict dynamics in Vakaga

In order to understand the conflict dynamics in Vakaga, it is necessary to have some awareness of the key specific events mentioned by the participants in the consultations. Some of these are common to all and mentioned by many, while others

are felt strongly by some but in a more limited geographical area. The key specific events mentioned by participants in the Vakaga 2021 consultations are set out below, using descriptions taken directly from the consultations where possible.¹²



¹² Armed groups mentioned are the MLCJ (*Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice* - Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice), the FPRC (*Front patriotique pour la révolution en Centrafrique* - the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic), the UFDR (*Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* - Union of Democratic Forces for Unity) and the PRNC (*Parti du Rassemblement de la nation centrafricaine* - Party of the Rally of the Central African Nation)



Significant, lasting change that shapes conflict dynamics in Vakaga

As with specific events, it is important to have a sense of what people interviewed in Vakaga in 2021 identified as the changes shaping conflict dynamics in the prefecture. Again, where possible, their words are used to describe both the changes and the impact on conflict dynamics.

Nature of change	Zone(s) affected	Impact on conflict dynamics
Armed groups taking over control of Vakaga from the state. Fighting between armed groups, for example over control of the border at Am-Dafock in 2019/2020.	Am-Dafock, Birao-Boromata and Birao-Takamala axis, Birao and surroundings, Matala	The period from 2009 to 2020 was marked by banditry, robbery, killing, looting, moral and physical violence. Fears in Birao that armed groups will attack, attacks on displacement camps.

<p>Attacks by armed groups on water points in displacement camp. MINUSCA protecting Birao with tanks.</p>		<p>Armed groups and (linked) ethnic groups around Birao armed and ready for offensive. Arab Tahacha say that some herders were attacked (by armed groups). Violent protests against MINUSCA.</p>
<p>Inter-ethnic clashes ongoing since 2019. Kara supported by Gula, Runga by Sara, Borno and Haoussa. Conflict mirrored in armed groups.</p>	<p>Whole of Vakaga prefecture.</p>	<p>The 2019 crisis, marked by inter-community clashes between the Gula, Runga and Kara, led to the displacement of part of the population in and outside Birao. The center of Birao was more affected by the destruction of the ethnic minority's houses and fields. These events have undermined the community cohesion.</p>
<p>A series of violent events over a number of years, including armed rebellion, abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and inter-communal conflict.</p>	<p>Ouanda-Djallé prefecture. Specific impact was felt locally, e.g. night attacks by LRA caused many casualties in Ouanda-Djallé. People were killed by the LRA in Mandoua.</p>	<p>The region has been rocked by conflicts that have almost brought it to ruin. To defend themselves against the LRA, the people of Ouanda-Djallé formed a self-defence movement and as a result the LRA is no longer active in the region.</p>
<p>Ongoing issues between the sedentary community and transhumants in Ndiffa, raised by Falata transhumants who have moved away from Ndiffa. Sedentary people in Ndiffa say that only Sudanese herders from the Falata ethnic group are allowed to stay because of their behaviour, but despite this there are a number of serious problems with the community, including stories of rape.</p>	<p>Transhumants in Vakaga Village (Tiringoulou area) and Sikikédé talk about disagreements with sedentary people from Ndiffa.</p>	<p>Falata Oudda say they have more problems with farmers, especially those from Ndiffa, Falata women and men in the Vakaga village camp say they left Ndiffa because of disagreements with sedentary people, and Falata in Sikikédé said they had moved because of disagreements with the sedentary people in Ndiffa. Gula women in Ndiffa say that Sudanese herders do not want to abide by the rules that govern the CAR and are involved in the destruction of fields, gardens and water points and, worst of all, the rape of women in the village. Settled Gula (older) people, however, say that Falata differ from the others in their willingness to collaborate, but that transhumants</p>

		<p>and armed groups have a forced relationship and that transhumants have almost left the area around Ndiffa because of the armed groups.</p> <p>Women farmers in Madawa say that the Falata and Salamat ethnic groups do not get along, and that is why the Falata are on the Tiringoulou side while the other ethnic groups are found towards Vodomassa, Boromata and Sikikédé.</p>
<p>See specific events above March and December 2020 Gula vs. Misseriya. As with the issues between transhumants and sedentary population in Ndiffa, this can be seen as a series of events or more significant, lasting change.</p>		<p>Sedentary and transhumant groups say the Misseriya are no longer accepted in the area, but transhumance by others is reported with only the usual tensions and disagreements.</p>

Structures in place – or lack of them

Listed here, again using their words where possible, are the existing structures referred to by participants referred during the 2021 consultations.

1. **Internal security forces in Birao.** Settled and transhumant communities in and around Birao say that the deployment of internal security forces from December 2020 has improved the security situation and allowed displaced people to return to their homes. The state is also reminding people of the rules, for example by telling camel herders that they are not allowed to enter certain areas. Arab Rachid transhumants in a camp near Boromata say that, since the return of the state in Birao, there has been a change in security provision – they refer to the gendarmerie, FACA and police – and as a result there have not been no attacks in the last 12 months.
2. **Lack of state authority in Darfur.** In contrast to the perceived return of the state in and around Birao, participants say that the lack of state authority in Darfur has led to the emergence of groups of armed bandits who are organising themselves to sabotage the established social order between the Sudanese herders and the Sikikédé and Boromata communities.
3. **Zoning for transhumance.** Reports of the creation of zoning in Tiringoulou and Ouandja, where herders are required to stay at least 15 km from the villages.

How conflict dynamics are felt across Vakaga

When asked if they have ever had a conflict with a particular population, over 80% of women and men say they have not. 87% of transhumants also answer No, as did over 80% of the sedentary population. 18% of our respondents from sedentary communities and 11% of transhumant herders say they have had a conflict with a particular population. When asked with whom they have had conflicts, foreign transhumants top the list with 19 mentions. This is followed by others (6). 17 of the mentions of foreign transhumants were by the sedentary population, one by semi-settled and one by a transhumant. The highest mention for transhumants is other (5) followed by Muslims (2).

Despite the consistent and abundant criticism in the focus groups, only one person (semi-settled) specifically said they had a conflict with a Misseriya. This was fewer than for Muslims (4), the same as for Falata Moulmoul, camel herders and Christians. One respondent (sedentary) mentioned the Seleka from the Runga ethnic group. There were no significant differences between the answers of men and women and no significant age differences.

When asked separate questions about security, a much higher percentage of settled respondents (over 40%) reported having been a victim of one of the groups they considered responsible for insecurity (mainly foreign transhumant herders and armed bandits). Abuses included theft of livestock and physical violence, closely followed by looting and then arson. Only one of the few transhumants who responded to this question said they had been a victim of one of the groups they considered as responsible for insecurity (armed bandits, others, FACA and villagers).

Care with findings on conflict dynamics

The facilitator's notes and observations from the focus groups indicate some reluctance and lack of openness on the part of participants to talk about conflict dynamics. The focus group environment may have discouraged people from speaking openly because of fear or social or political considerations. In an interview with a FNEC regional coordinator, the interviewer reported the interviewee's fear and insecurity when talking about transhumance relations with armed groups. The interviewer later described the coordinator's belief that herders do not associate with armed groups because they want to, but because they need protection. One facilitator reported that Misseriya men in a focus group seemed to be reticent about the issue of security, and another mentioned a private conversation after a focus group in which a farmer said that insecurity had increased since 2013, and even more so since 2018 with the

presence of Sudanese armed groups. One facilitator noted: "It seems that the farmers were too afraid to talk openly about their relationship with armed groups, so they declared that they had no problem, issue or violent conflict recently, that: "everyone is in perfect harmony."

Conflict dynamics per area: Birao, Tiringoulou, Ouanda-Djallé, Boromata and Sikikédé

The following information is mainly based on focus group discussions and workshops. It provides a detailed insight into the conflict dynamics per area and, in some cases, in specific villages. Allegations of attacks and incidents have not been verified, but provide a good overview of perceptions and inter-group relations.

Birao area

Participants in Ouanda-Djallé, when asked why transhumance is more peaceful there than in Birao, say that in Birao transhumance is more or less militarised, with alliances between the transhumants, who are mainly Arabs, and armed groups and between the transhumants and certain ethnic groups. For example, the Gula are allied with the Emat, and the Rachid and Runga with the Salamat and Sara.

Sedentary focus groups in and around Birao talk about transhumants and armed groups, sometimes linking the two, but most of their conversation and all of their energy is focused on the conflict with transhumants.

Transhumants describe both good and bad relations with settled populations and armed groups, but only one group mentioned the existence of an agreement between different ethnic transhumant groups, and none of the transhumant groups' notes mentioned an alliance between them and armed groups.

Conflict around transhumance pre and post 2013

Almost all sedentary groups make a distinction between pre and post 2013 when talking about transhumance. Before the military-political crisis of 2013, relations with the transhumants were good, both socially and commercially. The transhumants who came to the Birao area were mainly Sudanese Tahacha and Chadian Mbororo Peulh. They were mostly older, came with family members and moved without weapons. They had local leaders (Ardo/Katchalla). Transhumance was well organised and strictly controlled by the decentralised structures of the state. Each year, the Ministry of Livestock convened a national conference with all the traditional chiefs (sultans), prefects, sub-prefects and mayors, as well as technicians from FNEC and ACDA, to discuss the problems encountered in all parts of the country and to agree on the modalities of transhumance for the new season. Before the transhumants entered the CAR, a delegation led by the Sultan of Birao accompanied by representatives of FNEC, ANDE, the veterinary service and the gendarmerie went to the border to identify and register the transhumants and the number of livestock per owner. The transhumants did not arrive until the end of December, after the farmers had harvested their crops. The transhumants respected the fields of the sedentary population and were willing to collaborate in case of conflict. They made large purchases, which had a positive

impact on the social and living conditions of the sedentary population. Transhumant women sold cows' milk and collaborated well with sedentary women.

Since 2013, settled groups say relations have deteriorated. The absence of the state has led to violence by transhumants against the sedentary population. There is still a commercial relationship, but no social relationship. Sedentary focus group' participants say this is due to the arrival of another group of transhumants, Arab herders of Sudanese origin, who are described as behaving in a completely different way. They come from ethnic groups such as the Misseriya, Salamat (some from Sudan, some from Chad), Tahacha, Rachid, Hemat, Bornou, Amiteria / Almitera, Iram, Sahadi, Djerara, Nadimia, Salmania (from Chad), Haoulat-rabat, Lyalacheck, Ben-hassane and Ben-halba. Some come with families, wives and children, while others come alone. Those who come without their families are said to be young and to display bad behaviour, including aggression and drug use. Some participants mention cattle theft and violence, including sexual violence, against women, sometimes when women are alone in the fields.

The claim that there is a commercial but not a social relationship between some sedentary and transhumant communities is supported by some findings from quantitative research. In the Birao area, almost 20% of sedentary respondents say they would refuse without hesitation to attend a wedding or funeral of the other community. This differs by ethnicity: almost all Gula and Sara say they would accept an invitation to a funeral without hesitation (75%) or probably accept (25%), while close to 30% of Runga say that they would refuse without hesitation, as do close to 25% of Kara (note that sample sizes are small). In contrast, no settled respondents in Boromata and Sikikédé say they would refuse an invitation to a wedding or funeral without hesitation. Almost 30% of settled women in the Birao area say they would definitely or probably refuse to attend a traditional dance organized by the other community, and over 40% give the same answer for a religious ceremony.

Some transhumant focus groups, but not all, also made a distinction between pre and post 2013 when talking about transhumance. In the past, transhumance functioned normally and transhumants and sedentary populations had a very good relationship. Transhumants were able to carry out their activities in peace. These groups attribute this to the presence of the State and the resulting security: state services such as the police and gendarmerie regularly patrolled the main roads regularly as a deterrent and the military chased anyone who attacked, so they didn't feel insecure and could carry out their activities in peace.

The 2013 crisis has changed transhumance. One group says that all the difficulties started with the crisis. Like the sedentary groups, the transhumants talk about the arrival another group of transhumants since 2013. During the crisis, there were cases of cattle theft by Misseriya transhumants. Semi-settled Misseriya women in Safra say that new arrivals, including other Misseriya, display aggressive behaviour that affects relations between the settled and transhumant populations. These Misseriya are feared by local people as being the most dangerous and are also feared by other Misseriya. A group of transhumant Misseriya acknowledge that there are Misseriya who are aggressive and who will not cooperate in resolving a conflict over the destruction of fields. Sudanese Arab Rachid women deplore the behaviour of other transhumants, especially the Misseriya, who don't respect farmers' fields. The sedentary population can't tell the difference between them and other transhumants, so they no longer accept any transhumants. Transhumants admit that cattle are often close to the fields, justifying this by the fact that there are fields everywhere, with corridors occupied by farmers and no demarcation between agricultural and livestock

areas, and that camps have to be close to fields because of the location of water points. A group of Sudanese transhumant women from a mix of ethnic groups say that conflicts over the destruction of fields are caused by transhumants who come early, before the fields have been harvested, because of the competition for access to resources, especially water points. Other difficulties include the presence of armed groups and bandits in the villages and in the bush, who attack them either to extort money (illegal taxes) or to take livestock by force. Since 2013, there have been many tax collectors, including armed groups, and it is not clear who is entitled to collect taxes. Several groups of transhumants in the Birao area also mentioned the problem of bush fires, which they say these are deliberately set by the sedentary population and contribute to the diminishing and drying out of pastureland, which is also a source of conflict.

Some transhumants don't distinguish between pre and post 2013. They say they have always had problems with farmers in CAR and Sudan. Others say that they have returned for many years because they coexist peacefully with the settled population. Groups of Arab Tahacha transhumants say they have been returning every year for more than 20 years without any particular problem and that there is good cohesion and no conflict between the herders and the population of Délembé. A group of Misseriya also say they spend their transhumance in this region without any particular problem and that they have a good relations with the population of Bougaye.

Conflict around transhumance between 2019 and 2021

Some say the security situation has improved with the gradual return of the political-administrative and military authorities to the sub-prefecture of Birao. Before, there was no security in the corridors – the Seleka were everywhere. Some attribute the relative calm to the deployment of internal security forces in December 2020, although they admit that these have remained confined to Birao, or to the presence of the international special forces. Others say that, despite the deployment of security forces and sensitisation carried out by humanitarian organisations on transhumance, difficulties remain. Local authorities and youth leaders in Délembé say that, while the security situation is relatively calm, the population lives in fear of a possible reversal of the situation.

Causes of conflict during transhumance

Transhumants have no difficulty understanding why there are conflicts over cattle: given their economic and social importance (beef provides food and money for other needs and owning or maintaining a large herd of healthy animals conveys prestige), it is inevitable that they will be coveted by others. There are cases of cattle slaughter that aggravate relations with farmers.

Transhumants also acknowledge that their cattle are often close to the fields, but justify this by saying that there are fields everywhere. Conflicts often arise on routes now occupied by fields, such as those between Amdafock and Birao that pass through Roukoutou, because transhumants cannot access the water points that are essential for their livestock. They say that they reduce the potential for conflict by arriving after the harvest and leaving before the sowing. The presence of fields on the corridors is a bigger problem in the CAR than in Sudan, where farmers are formally prohibited from planting fields on the corridors and around water points.

Use of weapons during transhumance

Sedentary participants say that transhumants arriving since 2013 are often armed, some with knives, bows and arrows, and others with firearms including assault rifles and automatic weapons such as Kalashnikovs. This means that conflicts over the destruction of fields often lead to violence, often fatal. Some describe being threatened with firearms when they dare to complain about the destruction of fields. Sedentary youth say that those who have the weapons have the power: most of the herders who destroy fields are well armed with firearms and the youth cannot use them to claim their rights.

Local authorities say that those carrying weapons are foreign transhumants, including the Hanagamba, Mbarala and Hontorbe. They acknowledge that herders carry weapons to protect themselves. They acknowledge the insecurity with which the herders live, including from armed bandits, but say that the carrying of weapons by the herders is very disturbing to the farmers because it creates an imbalance between the two communities. They also accept that the herders may not be aware that they are not respecting the corridors because there are no official corridors and the transhumants come along the routes they know. Some participants acknowledge that they may be wrong to accuse the herders of poaching and banditry.

Some transhumants claim that they do not carry weapons. Others say that most transhumants have weapons, but they only carry them to protect themselves and their livestock, and only use them only when they feel their lives or those of their animals are in danger. A group of Hemat women say their community has machetes, bows and arrows to protect themselves. Transhumants report that farmers are also armed with similar weapons which they use when they catch an ox in their field. A group of mixed-ethnic Sudanese women transhumants says that conflict with the sedentary population occurs when unfounded accusations are made against transhumants: unidentified armed bandits carry out robberies and then flee into the bush, pursued by villagers who follow tracks and, when they reach a camp, accuse the residents of the crime.

Conflict dynamics with particular ethnic groups

Some sedentary populations report good conflict dynamics with certain ethnic groups of transhumants, including some of Arab origin. For example, a group of local authorities and youth leaders in Délembé, find it difficult to resolve conflicts with the Sudanese Arab Tahacha, who they describe as armed and aggressive, but find a group of (also Sudanese Arab) Awlad-Rachid transhumants moderate and willing to collaborate in resolving conflicts over the destruction of fields, theft and the killing of livestock. Kara agro-pastoralists in Dahal, on the other hand, say that coexistence with the Arab Tahacha has always been peaceful, despite conflicts over the destruction of fields.

Transhumants also report good relations with certain groups. A group of Misseriya says that the village of Safra, with its ethnic Kara population, welcomes foreign transhumants every year. Semi-settled Arab Salamats say they have good relations with the Sara, the Runga, even the Gula and Arabs from Chad. They say the Kara trade and marry with the Salamat. A group of Tahacha Arab transhumants in Terfel seem to live in harmony with their Kara hosts: the two communities have lived peacefully together for several decades.

However, another group of Sudanese Arab Salamat transhumants say that the Kara are hostile to transhumants, the Sara less so. The areas still hostile to transhumants are the Kara villages north-east of Birao. Disputes with the Sara are settled out of court, while those with

the Kara result in compensation claims that exceed the damage caused. Obstruction of transhumance corridors is more frequent and intense in Kara villages.

The Arab Misseriya herders are the most criticised by settled groups and local authorities, who accuse them of deliberately driving their cattle into fields to destroy crops and of belligerent behaviour. They are described as the most dangerous, carrying weapons in the bush, carrying out armed attacks, stealing and killing. Youths in Manou report a case in 2013 where Misseriya Arabs robbed three Gula men on the Birao – Delembe axis and killing one of them. Gula in Manou say the Misseriya are accompanied by armed bandits who rob motorbikes and other vehicles and kill people at will. Women in Toumou say the Misseriya have a reputation for stealing cattle, carrying weapons and even raping women in the locality. They are also criticised for not trading in Vakaga, instead going to Sudan to buy what they need.

When asked about their reputation, the Misseriya say that, as in any society, the Misseriya community has some black sheep, but that other ethnic groups should avoid generalising about their behaviour. As soon as a Misseriya makes a mistake, such as destroying fields or committing banditry, they generalise and say that all Misseriya are bad. They feel that they have had very difficult relations with the settled communities since long before the 2013 crisis. A group of Misseriya in Ferick Bougaye said that in 2019, when the Runga and Gula were in conflict, the Gula accused all Misseriya of being accomplices of their enemies. The conflict has prevented the Misseriya from moving to the Tiringoulou area or the centre of Birao, forcing them instead to go to Am Dafock to buy food and veterinary medicines. The already difficult situation has worsened since the conflict in Ndiffa in March 2020 over the sale of a vehicle by a Gula to a Misseriya in Sudan. They feel that the Gula are now in coalition with other ethnic groups to harm the Misseriya. They feel that their safety is no longer guaranteed as they are rejected by other communities who equate them with armed groups and bandits. They cannot go to the market in Birao for fear of being arrested.

Relations between transhumants

Semi-settled women say that they also have conflicts with other transhumants because their fields are damaged by the transhumants' livestock.

Semi-settled Salmania women talk about a conflict in 2013 between the Salamats and the Misseriya. This resulted in a loss of livestock for the Salmania, who had to leave quickly. A group of Salamat semi-settled men said they had made an agreement with five other Arab tribes, including the Misseriya and Hemat, not to take money from each other or harm each other. A group of Hemat transhumants said they had two oxen stolen by Misseriya herders three years ago.

Different transhumant groups have different views on camel herders. A group of semi-settled Arab Salamat participants say they have no problems with camel herders: they don't steal, they don't destroy crops, if a camel breaks a leg they sell the meat to the village. A group of mixed Sudanese Arab ethnicity transhumant women say that camel herders secretly use the pastoral wells at night, but do not contribute to their maintenance.

Relations with armed groups

Observers note a reluctance among sedentary participants to talk about their relations with armed groups, and local authorities advise that people do not want to talk about them. A group of Gula simply state that there are no armed groups in Birao, as they are committed

to the Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process included in the *Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité* - Special Mixed Security Units (USMS) and Khartoum agreements. A group of Kara in Terfelle said they had no links with armed groups. A local authority figure said that armed groups no longer played a significant role, but a few hours after the interview several FACA soldiers were shot dead in an ambush near the Sudanese border. Young people in Manou say that there are no disputes with armed groups in the area: relations with the armed group are only on a family basis. Some participants in a youth group in Nguene Boura say that the relationship between the armed groups and the transhumants forced them to take up arms and form a self-defence group in order to secure the village. Another group said that during the crisis, in the absence of the military authorities, the armed groups took the livestock of the local population by force. The FNEC regional coordinator says that farmers don't choose to have relations with armed groups: they fear them, are impoverished by their extortion and would prefer to get rid of them.

There are some comments from settled communities about the relationship between transhumants and armed groups, with some groups describing them as maintaining relations with or being allies of armed groups, and saying that they have good relations because of their common ethnicity. Others say that transhumants have no relationship or conflict with armed groups.

When asked about their relationship with armed groups, semi-settled participants say that they are armed bandits who steal other people's livestock and their community has no relationship with them.

Some transhumants say they have very good relations with the armed groups or no clashes with them, others say that relations with the armed groups are not without problems. They do not support any armed group: these groups take their cattle by force and impose exorbitant taxes on them. Disputes often arise over the collection of taxes and sometimes over arbitration following the destruction of crops. Farmers who want to put pressure on transhumants to pay more turn to armed groups. Some say the armed groups are better than the FACA and the gendarmes: the FACA and the gendarmes put their children in prison in Birao and they have to pay to have them released. Some report that they only pay taxes to armed groups when they are in small numbers in the camp or when they are unarmed. Armed groups rarely come to the camp because of the risk of creating tension. To avoid conflict, the most important thing is to pay the taxes.

Benefits of a peaceful transhumance

The sedentary groups recognise and describe the benefits of transhumance, mainly trade and the availability of draught animals. A group of young people say they have good relations with all transhumants (including several Arab Sudanese ethnic groups) except the Misseriya. For them, transhumance is an important activity for their village in the sense that trade contributes to improving their living conditions.

The need for young people to be economically active is one of the reasons why youth leaders in Délembé are calling for the return of the ZCV. of young people to carry out labour-intensive work in these hunting zones has not only helped to reduce unemployment and poverty but also to reduce conflict between farmers and herders, because young people who are busy would not think of stealing or killing the cattle of transhumants.

Transhumants also recognise the benefits of trade with the sedentary population, and say it is thanks to them that transhumants can find food to feed their families and livestock.

Recommendations from the consultations to improve conflict dynamics in Birao

In terms of remedies and recommendations to improve the conflict dynamics, the settled populations say that the absence of state authority (security) is the biggest obstacle to improving their situation in the short term.

Sedentary populations also mention the lack of a framework for managing conflicts between herders and farmers.

Transhumants say that only zoning will help avoid conflicts between the different stakeholders in transhumance, as it will allow farmers, herders and park managers to stay in their respective areas.

Local authorities say that the cause of most problems is the lack of respect for transhumance corridors, leading to the problems of field destruction and intrusion into national parks. They acknowledge that the main reason herders choose alternative routes is the insecurity linked to livestock theft.

Transhumants say that local authorities, farmers and herders must all share responsibility for transhumance-related conflict. Services such as ANDE and FNEC need to be restored, farmers need to stop cultivating everywhere and slaughtering cattle, and pastoralists need to seek negotiated solutions to conflicts.

It is important to solve the problem of insecurity so that transhumants can be asked to come without firearms.

As in Ouanda-Djallé, local authorities need to communicate with the transhumant communities. The herders must send representatives to the local authorities as soon as they arrive, to introduce themselves and to be informed about local rules and agreements on the sharing of natural resources. The FNEC regional coordinator also expressed strong support for the system of *gourniers*, which has not been in operation since the 1996 crisis, whose role was to inform and accompany transhumant herders from abroad as well as to monitor the corridors.

The local authorities recommend a meeting between the authorities and the leaders of the different communities, with the collaboration of ACDA and FNEC, to agree which areas are for herders and which are for farmers, and how herders should behave, including registering before arrival, presenting themselves to local the authorities, paying fees, and cooperating on carrying of weapons. They accept that military authorities may be needed to enforce the agreements.

Misseriya transhumants ask Concordis to organise an inter-community dialogue for peace and reconciliation between the settled communities and the Misseriya in the presence of their leaders and the local authorities.

The transhumants recommend a meeting of the leaders of the different transhumant groups to reach a consensus on how to behave during transhumance.

Tiringoulou area

All the transhumants who took part in the focus groups in the Tiringoulou area are Falata, including Oudda, Ekaher, Ekaye and Dankoe. They are Sudanese herders (Peulh, not Arab) who spend their time on transhumance in the CAR around Tiringoulou, Ouandja and Gordil. As noted below, Falata herders are the only group welcomed in parts of this area, but there are transhumants from other ethnic groups in other parts: settled men in the village of Madao say that, in addition to Falata who are the most common, they see Arab groups including Salamite, Misseriya, Tahacha, Risigate and Haimate.

All of the sedentary focus group participants in the Tiringoulou area whose ethnic group is recorded are Gula. Some of the settled communities in the Tiringoulou area, such as the village of Boldja, have a Christian majority.

Relations between settled and transhumant groups

Some transhumants say that relations between farmers and transhumant herders of the Falata ethnic group are good. They have established good relations with the sedentary community through contact, economic exchange and a willingness to work together in a friendly way. They have no conflicts with the sedentary people because they respect the fields and move away from them to graze their cattle. They know the value of the fields because they depend on them for their livelihoods during the transhumance period and therefore protect them from destruction during the grazing period. If livestock inadvertently enter the fields, they are always willing to come to an amicable agreement to avoid conflict with the farmers.

Others say that there is always conflict with the sedentary communities, but they stay far away from the villages, which reduces the destruction of crops and water points, and so reduces conflict with the settled population. One group says that, by staying about 30km from the villages, they have not had no conflict with the settled population for the past five years. Some farmers escalate the conflict by appealing to armed groups or local authorities, complicating a problem that could be resolved amicably without the involvement of a third party.

Several groups of transhumants say they have problems with farmers from Ndiffa. Some have left the area and moved to the village of Vakaga because of disagreements over crop damage, which prevents the sedentary communities of Ndiffa from accepting them. They say there have been so many claims for damage that they "could not breathe". They agreed to pay for the damage, but the prices quoted were excessive. One participant said that her child, who was looking after the cattle, had been beaten by a farmer's son.

Some sedentary participants have a different perspective on why transhumants have left Ndiffa, saying it is because of the armed groups who impose taxes on them, including unrealistic amounts for crop damage. However, some describe conflict with the transhumants and reference is made to the attack by Sudanese Arabs in 2020 over the sale of a car. A settled group in Ndiffa distinguishes between transhumants who come in search of pasture for their livestock, and who are willing to collaborate to reach an agreement after their crops have been destroyed, and those who come not for transhumance but with weapons to kill or steal animals to sell them in Sudan, or for banditry and robbery. Older participants say that the Falata herders are different from the others. They introduce themselves to the local authorities on arrival, stay as far away from villages and cultivated areas as possible to avoid crop destruction, are willing to collaborate when crops are damaged and to take into account the motivations and interests of the farmers, and use

weapons only when necessary to prevent the theft of their livestock. A younger minority say the Falata are dishonest and willing to rape women who go out to the fields alone: when transhumants were not allowed in the area, they had no problems with crop destruction and the rape of their wives. A group of Gula women in Ndiffa say that Sudanese herders do not abide by CAR rules and are always involved in destroying crops and, worst of all, raping women in the village. It is the rapes that have led the women of Ndiffa to reject the presence of the herders. They recognise the economic and social benefits of transhumance. Indeed, the transhumants pay good prices for harvested goods, giving the sedentary population money to buy basic necessities for the rainy season, and when children disappear into the bush they are found and returned to their parents in the villages. But the risk of rape prevents them from tending their crops and repairing their homes.

Beyond Ndiffa, Falata transhumants are present and accepted by the local population, although relations are not free of conflict. In Bamara, sedentary Gula men confirm the benefits of economic exchange with herders, but describe serious problems associated with their presence, including crop destruction, poaching of protected species and lack of respect for local authorities. A group of Gula farmers in Madao also of the benefits of trade with transhumants, but say that the transhumants contribute to food insecurity in the area because villagers are afraid to start farming until the transhumants have left, destroying crops and disrupting the reserved fishing source in the Vagaka watercourse. A woman in Madawa says that her brother's wife was harassed by a Falata herder while washing clothes on the banks of a river.

The sedentary participants distinguish between different groups of Falata transhumants. Some are courteous to the local authorities and maintain good relations with the farmers by respecting cultivated fields. Others do not present themselves to the authorities when they arrive in a village and always fight over the destruction of crops. The Oudda and Moulmoul are the most warlike. They behave like the Misseriya or Hemat Arab transhumants, refusing to take responsibility for finding a solution to crop destruction and always ready to use weapons as a deterrent. The Falata Kouri and the Dankoe are among those willing to engage in dialogue to find a solution to the conflict. Different groups arrive at different times, but it is the way they behave that causes the problems: the Falata Moulmoul arrive in December after the harvest but still cause "more problems than one can imagine". They do not respect the authorities, do not pay taxes and will not sit down to reach an amicable settlement over the destruction of crops. The Oudda interviewed confirm that they have problems with the farmers, but say that they stay away from the villages to deal with them, while the Dankoe speak of their closeness to the community and their willingness to resolve conflicts over crop destruction in a collaborative way.

In the Tiringoulou area, there are a few mentions of relations pre and post the 2013 crisis. Gula farmers say that since 2013, the village of Boldja has been surrounded by Sudanese transhumants, creating a climate of insecurity and fear. Since 2019, however, the community has lived in perfect harmony with the Falata herders, who come from Sudan. They echo the transhumants in saying that there is no destruction of crops because the herders stay away from the village. Villagers in Boldja also point to the benefits of transhumance, including trade with and services provided to the herders, which strengthens the economy and social cohesion, and the payment of a fee of 15,000 to 20,000 XFA by each herder, which is used to assist the most vulnerable people in the village with basic necessities such as soap and sugar, and to pay for parent-teachers in the school.

Use of weapons during transhumance

Transhumant and sedentary groups say that all herders carry weapons. A group of women farmers in Madawa say that the Falata are the only ones who are not militarised.

The transhumants say they trust the population of Tiringoulou, especially the local authorities, to ensure their safety and that of their animals. They have weapons to defend themselves if their camp is attacked by unidentified bandits. Some have dogs to protect their cattle safe at night. One group says they lost more than 200 cattle in 2013, almost half of their livestock, when armed bandits of Sudanese nationality took advantage of the unrest to attack the camps. They decided to arm themselves with the sole aim of protecting their livestock. Another group says they have not been attacked since the 2013 crisis.

The sedentary groups recognise that transhumants need weapons for their defence and cannot be asked to come without them because they will be attacked by armed bandits. They cite the circulation of weapons as one of the disadvantages of transhumance. Settled women in Madawa say that Sudanese herders roam freely with weapons of war obtained from Sudan, making them afraid to go about their business. Settled men in Madao say that transhumants possess illegal weapons including AK47s, and use them to commit crimes against the settled population, including attempted sexual assaults on women. Transhumants also prefer to use weapons and threats rather than working together to solve the problem of crop destruction. Armed bandits of Sudanese and Chadian nationality rob village communities.

Relations between transhumants

Falata transhumants say they choose their routes along ethnic lines, avoiding contact with the other transhumant groups with whom they have inter-ethnic conflicts, including the Misseriya, Salamats, Rissigale and Hemats. Several groups describe how they lost cattle in 2020 as a result of the attack in Terfel by the Misseriya and a Sudanese armed group (Janjaweed), in which more than 20 of their people were killed. They have not been attacked, in the last year. Sedentary groups also describe conflicts between transhumants. Sedentary participants in Bamara say that Falata herders were forced to change their route following conflict with the Tahacha. Sedentary women in Madawa describe conflicts between the Falata and Salamat ethnic groups and say that this is why the Falata are on the Tiringoulou side and the other ethnic groups are found towards Vodomassa, Boromata and Sikikédé.

Some sedentary groups describe relations between transhumants as less conflictual. One group in Ndiffa says that transhumants have formed a sacred union called "Oudai Arabia" and the golden rule of this union is that all herders, regardless of their ethnicity must support each other whenever there is a problem between farmers and herders. There is no mention of this cooperation – and much evidence to the contrary – from the transhumants in Tiringoulou.

More conflict in Sudan

Falata transhumants in the Tiringoulou area say there is too much unrest in Sudan, where they are in conflict with other Arab ethnic transhumant groups including the Misseriya, Salamats, Rizegat and Hemats who try to steal their cattle. They would like to stay in CAR to avoid the growing insecurity caused by inter-communal and inter-ethnic conflict in the absence of state authority in the Darfur region of Sudan, but some say this is conditional on the return of the state to provide security in the CAR.

Relations with armed groups

Some groups of transhumants say that the armed groups in the area don't bother them. They are able to carry out their activities peacefully. By staying away from the villages, the transhumants are safe from the armed groups. To avoid problems, they give 100,000 XFA to the armed group as soon as they arrive in an area. Some say this is a forced relationship based on the extortion of money, others use the language of a payment to ensure calm. Some sedentary communities say that there is no quarrel between armed groups and transhumants, but the Séléka collect a security tax during the transhumance from the herders in their area. Again, some speak of tax collection, others of forced payments. Others say the herders don't have a good relationship with the armed groups because they don't pay the immigration tax or because both carry weapons and know the damage weapons can cause.

Some stories suggest extortion. A Falata farmer in Gordil says he was asked to pay 900,000 XFA for damage that was not 10,000 XFA. He was forced to pay under pressure from the armed groups.

Transhumants say that none of their family members belong to an armed group, but settled participants in Ndiffa refer to transhumants who have family members in armed groups in CAR, saying that they trust them completely and believe that nothing can happen to them because of their links with the armed group.

There is one mention of sedentary people supporting the armed groups because they are all from the same community, and that the sedentary population sees the armed groups as protectors in the absence of state authority.

Some settled groups say they still feel threatened after attacks by armed groups, such as one by Joseph Kony's LRA in which two people were killed and three taken hostage.

A group of settled women in Boldja said that transhumants had recently left the area because of rumours about the presence of Russian troops in Birao and Tiringoulou.

Recommendations from the consultations to improve conflict dynamics in Tiringoulou

The Falata transhumants want the state to provide security and demand its return to Vakaga in the form of internal defence forces (FACA, gendarmerie, police) to ensure the security of all communities and promote peaceful transhumance. Specific reasons include the expectation that the state will prevent the payment of excessive compensation for crop damage under pressure from armed groups.

Ouanda-Djallé area

The Ouanda-Djallé area is mainly inhabited by settled communities of the Yulu ethnic group, although Runga, Sara, Peulh, Mbororo, Banda, Bornou and others are also present. According to sedentary participants, most transhumants in the area are Peulh from Sudan, including those from the Afe-Djam, Babero, Dagnogne, Danedja, Danko, Djedja, Dotankoé, Foulbe, Mandjaro, Ndongnongne, Ouda, Ouda Nara, Sankara, Wela, and Welankoy ethnic groups, but there are also some Misseriya.

Ouanda-Djallé benefits from its location as an important crossroads and also from its proximity to the gold mines in the neighbouring prefecture of Haute-Kotto: gold mines within 15 km of Ouanda-Djallé attract large numbers of people.

Role of armed groups

All communities in the Ouanda-Djallé area, with the exception of the Gula women of Sergobo village whose particular experience is noted separately below, say that armed groups play a role in controlling the area. Kara youth report that, following the creation of a self-defence group by Ouanda-Djallé nationals to repel LRA attacks, the town is still under the control of a rebel group, mainly composed of local sons, who collect taxes and fines through a parallel administration in the absence of state levies. Falata transhumants say that the young people who belong to the armed group are mostly from Ouanda-Djallé and that they don't have any problems with them because their parents, with whom the Falata transhumants have good relations, advise them not to disturb them. The butchers of Yulu and Bornou say that it is elements of the FPRC armed group (*Front patriotique pour la révolution en Centrafrique* – the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic), some of whom are natives of Ouanda-Djallé, who provide security for the town. The sedentary population appears to support, or at least to tolerate, these armed groups whose presence fills the security vacuum left by the absence of the state. Local authorities, including members of the rural development agency (*Agence de développement rural* - ADR), FNEC and the Farmer/Herder Conflict Resolution Committee, say they don't have a problem with armed groups. They have relatives in the armed groups and, since there are no internal security forces in Ouanda-Djallé to protect the people, it is these armed groups that provide security for the town. Gula men in Koumbal say the village is still under the control of a rebel group.

A decade of violent conflict

The Gula men in Koumbal say the conflict began when the Seleka rebel coalition occupied the village in 2012. All institutions, including the internal security forces that were supposed to protect people, collapsed, leaving the rebel groups free to spread terror and devastation among the population.

A decade of armed violence has emptied the town of its population and brought it to the brink of destruction on several occasions. Sedentary populations report that they have lived with these armed rebellions, LRA attacks and abductions, including of women and children, and inter-communal conflict for ten years. One group mentions the CPJP (*Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix* – Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace) and the Seleka. Women talk about the impact of witnessing violent conflict between rebel groups, the Gula UFDR and the Runga MLJC. A victim of a night attack by the LRA tells her story of being abducted while pregnant and carrying a child on her back. Forced to carry her abductor's luggage, she walked many kilometres before being freed by the Ouanda-Djallé youth self-defence group.

Relations between settled and transhumant groups

A group of butchers in Ouanda-Djallé say that after a decade of violent conflict, exacerbated by a lack of transport, education and health infrastructure, economic activity has now resumed in the area thanks to the presence of transhumants who bring supplies into town. Butchers say their relationship with the transhumants is commercial, friendly and free of

conflict. It is thanks to the herders that the butchers can carry out their commercial activities and sometimes the herders give them oxen on credit.

Sudanese Peulh Djounaye transhumants say that there is good collaboration between them and the sedentary population of Ouanda-Djallé, with trade and economic exchanges working well and strengthening this collaboration. They trust the sedentary population and turn to them in the event of an armed attacks and livestock theft. They have conflicts over the destruction of crops because the sedentary people are farming everywhere and have now occupied all the traditional corridors, but they cooperate with the conflict management committee and pay the agreed amount for the damage.

Gula men in Koumbal say that before the 2013, farmers and herders had very good relations, with transhumants respecting farmers' fields and complying with the social norms governing transhumance in CAR. Only Falata Mbororo herders grazed in the area, and they were respectful, moderate and cooperative. Local authorities, including the head of the rural development agency (ADR) and the FNEC, say that farmers and transhumants have had good relations in the past and still do today. Since 2004, a structure has been in place in Ouanda-Djallé to carry out checks on herders to make sure they stay off from the fields, and on farmers to prevent them from cultivating on traditional transhumance corridors.

While local authorities are positive about the current relationship between farmers and transhumants, other settled communities describe a more nuanced view of transhumance, recognising the benefits but resenting some of the consequences. Butchers acknowledge that, while they have good relations with transhumants, there are conflicts between farmers and herders. Gula women in Koubale are able to sell their agricultural products to transhumants, but these same transhumants make it difficult for them to go to the river or fields alone because of their violent behaviour towards women. They have no social relationship with the transhumants because of their bad behaviour. Yulu staff and members of the Central African Women's Organisation (*Organisation des femmes centrafricaines* - OFCA) of Ouanda-Djallé say that sedentary women see their lives linked to transhumance, which allows them to sell what they produce, stock up on beef and do small trades, but that issues of crop destruction sometimes go unresolved because women keep quiet for fear of being raped or abused.

Young people criticise the Sudanese Falata transhumants for their lack of discipline. Clashes over crop destruction are common, and the situation is aggravated by the herders' reluctance to compensate their victims, sometimes accompanied by threats of violence. Gula men in Koumbal observe that transhumants no longer comply with social norms that govern the practice and functioning of transhumance in the CAR, although these norms are the same as those they observed before the crisis, when the state's internal security forces were present in the area. They say it was the chaos following the 2013 crisis that led to Sudanese Arab transhumants, including Hemat, Charafa, Ben-hassane, Ben-Halba and Misseriya, coming to Koumbal. They describe them as bad and aggressive, cutting down trees, destroying beehives, and driving oxen into fields and threatening anyone who dares to report them. There is also talk of transhumants stealing the sheep and goats they have sold to the sedentary population when they get lost and return to their camp. Women say that it is generally the Misseriya who abuse women.

Relations between transhumants

Sedentary men in Koumbal say that Falata Mbororo transhumants left to Ouandja and Ouanda-Djallé to avoid conflict with Arab transhumants following their arrival in the area after the 2013 crisis.

Use of weapons during transhumance

Local authorities in Ouanda Djallé say that transhumants carry weapons to protect themselves and their livestock from attack. Gula men say that, since the 2013 crisis and the resulting collapse of the internal security forces, transhumants now all come armed with automatic rifles.

Conflict dynamics in Sergobo Village

A group of local authority and youth leaders in the village of Sergobo describe the particular dynamics of the conflict there. A history of violent conflict between Sudanese Arab Misseriya transhumants and the sedentary population has left the latter with a very negative perception of transhumance. In 2007, Misseriya transhumants burned down the village following a dispute over the destruction of crops. The sedentary population left the village for several months. Mediation and dialogue improved relations, which survived the 2013 crisis, but tensions resurfaced in 2020 with violent clashes between settled and Sudanese Arab Misseriya groups over crop destruction and reports of physical and sexual violence, forcing local Sergobo authorities to ban transhumants from the village.

Some residents are adamant that transhumants should not be allowed to return. They question the potential benefits of economic exchange with the herders, saying that Arab transhumants stock up in Sudan rather than buying from the local community. Others are open to the idea of resuming trade and being able to buy milk, butter and meat. After heated debate, the men in the group say that a return might be possible after a meeting to discuss reconciliation, but the women continue to express hatred for the transhumants and do not want them to return.

Other causes of conflict in Ouanda-Djallé

Access to water is a source of conflict in Ouanda-Djallé. With too few boreholes, the Voukouma and Nguesse rivers are used by both sedentary and transhumant groups and disputes over water points are common.

Transhumants cite the presence of armed groups and the taxes they impose, insecurity in the area and fear of robbery as risks they face in Ouanda-Djallé.

Recommendations from the consultations to improve conflict dynamics in Ouanda-Djallé

Falata transhumants in Ouanda-Djallé recommend that the authorities zone the Birao sub-prefecture to improve relations between the sedentary and transhumant communities.

Boromata area

The 1st deputy to the Mayor of the commune of Ouandja tells the story of the Misseriya attack on Boromata in 2020 and the burning down of the village following a clash between the Gula PNRC and Sudanese Arab Misseriya. It began when a Misseriya was accused by a Gula of stealing a car he had bought from a Gula relative in Sudan.

What is most striking here is the lack of wider impact of this significant event on the conflict dynamics in the Boromata area. Gula women farmers in Oulou say that the Misseriya are no longer accepted in the area because of their behaviour, as they are the cause of fires in Boromata. However, they see other transhumants, including the Sudanese Arab Salamats, Rachid and Charafa, as very different and as the women's best customers. Gula women farmers in Vodomassa say that social relations between transhumants and farmers are hostile because of the behaviour of some transhumants such as the Misseriya, but Gula men in Vodomassa. However, they are also critical of the behaviour of the Misseriya, saying that social and economic relations are good and that trade with transhumants is essential because the state of the roads means that no one else brings in basic necessities. No sedentary respondents in Boromata say they would definitely refuse an invitation to a transhumant wedding or funeral, although over 40% of sedentary women do say they would probably refuse to attend a traditional dance hosted by the other community.

The Misseriya were seen as newcomers to the area, having arrived since the 2013 crisis. In contrast, the Falata Outman transhumants have been coming here for over 50 years and they know the population well. They say there are always problems with the Misseriya, but it does not affect them. They have no problems with the farmers. If they have problems, they solve them peacefully and pay the price for crop damage. An Arab Rachid Chef de Camp has been coming here for more than 40 years. 50 to 60 members of the same family travel together, staying out of trouble or resolving it amicably if it arises. Zaghawa say they have been coming for 25 years, always to the same place. There are problems with farmers, but if a cow damages crops they pay to avoid trouble. Arab Hemats say that if they arrive before the harvest, they keep their distance and keep the cows away from the crops. If crops are damaged, they go to the farmers, assess the damage and pay. They have not had any cattle stolen since the Misseriya are no longer present in Boromata.

Factors contributing to the absence of violent conflict

There are conflicts between sedentary and transhumant groups – transhumant and sedentary groups all mention crop destruction and sedentary groups add failure to pay in full for damage, transhumants not announcing their arrival and carrying weapons, aggression towards children walking with animals – but there is a surprising lack of violent conflict is surprisingly absent given the history of the area.

Groups identify factors that may contribute to the current lack of conflict in Boromata.

1. **Social cohesion.** Some transhumants come to the local authorities to announce their arrival and mayors and veterinary officers maintain relations with the herders. Two older Arab Hemats say that their parents raised them to get along with the sedentary communities. An Arab Rachid Chef de Camp says the Mayor of Boromata raised their awareness and advised them to come after the harvest. They did so this year and had no problems. They will have to come earlier in the year if there is not enough rain and the grass dries out much faster.
2. **Impact of the Advisory Group.** The area's focal point of the Advisory Group says that people understand the role of the Advisory Group and that it has worked very well this season, resolving conflicts on a daily basis. After the training in Tiringoulou in October 2020, things have changed for the better. The messages from the training have been passed on and people have become more aware. The Misseriya left. There used to be a lot of crop destruction, but now they have created a kind of zoning. The herders have to

stay at least 15kms away from the villages, like in Tiringoulou. If there is a problem, people solve it without using violence.

Conflict over camels

One sedentary community groups camel herders with the Misseriya as they do not follow local conventions on transhumance. Some cattle herders are also critical: an Arab Rachid says that camel herders do not collaborate and an Arab Hemat that all camel herders have bad intentions and bad morals. Arab Rizegat camel herders, however, say they stay away from villages and crops, only take their camels to water, and have not had no problems since they started coming to the Boromata area.

Relations between transhumants

A group of Peulh (Falata Outman) say that they travel with Arab tribes (Beni Halba and Hemats) and that they come together with other tribes to raise money when something happens. Arab Rachids have no problems with other transhumants, although they disagree with the behaviour of Arab Rizegat and Mahariya, who they say cut plants, grass and trees and steal from the settled population. The Arab Rizegat say they don't cut trees, because they need them to grow for future years, but they do let their camels eat from them.

Asked about a recent conflict in Sudan between Tahacha and Falata, in which a Falata killed a Tahacha, an Arab Rachid says that other ethnic groups do not want to get involved in anything that affects these two tribes. An Arab Hemat says that while the conflict was over theft, access to land is also an issue for Falata and Tahacha. It is important to keep the two groups apart. Arab Hemats say they have not been affected by the conflict between Kara, Runga and Gula because they have not taken sides. They prefer not to get involved. The Hemats have good relations with everyone except the Misseriya, who steal the cattle of other transhumants.

Use of weapons during transhumance

Falata Outman say they have knives and other weapons to protect themselves in the camp. Arab Rachid say they protect themselves with sticks and arrows, but another group of Rachid claim that all the Arab transhumants they see have guns, even though they say they don't. They only use guns if they are attacked, but this has not happened since the return of the state in Birao. The Zaghawa say they don't need guns. They protect themselves by travelling in groups of four or five families, putting the cattle in the middle when they camp. The Rizegat say they need guns in Sudan but not in the CAR, although the armed groups are well armed and do attack them.

Relations with armed groups

Villagers in Oulou say they have not been attacked by armed groups. Gula women farmers in Vodomassa say that the armed groups are local people who do not clash with the local community. Gula men add that the armed groups keep them safe. The sedentary groups believe that some transhumants have no relationship with armed groups, but the Misseriya have a relationship with armed groups from Sudan. They acknowledge that transhumants have to pay illegal taxes to armed groups to avoid being attacked by them.

Tranhumants say they have no links with armed groups. Some say the armed groups move around but don't bother them. Others say there is extortion – armed groups come to the

camp and ask for money and livestock - but it is much better since the disarmament. They do not ask the armed groups for protection.

Sikikédé area

Sikikédé has become an important centre for trade due to the number of transhumants in the area. The transhumants buy food and basic goods from the sedentary groups and sell livestock to them, creating a good link with the host population. Herders say that Sikikédé is a welcoming area for all transhumants because of the behaviour of the settled population. Some of the sedentary population appear to be less than welcoming, attributing instability in the Sikikédé area to the massive transhumance of Sudanese herders who come to the CAR in their thousands .

Relations with armed groups

All groups in Sikikédé talk about their relations with armed groups, but reports on the dynamics of these relations are mixed. The Arab Hemats claim to have perfect relations with the armed groups of the FPRC, ex-Séléka, which control the area. The armed groups do not put pressurise them or demand any payment of taxes, and they have no conflicts with them. They do encounter armed bandits on their transhumance route, but are protected by travelling in large groups.

Arab Misseriya describe a less friendly relationship. They suffered after the 2013 crisis when armed groups took their cattle by force. One family describes how they lost several members of their group, including two of their brothers, and more than a hundred cattle to unidentified armed bandits. Today, they don't have conflicts with the armed groups because they travel in large groups for safety and when they arrive they obey the rules of the area. However, they claim to have no relationship with the armed groups and no part in any accompanying conflict with the settled community because they do not want to have trouble with anyone. One said that his brother joined an armed group in 2016 after the family was the victim of physical attacks and ransom demands during transhumance, and has remained a member to protect the family's pastures.

The relationship between the Arab Tahacha transhumants and the armed groups is far from perfect. They say that all the security forces in the Sikikédé area belong either to armed groups or unidentified armed bandits, neither of whom can be trusted. To avoid conflict they respect the rules of transhumance, staying away from the farmers and not harming the sedentary population. Their relationship with the armed group is a forced one, based on extortion. A group of Tahacha say that they have not been attacked in recent months because of the peace awareness between them and the armed groups. One individual said that almost all the men in his family have been in the armed group for three years, after having been victims of theft, looting and other acts of aggression by the armed groups.

Arab Salamats in both Sudan and CAR face groups of unidentified armed bandits who ambush them to steal their cattle.

Runga semi-nomads say that the presence of transhumants in the area is sometimes linked to the arrival of armed bandits from Sudan, leading to accusations from the settled population that the herders are protecting the bandits because they are of the same ethnicity and origin. Runga farmers demonstrate this by saying that they live with increasing insecurity caused by armed bandits of Sudanese origin from the Misseriya ethnic group, as

well as some Chadians. The Sudanese armed bandits disguise themselves as transhumants and take refuge in the transhumance camps, camouflaged by their Misseriya brothers.

In contrast to the conflict with armed bandits, the sedentary groups in Sikikédé report no conflict with armed groups. On the contrary, the armed groups in the town are said to intervene in incidents caused by armed bandits and, because their members are young people from the area, to defend the interests of the Runga women against the aggressive behaviour of the transhumants.

Relations between sedentary and transhumant groups

Arab Misseriya say that the areas inhabited by the Gula ethnic group are problematic for them because of the hostile behaviour of the Gula towards the herders. They have experienced conflicts with the Gula in Boromata, Vodomassa, Gordil, Ndiffa and Tiringoulou. They remain in the Sikikédé area because they feel they are better off with the Runga ethnic community. They used to have good relations with their hosts in Sikikédé, and some claim that they still do. Others believe that the sedentary population blames them for all the recent attacks in the Sikikédé area. As a result, the Misseriya feel that they are overcharged by the local population at the market, further straining relations. Where they have disputes, they use dialogue and mediation because using force in a conflict only risks others defending themselves by taking revenge. They still say that the host population is best placed to defend them because they are used to coexisting during the transhumance period.

The host population does little to defend the Misseriya's behaviour. Runga farmers say they are the worst herders, destroying crops and acting as robbers and killers, in contrast to herders from other ethnic groups, including the Salamats, Hemats and Falata, who are said to live in peace with the sedentary population.

Falata transhumants are also in Sikikédé, having moved to Gordil after disputes, in this case with the sedentary population of Ndiffa, who they claim have occupied all the land for their livelihoods, including corridors and camps, leaving no space for the cattle.

Arab Hemats describe their relationship with the settled population as perfect. There is no conflict because both groups need each other. Sudanese Charafa say the situation has really improved this year, with the local community more accepting and willing to collaborate. They do have conflicts with farmers over the destruction of crops, but they try to resolve them amicably. They describe their relationship with the local authorities as perfect, but needed their help to calm the situation recently when armed bandits killed a young motorbike taxi driver in Sikikédé and the community thought they were accomplices. The Arab Tahacha also say they do their best to avoid conflicts, but if they arise, they resolve them through peaceful dialogue with the local population. Arab Salamats also say they are close to community leaders, which helps them access the markets to buy goods and sell livestock.

Runga women see their relationship with transhumants as far from perfect. They describe daily life with herders since the 2013 crisis as hostile. Transhumants arrive without warning, carry weapons, fail to control their livestock, are aggressive towards women and abusive towards men. These Runga women were also the only settled group in Vakaga to blame the herders for burning the grass, which they say is a frequent source of conflict in Sikikédé.

Relations between transhumants

A group of Runga semi-nomads say that the relationship between the Runga and the Salamats is the strongest of any pastoralist group, due to a non-aggression pact signed before today's transhumants were even born.

Falata transhumants are currently able to use the park area around Gordil for their transhumance, staying away from the Arab Hemats, Misseriya, Salamats and Tahacha around Sikikédé, with whom they have a potential risk of conflict. A group of Falata who met in Sikikédé are part of the Falata groups who say they were attacked by the Misseriya and Salamats in the village of Terfel last year.

Arab Charafa claim that the Misseriya behave badly, stealing from other transhumants and allowing their cattle to destroy crops. The Runga semi-nomads also claim that the Misseriya steal from other transhumants, as well as from the semi-nomads, and that they are always at the centre of crises between herders and farmers. The Misseriya do not comment on their relations with other transhumants, but do say they are supporters of peace and do not want trouble with anyone.

Use of weapons during transhumance

The Arab Misseriya use bladed weapons – sticks, knives, bows and arrows - to protect themselves from a repeat of the attacks that followed the 2013 crisis . They don't need anyone else in their camps to protect them. They have not been attacked in the last 12 months.

Arab Tahacha protect themselves and their livestock with white weapons¹³ (sticks, arrows and knives). They say they are obliged to carry firearms to defend themselves if they are attacked by armed groups.

Arab Salamats say that bandits obtain weapons in Sudan and use them to steal from settled communities, including those of the Sikikédé and Boromata. Transhumants suffer not only from direct attacks by these bandits, but also from being implicated in attacks on sedentary communities, which damages their good relations with the sedentary population.

Runga farmers say that the transhumance brings with it automatic weapons carried by Sudanese transhumant herders to protect themselves and their livestock. Armed groups strictly forbid transhumant herders to keep their firearms in the town of Sikikédé.

Recommendations from the consultations to improve conflict dynamics in Sikikédé

Arab Misseriya transhumants in Sikikédé want state security forces to be deployed in the area to ensure security and the free movement of people and goods. Arab Tahacha say they need protection during transhumance and that the government is best placed to defend them, as they see it as neutral.

¹³ White weapons are sharp or blunt objects that can be used as instruments of aggression. They do not involve fire or explosions.

Recommendations from workshops to improve conflict dynamics in Vakaga

1. Workshop participants recommend that the state guarantee the security of transhumant herders within the Central African Republic.
2. Workshop participants recommend that transhumant herders don't walk around with automatic weapons, don't leave herds in the care of children and stay about 15 km away from cultivated fields.



Arab Rizegat camel herders say they stay away from villages and crops and have not had any problems since they started coming to the Boromata area.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

All the sedentary groups who commented say that conflict resolution was better in the past. Conflicts were resolved amicably, usually between farmers and herders themselves, with village chiefs and herder leaders acting as intermediaries in the worst cases. Today, they say, this practice no longer exists. Women farmers say that transhumants used to respect local authorities. If crops were destroyed they would agree to sit down and resolve the conflict. Young people say that the traditional mechanisms for resolving conflicts, based on mediation and arbitration by local authorities (village chief, mayor), no longer work because transhumant herders do not cooperate.

Some transhumant groups comment on conflict resolution in the past. A group of Tahacha in Assafi say that conflict resolution with the settled community has been and remains good. The two communities have co-existed peacefully for several decades thanks in part to a conflict resolution mechanism based on amicable settlements. Sudanese Arab Rachid transhumant women say that transhumance worked much better in the past because there was a good mechanism for resolving conflicts peacefully without resorting to violence. If there was a problem with crop destruction, the owner would come to the Ardo and explain the problem peacefully, proposing a sum to cover the cost of the damage. If the two parties could not agree, the problem would be referred to the village chiefs. Sudanese Arab Hemats say that if a conflict arose over crop destruction before the 2013 crisis, it would be settled amicably between the farmer and the herder, with the dispute referred to the Sultan-Mayor for assessment if there was a disagreement. Sudanese Arab Misseriya describe three levels of conflict resolution prior to the 2013 crisis: amicable settlement by the local population, settlement with the local authorities through mediation, or settlement with the judicial authorities, namely the gendarmerie, the police and the public prosecutor. Sudanese Arab Tahacha in Delembe say that before the 2013 crisis, disputes over damage caused to fields were handled by specialised judicial structures, but these are no longer operational.

When asked who played the role of intermediary in a recent conflict, 46% of respondents say the village chief and 3% the Ardo. 34% say no one, with 9% say a local peace committee and 8% say a Muslim religious authority. 61% say they were not satisfied with the solution found, the main issues being that the perpetrator did not keep his promise (45%) or that the compensation was not enough (25%).

Avoiding conflict

Several transhumant groups talk about the steps they take to avoid conflict with sedentary communities. The main one is to stay as far away from villages as possible, up to 30 km in the case of one group of Peulh Ekaher, to avoid destroying fields.

Respecting the rules and principles to avoid altercation with armed groups is also mentioned several times.

The sedentary groups echo the need for transhumant herders to respect rules and principles, but don't mention any specific steps they take to avoid conflict with transhumant herders.

Amicable settlement / Dialogue

Several groups of transhumant herders advocate for amicable settlement or dialogue, often citing it as more likely to lead to a solution than the alternative of resorting to violence. Some say it should be used before local authorities intervene, others that the local authorities can be involved in reaching an amicable settlement. As above, Tahacha in Assafi describe successful conflict management based on amicable settlement. Other transhumant herders say that amicable settlement is the only approach that works. A group of Peulh women prefer to talk directly to the owners of a field to find an amicable solution, while a group of Peulh Dankoe say that the way they have built up acceptance in the community is mainly through their willingness to manage conflicts in a collaborative and amicable way. Another group of Peulh say that they are always available for amicable settlements to avoid conflict with the farmers. However, a fourth group laments that some farmers who never opt for amicable settlements but instead turn to armed groups or local authorities, complicating a problem that should be resolved amicably between the two parties without recourse to a third party. A group of Charafa say they have signed an agreement with the Mayor of Sikikédé to try to resolve a conflict amicably first and then, if necessary, to go to the local authorities (mayor, village chief).

A group of Misseriya say that there is a need to share responsibility for conflicts related to transhumance: some pastoralists do not cooperate in finding negotiated solutions to conflicts related to crop damage or the theft or killing of livestock. A group of semi-nomadic pastoralists say that while some herders are in favour of amicable collaborative arrangements that satisfy everyone's interests, there are some belligerent transhumant herders who refuse to sit down with field owners to reach amicable agreements.

A few groups from the sedentary communities also speak of an amicable settlement through negotiation between the two parties to the conflict, although they tend to associate this with the involvement of local authorities. The FNEC regional coordinator in Birao says that the ideal solution is an amicable settlement, accompanied if necessary by FNEC and ACDA technicians. The key players in resolving conflicts and better managing transhumance are the mayors of the livestock communes, who have good relations with the other communes as well as with the transhumant herders.

The reporting teams agree that, in general, both sedentary and transhumant groups prefer to come to an amicable agreement. This can help both parties if both are honest. Where trust issues arise, for example where a herder feels that a farmer is overcharging for compensation, a third party such as a traditional leader is called in to assess and value the damage.

Conflict Resolution Committees and Advisory Groups

In Ouanda Djallé, a group of Kara youth and another of group of local authorities speak positively of a conflict resolution committee, set up by MINUSCA in 2016, and composed of representatives of the sedentary and transhumant communities, which manages conflicts arising from the destruction of fields or the theft and killing of livestock. Another group of young people said that conflict resolution mechanisms do not exist in their area. The Head of Agriculture in Birao says that the dispute resolution committee set up by MINUSCA is no longer functioning, but that it used to prepare people to manage conflicts through mediation and inter-community workshops.

Those who have and know of the Advisory Group in their area describe its role in conflict resolution as that of an intermediary, facilitating dialogue with a view to finding a non-violent solution to the conflict.

The transhumant groups see the Advisory Group as a good initiative that will enable conflicts between herders and farmers to be well managed by a neutral mediator who can observe the two parties and help them understand how to resolve the conflict through dialogue.

One sedentary community commented that transhumant herders do not have much trust in local authorities and that the Advisory Group can act as a link between farmers and herders.

Local authorities

Groups from sedentary, semi-settled and transhumant communities talk about the involvement of a local authority in conflict resolution. There is some linguistic ambiguity here: different groups use the term local authorities to mean or include village chiefs, group/quartier chiefs, canton chiefs and mayors.

The majority of sedentary groups say they go to the village chiefs to resolve conflicts over field destruction. Sedentary women say that in the event of a dispute, it is the village chief who must decide. Conflict resolution mechanisms are reported by these groups to exist, to function normally and to be regulated in the presence of the village chief. Identifying and seizing the oxen that caused the damage increases the likelihood

of receiving compensation. Sedentary women say that the village chief sends people to take note of the damage and report it. The village chief summons the herder, who is brought before them to repair the damage. Agro-pastoralists say that the conflict is resolved after both parties have established the extent of the damage: a bipartite mediation with reconciliation in front of the village chief is used to reach a quick solution.

A few transhumant groups speak positively about the role of village chiefs, describing situations where mediation by leaders of both parties leads to an amicable solution. Salamat semi-nomadic women say that the resolution of conflicts between farmers and herders is done with the village chief. Dialogue involving the local authorities and the canton chiefs or mayors is the best method of resolving conflicts. However, a group of Misseriya say that the compensation system currently used by local authorities does not work: instead of starting from an independent assessment of the crop damage, the farmer is asked to set the amount of damage and the herder is asked to pay this amount. This forces transhumants to flee without paying because the damages are exorbitant.

There are differing views on the use of local authority conflict resolution mechanisms. Several sedentary groups, mainly women and youth, say that the village chiefs no longer have any authority. The lack of authority is said to have created a wide gap between the conflicting parties, with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms not working because transhumant herders do not collaborate. A group of Kara women farmers say that the situation has worsened since the 2013 crisis and that local authorities are no longer respected by transhumants. One sedentary group described how the owner of a field was forced to leave a case without compensation because the transhumant would not acknowledge the damage caused by his cattle and refused to respond to a summons issued by the Mayor to reconcile the two parties. However, a group of local authorities in Kara say that transhumant herders are always willing to go to the local authorities with the owner of the field in order to find an amicable arrangement.

Some local authorities feel the burden of their role: a group from Bachama say that the countless disputes with the local population following complaints about real or alleged destruction of fields are difficult to resolve.

In the worst cases of destruction of fields or the killing of livestock, the process escalates from the local authorities (arbitration, conciliation) to the judicial authorities (police, gendarmerie, court). This happens when there is no consensus, either on the facts of the case or on the remedy. A group of Hemat transhumant women say that conflict resolution is carried out by the gendarmerie, but this form of justice is often unfair, with transhumants being punished more severely.

Military authorities

Several sedentary groups (all women) referred to the role of military authorities in relation to conflict resolution. Recourse to the military authorities is used when mediation by the village chief fails, and is successful because the military authorities can use their power to force the herders to pay compensation for damage. Sedentary women in Birao say that recourse to the military authorities is the most common conflict resolution method used to settle disputes between farmers and herders. A group of Salamat semi-nomads (also women) say that the presence of the military authority is necessary to establish discipline and security.

Armed groups

Some sedentary and transhumant groups speak positively of the role of armed groups in preventing and resolving conflicts. Settled groups say that the armed groups prevent transhumant herders from carrying firearms in town, come to the aid of settled communities when they are in conflict with transhumant herders, and intervene in incidents caused by armed bandits. A group of transhumant herders say they turn to the armed groups in cases of crop destruction because the armed group members are sons of the villages concerned.

However, other transhumant herders are less positive about the role of armed groups in mediating conflicts. A group of Misseriya say that the armed groups are now the only ones empowered to settle any dispute that occurs in their area of jurisdiction, where previously local and judicial authorities would have applied the law with the main aim of "moralising the actors to build a harmonious life in the society they belong to." A group from Tahacha says that those who are close to armed groups are able to win through force. Several groups describe their relations with armed groups as forced because they have to give money to the armed groups when they arrive in each village in order to stay in peace during the transhumance. This was universal: one group said that the ex-Seleka group, now the FPRC, did not impose such taxes. Another group of Misseriya said that the armed groups were unpredictable people who could change their behaviour from one moment to the next and had never been credible interlocutors in conflict management.

Both sedentary and transhumant groups report that armed groups impose fines for destroying fields. Participants from both communities say that these fines can be excessive (see section on fines and payments below for details). A group of Misseriya say that since the arrival of the ex-Seleka in 2013, the amount of fees and fines to be paid has at least tripled everywhere.

Violence

No group advocated for violence as a conflict resolution mechanism. A group from Misseriya typically said that violence does not resolve a conflict: everyone will try to defend themselves by using revenge as a weapon, which will only make the situation worse.

Violence – or the threat of it – was mentioned to by both sedentary and transhumant groups as influencing the behaviour of those involved in conflict. A group of Peulh said that some transhumant herders are forced to pay a sum of money regardless of their wishes, out of fear, while a group of semi-nomads said that some transhumant herders refuse to sit down together with field owners for amicable agreements because they trust the weapons they have and are prepared to use them as a deterrent to frighten the field owners. Sudanese Arab Rachid transhumant women said that farmers today are all armed with machetes and other weapons that they use when they catch an ox in their field, and more often than not the animal ends up dying when the problem could have been resolved peacefully.

Fines and compensation

Conflict resolution is often followed by compensation in kind or money.

Two ranges of fines and compensation payments are detailed in group discussions.

The first establishes what some groups describe as fixed rates for crop damage, ranging from 10k to 25k XFA (15 to 40 euros) or 60k to 100k XFA (90 – 150 euros), although in the case of the destruction of a field by a large number of oxen it is fixed at 200k XFA (300 euros). It is also mentioned that the amount of money being is determined by the owner of the field in the presence of the local authority, or both parties assess the damage and agree on a reasonable price after discussion, the compensation being proportional to the damage suffered, equivalent to the value of the crop destroyed or looted, and payment in cash or in kind (millet, goats, oxen – although the latter are said to be given by transhumant herders only as blood money).

The second is the range of payments, which both sedentary and transhumant groups say are unreasonable. A group of Gula farmers say that armed groups take advantage of problems related to the destruction of fields to impose fines on transhumant herders ranging from 400 – 900k XFA (600 – 1400 euros), while a group of Peulh transhumant herders say that the owner demanded 900k XFA (1400 euros) in compensation when the damage was not even 10k XFA (15 euros) and a group of Peulh women say that they agreed to compensation for damage caused by their livestock but the price set exceeded even a devastated plot of land. A group of sedentary young men and women described how a sedentary hunter killed a

transhumant's ox. The owner demanded 3,000k XFA (4,500 euros) and the population of five villages contributed to raise this amount to avoid reprisals from the Misseriya herders. A group of Misseriya, in turn, say that when damage is caused by one or two of their cattle, the armed groups set compensation prices that are out of all proportion to the damage caused. Blame for unreasonable payments does not fall only on armed groups. A group of Peulh Dankoe say that local authorities also charge compensation that is disproportionate to the damage caused, and one Peulh participant says that he spent more than 450k XFA (700 euros) on damage last month and feels that this is an unfair fixed price in which not only the local authorities of this locality are complicit.

Recommendations from the consultations for conflict resolution mechanisms

1. Establish clear rules and principles for all parties involved in transhumance: 100% of transhumants and 97% of sedentary communities say they would be willing to engage in dialogue with the other community. A group of sedentary young men and women call for the creation of a workshop for exchange and dialogue initiated by the authorities.
2. Investigate barriers to compliance with existing transhumance rules and principles: Focus groups recommend working to understand why herders do not use the identified corridors to carry out their activities. The Misseriya recommend sensitising sedentary communities not to steal or kill transhumant livestock.
3. Strengthen inclusive frameworks for dialogue and conflict management between farmers and herders.
4. Establish conflict resolution mechanisms based on amicable settlement between herders and farmers, with as little external assistance as is necessary to reach an agreement, starting with mediation and arbitration by local authorities (village chief, mayor) before resorting to judicial authorities. The Misseriya recommend that the conflict resolution mechanism be representative of farmers and herders and include a mechanism to ensure that the perpetrator abides by the agreed settlement. The influence of the military authorities in enforcing agreements, discussed above, may be relevant here. A group of sedentary young men and women recommend strengthening the presence of the FSI (*Forces de sécurité intérieure* - Interior Security Forces), which can facilitate the resolution of disputes between farmers and herders. A group of Hemat transhumants said that existing conflict management is biased: as in Sudan, the system set up needs to be neutral and inclusive. Workshop participants noted that the structure for managing conflicts related to transhumance needs to be neutral, impartial and inclusive.
5. Provide support to transhumant and sedentary communities to increase the likelihood of reaching an amicable settlement, e.g. training in peaceful dialogue and negotiation. Transhumant herders ask Concordis to show them a strategy to avoid conflicts between transhumant herders and farmers. Butchers in Ouanda-Djallé say that some farmers are not collaborative and some transhumants cause conflicts:

there is a need for education and awareness raising to manage conflicts collaboratively, including raising the awareness of sedentary people to respect transhumance corridors and not to steal or kill transhumants' livestock. Local authorities recommend training conflict resolution committee members in mediation and facilitating community dialogue. Workshops recommended training Advisory Group members in peaceful conflict analysis and management, emphasizing mediation as a non-violent means of conflict resolution.

6. **Learn from previous effective conflict resolution mechanisms** e.g. what can be learned from the success of the conflict resolution committee mentioned in the focus groups, that was set up by MINUSCA in 2016 in Ouanda Djallé, composed of representatives of the sedentary and transhumant communities, to manage conflicts arising from the destruction of fields or the theft and killing of livestock.
7. **Establish a consistent and proportionate scale of compensation** for damage caused by transhumance. It should be noted that the workshops generally recognised the need to regulate / harmonise local taxes.
8. **Publicise the existence of the Advisory Groups.** Several sedentary groups say that they are not aware of the Advisory Group, but they commend the initiative and hope that this approach will contribute to a peaceful resolution of conflicts between parties through facilitation. A group of transhumant herders find it very interesting and relevant to have a neutral mediator to observe the two parties in a peaceful dialogue. Another group suggests that a committee for the management of farmer-herder conflicts should be set up. The transhumant herders want to know the focal point of the Advisory Group in their area.
9. **Equip the Advisory Group to deal with more conflicts.** A group of sedentary women say that they are aware of the Advisory Group, but that it has not yet dealt with a conflict in their locality. They believe that the initiative will contribute enormously to the resolution of herder/farmer conflicts. Semi-settled herders ask for support to enable the Advisory Group to carry out its mandate: capacity building, transport, visibility and office supplies. The workshops recommend that the state support the activities of the Advisory Group by facilitating the free movement of its members.
10. **Ensure that all groups feel represented in the Advisory Groups.** Transhumant herders (Misseriya) want to have one of their leaders on the Advisory Group to represent them in discussions on transhumance and say the same should be done for the other ethnic groups involved in transhumance. The Salamats also say that the Advisory Group would be even better if they had their own leader there to represent them and talk to the authorities about their concerns.



Transhumant groups talk about the steps they take to avoid conflicts with settled communities, including staying as far away from villages as possible.

SECURITY

How safe do people feel?

When asked how they would describe security today, two thirds of respondents describe it as good (57%) or excellent (9%). A significant minority described it as bad (32%) or very bad (1%). There is a difference between the responses of transhumant herders and sedentary communities: almost 90% of transhumant herders describe it as good (80%) or excellent (7%), with only 13% saying it is bad. There are no significant differences between men and women on this question and all age groups respond in a similar way.

In some focus groups, transhumant herders say that security has improved. One group says that insecurity no longer prevents the sedentary population with whom they trade from farming, another that armed groups in the area no longer bother them and they carry out their activities peacefully without any security concerns, and a third that the phenomenon of transhumance being considered dangerous because of road bandits has almost disappeared since 2013. A group of Charafa also say that transhumance is starting to improve after a period when many people were afraid to cross the border because of the various types of conflicts in the CAR. A group of Salamats near Birao say that there used to be no security on the corridors because the Seleka were everywhere, but now the state has returned. Arab Rachid near Vodomassa say that security has changed since the return of the state to Birao and that there have been no attacks in the last 12 months. A group of Misseriya say that the security situation has improved slightly since December 2020, although they continue to talk about the fear and distrust they feel from other communities following the Ndiffa incidents, and the various individuals, among them some with links to local authorities including FACA and the police, who chase the Misseriya into the bush to defraud them.

Few settled groups say security has improved. A group of Gula in Birao say that the security situation there has started to improve following the deployment of internal security forces in December 2020. This has allowed displaced people to return to their homes. A group of Kara youth in Nguene-Boura say that the security situation has improved following the gradual return of political-administrative and military authorities to the Birao sub-prefecture. Farmers in Toumou say they now feel safe because of patrols by internal security forces and being connected to the telephone network which allows them to inform the security authorities in Birao when they feel they are in danger.

Most of the sedentary focus groups, and several groups of transhumant herders, are more negative about the current security situation. A group of Hemat transhumant women say that before 2013 there was security with the presence of the state. Now there are cases of cattle theft by other Misseriya transhumants. A group of Misseriya

say that the presence of MINUSCA in Birao has had little impact on the security situation in the Birao area. They have a general feeling of insecurity caused by hostility from others who believe they have links with armed bandits. A group of Hemat men near Kidkidji say that the return of the government to the area would really help their security. Participants express a general desire for security in the CAR, so that they can ensure their own safety and go about their business freely.

Issues raised beyond the inherent security challenges of large groups of people and animals being on the move include:

1. **The behaviour of transhumant herders.** The Head of the Agriculture Department in Birao says that the situation has worsened. The insecurity is mainly due to the presence of transhumant herders who do not respect the corridors. Other local authorities say that the transhumant herders have changed their behaviour and are now more or less militarised nowadays to protect themselves and their livestock because they face attacks from armed groups who take their livestock by force or from villagers who steal and kill the animals.
2. **Structural violence.** Young people say that unemployment and poverty have a negative impact on young people and increase community violence.
3. **Weapons.** The main disadvantages of transhumance are insecurity and the circulation of weapons throughout the Vakaga region. Sedentary communities say that transhumant herders leaving Sudan carry a stick, a bow, an arrow and even a gun. Local authorities claim that they all come armed and refuse to conform to the rules of society. If the community wants to raise an issue, such as the destruction of a field, the transhumant herders threaten them with weapons, preferring to use weapons and threats. The Head of Service in Birao acknowledges that armed groups around the transhumance corridors are the reason why the herders carry the weapons that scare the locals.
4. **Armed banditry.** There are recurrent incidents of armed banditry. According to interviewees, the population of Sikikédé, especially the men, live with increasing insecurity caused by armed bandits of Sudanese origin from the Misseriya ethnic group and also some Chadians, who rob and extort.
5. **Armed groups.** Butchers in Ouanda Djallé say that security in the sub-prefecture has been shaken by violent events, including the armed rebellions by the CPJP and the Seleka, and kidnappings of the LRA. In a private conversation, a settled farmer says that insecurity has increased since 2013, and even more so since 2018 with the presence of Sudanese armed groups. A group of Misseriya say that transhumance has not developed well since 2013 because of the insecurity on the axis caused by armed groups who have taken their cattle by force.
6. **Impact of insecurity on services provided.** Transhumant herders say that, while before the crisis, FNEC staff treated and vaccinated livestock, but now they are no

longer doing their job as they used to because of regional insecurity concerns. Although the situation is now improving, the insecurity since 2013 has devastated deprived the sedentary population with whom they trade. Settled communities also comment on how the effects of increased insecurity in recent years (lack of medicine or doctors, theft of cattle) have affected their livestock.

7. **Mining.** There was only one mention of mining across all the Vakaga focus groups: a group of transhumant herders mentioned a well-armed group of 30 people on motorbikes who had invaded Vakaga village in search of gold sites.

Quantitative research findings reflect very similar issues. When asked to list the main obstacles to peaceful transhumance, respondents included (in order of number of mentions):

What are the most important obstacles to peaceful transhumance?	
Armed bandits	178
Circulation of weapons	128
Foreign transhumants	61
Sudanese Arabs	61
FACA	48
Absence of the state	10
Chadian Arabs	8
FPRC	7
Seleka Rénové	5
MINUSCA	5

Most of the differences in responses between sedentary and transhumant communities are obvious. Transhumant responses focus on bandits (38%), the circulation of weapons (21%) and FACA (16%), with no mention of foreign transhumant herders and only one mention of Sudanese Arabs. Transhumants are more likely than sedentary communities to cite the absence of the state (7% vs. under 1%).

Women are almost twice as likely as men to list FACA (10% vs. 6% of mentions) and more likely to blame the circulation of weapons, the absence of the state or Sudanese Arabs. 18-25 year olds are less likely than other age groups to mention armed bandits or the circulation of weapons, and proportionally more likely to mention specific armed groups, although the number of mentions for these is low. Both age groups over 25 are most likely to mention armed bandits, while those over 50 are slightly more likely than the other two age groups to mention FACA and foreign transhumant herders.

Who do people trust to provide security?

When asked to name the best actor to guarantee their safety, respondents are most likely to name the FACA. 50% of those in sedentary communities name only FACA and almost 90% name FACA. 50% of transhumant herders also mention only FACA, with almost 90% again mentioning the CAR armed forces. Less than 2% of all respondents mention only MINUSCA, but 15% mention MINUSCA. There are also a few mentions of (unspecified) state authorities, internal security forces, police, gendarmerie, and armed groups including the FPRC, Seleka Renové and FDPC.

A third of respondents were also asked who was responsible for insecurity. Answers included foreign transhumant herders (mentioned by 70% of respondents), armed bandits (39%), Seleka Renové (4%) and international forces (1%).

God

There are very few references to religion throughout the Vakaga consultation. Most are made by transhumant herders in relation to security. One group says that no one is currently providing security for them: "It is in God's hand." Another group says they have not experienced any loss of livestock or visits by armed groups to their camps. They claim it was Allah who protected them during this difficult time of trial, when even some of their close relatives suffered considerable losses. The Arab Rizegat leader of one camel camp says he puts his faith in God for protection.

Themselves

Both sedentary and transhumant communities talk about how they ensure their own security. The Misseriya say that protection during transhumance is personal. They do not need anyone else to protect them, even in the camps. A settled group of young men and women say that some of them have been forced to take up arms and form a self-defence group because of the relationship between armed groups and transhumant herders.

Transhumant herders travel in large groups for security reasons. Misseriya say they travel with large numbers of people from the same ethnic group for security reasons and also know how to defend themselves. Hemat herders say their large numbers, leaving Sudan for CAR, already guarantee their safety and protection, although there are often armed bandits along the way trying to steal goods and oxen. The Charafa travel in groups to ensure their safety and that of their livestock. Peulh Moulmoul prefer to travel with members of their own ethnic group for greater security and to reduce the risk of attack by armed bandits. The Salamats say the current situation puts them in a difficult position and forces them to become more militarised. Their strength is that they come on transhumance in very large numbers, up to more than 3000 and

in case of aggression they will unite to defend themselves with all the means at their disposal. One group believes that the proximity of transhumant herders in camps within a 5 km radius allows them to help each other in the event of an attack. This proximity may also help to prevent an attack: the group says it has not experienced one since 2011.

Transhumant herders describe the weapons they use to protect themselves. The Misseriya use bladed weapons (arrows, bows, sticks and knives) and say that if today's herders have become militarised, it is to ensure their security while on the move. The Tahacha protect themselves and their livestock with white weapons (sticks, arrows, knives). The Charafa say that they use arrows and even dogs as a means of defence in the camp, and the Peulh say that they use the same tools, including arrows and guard dogs, to ensure their security and that of their cattle against attacks by humans and wild animals and to defend themselves in the camps.

Sedentary communities

Some transhumant herders say that the ideal defence is good relations with the host population, although they still have weapons to protect themselves and their livestock. Salamats say that Sikikédé welcomes to all transhumant herders because of the behaviour of the inhabitants of the villagers. One group stays near Matala for security reasons as they have a good relationship with the villagers. A group of Misseriya say that the ideal people to defend them are the host population because they are used to living together since they started transhumance.

On the other hand, a group of Salamats say that some settled communities, especially the young ones, set fire to the bush to show their anger and make life difficult for the herders.

Transhumant herders

Some sedentary groups say they live in perfect harmony with the transhumant herders. While this does not mean that the transhumant herders provide security, it does mean that they are trusted by these groups not to cause insecurity.

Sedentary groups understand why transhumant herders carry weapons but say it does create a sense of insecurity. One sedentary group says that Arab herders carry AK47s guns for their own security against armed groups, but this creates an imbalance in negotiations and trade with farmers who mostly feel threatened by them.

Perceptions of the role of transhumant herders in providing security in sedentary communities are strongly influenced by their association with armed bandits. This is explored below in relation to armed bandits.

Transhumant groups do not always trust each other to provide security. Several groups referred to a conflict in 2020 when Peulh herders were attacked by Misseriya and Salamats (together with a Sudanese armed group, the Janjaweed) and many people were killed. One Peulh group says that for them this attack was due to the the Misseriya's bad faith towards the Peulh. Another group says that the Peulh Oudda and Moulmoul groups are always ready to use weapons as a deterrent. Semi-nomads say that some transhumant herders steal their cattle: the Misseriya are cited as being much more involved in this and also for stealing the cattle of fellow Sudanese herders from other ethnic groups other than theirs. In a focus group reports, the issue of Misseriya theft was confirmed several times by the transhumant herders themselves.



Farmers fertilise fields by placing herbs on them and then lighting them; transhumant herders complain that fires are being set to block their passage.

Parks

Parks are mentioned as having a role to play in security. As noted in the chapter on parks, focus group respondents do not distinguish between national parks and hunting areas. Where they work well, those using parks (presumably hunting areas) say they do not have to look for water and grass for their livestock and are safe. However, transhumant herders express concern that if herders are displaced when (national) parks are re-established, there will be a surplus of herders in areas immediately outside the parks and a potential risk of insecurity due to conflict, as Hemat, Misseriya and Tahacha herders do not get on with the Peulh herders currently using the park area.

Local authorities

In a private conversation, a farmer expresses the importance of local authorities in ensuring regional security.

Charafa transhumant herders talk about using local authorities for security. Before leaving for transhumance, they contact the local authorities, especially the mayors of the communes, for security information. To guarantee their security and neutrality, a group of Charafa have signed a pledge with the mayor. In the event of a new conflict, they will first try to resolve it amicably, and if necessary they will turn to the local authorities (mayors, village chiefs). They want the state authorities to take effective action to guarantee their security.

Internal security forces

Sedentary communities and transhumant herders use language that suggests trust in the internal security forces to provide security. Most of the references are requests: a group of sedentary women want the return of the internal security forces to guarantee their safety; a group of transhumant men need protection during transhumance and the government would be the best actor to defend them as it is seen as neutral. A group of Misseriya hope for the restoration of state authority with the deployment of security forces in the area to ensure the security and the free movement of people and goods; another group say they rely on the Central African government and population for their safety. A group of local authorities suggest that the internal security forces were effective in the past when they say that transhumant herders refuse to conform to the rules of society, although these are the same rules they observed before the crisis when the state's internal security forces were present in the area. Similarly, the Chef d'Antenne of CAMDCA (*Coopération agro-pastorale et minière pour le développement* - Agro-pastoral and mining cooperation for development) says that the situation of transhumant herders carrying guns for their own security would not happen if the state authorities were efficient.

The lack of internal security forces is sometimes described more critically. A group of transhumant herders say that the security situation in the CAR, particularly in Vakaga, is fragile because no one can guarantee the security of the country except the state, which is the only guarantor. They want the state to redeploy in Vakaga, particularly the internal defence forces (gendarmerie, police) and the FACA, to ensure the security of all communities and promote peaceful transhumance. This is echoed by groups of Peulh transhumant herders, who say that before there can be any real talk of security, the country must first be secure and the exercise of state authority must be restored. This would allow the herders to be safe and to carry out their activities freely. They do not have the means to ensure their security and want the state authorities to return to

ensure their safety. According to a group of local authorities, the internal security forces are not deployed in Ouanda-Djallé to ensure the protection of the population.

Military authorities

Military authorities are mentioned by only a few groups. Settled communities say that transhumant herders have more respect for military authorities because of the sanctions they impose on those who are undisciplined. Military authorities use their power to force herders to pay compensation for damage caused.

Armed groups¹⁴

Armed groups are trusted by some in settled communities to provide security. They intervene in the town in the event of incidents caused by armed bandits. Among other things, they strictly forbid transhumant herders to keep their firearms in Sikikédé. They also come to the aid of communities in the event of conflicts between the farmers and the herders. The local population maintains relations with the armed groups in order to secure their fields. Some say the settled communities support the armed groups because they all come from the same community and share the same realities. They see the armed groups as protectors in the absence of state authority in the area, which is why they are much more supportive of the armed groups. Butchers in Ouanda-Djallé say that it is elements of the FPRC, some of whom are natives of Ouanda-Djallé, who provide security for the town. Asked about the links between the armed groups and the security of the town, local authorities say they do not have a problem with the armed groups. In fact, they have some of their relatives in the armed groups who also provide security for the town. Transhumant herders who have family members in the armed groups in CAR are also fully trusted.

Other sedentary communities speak of armed groups as a source of insecurity. Since 2018, insecurity has increased more with the presence of Sudanese armed groups. Armed groups around the corridors are the reason why herders carry weapons, which creates a sense of insecurity among villagers. Some armed groups carry weapons just to provoke the farmers. The security of a community can be affected by an attack by an armed group on a nearby village: residents of Oulou say that the attack on Boromata in 2020 had an impact on Oulou, where the population fled because the village is located only 7 km from Boromata.

A group of transhumant Hemat herders say their relations with the armed groups controlling the area are now perfect. The armed groups are ex-Seleka, now with the FPRC, and they do not exert any force nor provoke disputes. Reporting teams note that the leader of the FPRC lives in Sudan, and there is a link between this and the fact

¹⁴ Note that care is needed with definitions used in focus groups. Facilitators say some participants define armed groups as armed bandits.

that the FPRC in Sikikédé welcomes Sudanese herders. Other groups also describe a peaceful coexistence: armed groups no longer bother them and they carry out their activities peacefully without any security concerns; they have not been attacked in recent months because of a growing understanding of peace between them and the armed groups; staying as far away from the villages as possible keeps them safe from armed groups. One group of Misseriya said that they have no disputes with the armed groups because they do not violate the principles established for peace and security in the area; another said that they have no relations with the armed groups because they are supporters of peace and do not want to get into trouble with anyone.

Some coexistence is described in less positive terms. One group says that armed groups are armed bandits who steal other people's livestock and that their community has no relations with them. This lack of contact does not always create a sense of security for transhumant herders. An FNEC regional coordinator stated that the herders had no relationship with armed groups, and the interviewer reported that the coordinator felt a great deal of fear and insecurity. Several groups of transhumant herders have established links with armed groups to reduce insecurity: one participant said almost his entire family had been in an armed group for three years because they had been victims of theft, looting and the disappearance of oxen. Others report forced relationships with armed groups based on extortion: they give money to avoid visits at any time in order to remain in peace during the transhumance, which they are forced to pay this, regardless of their wishes, out of fear.

There are several reports of specific security incidents involving armed groups: Misseriya groups say that armed groups take their cattle by force and, in one case stripping them before allowing them to continue their journey. Peulh men and women say that a Sudanese armed group (Janjaweed) was involved in the attack in Terfel in 2020 in which more than 20 herders were killed and almost 100 cattle taken.

Armed bandits¹⁵

There is no evidence from focus groups that people trust armed bandits to provide security.

There are many reports from both transhumant and sedentary communities of armed bandits causing insecurity.

The Misseriya say that they lost more than 100 cattle during the 2013 crisis to unidentified armed bandits who took advantage of the chaos to organise armed robberies in the herders' camps. Hemat herders speak of armed bandits on the way from Sudan to CAR trying to steal goods and oxen. Salamats say that the proliferation

¹⁵ Note that care is needed with definitions used in focus groups. Facilitators say some participants define armed groups as armed bandits.

of weapons on the Darfur side of the border due to the lack of an effective of the Sudanese state presence in the area, has led to the emergence of a large number of armed bandits who take advantage of the situation to wreak havoc on both the Central African and Sudanese sides. A group of Salamats say that they have recently been confronted by groups of unidentified armed bandits who know that they will be passing in a certain direction and often ambush them just to steal their cattle. A group of Peulh Ekaher have lost more than 200 oxen to armed attacks in the camps carried out by bandits of Sudanese nationality. Another Salamat group says that during the 2013 crisis they were not attacked by armed groups or armed bandits, but to overcome the fear they were forced to move far into the bush, abandoning the usual corridor to Sudan. Unfortunately in recent times the lack of state authority in Darfur has led to the emergence of groups of armed bandits who organise themselves to sabotage the established social order between the Sudanese herders and the settled communities. Some transhumant herders say they stay as far away from the villages as possible to protect them from armed groups and unidentified armed bandits.

Sedentary participants in Sikikédé say that the population, especially the men, live with growing insecurity caused by armed bandits of Sudanese origin from the Misseriya group and also some Chadians who rob and extort goods from the community.

The link, real or imagined, between transhumant herders and armed bandits is raised by several groups and is seen by both sedentary and transhumant communities as influencing perceptions of who can be trusted to provide security. Some settled participants, who define armed groups as armed bandits, say that transhumant herders, especially those from the Misseriya tribe, have relationships with armed groups because they are allied ethnic groups. Local authorities say transhumant herders are accompanied by armed bandits who rob motorbikes and vehicles and kill people at will. Other sedentary groups say that transhumant herders are similar to Sudanese armed bandits, who disguise themselves as transhumant herders. After committing a crime, they take refuge in transhumant camps and are disguised by their Misseriya brothers. According to participants in the groups, they are highwaymen who rob motorbikes belonging to itinerant traders or motorbike taxis, extort property and murder the population of the Sikikédé population, mainly targeting men. Other sedentary groups say that transhumant herders are well aware that there are some who have not come not because of transhumance but because of for banditry, but they prefer to host them anyway without worrying about it.

Transhumant herders acknowledge and refute their perceived association with armed bandits. The Misseriya say that the sedentary population believes that transhumant herders are the perpetrators of the attacks that plague the area because they carry weapons to protect their herds. Charafa point to a group of armed Sudanese bandits who killed a young motorbike taxi driver. Tension were so high that the local population thought they were accomplices. Salamats say that armed bandits are

organised to rob and steal from the settled communities, and that this practice destroys the good collaboration between Sudanese herders in general. Semi-nomads also describe the perceived link, saying that some accuse the herders of covering up for the criminals because they are all brothers, sometimes from the same ethnicity and region. The transhumant herders have always maintained their innocence on this issue, claiming that they are victims of these criminals because they do not have the means to stop them.

Recommendations from the consultations for security

- 1. Security in the CAR should be provided by the State.** Participants expressed a general desire for security in the CAR, so that they can go about their business freely. FACA is most likely to be mentioned by all respondents as the best actor to guarantee their security, while MINUSCA is mentioned by 15%. The transhumant herders say that, in order to find a lasting solution to this situation of insecurity, which has gone on for too long, it is important that the authority of the Central African state is re-established throughout the Vakaga area and that the Central African and Sudanese authorities communicate with each other and develop a joint strategy for controlling the border between the two countries. A reduction in insecurity will also allow the resumption of essential services, including veterinary services and the vaccination of livestock. Kara youth recommend that police and military units be deployed to ensure the security of the population. Local authorities and youth leaders in Delembe call for security to be strengthened through the deployment of national defence and security forces (FACA, gendarmerie), including regular patrols in the villages and on the outlying roads around Birao. The workshops recommend the restoration of State authority (deployment of defence and security forces, gendarmerie, police, FACA, forest guards). National authorities could provide a framework for this by deploying FACA, training FACA in non-violent communication and proactively and visibly addressing perceptions of marginalization of certain groups. International organizations could provide training in non-violent communication for the armed forces.
- 2. Reduce the need to carry weapons.** Carrying weapons is mentioned by almost half (46%) of respondents as one of the main obstacles to peaceful transhumance. In the workshops, armed transhumance is mentioned as one of the problems. Both transhumant and, to a lesser extent, sedentary communities talk about ways to ensure their own security. To reduce the insecurity caused by groups carrying weapons, groups need to trust that security will be provided by the State. In particular, if transhumant herders no longer believe that they need to carry weapons to protect themselves and their livestock from attacks by armed groups, the settled community or other transhumant groups, they will be willing to leave their weapons with the village chief, and settled communities will no longer perceive their weapons as a threat. The workshops recommended concerted action by members of the Advisory Group in CAR, Sudan and Chad to organise regular dialogue and

awareness-raising among farmers and herders in favour of unarmed transhumance. They also recommended organising regular patrols in communities to deter some transhumant herders who use firearms to solve a problem related to the destruction of fields.

3. **Local authorities and internal defence forces should contribute to security.** Local authorities and internal defence forces (gendarmerie, police) have a role to play in ensuring regional security and need to play this role effectively. Workshops recommend increasing the number of FACA, gendarmes and police and deploying them throughout Vakaga including the southern zone.
4. **Armed groups should not be separate security providers.** Armed groups are currently seen by some communities, both sedentary and transhumant, as a source of insecurity and by others as a source of security. As above, there needs to be trust in the state's provision of security: where groups are part of the state's provision, this should be clear and understood; where groups are not part of the state's provision, they should have no role in providing security. The workshops recommended a meeting between the Advisory Group and the leaders of armed groups to advocate for safe and peaceful transhumance, and that the role of armed groups in providing security should be part of the meeting agenda. National authorities could provide incentives for armed groups to disarm and demobilize, reintegrate ex-combatants who are still active, and refrain from using mercenaries.
5. **Assign accurate responsibility for actions that cause insecurity.** Find ways to distinguish between the actions of transhumant herders and those of armed bandits, so that the behaviour of armed bandits does not create insecurity between transhumant herders and the sedentary communities. Transhumant herders say settled communities should distinguish between herders and armed bandits and join forces with herders who are themselves victims of armed cattle raiding. National authorities could support this by enforcing the law against banditry.
6. **Reduce the attractiveness of crime.** Workshops recommend finding jobs for young people in areas around the transhumance corridors to discourage them from stealing and killing cattle. Reporting teams suggest that the motivations for cattle rustling should be explored further: in many areas unemployment is high and incomes very low, yet there is no cattle rustling.
7. **Restore parks carefully.** To avoid insecurity, care must be taken to restore the parks in a way that does not cause conflict between transhumant groups displaced from the parks.
8. **Strengthen border security.** The workshops recommend the creation of a mixed unit composed of elements of the Armed Force of Central African, Sudanese and Chadian armed forces to carry out strict controls at the borders of the CAR, Sudan and Chad and at the border posts of Tissi, Aouk and Amdafock to prevent transhumant herders from travelling with automatic weapons and to check the papers of transhumant herders.

VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE

Of the 28% who said they had been the victim of a group with whom they had a conflict, 17% said the abuse included physical violence. In the workshops, theft, killing and extortion of cattle was identified as one of the problems of transhumance: violence against the person was not identified as a separate problem, although it may have been included in armed transhumance. The workshops called for the state to guarantee the safety of transhumant herders in CAR: it is not clear whether this referred to personal safety, livestock safety or both.

In the qualitative data, several groups of transhumant herders referred to personal violence. Some referred to specific incidents: a group of Sudanese armed bandits who recently killed a young motorbike taxi driver; resistance against an armed group in which they lost several members of their ethnic group and in particular two of their brothers; physical violence against one of their children who was beaten by a farmer's son. A conflict in 2020 involving significant loss of life is mentioned by several groups: a group of Peulh men and a separate group of Peulh women each describe in almost identical terms an attack in Terfel by the Misseriya and a Sudanese armed group (Janjaweed) who had come to steal their cattle. More than 20 herders from their side were killed in the attack. A group of Peulh say that they were among the Peulh groups attacked in Terfel, in which many people lost their lives: they accuse the Misseriya and the Salamats of being behind this attack. Some make more general references to violence against the person. One of the reasons why a brother joined an armed group was because he was the victim of physical aggression. Peulh Ekaher have lost almost half of their oxen because of armed attacks by bandits of Sudanese nationality who come on horseback, all armed, and show no mercy when they want to attack the herders to take their cattle. Some violence is linked to the 2013 crisis. A group of Tahacha say they have recorded deaths as a result of armed bandits, but the phenomenon has practically disappeared since 2013, although the memories are still vivid. Some Misseriya describe losing two brothers in the 2013 crisis and say unidentified armed bandits took advantage of the chaos to organise armed robberies in the herders' camps, taking more than 100 oxen.

Several settled groups also refer to violence against the person. These are described in general terms. Sudanese armed bandits are killing the population of Sikikédé, with men being their main targets. Armed bandits are killing people at will. The presence of transhumant herders in the areas that used to be parks now means (according to two focus groups) the destruction of fields, the rape of women and permanent conflicts with their husbands. One group says that Misseriya have a reputation for stealing cattle, carrying weapons and even raping women in the area, and another says that Misseriya even show violent behaviour towards women and girls when they go to the field or the river. A group of settled women said that transhumant herders sometimes commit sexual violence when they find a woman alone in the bush, and another said

that conflicts with herders are due to the destruction of fields and sexual harassment. One group of men said that there have been attempted sexual assaults on women, and another said that transhumant herders also commit acts of sexual violence against women.

Participants often refer to violence that threatens the person in the same sentence as violence that threatens the livelihood. One sedentary group of women says that transhumant herders who come without their families are perpetrators of violence against the community such as attacks on women and even cattle theft. Given that communities are entirely dependent on livestock or crops for food security, protecting them may well be seen as equally important as protecting human lives. Settled communities go to great lengths to prevent the destruction of their fields and transhumant herders do the same to protect their cattle. Evidence of this can be found in decisions to join armed groups: the participant whose brother joined because they were victims of physical aggression and were being held to ransom demands during the transhumance added that he joined to protect his pastures and those of this family who continued to transhum. A Tahacha said that almost his entire family had been in the armed group for three years because of the aggressions committed against them by armed groups and because they had been victims of the theft, looting and the disappearance of oxen.

It is undoubtedly true that communities see security as necessary to ensure more than personal safety. For example, it is typical for a group of settled women to express the need to secure a field to protect the harvest, while a group of men are not alone in saying that they hold arrows to ensure the safety of the cattle during the transhumance.

Recommendations from the consultations for violence against the person

No specific recommendations emerge from the study of violence against the person in Vakaga, although all of the recommendations listed under security would be likely to address this issue.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

What is working?

Only one of the 22 focus groups with findings on services had a positive comment. A group of transhumant herders (Misseriya) said that transhumance improved in the last two years because of the involvement of a former FNEC agent in Sikikédé who helped them to take care of their livestock by diagnosing the animals before they were treated.

This reflects the many comments from focus groups about what worked before the crisis. More than half of the transhumant focus groups said that the FNEC protected their cattle before the crisis by providing them with effective medicines. Cattle were in perfect health before the crisis because FNEC was on the ground fulfilling its role. Veterinarians were all over the villages treating livestock. Vaccination of livestock was carried out by a veterinary officer or a government service, and vaccines were plentiful and not in short supply. Some organisations, such as the NGO Triangle, were involved in vaccination. Several groups commented that in the past it was easy to find vets in the villages. They would even follow the transhumant herders into the bush to provide care for livestock and effective medicines.

To meet their needs for **veterinary services**, transhumant herders are trying to make alternative arrangements. Misseriya transhumant herders say that before they leave for transhumance, they buy a large quantity of veterinary medicines, which they sell during their outward and return journeys and while they are in Sikikédé. The money they make from this allows them to buy cattle from other transhumants to increase their herd size. Hemat herders in Tiringoulou say: "We are bringing a small veterinary pharmacy from Sudan to at least meet the health needs of our cattle."

In addition to veterinary services, **access to markets** is mentioned as important for transhumant breeders. A group of Salamats say they are always close to the community leaders which helps them access the market and sell their livestock in Sikikédé.

There are a handful of mentions by the sedentary communities of where the state, and in particular the **local authorities**, operate. One group says that in case of danger they inform the authorities responsible for security in Birao. Participants from the local authorities in Kara say that the security situation and transhumance have improved relatively since the gradual return of the state with the deployment of internal defence and security forces. Unfortunately the latter have remained confined to Birao and have not patrolled the axes and surrounding villages. The head of agriculture and the ACDA sector manager in Birao say that one of the reasons for the more stable environment in Ouanda Djallé is the commitment of the local authorities to communicate with the transhumant herders. Women farmers in Matala say that although it is not the local

authorities who warn them of the arrival of the transhumant herders, once the transhumant herders arrive they come to inform the local authority about their arrival. A group in Matala market says that when fields are destroyed, they inform the local authority, i.e. the village chief.

The involvement of local authorities in transhumance is mentioned by more settled communities, and this can be seen as further evidence that the local authorities are working in some way. Some sedentary groups speak of transhumant herders informing local authorities of their presence, while a slightly smaller number speak of transhumant herders not informing the local authorities. There are mentions of local authorities being involved in conflicts over the destruction of fields, of transhumant herders making payments to the village chief, and herders benefiting from the protection of local authorities.

Seven transhumant groups mention the role of local authorities as something that works. Most mentions are related to the handling of disputes: some transhumant herders say that the best way to resolve disputes is to involve the local authorities in dialogue. After trying to resolve a new conflict amicably, transhumant herders will turn to the local authorities (mayor, village chief) to reach an amicable agreement in their presence. Before their seasonal movements, Peulh transhumant herders from Sudan also contact the local authorities, in particular the mayors of the communes, through their ardo, to obtain information on security, consent and accessibility of the areas before they leave. A group of transhumant herders said that there was a “perfect” relationship exists between them and the local authorities (mayors, village chiefs and the head of the FNEC). Another referred to the role of the local authorities of all the communes of Vakaga in organising a large meeting in collaboration with MINUSCA, which resulted in the identification of three main transhumance corridors.

Sedentary communities cite examples where the involvement of **military authorities** works. Conflicts between herders and farmers are resolved with the arrival of the military authorities because the transhumant herders have more respect for them because of the sanctions they apply to those who are undisciplined. One group of women says that the military authorities are the most common method of resolving these conflicts because they force the herders to pay compensation for the damage they have caused: as another group says: “when they see the red berets, they will understand”.

What is not working?

The overwhelming response from transhumant herders to what is not working is the **lack of veterinary services**. This is raised in every transhumant focus group. The story is entirely consistent across 16 focus groups: on arrival in CAR, livestock are threatened by unfamiliar diseases from the new grasses on which they graze, from contaminated

water, or from flies¹⁶ and ticks. There is a lack of medicines and qualified vets to treat them. There is almost no veterinary dispensary. The transhumant herders treat themselves without diagnosis, using the medicines they find on the market, which are of poor quality. The livestock fall back into the same situation days later and die.

Many groups stress that the current method is completely different from the one before the crisis. Before the crisis, cattle did not get sick as they do now. The FNEC protected their cattle by providing them with effective medicines, but now the transhumant herders say they are struggling to treat their cattle themselves. The people trained by the NGO Triangle to vaccinate the cattle no longer have the medicines.

Transhumant herders describe the considerable costs. Livestock health is still under threat, with livestock suffering serious health problems. Several groups say they have lost more cattle to disease this year. One group says they sometimes lose 30-35 cattle a year to disease, another that they have lost nine cattle to strange diseases over which they have no control, a third that the number of cattle has decreased due to the lack of a qualified vet to treat the animals.

Transhumant herders also describe how they dispose of sick and dead cattle. Sometimes they sell the cattle before the disease gets worse and sell them at a low price to sedentary communities. Some sell the beef as soon as possible, others slaughter it and eat it. Some separate sick cattle from others or kill them to avoid contamination, some burn them to prevent the spread of disease, others leave them to die.

Sedentary communities also point to the lack of veterinary services. Like the transhumant herders, they say that life was better before 2013: a minimum of animal health support from FNEC was visible. Animal health was better, advice and follow-up from veterinary services was available. Now, the absence of an agro-pastoral development structure (such as FNEC, ANDE) means that endemic diseases that decimate livestock persist.

While transhumant herders all focus on the lack of veterinary services, sedentary communities identify several other services that are not working. Distance to services is an issue: for those 15 km from Birao in Bachama the total **absence of a school structure** and the difficulty for parents to find a guardian in Birao to accommodate their children results directly in the non-enrolment of school-aged children. **Distance from health services** is also a problem. The **condition of the roads** is raised: the lack of road infrastructure leaves the population particularly isolated, especially in winter.

¹⁶ This is likely to be a reference to tsetse flies which transmit trypanosomiasis, also known as sleeping sickness in humans and nagana in cattle.

Young people's voices are strong on the lack of services. A group of young people from Kara listed the following:

- **Absence of state authority** – a vacuum in all sectors.
- **Education** – lack of access to vocational training.
- **Schools** – lack of schools and teachers.
- **Health** – lack of qualified health personnel.
- **Social-cultural infrastructure** – lack of youth centres, cultural centres.
- **Youth projects** – lack of these.
- **Roads** – deterioration of roads.
- **Humanitarian aid** – lack of humanitarian assistance.

Another group of young men and women said that **unemployment** was the main problem facing young people in Boura. There are more opportunities in Birao (given the massive presence of humanitarian NGOs), but neither the leaders of humanitarian organisations nor the Birao authorities are concerned about their situation. Unemployment and the resulting poverty are factors that negatively influence young people's behaviour and increase community violence. The group also points to the **lack of schools, health infrastructure and boreholes for drinking water**.

The **absence of state authority** is raised by many sedentary groups beyond the Kara youth. It is said to have caused security problems. The absence of the state (political-administrative authorities, FACA, police, gendarmerie) in the prefecture of Vakaga, aggravated by the interethnic clashes between the Gula, Runga and Kara in September 2019, has dealt a heavy blow to the security and cohesion of the different communities of Birao and Boura. It has created a wide gap between the conflicting parties of farmers and herders, it has led to an incalculable number of foreign transhumant herders who come armed with assault rifles, including automatic weapons. Several sedentary groups say that transhumant herders carry weapons because they run the risk of being attacked by armed bandits. For the Chef d'Antenne of CAMDCA, this situation would not occur if the state authorities were effective, while the regional co-ordinator of FNEC says that the deteriorating security situation and the absence of the authorities since 2013 have led to anarchy on the transhumance corridors. The lack of a security presence is also blamed for the behaviour of transhumant herders. The local authorities in Kara say that transhumant herders all come armed and refuse to comply with the rules of society, even though these are the same rules they followed before the crisis, when the state's internal security forces were present in the area.

The costs of the absence of state authority, presence and services are noted. Farmers in Birao point to the lack of a judicial system and say that the absence of state authority

in the Vakaga prefecture is an obstacle to improving their situation in the short term. Sedentary communities say that the main reason for insecurity is the absence of state authorities. They see armed groups as protectors in the absence of state authority, and recognise that the practice of armed groups “obliging” transhumant herders to pay compensation for damage to fields, often at a high price, will continue until the state authority returns to the whole of Vakaga.

Some groups from sedentary communities speak of state or local authorities that are present but somehow ineffective. Several groups comment on the lack of respect by transhumant herders for local authorities. It is said that some transhumant herders, particularly from the Arab sub-tribes, have no respect for anyone or for the local authorities and that they no longer respect the fields and that even the village chiefs have no authority. One group says that traditional conflict resolution mechanisms based on mediation and arbitration by local authorities (village chief, mayor) do not work because transhumant herders do not collaborate. These transhumant herders trample on the power of the local authorities, who don't have the means to compel the transhumant herders and enforce their settlements.

A significant number of transhumant herders groups are calling for the return of state authority. They say that transhumance is currently not well organised or well-founded because of the total absence of state authority. They hope for the restoration of state authority with the deployment of security forces to guarantee their safety and the free movement of people, animals and goods. They are calling for the state to be deployed in the Vakaga region, in particular the internal defence forces (gendarmerie, police) and the FACA, to guarantee the security of all communities and to promote peaceful transhumance in Vakaga. To really talk about security the country must first be secure and the exercise of state authority must be restored. No one can guarantee the security of a country other than the State. When the country is at peace, they too will be safe.

Transhumant groups also recognise the need for state authority across borders. Recently, the lack of state authority in Darfur has led to the emergence of groups of armed bandit groups. It is important that the Central African and Sudanese authorities communicate and develop a joint strategy to control the border between the two countries and ensure peaceful seasonal migration.

Several transhumant herders groups are calling for the involvement of state authorities to guarantee the breeding service for the health of their cattle. They want the state to demarcate a breeding area. There are also a few mentions of the need for the return of state authority to prevent transhumant herders from paying more taxes than they should (both legal and illegal).

Recommendations from the consultations for provision of services

1. **Provide veterinary services.** The lack of veterinary services is a problem both for transhumant herders, for whom the health of their livestock is crucial to their livelihoods, and for sedentary communities, who are concerned about the infection of their own herds.
 - Restore FNEC presence / veterinary services to protect the health of livestock.
 - Reintroduce / publicise vaccination of cattle by veterinary officers / government services / NGOs e.g. Triangle.
 - Provide vaccination facilities and other veterinary services at border crossings. Vaccinating cattle at the border before they enter Central African territory would prevent contamination of Central African livestock from Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and other diseases. It would also provide an incentive to cross at officially designated points and allow for registration and other regulatory controls.
 - Guarantee the breeding service for the health of the cattle and demarcate breeding area.
 - Create a breeding commune.
 - Head of the livestock department / FNEC to issue vaccination receipts and pasture taxes to facilitate the free movement of breeders.
 - Good collaboration between the FNEC and the breeders: FNEC issues the breeders' cards to help identify transhumant herders.
 - International organisations could provide veterinary expertise.
 - International organisations could share examples of similar projects carried out elsewhere, where the provision of veterinary services and vaccination facilities has provided an incentive to participate in a regulated process of transhumance, and practical means to ensure that the provision meets the needs of local communities.
2. **Provide security services:** transhumant and sedentary communities are united in demanding the restoration of state authority to define and enforce a system of peaceful transhumance.
 - Restore state authority (deployment of defence and security forces, gendarmerie, police, FACA, forest guards).
 - Increase the number of FACA, gendarmes and police and deploy them throughout Vakaga, including the southern zone.
 - Equip the internal defence forces (gendarmerie, police) and FACA to ensure the security of all communities and to promote peaceful transhumance in Vakaga.

- Extend the internal defence and security forces patrolling out to the axes (of Birao) and surrounding villages.
- Regular patrols by internal security providers to promote the free movement of goods and people.
- Increase the number of internal security providers to cover the entire zone.

3. Provide border services:

- Organise a meeting between the technical services (ANDE, ACDA, FNEC) of CAR, Sudan and Chad to share experiences.
- Good collaboration between ANDE and FNEC, supported by the internal security providers.
- Central African and Sudanese authorities to develop a joint strategy to control the border between the two countries.
- Establish a mixed unit composed of elements from the Armed Forces of Central Africa, Sudanese and Chadian armed forces for strict control of the borders between the CAR, Sudan and Chad.
- Revise the 1925 Convention on the Livestock Sector between the CAR and Sudan.

4. Provide commercial services:

- Provide easy access to markets for transhumant herders.

5. Provide access to water. Access to drinking water is a challenge for some sedentary communities and a criterion for the routes chosen by transhumant herders. Boreholes and other water points are also places where people from sedentary and transhumant communities meet.

- National authorities could make the rehabilitation of water points shared by transhumant herders and sedentary populations a national priority.
- Local authorities could provide boreholes for drinking water and access to water for livestock and establish a medium-term plan for maintaining the water points.
- National authorities could support the development of infrastructure around the water points to enable trade, information sharing – for example about transhumant movements in the area and which fields have not yet been harvested - and social interaction.
- International organisations could provide examples of similar projects undertaken elsewhere for consideration by policy-makers, highlighting useful practices and pitfalls
- International organisations could support infrastructure development around the water points.

6. Provide transhumance services:

- Workshop participants recommend organising a reflection workshop between the advisory group and the technical services, including in particular the livestock service, agriculture, farmers' organisations, the administrative authorities, and the mayors, in order to discuss the problems associated with transhumance and to facilitate peaceful transhumance for the benefit of all. A focus group of young men and women is also calling for a workshop for exchange and dialogue initiated by the authorities.
- A focus group of young men and women recommends strengthening the presence of the FSI, which can facilitate the resolution of disputes between farmers and herders.
- National and local authorities to work effectively around transhumance, including: communicating effectively with transhumant herders, providing them with up-to-date information on their planned routes, advise settled communities of the imminent arrival of transhumant herders, dealing with transhumance-related disputes.
- Involve military authorities where appropriate, e.g. to enforce agreed conflict settlements.
- International organisations could initiate collaborative projects to help identify, diagnose and fill the gaps that can occur when information shared from border crossings does not reach the intended farmers and traders in settled communities.

7. Provide services beyond transhumance:

- Provide a school structure, convenient access to health services and qualified health personnel, road infrastructure, vocational training, socio-cultural infrastructure (e.g. youth centres, cultural centres), youth projects, employment opportunities for young people, judicial system.
- Creation of schools and provision of qualified teachers for the children of transhumant and sedentary people in the Vakaga area.
- Create income-generating activities (agro-pastoralist groups) in areas affected by transhumance corridors to provide employment for young people and discourage them from stealing and killing cattle.



Concordis' flag in the field

METHODOLOGY

Concordis' consultations sought to explore the challenges and dilemmas of transhumance from the perspective of local stakeholders and the mechanisms to which they use to manage conflict.

The baseline consultation in northern CAR, covering the prefectures of Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran, Ouham-Pendé and western Ouham, involved 2,583 people, of whom 1,007 were women and 1,576 men.

In 2021, the consultations involved a total of 4,600 encounters with people in focus groups, individual interviews and questionnaires, including 1,922 women and 2,678 men. The consultations in Vakaga involved 1,427 people (536 women, 891 men).

Participants' Demographics

The samples for both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis were deliberately diverse to ensure inclusive participation and representation in the data. The pool of participants in the 2021 consultations in Vakaga included the following:

- 31 ethnic groups, including: Goula, Bourno , Tahacha, Imar, Kara, Yulu, Khadjakhsa, Haoussa, Sara, Massalite, Rachid, Arab Misseriya, Charafa, Runga, Salamat, Tahacha, Peuhl, Hemat
- people who identified themselves as having a disability (blind, maimed);
- displaced persons;

- diverse livelihoods in sedentary communities (farmers, grower-salesmen, butchers, agro-pastoralists, merchants, restaurant owners, pharmacists, veterinarians, midwives);
- leaders at various levels of the traditional and state hierarchies (village, group, district and religious leaders, mayors, deputy mayors and ardo/ Katchalla);
- representatives of official structures (the National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers (FNEC), the Central African Agency for Agricultural Development (ACDA) and the National Agency for Livestock Farming Development (ANDE);
- members of cooperatives and associations, including women's, herders' and farmers' associations;
- towns and villages of various sizes (Birao, Boromata, Takandja, Tissi), as well as neighbourhoods within the major towns (Manou or Tango in Birao) and transhumance camps (Bachama1, Al-Harra, Safra).

The findings presented include the voices of many who are often not heard, including women and nomadic pastoralists. This is done without judgment and in the firm belief that the transformation of any conflict is possible to the extent that actions are identified, designed and implemented by those living in the conflict environment. Specific statements from respondents are included throughout this report to allow local actors to narrate realities. The results of the analysis of the data from the questionnaires complement their stories.

Setting Up Teams

Concordis and IPIS assembled a team of Central Africans with proven skills and experience in promoting dialogue and social cohesion. They provided training in a range of skills, including data collection, focus group facilitation, mediation, participatory mapping, and the technical skills required to use the Fulcrum smartphone application for data collection and the Garmin InReach device for movement and security monitoring.

During the training, the Concordis and IPIS teams worked with the participants to refine the questions used in the questionnaires and focus groups, ensuring that they were applicable and appropriate to each local context, and that they did not provoke conflict or cause unintended harm.

The research team conducted structured one-on-one interviews using fixed questionnaires with closed questions that were tailored to each group. In addition, the team used unstructured interviews, which they conducted through focus groups and informal discussions with more probing, open-ended questions. The team used participatory mapping to triangulate the findings and map the routes used for seasonal transhumance.

Concordis project officers spent time in the villages, traveling by motorcycle to more rural areas and visiting herders in their camps. This allowed conversations to develop naturally: team members were able to gain trust and explore issues in greater depth and nuance, beyond the superficial answers. With transhumant herders in particular, the data obtained through a mix of informal interview techniques and the more structured research methodology was considered more reliable than if formal interviews had been conducted.

A number of questions guided the consultation process, including:

- What routes were taken by different groups of herders during the last seasonal migration, both officially and clandestinely?
- How are decisions made about migration routes and the choice of crops to be sown?
- What are the dynamics and drivers of conflict are evident in each zone and group?
- What are the minority views and outliers in the disaggregated data were encountered?
- What trust or mistrust exists between different groups?
- Who trusts whom for protection and advice?
- Who fears whom and who does each group attribute responsibility for insecurity?
- What are the most common grievances and who is blamed for what?
- What is the extent of social and economic interaction between different groups in different areas?
- How do people maintain their livelihoods and what would make this more sustainable?
- What conflict resolution mechanisms have been used in the past, what is currently working and what initiatives or mechanisms would people support; how can we evaluate what is working, what is not and why?

All of the data was disaggregated by gender, age and livelihood.

On this basis, the consultations sought to identify locally owned recommendations proposed by the different livelihood groups themselves, and options they envisioned for promoting peaceful collaboration that benefits all.

Quantitative Methods

The research team conducted 302 individual interviews with 147 men and 155 women throughout Vakaga. At the start of each interview, the team informed participants of the reason for the questions and asked if they agreed to be interviewed.

In order to produce a quantitative dataset, the questionnaires were designed to provide measurable data on the views of members of each livelihood group on a number of key issues. Some of these questions served as proxies to measure aspects of social cohesion between the groups, including trust, fear and economic interdependence: among the proxies were questions about willingness to attend a wedding organised by the other group or to allow one's child to play with a child from the other group. To ensure the disaggregation of the dataset, the questionnaires also asked for detailed information on respondents' age, ethnicity, gender and livelihood – the latter to highlight the extent to which people are engaged in multiple livelihood simultaneously. For speed and consistency, expected responses to questions were recorded in a multiple-choice format; respondents were not shown the possible answers so as not to guide them in any way and when they gave an answer that was not available, this was recorded separately.

The research team used the Fulcrum data collection application to upload questionnaires onto rugged smartphones in French and Sango. This allowed pre-prepared but tailored questions to be asked to each respondent individually, asking only relevant questions that matched answers already given. It also allowed people who identified with several different livelihoods to be asked questions about each one. For example, those who identified as farmers were asked about their crops and livestock. Herders were asked about their *zone d'attache* (place of habitual residence), past and present migration routes, and the relationship between themselves and semi-settled pastoralists. Programme officers were trained to select representative samples of respondents from each of the livelihood groups.

Concordis' programme officers are trained and experienced in selecting representative samples of respondents from each of the livelihood group. The team always sought permission from the local and traditional authorities before approaching anyone and explained to both the authorities and the respondents why the consultation was important and how the data would be used.

The disaggregated datasets were uploaded into a spreadsheet for analysis, and the basic demographics are shown in the table below:

	Men	Women	Total
Sedentary communities	85	102	187
Transhumant herders	62	53	115
Total	147	155	302

Disaggregated quantitative data: Participation in questionnaires, Vakaga 2021

Qualitative Methods

While the questionnaire provided a quantitative dataset, focus groups and a series of one-to-one interviews provided qualitative data, revealing stakeholders' fears, needs and aspirations, exploring possible lines of causality and adding depth and detail to the analysis.

While efforts were made to limit the focus groups to around 12 or 13 participants, the event attracted curiosity and some groups had 19 or even 20 participants. For the most part, separate focus groups were held for men and women. There was no attempt to separate by ethnicity: this was not necessary as the population is already quite segregated. The team also tried to make the focus groups homogenous in terms of age and occupation. All focus groups were attended by at least two Concordis staff members, so that one could be fully involved as facilitator, while the other took notes.

The team always sought permission from local and traditional authorities before approaching anyone, and explained to both the authorities and the consultees why the consultation was important and how their confidentiality would be respected. Participants were not paid for their participation (only fresh drinks were provided). Consultations were conducted in a variety of commonly used languages, including Sango, Arabic and French.

The team also used a variety of methods to increase the inclusiveness of the consultation and to give a voice to people who might otherwise have been excluded. Sidebar focus groups were held with women and with young people while the main consultation was taking place elsewhere in a village. Concordis also consulted directly with women's cooperatives and youth groups.

Facilitators sought to ensure that all participants had a chance to express their views – not just the most vocal. The team also encouraged participants to reflect on simplistic narratives and rhetoric and to identify the underlying issues specific to their group or locality.

Specific questions were also asked to triangulate the answers given by other respondents.

The basic demographics of gender and livelihood are shown in the table below:

	Men	Women	Total
Settled communities	298	303	601
Transhumant herders	453	85	538
Total	751	388	1139

Disaggregated qualitative data: Participation in focus groups and interviews, Vakaga 2021.

Map making

Concordis commissioned International Peace Information Service (IPIS) to design and build sophisticated tools to plot the migration routes described by respondents onto their existing interactive maps. This cartographic exercise makes it possible to identify new or clandestine migration routes in addition to the official corridors. It also allows the results of this research to be compared with other factors in the same locations, including access to water and incidents of violence. IPIS also provided maps showing the distribution of locations where focus groups and surveys were conducted.

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The focus groups and interviews cited here are based on data and reports received from Concordis project officers, collated, tabulated by location, organised into themes and finally archived electronically. In some cases, providing details in the form of a citation would have risked compromising the safety of those interviewed. It was therefore decided not to provide citations, while retaining sufficient detail in the text to suggest the granularity of the data from the consultation, and to ensure that the archive would be preserved and made available on request, in line with Concordis' commitment to safeguarding.

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