

CHAD RELIEF FOUNDATION

Briefing Paper 1

The Central African Refugees in Southern Chad

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This briefing paper outlines the current situation in Chad and Central Republic of Africa. It also summarizes the observations of the Chad Relief Foundation during its exploratory mission in Goré, southern Chad, in September 2007.

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1. CHAD

Chad is the fifth poorest country in the world. The country suffers from a poor economy, poor governance, a lack of infrastructure and political instability.

a. Geography

Chad is a landlocked country in North Central Africa surrounded by Libya to the north, Sudan to the west, the Central Republic of Africa to the south, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria to the west. The country is about three times the size of California with a population of about 9,885,561. The capital is N'Djamena. The other major cities are Abeche, Sahr and Moundou.

The north of the country is desert and mountainous. The climate is dry throughout the year with a wide range of temperature between the day and the night. The center is a broad arid plain. The climate is semi-desertic, hot and dry with a brief rainy season from mid-June to mid-September. The south is fertile lowlands and grasslands. The climate is tropical: warm and more humid with seasonal rains from late May to early October.

See map of Chad attached.

b. Demographics

Chad has a diverse population with about 200 different ethnic groups. The population in the north and the center of the country is predominantly Muslim. The population in the south is predominantly Christian or Animist.

The official languages are French and Arabic. However, there are more than 120 spoken Chadian languages and dialects. Arabic is commonly spoken in the North; Sango and Sara in the South. Sango is also the official language of CAR.

c. Socio-economic context

Chad is an extremely poor country. It ranked 171 out of 177 on the United Nations 2006 Human Development Index. 55% of the population lives in poverty. One out of 5 children will not reach the age of 5.

The majority of the population relies on subsistence farming and livestock for survival. Unfortunately, the agricultural output is unstable due to the difficult natural conditions (recurrent droughts, pest infestations) and the political situation (tribal conflicts, confrontations between armed opposition groups and governmental forces) and the presence of Sudanese rebels in the east.

The manufacturing and industrial sectors are weak. The population lacks skills and education. In fact, more than half of the population under 15 is illiterate.

The infrastructure is inadequate. There is a lack of access to basic resources such as clean water, health services, education, and energy in most of Chad. As examples, there is only 1 doctor for every 28,000 people, only 3 out of 10 people have access to potable water and electricity is available to only 1% of the population.

d. Political situation

The head of state is President Idriss Deby Itno. President Deby seized power from his predecessor in 1990 with the help of Libya. He has been in power ever since even though he has faced numerous coup d'état, the most recent in April 2006.

His administration continues to be threatened by armed opposition groups located in the east. In October 2007 Libya brokered a peace accord between the armed opposition groups and the government. The accord was short lived and fighting resumed in December 2007. In January 2008 the armed opposition groups agreed to join forces. President Deby launched an air attack on their camps inside Sudan, which he accuses of supporting the Chadian armed opposition groups. Sudan, on the other hand, is accusing Chad of supporting the Sudanese rebel groups. The relation between Chad and Sudan is tense. This has rendered humanitarian assistance extremely difficult in the east and has also delayed the arrival of the Eurofor troops originally planned for November 2007 and now expected to arrive in February 2008.

Freedom of speech and press has been curtailed since the beginning of the year. The government has started a crackdown against journalists reporting on the conflict in east Chad. Several reporters were arrested as well as the leader of the opposition liberal party for criticizing President Deby's policies in the east.

There has been no report of instability in south Chad.

e. Oil production

Chad is an oil producing country. Unfortunately the availability of oil revenue has had little impact on the living conditions of the Chadian population.

Oil production started in 2003 in the southern Doba region with the U.S. based Exxon/Mobil/Texaco consortium. The World Bank is involved because the consortium was unable to obtain financing due to the unstable conditions in Chad. The Chad-Cameroon pipeline was completed in 2003. In order to receive World Bank support for the project, Chad agreed to dedicate a portion of the oil revenue, which it receives in the form of royalties and taxes, to development.

However, Chadians and others have complained that the oil revenues have not improved the living conditions in Chad. Rather than going towards development projects, the oil revenues have instead gone to enriching the ruling elite and buying arms. This is a sentiment that was expressed by several people during our September 2007 mission.

In addition, Chadians and others have also complained that, due to corruption, funds allegedly disbursed for development projects were in fact diverted and not used for their intended purposes.

In September 2007, Chad signed an agreement with China to exploit additional oil fields. The Chinese have pledged to help development in Chad.

See, www.esso Chad.com; www.exxonmobil.com; www.worldbank.org, for more information on the Chad-Cameroon pipeline.

2. THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN CENTRAL REPUBLIC OF AFRICA

There is a humanitarian crisis quietly unfolding in northern CAR brought about by fighting between government troops and armed rebel groups and by a complete state of lawlessness which has allowed bandits to terrorize local populations with impunity.

Local populations are subjected to killings, destruction of property, rape, burning of villages, and kidnapping for ransom. They are subjected to a cycle of violence by governmental troupes, rebels and bandits. When armed rebel groups attack a town, local authorities call the Presidential Guard. By the time the Presidential Guard arrives, the rebels have left. Nevertheless, the Presidential Guard launches attacks against local populations accused of supporting and sheltering armed rebels. Men and boys are targeted. Villages are burnt.

The armed rebel groups also attack villages that they accuse of collaborating with or supporting government troops. Rape and sexual violence is commonplace. The armed rebel groups attack villagers to rob them of food and possessions.

The bandits, profiting from the absence of law and order in the region, abduct children and some adults for ransoms particularly targeting the Peuhl population (nomad herders). When their demands are not met, they do not hesitate to kill or maim their hostages, even the children. They also burn homes and property.

This situation has led to the uprooting of 290,000 CAR citizens or 7% of the total population. 210,000 people are internally displaced living in the bush under dire circumstances with almost no humanitarian assistance. 80,000 people have fled to neighboring countries including Southern Chad, Cameroon and Sudan.

Refugees continue to flee to Chad. Paul Lynch of UCSB who was there recently reports that 1,000 refugees crossed the border within the past few months.

The CAR press has been reporting that insecurity is rising in north-west CAR. On December 9, 2007, bandits invaded the village of Bouara in the Bocanranga region. The bandits separated the women from their husbands. They killed 12 of the men and wounded 4. Four days later, the bandits returned, kidnapped 4 men known to be opposed to the bandits, and executed them.

This is so even though Bozize, the president of CAR, promised the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to remedy the situation after he was presented with the Human Rights Watch Report on the situation in northern CAR.

See map of CAR attached. *See* also Central African Republic: Civilians in Peril in the Wild North, September 2007, Amnesty International available at www.web.amnesty.org; State of Anarchy: Rebellion and Abuses against Civilians, Human Rights Watch, September 2007, available at www.hrw.org; Republique Centrafricaine: Anatomie d'un Etat Fantôme, International Crisis Group, Rapport Afrique No. 136, available in French only at www.crisisgroup.org, for more information on the situation in northern CAR.

3. THE CAR REFUGEES IN GORE

In 2003, the UNHCR re-established its presence in Chad to address the needs of the refugees from the Central Republic of Africa and from Sudan and assist the government in providing international protection and humanitarian assistance for these refugees. While originally the focus

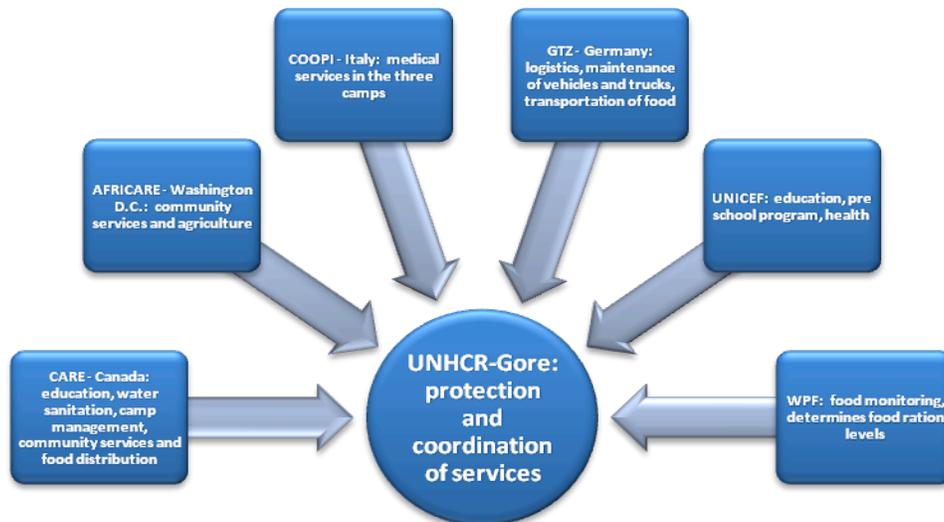
was on providing emergency assistance, in the South the focus has moved towards integration of the refugees with the local community, refugee self-reliance within the local community and economy and support of local development:

In Southern Chad, where the security situation seems more or less stable, despite the insecurity that affects Northern CAR, the HCR will concentrate its efforts in legal assistance to the CAR refugees to achieve local integration for those who want it. To that effect, refugee identity cards will be delivered to all CAR refugees. Education campaigns regarding violence against women will continue as it is the main focus of protection efforts in Chad. Finally, depending on the security situation in Northern CAR, “go and see” visits will be organized to prepare repatriation in 2008 of those refugees who want it. Activities designed to promote refugee self-reliance and integration of social services into Chadian structures will be pursued as well as an appeal to development agencies to ensure a better participation on their part. (UNHCR Plan D’Operations 2008-2009 – Pays: Tchad.)

When we met with Ann Maymann, Chief of External Relations, UNCHR-N’Djamena, she told us that she does not believe that the current strategies work. She would like to see more joint efforts between humanitarian relief and development and new approaches to link relief and reconstruction to development. This is an area where the Chad Relief Foundation can play an important role.

a. The Organizational Structure

The UNHCR’s main mandate is the protection of the refugees. The UNHCR also coordinates all the activities of the NGOS it contracts with to provide services in the camps: education, community services, medical services and food distribution. Below is a chart of the different NGOS involved in Goré.



b. The Refugees

The refugees are 70% Christians from the Kaba ethnic group and 30 % Muslims, 15% of which are Arabs, 10 % Peuhls and 2% Arabs of Salamat. The Kabas are farmers while the Peuhls and Arabas are cattle breeders and merchants. Most of the new refugees are Peuhl, due to the fact that they are targeted by the road bandits.

c. The Camps

(1) Amboko Camp

Amboko was opened on June 11, 2003, and houses about 11,883 refugees. The refugees receive monthly food rations amounting to 900 calories a day. The population is broken down as follows: 51% Kaba, 32% Arabs, 8% Fulbe, 4% Salamat, 1 % Haoussa and 4% others.

See camp profile and map.

(2) Gondje Camp

Gondje was opened on December 14, 2005 and houses about 12,402 refugees. The refugees receive monthly food rations amounting to 1,200 calories a day. The population is broken down as follows: 90% Kaba, 4% Fulbe, 3% Arabs and 3% others.

See camp profile and map.

(3) Dosseye Camp

Dosseye was opened on December 11, 2006 and houses about 7,000 refugees. The refugees received monthly food rations amounting to 2,000 calories a day. The population is broken down as follows: 66% Fulbe/Peuhls, 23% Kaba, 10 % Arabs and others 1%. As new refugees continue to arrive, they are placed in Dosseye.

See camp profile and map.

4. NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURE IN THE CAMPS

Nutrition is a big issue for the refugees. Every refugee we talked to during the September 2007 mission related to us that they were hungry all the time.

The World Food Program distributes monthly rations of flour, salt, oil and cereals in each of the camps. The amount of food depends on the length of time the refugees have been in the camps. At Amboko, the oldest camp, the refugees receive the equivalent of 900 calories a day. In Gondje, they received 1,200 calories a day. In Dosseye, the most recent camp, they receive 2000 calories. The international standard for daily calories intake is 2,100.

The food distributed by the World Food Program, flour, salt, oil and cereal, is not typical of the diet in Chad or in CAR where people eat mostly meat, milk, fruit and vegetables. Some members of the JAM mission raised the concern that the refugees are not receiving the vitamins they

need, such as Vitamin A and iron, through their diet and that the malnutrition rate is high among pregnant women and children.

Upon their arrival, the refugees receive a small plot of land to cultivate as their own. They are also supposed to receive some tools and seeds. The land in the camps and in Goré is fertile and the soil is of high quality. The land produces one crop a year. There is water as well. This region is considered the breadbasket of Chad. Corn and peanuts are grown there in addition to vegetables. The NGOs have started a project to grow rice as well. Despite the availability of natural resources, the refugees are not self-sufficient yet.

There are several reasons why refugee's self-sufficiency has not yet been achieved. First, the earlier refugees in Amboko did not receive sufficient land. Secondly, the refugees were not provided with the necessary seeds in a timely fashion, thereby missing the planting season. Africare does not have the necessary tools to distribute to the refugees. There is a lack of adequate farming tools to clear the jungle for planting and farming operation. The refugees did receive cattle to use for farming. However, the cattle were too young and could not be used for that purpose. Africare also reported that the refugees cared poorly for the cattle. They explained that in the other camps, where the refugees were expected to reimburse them for the cost of the cattle, the cattle were better managed. They also reported a reimbursement rate of 90%.

There is a special problem for households headed by women who appear unable to cultivate land on their own.

Finally, refugees have vegetable gardens. We observed in the camp markets where women were selling vegetables, potatoes, sweet potatoes, millet, lemons, and tomatoes. It is unclear, however, whether the refugees receive any tools to start and cultivate a garden upon arrival.

UNHCR has two long term goals with regard to agriculture: maximization of utilization and water management keeping in mind resource management and environmental impact. Africare has noticed that the production in Amboko has been declining from prior years due to continuous use. The refugees do not have access to chemical fertilizers and there is not enough manure. Africare has been experimenting with rice fields outside of the camps as well. While increased production is encouraged, nothing has been put in place to deal with drying and storing the grains and peanuts for use later in the year.

Upon our return to N'Djamena, we met with Abdelwahid Yacoub, who was part of the JAM mission and has worked with USAID for 21 years. He is the national representative of FEWS (Famine Early Warning Systems Network)/NET Chad/USAID. Yacoub expressed the following opinion with regards to agriculture and food production.

The NGOs are going to withdraw gradually from Goré but they cannot do it precipitously without an attempt to integrate the refugees in the local population. He does not believe that withdrawal is appropriate before 2009 without a survey identifying which household is really poor and which can survive. Yacoub believes that with one or two years of effective support, the refugees would be in position to be food self-reliant and will no longer need the support of the World Food Program. However, if the NGOs were to leave now, the refugees would be forced to steal and prey on the local population.

When JAM cut the food rations in 2005-2006, there was no follow through on providing the resources to the refugees to grow the difference. The refugees were not provided with appropriate credit, tools and seeds for vegetable production. The seeds arrived too late for planting. The animals delivered to the camps were too small and could not do the work. He is hoping that this year there will be appropriate animals, seeds and tools provided.

Yacoub considers Dosseye the best camp because the refugees have animals for food and milk and get the most food aid. He stated that the refugees there can sell their meat at the meat market. However, there is no market for women to sell the excess vegetables near Dosseye. Yacoub would not have been opposed to cut food rations at Dosseye if the refugees received grasses for their cattle, credits, seeds, and animals for traction.

Finally, he indicated that our organization could help by providing hand tools, such as plows locally made, seeds, and a tractor for each camp. He did state that we would need an outside monitor to insure proper use of the resources provided.

5. HEALTH IN THE CAMPS

a. The situation at present

Health services are provided by COOPI with assistance from UNICEF. Each camp has a health center. The Amboko and Gondje health centers are staffed with a physician. The Dosseye health center is staffed by a nurse.

The medical personnel work with health agents, who are paid. There is 1 health agent per 1000 people. They receive short course on vaccination, AIDS, and malaria. The health agents walk the camps to identify people in need of medical assistance and provide basic health education. While critical to the delivery of medical services, the lack of nurses to oversee the health agents is a problem.

Each health center has a triage station, birthing center and a hospital ward. The health centers are designed to handle simple cases. Most complicated cases or patients showing no improvement of their condition within three days should be transported to the state hospital in Goré which is currently staffed by MSF. However, according to Dr. Henry, the health centers hang on to most patients even for weeks as the care in the Goré hospital is not necessarily better and the lab tests are not functioning.

The most common illnesses are malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhea and malnourished children. HIV is also present although we could not determine the extent of the problem. HIV is taboo and nobody wants to talk about it. There is some attempt at education in this area by providing information about AIDS and sexually transmitted disease and by distributing condoms once a week.

The health centers have a vaccination program including TB, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, diphtheria, yellow fever and measles. Resistance to vaccination is rare but it can be challenging to finish a course of vaccination due to the fact that refugees go back and forth between the camps and CAR.

The health centers provide pre-natal consultations and mid-wives. Most deliveries are done in the centers with some exceptions (see below) and most mothers are seen post-birth.

There is a malnutrition center in Amboko. We were told by a UN worker, part of the JAM mission, that malnutrition is a problem for children between 6 months and 2 years old because their mothers do not breastfeed them anymore. Instead, the mothers feed goat milk or sugar water to their children which cause diarrhea, an often deadly condition. Mothers do not recognize the dangers of diarrhea in small children, do not go to the health centers soon enough, and the result is often a quick death. In Dosseye, there is a distribution of food every Wednesday for malnourished children. This event is used as an educational opportunity to teach the refugees how to cook with the food provided.

The health centers appear to have access to most medications.

There are several challenges in providing health care to the refugees: preference for traditional medicine, lack of hygiene, cultural impediments to seeking treatment.

Many refugees still resort first to traditional medicine. There are no health centers in Northern CAR, therefore, for most refugees, this is their first exposures to western medicine. They turn to the marabou (traditional healer) for care first as they did when they were in CAR. Patients may be poisoned due to lack of knowledge in general or lack of knowledge of the plants available in Chad. When patients are not improving, they are brought to the hospital, many times too late for medical personnel to do anything. The nurse in charge of Dosseye has been working with a marabou certified by the CAR government. She is hoping to learn from her the techniques used and showing her what western medicine can do so the marabou will encourage refugees to come to the clinic.

Lack of hygiene is a very big challenge as well. The refugees do not use the well during the rainy season. They drink rain water which is contaminated. There is no washing of the hands and the body. The latrines are not used as much as they should due to cultural taboos as males and females cannot share the same latrines.

Pregnancy and birth are shameful to Peuhl women. Therefore, many of them go to the bush to give birth alone rather than coming to the health center. They do bring their babies once born to receive vaccination and the birth packet given to each new mother. The women are given antibiotics at that time in an effort to ward off infections. In addition, women tend not to bring their children to the health center or do not stay in the hospital because it takes away time from work. Women are very often back at work within a few hours of giving birth. COOPI had educational campaigns to change that situation. They also use health monitors to identify problem births. Three difficult births were referred to the hospital that way.

Malaria affects a large proportion of the camp population. New mothers are supposed to receive a mosquito net from UNICEF to protect their child. New refugees are also supposed to receive a mosquito net upon arrival. However, when we were there in September 2007, they had run out of them. In addition, there is a lot of standing water around the camp in the rainy season. Most housing is not waterproof which compounds the problem.

b. The future

The health situation is better in the camp than for the average Chadian. For instance, children die at a lower rate in the camps versus the local population.

The health activities in the camps will be eventually transferred to state health centers outside the camp as part of the trend toward integration and self-reliance. Dr. Henry sees that as an unfortunate development. Health in the region is administered by the central government via delegates from various ministries who are also political appointees. The Chadian government is unable to deliver health care. Dr. Henry predicts that there will be no funds from the government to pay staff at the clinics. Due to corruption, medicines are likely to disappear. The center will not be used as the population is unable to pay for the services. Finally, the focus will most likely shift from preventative medicine in the camps to curative in the state centers.

6. EDUCATION IN THE CAMPS

a. The situation at present

Education in the camps is provided through CARE and UNICEF with one administrator, a lawyer from CAR, 3 educational advisors and 30 teachers. A Parent/Student Association is also involved in the operation of the schools.

Each camp has a primary school and a pre-school. The school year is from October to May or June. School is conducted in French but the children speak Sango or Arabic in class. School classes are organized according to needs/ability and not age.

Attendance is an issue. Only 30% of eligible children attend school. As the school year progresses, 24% or the 30% stop attending. As a consequence of the cut of the monthly food rations, the refugees have to grow more which means that the children are needed to work in the fields. The attendance problem is particularly acute in April, May and June when the crops are planted. In addition, many parents are illiterate and have never attended school. They do not understand the importance of attending school.

Girls attend school less frequently than boys because girls are needed at home to gather firewood, do domestic tasks and watch the younger children. Another impediment to girls attending school is the lack of proper clothing or personal hygiene items. CARE has been trying to find ways to keep girls at school such as giving girls a bag with a notebook as an incentive. CARE also opened a pre-school in the camps as a means to help girls attend school instead of staying home with the babies. Unfortunately, the project funded by UNICEF allows only 30 children per camp well below the number of eligible children.

The major issues faced by the schools in the camps are the lack of trained qualified teachers, supplies and educational materials.

There is no secondary education in the camps. The closest school is in Gore which is too far away to walk to from the camps on the daily basis and presents special safety concerns for girls.

b. The future

The goal is to transform the CARE schools into state schools even though they will physically stay in the camps. As in the case of health, education is administered by the central government via delegates from various ministries. The state schools face a lack of funding, appropriate facilities, supplies, teaching materials and qualified teachers. In addition, the government fails to pay its teachers on a regular basis and for long period of times. The Parents/Student Association (Association des Parents d'Elèves Chadians) compensate for the lack of state funding by hiring and paying teachers themselves, which is what the refugees will have to do once the schools become state schools.

7. COMMUNITY SERVICES/ECONOMY

Many young men in the camps are idle. They would like to learn a trade but they do not have the opportunity. There are no vocational training programs in the camps due to lack of funding. There is no equipment available for vocational training such as carpenter's tools or sewing supplies. In addition, an Africare worker raised the issue of whether there would be a market for anything produced in the camps if the refugees were able to engage in small trades.

The situation is particularly hard for women head of household. Since they have no husband, they cannot cultivate the land and have nothing to sell at the market. They usually lost their herd and with it their ability to sell milk or milk by-products. They do not have the means to engage in small trade to earn money. There is no training program directed at women.

There is apparently a modest micro-loan program in the camps; however, at this time the extent of the program and its efficacy is unclear.

8. RECREATION IN THE CAMPS

As discussed above, there is no secondary education in the camps. Due to distance between the camps and Goré and the lack of transportation, teenagers do not attend school there. There appears to be a total lack of recreation opportunities for teenagers and young men.

In Amboko, there was a small "movie theater", a television set and a VCR, playing movies for a small admission charge.

There is also a very successful dance and music troop comprised mostly of teenagers, both male and females, and young men.

There are a few soccer fields but not nets and not enough footballs or shoes. There are basketball courts but no balls.

9. SECURITY IN THE CAMPS

The security in the camps is provided by the gendarmerie. The gendarmes are appointed by the central government. As the political power resides with Arabs in the East, the gendarmes are largely Arabic speaking with little education. Since they do not speak French or the local languages (Sango and Sara), their ability to communicate with the refugee population is limited. After 4:00 p.m., all the NGOs leave the camps leaving the refugees alone with the gendarmes. Mari Sveen, Protection Office, UNHCR-Goré, is suspicious of their activities at night

The lack of lighting at night is another security issue in the camps. It creates an unsafe environment especially for single women. In addition, the lack of lighting results in a number of snake bites.

10. PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES IN THE CAMPS

There are no trained psychological workers in Goré. NGOs workers provide lay counseling whenever they can. The psychologically vulnerable population includes refugees who have experienced violence, refugees who have been subject to gender-based violence in CAR or in the camps, and refugees suffering from depression. Nomad refugees also need support to deal with life style change in addition to the violence and trauma they have endured. Ann Mayman, Chief External Officer, UNHCR – N'Djamena, stressed the importance for the counselors to help the refugees keep their own culture but adapt to changed circumstances.

11. LAW AND SOCIETY ISSUES

The Chadian legal system is based on the civil law system. The judges are trained in Chad. There are about 100 lawyers in the country for a population of 9 million. Despite the constitutional guarantee of judicial independence from the executive branch, the president names most of key judicial officers. The Constitution recognizes customary and traditional law in locales where it is practiced and to the extent that it does not interfere with public order or constitutional guarantees of equality of all citizens.

Anne Mayman, Chief of External Relations, UNHCR-Gore, stated that her organization is interested in finding ways to strengthen legal institutions, improve the wretched conditions in the Gore jail, do something about the human rights abuse of prisoners and deal with violence against women. She strongly believes that the judicial system must be developed as the basis for a stable society.

While the local population and the refugee population mix well due to their commonality of background, there are tensions between herders and farmers. The major source of contention since the refugee came is the trampling of fields by roaming cattle. Farmers, however, also sometimes farm in the cattle travel corridors.

If issues arise between refugees and locals, the Comité des Sages, comprised of representatives of the local population and the refugees, attempts first to resolve the problem. The Catholic Church also has a Commission de Justice et Paix which offers a mediation program between herders and farmers. . If mediation is unsuccessful, the parties will go to the local court.

There is one judge in Gore and no lawyers. The judge handles civil matters and criminal matters unless they go to trial. Criminal trials are transferred to Doba. He handles matters involving the refugees and noted his caseload has increased since their arrival.

Criminal cases involving refugees involve theft, aggravated rape and sorcery. The judge will try first to handle the cases informally with the parties and UNHCR. If an agreement is reached between the victim and the perpetrator, the case is settled in Gore and is not transferred. If not, it is

transferred to Doba. The parties do not have the assistance of lawyers as there are none in Goré and would not have funds to hire one.

Sorcery was a much talked about issue during our trip in September 2007. For instance, a widowed Peuhl woman with 9 children was accused of putting a spell on her neighbors' three children who died in the space of a few hours. All her possessions were burned and she was ostracized from the camps. It turned out that the children probably died from malaria and/or poisoning by traditional remedies. Without going into details, there are trials involving sorcery. People can be tried for misrepresenting themselves as witches or sorcerers while others may be tried for using their alleged powers to put curses on people. The trials include very crude methods to determine whether someone is a witch or not.

The judge also handles civil disputes. In cases involving refugees, there are "assessors" representing their communities. If a matter of custom is involved, the case is given to the assessors. If no agreement is reached, the judge will then hear the case.

In cases involving disputes between herders and farmer, there is a commission representing each party. They will make a visit to the site with the parties, evaluate the extent of the damages, return to the judge who will conduct a trial and decide the dispute.

The legal process is quick; trial occurs within a matter of 8 to 10 weeks. A trial usually does not involve the testimony of witnesses. Rather the judge relies on written statements and closing arguments to make a decision.

The Catholic Church also has a Commission of Justice and Peace in Goré which deals with law and society issues. Some of the Commission's activities include promoting the rights of children, women and refugees through educational program; organizing mediation and training programs for herders and farmers to promote mutual understanding; promoting democracy through educational workshops encouraging people to participate in the political process.