

HIGHLIGHTS

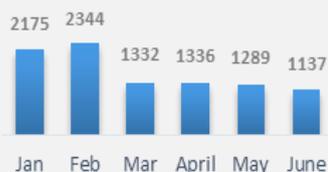
- Beginning of eviction from protected forest areas
- The Government and its partners consult on the reduction of disaster risks
- The national GBV coordination harmonizes communication tools
- Lack of birth certificate for pupils is one of the major causes of low enrolment

KEY FIGURES

Number of Ivorian refugees in West Africa

Country	Refugees
Liberia	57,533
Ghana	8,515
Guinea	6,551
Togo	5,461
Mali	1,366
Others	740
Total:	80,166

Evolution of the number of Ivorian returnees from West Africa



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Evictions from classified forests

An eviction operation in June expelled thousands of people from the Niégré forest

The crises of 2002 and especially that of 2010 have encouraged the illegal occupation of protected forest areas in Côte d'Ivoire where 231 such forests are currently occupied. Most of these forests are infiltrated by clandestine and illegal users, sometimes armed or protected by armed militiamen that the State has decided to evict for environmental reasons. It is more than ever urgent to restore the country's forest cover, which is 1 million ha in 2013 compared to 16 million ha between 1900 and 1960¹. If nothing is done, the consequences of climate change will be significant over the coming years.

Two protected areas were targeted in May and June: the Mount Peko national park and the Niégré classified forest. The eviction operations have displaced thousands of people living in these areas. Most of them have moved to nearby villages.

The largest part of the 9,000 people evicted from Mount Peko were registered before returning to their encampments in the forest to preserve their livelihood. An unknown number of people evicted from Niégré have settled in other forest areas, including the Goin Débé forest (between Guiglo and Blolequin). This forest is located in the department of Blolequin and covers 133,000 ha, of which 100,000 ha are reportedly used by illegal farmers.



¹ Source : Stratégie de reprise en main des forêts classées, Société de Développement des Forêts de Côte d'Ivoire (SODEFOR), April 2013

Multiple needs for the evicted populations

Eviction operations can increase humanitarian needs, as was the case after the operation in the Niégré forest, from where thousands of people were displaced while only 7000 have been registered. Most of the displaced populations first took refuge in neighboring villages which are all located in areas already lacking basic socio-economic infrastructures, thus straining the limited resources.

OCHA has organized inter-agency missions in the two affected areas. No emergency was noted during the mission in Mount Peko. Nevertheless needs were identified in the areas of health and drinking water, especially for the most vulnerable. The people evicted from the Niégré forest are in need of shelters, drinking water, health, sanitation and food security for themselves and the host families in host villages. Most of these people have since dispersed and their precise destinations remain unknown. However, a small number still remains in host families or in makeshift sites, schools or churches (Guéyo Prefecture).

Random relocations and extremely precarious conditions in host areas. The management of the flows of evicted populations seems not to have been taken into account in the planning and implementation of the operation in the Niégré classified forest. No measure has been taken to assist the evicted population in terms of shelters, water, health (except child vaccination), sanitation, food or safety both on their departure from the forests and their arrival in the host villages. The evicted communities were accommodated in host families or in marketplaces, shops, schools and in the open with their property and their families. This has caused overcrowding in host families. The displaced were coping in makeshift shelters without any adequate resources in this rainy season.

Advocacy for better planning during subsequent eviction operations

The humanitarian community continues its advocacy for preparation and planning of these operations that take into account the necessary accompanying measures to anticipate the needs for assistance of the most vulnerable, respect for the human rights of these populations in situations of forced displacement, as provided for by international legal instruments.

Following the operation in the Niégré forest, humanitarian partners got involved in this issue by clarifying the position of humanitarian actors in relation to the government's decision to restore the protected nature of these spaces. The advocacy was made in collaboration with national partners and involved a warning on the possible humanitarian consequences of the evictions, the responsibilities of the Government in the implementation of such an operation, as well as measures of support for the evicted populations, in accordance with the guiding principles of internal displacement, of the Kampala Convention and the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) convention on the free movement of people and goods.



People evicted from Niégré at the Niapidou marketplace, 6 June 2013 (© G. Trujillo/OCHA)

Continuation of the eviction operations in the coming weeks

The eviction from protected areas has been announced for more than a year. It was preceded by sessions of recognition, sensitization, registration, announcement of medium-term measures to regulate the operation of cocoa plantations in the production phase (boundary marking, land registry, contractualisation) and measures of joint planting and reforestation. The extensive eviction operation covers all 231 protected areas illegally occupied and used for years, and for which the government wants to restore the classified forest or natural reserve purpose, to ensure reforestation, environmental protection and sustainable forestry.

*Eventually,
231
protected
forest areas
will be
cleared of
illegal
occupants*

Reducing Disaster Risks: Government and partners consult

Floods during the rainy season have often cast a shadow over the country

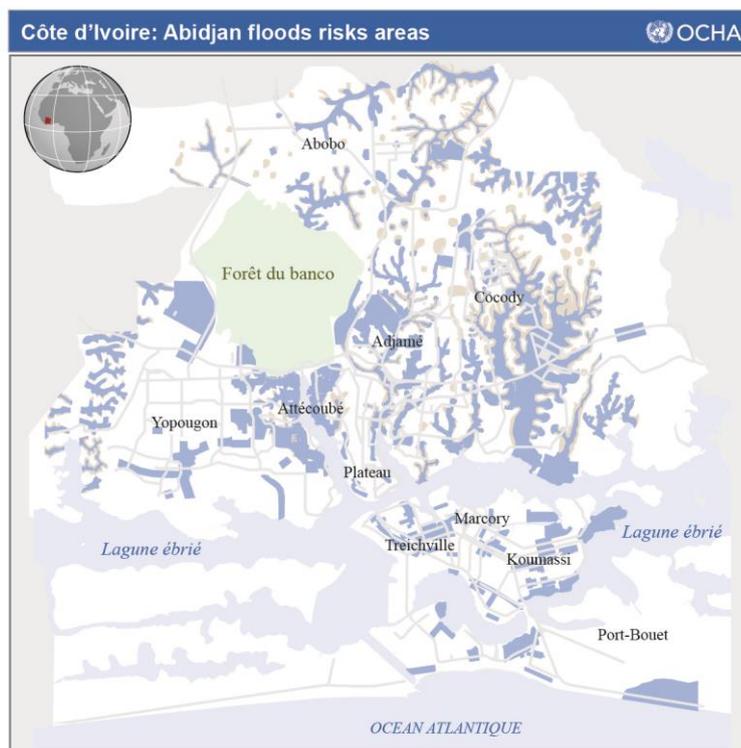
Every year Côte d'Ivoire experiences floods which often cause landslides, cholera epidemics and deaths during rainy seasons. The most affected areas are mainly the city of Abidjan, the Lagunes District and the Sud-Comoé region. Since 2009, 13 people on average die every year in the city of Abidjan due to floods. As regards cholera, over the last five years, 2011 was the worst year with 1,448 cases of cholera, including 35 deaths. In 2012, the Sud-Comoé region was the most affected.

While the rains have not caused any considerable damage this year, the existence of a Disaster Risk Management platform is an asset for promoting synergy of action in terms of early warning and emergency response.

The rainy season recalls the importance of reviving the risk reduction process

While the humanitarian transition phase is underway in Côte d'Ivoire, humanitarian and development actors and the Government pay special attention to the revival of the process for reduction of natural disaster risks that was largely disrupted by the post-election crisis of 2011.

Conscious of the importance of risk reduction and strengthening the populations' resilience, the humanitarian community seized the opportunity offered by the revival to begin sensitization among partners in order to mobilize the necessary support to efforts of the Government. On 30 May 2013, the meeting of the humanitarian country team gathered all humanitarian partners, the focal point of the Disaster Risk Management platform and representatives of the National Office for Civil Protection (ONPC). The meeting was intended to inform the participants of the progress made in the implementation of the national strategy, the reactivation of the national platform, but especially to involve themselves in the priority areas established in 2010. The platform is under construction. Sectorial Technical Committees (STC) will be set up and opened to any interested organization. The platform will operate on the field through regional committees and could include the civil society and national NGOs. The process will be completed with the decrees to be taken by the Minister of the Environment, Urban Sanitation and Sustainable Development.



The GBV coordination group harmonizes communication tools

Gender-based violence persists in Côte d'Ivoire

GBV is a real "epidemic." It is based on discrimination fueled by the social differences between men and women. Mobilization of all for the welfare of women and girls is the foundation of the national GBV coordination group. Indeed, violence against women and girls is a serious concern: in Côte d'Ivoire, 36% of women aged 25 – 49 got married before the age of 18², a case of rape is reported every two days³ and 38% of women are circumcised⁴. To control this situation, several initiatives have been undertaken by the actors on the field, including the national communication campaign on FGM/Female circumcision, launched in February 2013 and the caravan against violence in schools, initiated in May in the department of Jacquelineville⁵. The lesson learned from this campaign is that it appears necessary to better structure the actions to maximize the results expected from sensitization activities, especially the 16 day campaign of activism to fight violence against women.



A view of the workshop on harmonization of GBV communication tools, 13 - 18 May 2013, in Agboville (© UNFPA)

Humanitarian partners improve communication efforts on rape, female genital mutilation and other forms of GBV

Humanitarian partners and their government counterparts are preparing to launch a communication campaign on GBV. A workshop for harmonization of communication tools on the issues of rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), early pregnancies, psychological abuse and physical violence was held last May in Agboville and gathered 40 communication and Gender/GBV experts. At the end of the workshop, the participants validated the sensitization tools and messages that will be disseminated this year through materials including gadgets, image boxes, etc.

Transition and Capacity Building

Training of local authorities and army (FRCI) on human rights and civil-military coordination

As part of capacity building, a series of ten training sessions were scheduled on human rights, international humanitarian law and civil-military coordination in the main regions of the country for armed



A view of the participants in the Tai workshop, 27-30 May 2013 (© OCHA)

² Demographic/Health and Multiple Indicator Surveys (EDS 2012)

³ Côte d'Ivoire Gender-Based Violence Information Management System

⁴ EDS 2012

⁵ The actors of caravan against violence in schools are: UNOCI, UNFPA, UNICEF and Save the Children.

forces and prefectural officials. The training sessions took place from 24 to 30 May in Taï and Toulepleu and gathered 160 participants, local authorities, FRCIs, Customs, Forestry, Police and gendarmes in the region.

The training has been appreciated by all participants, as they explained during the final evaluations. It should be noted that the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire has set as a prerequisite that every FRCI element to be sent on international mission must attend this training.

750,000 pupils have no birth certificate: a practical and effective strategy is required

*1/4 of
primary
school
pupils in
Côte d'Ivoire
don't have a
birth
certificate*

At the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, nearly 750,000 primary school pupils including nearly 333,400 girls and 416,500 boys in primary schools did not have a birth certificate, according to the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training. The lack of birth certificate for pupils is one of the major causes of low enrolment, particularly among girls. The national partners want greater collaboration with the humanitarian community already involved in this issue, to help the government to better strengthen its actions to preserve the rights of all children, including the right to education.

The humanitarian community and the competent authorities were sensitized on 27 June 2013 on the negative impact of the lack of birth certificates in schools in Côte d'Ivoire, during the monthly meeting of NGOs. The meeting gathered more than 30 participants and dealt with the civil status situation and its negative impact on national education and the child enrolment in Côte d'Ivoire. Following clear and open discussions and debates, the ministries and partners agreed on the urgency of the situation and on the need to implement programs to find concrete, practical, rapid and sustainable solutions to meet the identified needs.

Portrait of national NGO MESAD

“Mouvement pour l'Education, la Santé et le Développement” (MESAD) is an Ivorian non-governmental organization involved in child protection and youth promotion. MESAD operates in the area of humanitarian emergencies, education, vocational insertion and health. To better achieve its mission, MESAD has adopted a grassroots approach of continuous presence at the heart of communities, through its support and counseling centers. Every year, the centers assist over 100,000 people in the districts of Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, and in the cities of Gagnoa and Daoukro



Sensitization on the Ivorian culture for children in the commune of Treichville, Abidjan (© MESAD)

With slightly more than 12 years of existence, MESAD has directly contributed to the education of over 9,000 children, re-socialization of 10,000 street children and training and vocational insertion of 5,000 young people. In the area of humanitarian emergencies, more than 215,000 people have been assisted as part of the post-election crisis.

MESAD continues its assistance to communities, by facilitating the development of local development plans in disadvantaged neighborhoods through a participatory approach,

and also addresses new issues such as the management of waste from electronic and electrical equipment and gender-based violence. In the next years, MESAD intends to extend its activities to all regions of Côte d'Ivoire in order to reach a larger number of beneficiaries.

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