

**NGOs call for response to insecurity in Menaka**

*International NGOs working in Menaka seek to prevent further destabilization and improve the safety and security of the population and humanitarian workers*

**Bamako, Mali** – We, the international NGOs working in Menaka, would like to bring attention to the persistence of insecurity in the city of Menaka, which impacts both the area's population as well as NGO staff. Since the beginning of 2018, at least 28 incidents have targeted NGO staff in the Menaka region, making it one of the most dangerous areas for us to work in Mali.

These incidents have continued without improvement; the city of Menaka's population and national NGO staff who work in the area remain targets of armed and violent robberies at night despite the resumption of security patrols. There are countless traders whose stores have been looted, individuals whose houses have been broken into, and NGO staff who have been assaulted.

Despite consulting with local leaders, recurrently raising the issues with decision-makers, and advocating to local and international organizations, we feel that our voices are not being heard.

The purpose of patrols is to dissuade thieves; however, they have not prevented attacks and do not have the geographical reach to effectively counteract insecurity. Additionally, the continued mass circulation of weapons and presence of armed groups throughout the city of Menaka can be explained by the delayed pace of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process.

Finally, Menaka's courthouse is not yet functional, which may contribute to a feeling of impunity among criminals. This is exemplified by instances where thieves bring ladders to the houses of their intended targets for ease of access and where they do not seem rushed to carry out their actions.

The people of Menaka and our colleagues live in constant fear and anxiety of the time when their homes will be broken into and robbed. It is therefore urgent to bring back security to the city of Menaka, for its inhabitants as well as for its NGO workers. This must occur before irreversible damage is caused, such as serious injury or death, where the absence of a strong security response drives NGOs out of the city of Menaka.

We, the NGOs of Menaka, thus call on all leaders and decision-makers, to quickly find and commit to a solution and consequently act upon these commitments to foster a safer and more peaceful environment for all.

