



Strengthening accountability in Chad

Report • Local authorities' perceptions

Introduction

The humanitarian response in Chad

In a context of chronic poverty and poor development, Chad faces a complex humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian situation in Chad has been particularly impacted by external crises that led to an influx of refugees, displaced persons, and Chadian returnees to the East (the Darfur crisis of 2006), the South (the civil conflict in Central Africa), and the West (the presence of armed groups in Lac).

The main local authorities involved in humanitarian action in Chad

- **DONGAH** plays a central role in coordinating with humanitarian organisations, especially in establishing work agreements between international NGOs (INGOs) and the national government. DONGAH also monitors and evaluates humanitarian organisations' projects. However, establishing monitoring and control procedures for NGOs is considered a sensitive, complex process. The main challenges are related to covering the costs of DONGAH field missions – DONGAH has insufficient resources and therefore asks NGOs to cover its mission expenses, particularly per diems.¹
- **CNARR** manages refugee reception processes and relations between refugees and host communities. CNARR is an important player for international organisations, since it grants approval to NGOs travelling to Ouaddaï and facilitates travel agreements with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Public Security, and Local Governance.
- **Other state actors** also participate in humanitarian actions. At the local level, these include administrative authorities (such as governors, prefects, and sub-prefects), decentralised and deconcentrated² state entities (such as ministerial delegates and directors), and traditional authorities (canton chiefs).

The Chadian legislative framework

In Chad, several laws regulate state institutions. In addition to regulations governing humanitarian action, specialised entities have been created to support and guide humanitarian efforts. The main state technical agencies are the Directorate of Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian Affairs (DONGAH), a division of the Ministry of Economy and Development Planning, and the National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees (CNARR).

1 Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Evaluation of the Cluster Approach Phase Two - Country Study, (Berlin: Plaisians, April 2010), [online](#)

2 Deconcentrated entities include ministerial delegations and other entities directly under the authority of the central government, while decentralised entities include city governments and other entities which enjoy some autonomy in decision-making and budget management

The CHS–GTS project in Chad

As part of the humanitarian response in Chad, a number of emergency and development actors are supporting affected populations in-country.. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) requested the implementation of a project aimed at strengthening accountability to affected populations in order to bring humanitarian actions into closer compliance with humanitarian standards. Funded by the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) (SIDA), this project is the result of a collaboration between Ground Truth Solutions (GTS), [Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance](#) (CHS), and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Ground Truth Solutions is engaged in the systematic collection and analysis of perception data to help actors include the views of affected populations in the humanitarian decision-making process.

As part of this project, Ground Truth Solutions conducts surveys with three types of actors involved in the humanitarian response: 1) affected populations, 2) humanitarian field staff, and 3) INGO local partner organisations.³

Although these three surveys provide a detailed snapshot of different actors' perceptions of the humanitarian response in Chad, they do not allow for a better understanding of the collaboration between humanitarian staff and local authorities. Nevertheless, the performance and effectiveness of humanitarian actions largely depend on collaboration between humanitarian actors and the decentralised entities of the Chadian state (both national and provincial). In order to provide a more complete view of the perception of humanitarian efforts in Chad, Ground Truth Solutions consulted local authorities regarding their collaboration with humanitarian actors.

Methodology

As part of this qualitative study, Ground Truth Solution selected key informants to represent the different types of state actors working with humanitarian organisations in Chad. Several different levels of authority were included to reflect the similarities and differences within the Chadian administrative apparatus.

Administrative authorities (governors, prefects, sub-prefects), traditional authorities (canton chiefs), and decentralised state services (ANADER⁴, CNARR) were all defined as target groups in this study. **The study included an average of five local authorities per province (including one senior representative, such as the prefect or sub-prefect).**

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to collect and analyse the perceptions of local authorities regarding their collaboration with humanitarian organisations.

Specifically, the study aims to:

- Understand collaboration between local authorities and humanitarian actors.
- Analyse the level of information-sharing with local authorities and affected populations.
- Understand local authorities' perspectives regarding community empowerment and targeting.
- Collect local authorities' perceptions on how humanitarian personnel behave towards affected groups, as well as the existing complaints mechanisms.

Key informant selection process



1. GTS identified the target groups and organisations from which key informants would be selected.



2. GTS selected key informants within each target group, following consultations with experts of the Chadian context.



3. GTS requested that informants recommend other individuals who could be interviewed (using the snowball approach).

³ The results are available on [Ground Truth Solutions' website](#)

⁴ ANADER: National Agency for Rural Development

Questionnaire and research topics

The key informant questionnaire was based on Ground Truth Solutions' perception studies among affected populations in the three target regions. The topics discussed during the most recent surveys of affected populations were included in order to compare the points of view of local authorities with those of affected people and humanitarian actors⁵. The questionnaire is thus divided into five themes: 1) relations with humanitarian actors, 2) information-sharing, 3) self-reliance, 4) targeting, 5) reporting abuse.

These categories also made it possible to categorise informant responses according to key concepts. The coding process helped to identify the most relevant facts in the study. The questionnaire was also based on various tools, academic resources, and reports, such as the USAID guide *Conducting Key Informant Interviews* (1996) and the research of Demiroz and Unlu (2018).⁶

To ensure informants data's confidentiality, the study follows the protocols defined by Ground Truth Solutions' Ethics Committee. Audio recordings or photos of those interviewed were only taken with formal written authorisation. To preserve their anonymity, the quotations used in the report are not attributed to specific informants. The limitations of the study are geographical (only three provinces were covered) and logistical (due to a limited number of interviewers).

5 Please note that this comparison is a qualitative analysis intended to explore common themes and therefore cannot be considered statistically significant.

6 Demiroz Fatih, and Ali Unlu. 'The Role of Government Legitimacy and Trust in Managing Refugee Crises: The Case of Kobani', *Risk Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy* (2018), [online](#)

Key disparities between the different types of local authorities

There are significant disparities between the perceptions of the local authorities included in the study. Staff members, from regional technical agencies directly involved in humanitarian affairs management, such as those working at CNARR and the Food Security and Early Warning Information System (SISAAP), feel that their views are indeed taken into account in the humanitarian decision-making process. However, other local authorities report that they are not consulted regarding important decisions about humanitarian actions in their areas of intervention.

Beyond information-sharing between humanitarian actors, sub-prefects and prefects feel they are not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process. It is also important to note that exchanges with traditional leaders show that they expect favours from humanitarian staff in exchange for their collaboration (e.g. in constructing wells or distributing goods).

Table of informants

Localités	Position / Institution	Date
Logone Oriental		
Goré	CNARR	05/06/2019
	Canton chief	06/06/2019
	Prefect	08/06/2019
	ANADER	10/06/2019
	SISAAP	10/06/2019
Bekan	Canton chief	08/06/2019
Région du Lac		
Liwa	Deputy mayor	14/06/2019
	Prefect	14/06/2019
Bol	General secretary	16/06/2019
Ouaddaï		
Farchana	Sub-prefect Farchana	25/06/2019
Hadjer Hafid	Sub-prefect Hadjer Hadid	02/07/2019
Amleyouna	Sub-prefect Amleyouna	27/06/2019
Abéché	CNARR	01/07/2019
	ANADER	02/07/2019
	Rural Engineering Delegate	02/07/2019
	Sub-prefect Hadjer Hadid	02/07/2019

Results of the study by theme

Coordination with humanitarian actors (CHS 6)⁷

Collaboration is seen as positive but limited

Overall, informants in all the target regions appreciate their collaboration with humanitarian actors. However, the authorities interviewed report that some NGO practices undermine good collaboration with humanitarian actors. Respondents often say the lack of communication and transparency with local authorities about the implementation of humanitarian actions is problematic.

In addition, canton chiefs feel they are not sufficiently involved in humanitarian efforts. Some complain that humanitarian actors do not consult them when developing activities, nor do they request permission to access affected populations. The chiefs feel abandoned by humanitarian actors, who more frequently turn to administrative authorities, such as prefectural governments. Other informants mention a lack of transparency on the part of some humanitarian organisations – for example, regarding recruitment processes and calls for tenders.

State actors say their role in humanitarian activities should be more prominent

Local authorities believe that a large proportion of humanitarian staff did not involve them in their activities at the beginning of the humanitarian response. However, the relationship between the two types of actors has changed, and there is more involvement today.

As part of this new dynamic, local authorities want to increase their participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms at all administrative levels (national, provincial, and local). The same is true in Lac, where local authorities participated in the creation of a legal and administrative framework to oversee collaboration between humanitarian actors and the Chadian government.

⁷ For more information on the nine CHS commitments, please visit [the Core Humanitarian Standard website](#)

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“Collaboration is good with both UN agencies and NGOs. Exchanges are frequent. Humanitarian actors must inform us of their activities. Some actors are well known, and we have good knowledge of their activities.”

Regional technical agency, Logone Oriental

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“Some misunderstandings are also taking hold, because some actors tend to bypass us. I don’t know if it is intentional or out of ignorance, but it happens that we go out in the field and there are people engaged in activities. We are surprised: What is happening? We are not informed.”

Regional technical agency, Logone Oriental

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“Humanitarian staff do not come to see me before visiting a village under my authority. If they want to work in these locations, they must first go through me and get my authorisation. It is my territory first and foremost, and it is up to me to manage them [the affected populations].”

Traditional authority, Logone Oriental

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“For humanitarians, it was their exclusive territory [the refugees]. They did not communicate too much. So they worked in a closed circuit without informing the authorities. Since two or three years ago, they want to rely on state services. They have taken an interest, but since they [the state services] have been rejected in the past, they [the state services] have difficulties taking an interest in humanitarian action. They think humanitarian organisations must fend for themselves. The [humanitarian] context has changed, so everyone must come together to resolve this situation.”

Regional technical agency, Logone Oriental

Government actors want to be more involved at every level

The Chadian government has set up committees to support and monitor ongoing humanitarian and development activities. The Local Action Committee (LAC), the Departmental Action Committee (DAC), and the Provincial Action Committee (PAC) are thus responsible for supporting humanitarian actors at the various levels of the Chadian administration.

While these committees support humanitarian actors, many respondents say the committees do not have the capacity to monitor and provide technical support to every humanitarian project. They describe provincial committees as effective, while they perceive departmental and local committees as playing a more minor role.

According to individuals interviewed across all three regions, these committees merely review the presentations and evaluations of the projects implemented by humanitarian actors and do not closely monitor humanitarian activities in the field.

Therefore, informants want DACs, LACs, and PACs to be revitalised. Given the financial difficulties that state bodies are facing, they indicate that these committees are unable to monitor humanitarian activities without the technical and financial support of humanitarian partners. However, a large proportion of the respondents, regardless of their administrative level, do not seem to be aware of the budgetary restrictions on the humanitarian response in Chad.



Meeting with Chadian returnees leaders in Logone Oriental - june 2019

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The DACs and LACs used to be active, but after the financial crisis of 2016, they no longer have enough resources to monitor humanitarian projects. Technical support and information-sharing from humanitarian actors is necessary to reactivate these committees.”

Administrative authority, Logone Oriental

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Right now, there is a legal void regarding the monitoring of humanitarian programmes by government agents. PACs and DACs should help to monitor programmes, but they have no legal legitimacy to do their work. The security and development plan will fill this legal vacuum.”

Administrative authority, Lac



Suggestions from local authorities

- Humanitarian actors should provide technical and financial support to DACs / LACs / PACs.
- This should include logistical support to local authorities to help them monitor humanitarian actions (such as fuel and vehicles).
- Regular meetings should be organised by humanitarian actors with the local authorities to discuss ongoing humanitarian activities.

Information-sharing (CHS 4 and 6)

Information-sharing between humanitarian actors and local authorities is limited

While local authorities feel that humanitarian actors treat them with respect, most of them complain about a lack of communication. In Lac and Logone Oriental, state agents point to a lack of information about both new humanitarian activities and projects that are coming to an end. Local authorities also report a lack of communication regarding certain NGOs withdrawing from the country. **Due to a lack of information from some humanitarian actors, the local authorities interviewed are concerned about negative impacts on affected populations.**

However, there are disparities in perceptions between regions. While local authorities in Ouaddaï report that humanitarian actors share information consistently, perceptions in Lac and Logone Oriental are mostly negative. These differences in perception are likely due to the humanitarian context and the nature of the responses. In Lac and Logone Oriental, humanitarian responses are more active, due to external factors such as frequent population displacement and media coverage of these humanitarian crises. A growing number of humanitarian actors have arrived in Lac, following new flows of refugees, returnees, and IDPs. Meanwhile, local authorities report decreased information-sharing and a loss of contact between the two parties. The frequent arrival of new actors may explain the limitations of these relationships in comparison to Ouaddaï, where humanitarian actors have developed more stable relationships with local authorities over time.

Local authorities underscore their role in sharing information with affected populations (refugees, returnees, displaced persons, and host communities).

Local authorities feel that information-sharing between humanitarian actors and affected populations is largely irregular and has a negative impact on humanitarian efforts. In addition to these information-sharing problems between humanitarian actors and affected populations, local authorities think they should play a stronger role in the process. **According to the local authorities interviewed, their experience in the field and their understanding of their citizens mean they could provide useful information about affected people to humanitarian actors.**

Regarding information-sharing with affected populations, administrative and traditional authorities believe they are responsible for the following communication activities:



Participating in awareness-raising campaigns.



Disseminating information about humanitarian projects (e.g. distribution dates, projects ending).



Highlighting risks and recourse in the event of abuse, as well as informing affected populations about existing complaints mechanisms.



“When NGOs leave the region, we have nothing – not even a memory of the support they provided. For example, the NGOs who were managing the health centres left. Since then, it is difficult to get treatment. There are more and more health problems. We have sent several letters to find out what happened to the NGOs that left us, but we have received no answer.”

Traditional authority, Logone Oriental



“They must explain their project, and we must discuss the local situation together. Our local knowledge can help you [humanitarian actors] to do a good job.”

Administrative authority, Lac



“They [the traditional local authorities] may still feel like leaders, but they forget that they have duties to these people [the humanitarian agencies] and that communication needs to flow if actions are to be successful. This is not always the case. There are people who do not properly take up their role.”

Regional technical agency, Logone Oriental



Suggestions from local authorities

- Make greater use of mass-communication channels, such as radio and public criers, to reach a greater number of affected people.
- Train community leaders to share information effectively and ensure good feedback through existing communication channels.
- Communicate more directly with affected populations through community meetings and camp committees.

Targeting processes (CHS 1)

There are disparities in the understanding of humanitarian targeting among local authorities and affected populations

Some informants do not understand humanitarian actors' targeting processes.

On the one hand, authorities involved in humanitarian projects – such as CNARR – are well aware of how the targeting process works. On the other hand, other local authorities (such as sub-prefects, prefects, representatives of decentralised state entities, and canton chiefs) do not seem to understand the different types of targeting processes. Many local authority representatives consulted believe that affected populations are unfamiliar with humanitarian actors' targeting criteria.

Some informants believe that community leaders do not share this information with affected groups.

They suggest that humanitarian actors should rely on mass communication channels, such as community meetings, rather than meetings with community leaders in order to help all the affected people better understand the targeting process.

Local authorities point out flaws in current targeting systems

Local authorities closely following the humanitarian situation in Ouaddaï say that some affected people who are in good economic situations are classified as “very poor” or “poor”, while others whom they consider vulnerable are classified as “wealthy” or “middle class”.

In Logone Oriental, one informant noted that while there are recourse mechanisms for people who are dissatisfied with the targeting, these mechanisms are perceived as dysfunctional because there is usually no response to complaints.



“Some people do not have any resources, and yet they are not classified among the most vulnerable. This is due to communication problems between interviewers and affected individuals and is linked to the training of interviewers involved in the targeting process, or to the fact that some of them lack knowledge of local languages. It would be necessary to include translators in the process.”

Regional technical agency, Ouaddaï



Suggestions from local authorities

- Train and involve more interviewers with good knowledge of local languages in the targeting process.
- Focus on data quality rather than on the number of interviews conducted per day to ensure more effective targeting.
- Develop non-standardised selection criteria adapted to local contexts.



Meeting with internally displaced leaders in Amma, Lake - June 2019

Self-reliance (CHS 3)

According to local authorities, the existing self-reliance support for affected populations is insufficient

Although humanitarian action focuses on saving lives and preserving people's dignity, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) in Chad also aims to reduce the vulnerability of affected populations by strengthening resilience. **In the three provinces covered by this study, local authorities consider the current humanitarian response inadequate when it comes to enabling affected populations to live without assistance in the future.** According to local authorities in Logone Oriental and Ouaddaï, this is due to the limited number of long-term development initiatives or humanitarian activities.

Informants in Logone Oriental indicate a gap between the needs of affected populations and the programmes provided. **Humanitarian actions only address affected people's immediate needs, and local authorities refer to affected individuals' "aid dependence" on humanitarian actors.** This can have negative consequences if humanitarian actors withdraw from the region.

Local authorities must be mobilised to empower affected groups to be self-sufficient

In order to help empower affected groups, state actors believe they have a role to play in technical support and information-sharing regarding ongoing projects (especially in Ouaddaï).

First, the local authorities in Logone and Ouaddaï claim to be able to provide technical support to humanitarian actors, such as market studies or needs assessment. Some decentralised state agencies, such as SISAAP or ANADER, believe that their technical institutes can provide information and expertise in areas related to empowerment, such as agricultural development.

Second, local administrative authorities (such as canton chiefs, prefects, or sub-prefects) can use their administrative expertise to support the self-reliance of affected populations within their jurisdictions. In all three regions, the local authorities interviewed believe they have the following responsibilities to affected groups:



Supporting affected individuals' access to agricultural lands.



Strengthening the protection of affected groups in their local areas.



Guiding returnees through administrative procedures (within the limits of the current Chadian administrative system).



"In 2015, targeting activities were carried out to categorise refugees, thus reaching those considered vulnerable. In principle, this categorisation should have been accompanied by assistance for those deemed incapable of coping on their own. Unfortunately, the support stopped after a while. Those who were considered capable enough have fallen back into vulnerability. This is a problem and has had some deplorable consequences. [...] They engaged in criminal behaviour, they got involved in petty theft and other similar activities. Girls engaged in survival sex. There was an upsurge in these activities when humanitarian actions decreased. Now it has been two or three years and people are trying to adapt, but it is difficult."

Regional technical agency, Logone Oriental



Suggestions from local authorities

- Develop income-generating activities, such as trading, livestock farming, or fishing (e.g. via training and distributing materials).
- Focus humanitarian activities on "key populations" to strengthen local economies, such as farmers in Logone Oriental or fishermen in Lac.

Complaint and feedback mechanisms (CHS 5)

Complaint and feedback mechanisms are appreciated but not well known

Overall, local authorities have a positive perception of existing complaint and feedback mechanisms in all three regions. However, not all informants have a good understanding of these mechanisms. While some government officials who frequently work with humanitarian actors (CNARR, for example) have a good understanding of these mechanisms, many informants do not have a clear idea of how complaint and feedback processes work. A good understanding of this information is all the more important for local structures that are frequently in contact with affected populations, such as city governments or canton officials.

Local authorities play a role in complaint and abuse reporting mechanisms

Local authorities have pointed out that some feedback responsibilities should fall within their jurisdiction. In partnership with humanitarian actors and decentralised state agencies (CNARR), community and canton authorities affirm their participation in conflict-mediation initiatives between host communities and returnee/refugee populations – in Logone Oriental, for example.

However, in addition to this mediatory role, informants highlight that the current complaint and feedback systems put in place by humanitarian actors can be confusing for affected populations. Indeed, affected people do not know to whom they should address their claims and suggestions. Local authorities argue that humanitarian and state actors should clarify and explain the existing mechanisms as well as the respective roles of each party in the process.



Meeting with Central African refugees leaders at Bekan Camp, Logone Oriental - June 2019



Suggestions from local authorities

- Organise information meetings to mobilise local authorities (traditional and administrative) regarding complaint and feedback mechanisms.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of those complaint and feedback mechanisms that are considered ineffective (e.g. the hotline and suggestion boxes are considered ineffective because communication is irregular, there are barriers to literacy, and suggestions are not regularly collected).
- Organise feedback on complaints and suggestions from camp committees and community meetings.

Cross-cutting recommendations

Inform authorities about the scope and limitations of humanitarian programmes

Local authorities should receive more information on the range and limitations of humanitarian activities, such as budgetary and logistical constraints or ethical “red lines”. Most traditional and administrative local authorities have a biased view of humanitarian actions (e.g. that they have unlimited material resources and broad funding). In order to limit expectations and avoid requests for personal favours, Ground Truth Solutions encourage discussion sessions regarding these limitations.

Rely on state actors for humanitarian activities

Local authorities in the field have knowledge and technical skills that can facilitate the implementation of certain humanitarian activities. Ground Truth Solutions recommends consulting state actors to include the capacities of local authorities in the humanitarian programme cycle.

- **Technical support** – Regional technical agencies, such as SISAAP or CNARR, claim that they can provide humanitarian actors with technical knowledge relevant to the different stages of the humanitarian programme cycle, such as the targeting process (e.g. SISAAP’s need assessment).
- **Knowledge of local contexts and access to affected populations** – Both traditional authorities (canton chiefs) and CNARR have in-depth knowledge of local contexts. This could help humanitarian actors to identify vulnerable affected populations and their basic needs. In addition, access to affected populations requires the approval of local actors – traditional authorities in the case of returnees/displaced persons, and CNARR in the case of refugees.
- **Mediation and security** – Local authorities can also support mediation when tensions arise between different affected groups and can report cases of violence to humanitarian actors.

Share information on ongoing activities regularly

Local authorities consider the transparency of the current humanitarian response to be poor. Hence information-sharing between humanitarian actors and local authorities needs to be increased, particularly in the following areas:

- **Locations and populations targeted by humanitarian programmes** – in order to ensure humanitarian actors’ access to populations and, where relevant, to inform targeted communities in advance.
- **Focal points within humanitarian agencies** – in order to follow up on complaints and feedback, if necessary.
- **Concluding activities and withdrawing from locations** – in order to ensure that local authorities can sustain humanitarian projects and that affected populations can cope without assistance in the longer term.

Clarify the different aspects of humanitarian programmes with local authorities

It is important to engage with local authorities regarding different aspects of humanitarian actions – such as targeting processes or existing complaint and feedback mechanisms – and their roles in the ongoing humanitarian response. Many informants have limited knowledge of the key components of the humanitarian response. This can increase the risk that false information or rumours are disseminated to affected populations, thus undermining humanitarian activities in the region.

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