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TECHNICAL REPORT

ACCESS TO LAND AND RESILIENCE FOR FEMALE SUDANESE REFUGEES IN CHAD

Systemic issues and local perceptions

Camille Laville, Bao We Wal Bambe, Abdérahim Malloum and Dieudonné Vaila

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Climate change, armed conflict, environmental fragility and weak governance and the impact these have on natural resource-based livelihoods are among the key drivers of both crisis and poverty for communities in some of the world's most vulnerable and conflict-affected countries.

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We strive to create impact by using research and evidence to develop knowledge that improves how the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), donors, non-governmental organisations, local and national governments and civil society can empower these communities in the context of climate change.

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BOXES, FIGURES AND TABLES

ACRONYMS

ACF	Action contre la faim (in English, Action Against Hunger)
ADES	Agence de développement économique et social (in English, Agency for Economic and Social Development)
AP News	Associated Press News
CEMAC	Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (in English, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa)
CFA	African franc
CILSS	Comité inter-État de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel (in English, Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
CNARR	Commission nationale d'accueil de réinsertion des réfugiés et des rapatriés (in English, National Commission for Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees)
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEWS-NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
GDP	Gross domestic product
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HDI	Human Development Index
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IGAD	The Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Eastern Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame global adaptation initiative
NRP	National Response Plan
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PARCA	Programme to Support Refugees and Host Communities
RRRP	Regional Refugee Response Plan
SNGCC	National Strategy relating to Gender and Climate Change
SNLCC	National Strategy to Combat Climate Change
UNHCR/HCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2025, more than one million Sudanese refugees, mainly women and children, are living in eastern Chad, and some have been doing so for more than 15 years. The formal camps that host them are mainly located in areas where agriculture and pastoralism are the main sources of livelihood. The influx of refugees, combined with climate variability and rapid population growth – with the population likely to double by 2050 – is putting considerable pressure on access to land and leading to its degradation. This calls into question the ability of these areas to sustainably support the livelihoods and food security of local and refugee communities.

Since the resumption of civil war in Sudan in 2023, the government of Chad and its humanitarian partners have been encouraging the empowerment of refugees through increased access to land for agricultural activities. In particular, they have adopted an approach called 'villagisation', which involves gradually transforming refugee camps into integrated villages in order to promote refugee autonomy and facilitate their inclusion in local communities. Although the 2020 asylum law recognises refugees' right to access land without discrimination, its implementation is hampered by local customary and religious land tenure systems, based on agreements between lineages (family descendants and relations) and social norms that are often discriminatory towards women[1] (Government of Chad, 2024a). National policy documents on climate and refugee reception have paid little attention to this local reality which is marked by diverse and competitive land dynamics for refugees, particularly women. Existing guidelines lack clarity on how to design programmes that are sensitive to gender and the dynamics of refugee exclusion from land arrangements, contributing to the invisibility of the situation of nearly 640,000 Sudanese refugee women, particularly those from ethnic minorities, the elderly/old, widows or socially isolated female heads of household.

This study is the result of a collaboration between ODI and the Agency for Economic and Social Development (ADES). It explores the obstacles and opportunities for access to land for female Sudanese refugees settled in eastern Chad, with a particular focus on gender disparities in land arrangements. The research questions – detailed in Box 1 – were jointly developed to reflect locally identified priorities, and the methodology was collectively adapted to take into account the realities on the ground. Rather than setting out an exhaustive overview of land issues, the study focuses on the perceptions of local authorities, refugees and host communities in the refugee camps of Abou-Tengué (Ouaddaï), Djabal (Sila) and Touloum (Wadi Fira). This approach makes it possible to identify both consensus and invisible barriers, as an essential step towards better coordination between local, national and international actors in order to avoid reproducing or exacerbating existing inequalities. Although focused on these three camps, the results open up avenues for reflection that could be explored in other localities in the east of the country. Recommendations for the Chad government and its international partners are presented on the basis of the research findings.

1 Furthermore, although land management remains largely communal and allows women indirect access – particularly through their family of origin or that of their spouse – women often find themselves in a highly vulnerable situation when they become widowed or divorced.

BOX 1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the systemic barriers to land access currently faced by all communities in eastern Chad? How does the scarcity of natural resources and competition for land access affect different social groups? To what extent do national climate and humanitarian risk resilience strategies take into account the differentiated and gendered needs of refugees and host communities? How do funding constraints limit actions to support access to land and local resilience?

How do community perceptions inform us about the social characteristics of refugee women that affect their access to land? What social characteristics of refugee women (family status, age, ethnicity) are perceived as obstacles or assets to accessing land? How do social norms and land rules explain these dynamics? How do the perceptions of obstacles and opportunities vary between refugees and hosts, according to gender, age, social status and types of contracts used (rental, sharecropping, etc.)? What is the view of local and traditional authorities on these issues, and does it converge with that of the communities?

Source: the authors.

Focus group of men of 40+ years in the refugee camps of Touloum, Chad.
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2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Sources of data

Thirty focus group discussions with host and refugee communities were conducted between 12th and 20th February, 2025: 11 in Touloum (with between 10 and 50 participants per group), 10 in Djabal (with between 10 and 20 participants per group), and 9 in Abou-Tengué (with around 10 participants per group).[2] In total, more than 300 people took part in these discussions. The discussions were organised in separate groups of men and women, taking into account age (young people/adults and older people) and status (refugees or members of host communities), in order to better understand the diversity of experiences and perceptions related to access to land. These groups ranked fictional profiles of refugee women according to their perceived chances of accessing agricultural land. This method allows for more honest and comparable responses by presenting uniform scenarios to all.[3]

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrative and traditional authorities in the three areas to gather their perspectives on refugees' access to land (see Table 1). The questions focused on the composition and vulnerability of communities, their actions regarding land access and gender considerations, and the dynamics between refugees and hosts. They aimed to identify the most disadvantaged groups in terms of land access and intersecting barriers, particularly those related to gender, age, disability or marital status.

TABLE 1. LIST OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES CONSULTED

Area	Authorities	Type	Roles in relation to communities as regards land management
Djabal	Secretary General of the Governor of Sila	Administrative	▪ Coordination of regional land policies. ▪ Approval of major economic and humanitarian projects. ▪ Mediation with central government and donors and international organisations.
Abou-Tengué	Prefect of Adré	Administrative	▪ Approval of allotments of land. ▪ Supervision of agricultural or mining projects. ▪ Intervention in cases of major inter-community conflicts.
Touloum	Sub-prefect of Iriba	Administrative	▪ Application of national land laws. ▪ Local mediation between farmers and herders. ▪ Complex disputes transferred to the prefect.

2 The difference can be explained by the refusal of certain community leaders to allow mixed teams to conduct separate interviews with unmarried women, reducing the number of focus groups from six to four.

3 The use of imaginary cases reduces the participants' inclination to respond in a way that they consider will be socially acceptable (social desirability bias) as well as reducing the effect of differently worded questions and past memories and experiences of participants.

Area	Authorities	Type	Roles in relation to communities as regards land management
Three areas	CNARR of Iriba CNARR of Adré CNARR of Sila	Administrative	▪ The CNARR identifies and prepares sites for establishing refugee camps in collaboration with the local authorities and the UNHCR. ▪ It intervenes to resolve disputes between refugees and local populations, often related to access to agricultural land or pastures. ▪ It works with village chiefs and sultans to obtain customary plots of land avoiding forced expropriations. ▪ It takes part in mediation committees to relieve tensions. ▪ It facilitates access to plots of land which refugees can cultivate as part of rehabilitation programmes. ▪ Despite not having formal authority for delivery of titles of property, it advocates recognition by local authorities of use rights for refugees.
Djabal	Sultan of Sila	Customary	▪ Guarantor of historic good relations between communities. ▪ Influence on decisions of local chiefs. ▪ Symbolic role in major crises.
Touloum	Chief of the canton of Kobé South	Customary	▪ Allotment of plots of land according to the customs of clans/tribes. ▪ Resolution of local disputes. ▪ Representation of villages before administrative authorities.
Abou-Tengué	Village chief of Abou-Tengué	Customary	▪ Distributes parcels of land to families according to need and custom. ▪ Oversees inheritance and temporary loans. ▪ Arbitrates on disputes between farmers and herders. ▪ Acts as first/front-line actor before administrative authorities.

Source: the authors.

Interviews with humanitarian actors and land and gender experts have helped to document operational constraints, approaches developed in the field, and blind spots in the interaction between gender, land and refugee status in ongoing interventions.

A review of grey and academic literature (academic articles, reports from international organisations) was carried out to identify population groups likely to be marginalised in terms of access to land, as well as systemic issues relating to resilience and land governance in eastern Chad.

An analysis of national strategy documents and budgets was done to assess the commitments of the government and of humanitarian partners. The lack of detailed data for 2024 limited the scope of the budgetary analysis, but highlights the lack of transparency on the resources allocated to land issues and refugees.

2.2 Areas of study

The study focuses on three formal refugee camps chosen for their high population growth — linked to the influx of refugees between 2023 and 2024 – (see Table 2) and their distinct environmental characteristics, with likely implications for barriers and opportunities for land access:

- **Touloum (Wadi Fira):** faced with difficult climatic conditions and intense pressure on land, the camp has few areas of productive land around. However, the ethnic closeness between hosts and refugees (mainly Zaghawa, but also Fours and Arabs) could encourage dialogue and exchanges about access to land.
- **Djabal (Sila):** located near Goz Beida, this camp has seen its female population increase by 67% in one year. The surrounding land is fertile but limited due to population density. Its location near an urban centre encourages economic diversification among female refugees, but also leads to land speculation that excludes the most vulnerable.
- **Abou-Tengué (Ouaddaï):** selected to replace Adré (where food distribution was planned at the time of the survey), this recent camp is the second most populated among those newly created in Ouaddaï to cope with the influx of refugees in 2023. Located 40 km from Adré, land pressure there is exacerbated by the scale of arrivals and the encroachment of the camp on the fields of host communities.

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF REFUGEES REGISTERED AT TOULOUM, DJABAL AND ABOU-TENGUE

Area	Region	Department	Individuals registered (December 2023)			New individuals registered (April 2023 to January 2025)		
			Total	Adults (>18 yrs) [f/m]	Children (0–17 yrs)	Total	Adults (>18 ans) [f/m]	Children (0–17 yrs)
Djabal	Sila	Goz Beida	35,314	15,957 [59%/41%]	13,803	11,164	3,907 [71%/29%]	7,257
Touloum	Wadi Fira	Kobe Sud	37,325	18,126 [62%/38%]	19,199	23,829	10,007 [69%/31%]	13,820
Abou-Tengué	Ouaddaï	Guergne	0	0	0	46,181	19,395 [71%/29%]	26,785

Sources: the authors, from data of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2025a; 2025b).

2.3 Organisation of the focus groups

The composition of the discussion groups was defined according to belonging to a community (refugees or members of the host community[4]), gender (men or women), and age (young people/adults between 16 and 40 years old, or older/elderly persons over 40 years old). Marital status was also taken into account when organising the women's discussion groups, distinguishing between women who are married and those who are not (single or widowed). This approach makes it possible to capture the diversity of experiences and perceptions regarding access to land while limiting social desirability bias[5] and the risk of certain categories, such as men or elders, dominating the conversation.

In each group, a list of questions – presented in Box 2 – was submitted to participants in order to elicit their reactions to fictional cases (also known in survey research as 'vignettes'[6] of refugee women seeking access to land for farming (the method for selecting vignettes is detailed in Appendix A). The cases presented in each area have a particular combination of characteristics in terms of ethnicity (minority or majority), age (young or old), marital status (married or single/widowed) and who accompanied them on arrival in Chad (husband, older children, younger children or alone).

Vignettes presented to refugee and host communities in Touloum (mostly from the Zaghawa ethnic group):

- **Zenab**, a young married woman from the Four ethnic group (a minority ethnic group), lives in the refugee camp with her husband. The household would like to have access to land for farming.
- **Fatimé**, a single young woman from the Four ethnic group (a minority ethnic group), lives alone in the camp without a husband and would like to farm.
- **Zara**, a young woman who is a widow from the Zaghawa ethnic group (the majority ethnic group) with three young children, lives in the camp and would like access to land for farming.

Vignettes presented to refugee communities (mainly Massalit) and host communities (mainly Arab) in Djabal:

- **Timba**, an elderly woman who is married and belongs to the Massalit ethnic group (a minority ethnic group), arrives at the refugee camp alone with her young children, but she receives news from her husband who has remained in Sudan. She is looking to work in agriculture.
- **Amné**, an elderly married woman from the Massalit ethnic group (a minority ethnic group), arrives with older children and receives news from her husband who remained in Sudan. She would like to have access to land for farming.

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4 Only the host communities located in 5 km circles around refugee camps were questioned during the field studies.

5 The social desirability bias is reduced by choosing homogeneous groups in which the participants felt freer to express their views.

6 The vignettes are 'brief descriptions carefully constructed of a person, an object or a situation representing a systemic combination of characteristics' (Atzmüller and Steiner, 2010).

- **Leimoune**, a married woman from the Dadjo ethnic group (majority ethnic group), arrives at the camp without her husband but with young children and would like to have access to land for farming.

Vignettes presented to refugee and host communities (mainly from the Massalit ethnic group) in Abou-Tengué:

- **Zamzam**, a widow from the Massalit ethnic group (a minority ethnic group), arrives alone at the refugee camp. She wants access to land for farming.
- **Seida**, a widow from the Dadjo ethnic group (majority ethnic group) with two teenagers living in the camp. She wants access to land for farming.
- **Imane**, an elderly widow with three teenage children from the Massalit ethnic group (a minority ethnic group) living in the camp. She wants access to land for farming.

BOX 2. CONTENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In your view, of these three persons, which will have most difficulty accessing land? Why? Which of the three will have the least difficulty?
2. Do you consider the cases presented as being realistic? If yes, why? If not, why not?
3. Is there another characteristic or another factor which we have not mentioned, but which could play a significant role as regards land access? In your view, what information is missing for comparison of these cases?
4. Once the person in question has accessed land, what new difficulties could she encounter? For example, have you witnessed past cases of violence or problems related to use of land, to conflicts, or related to availability of resources?

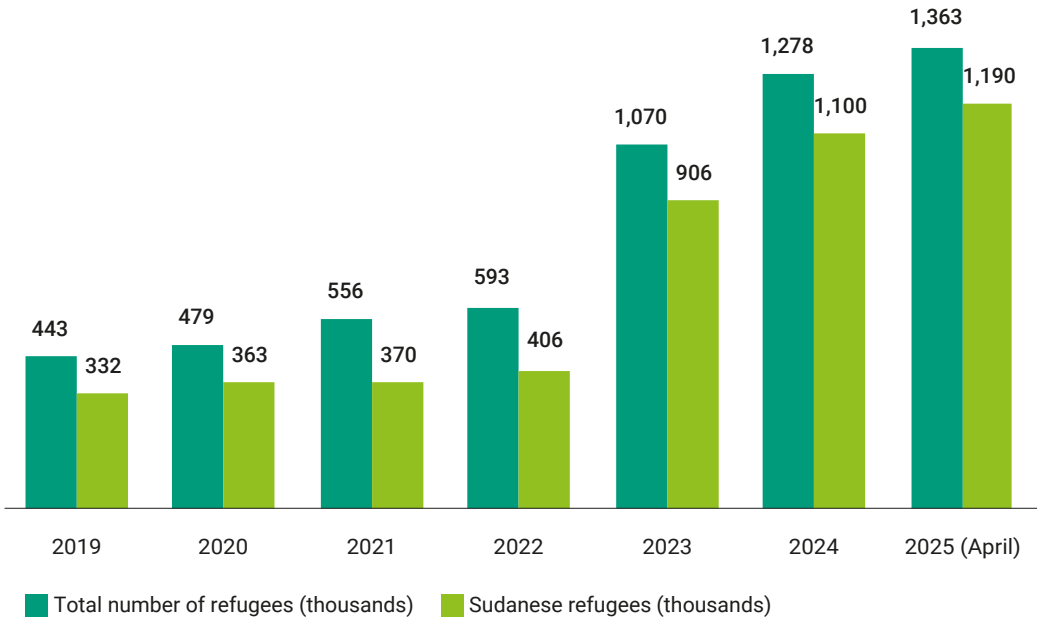
Source: the authors.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 The refugee crisis in the east of Chad

Since the early 2000s, the crisis in Darfur, in western Sudan, has caused a massive influx of Sudanese refugees into eastern Chad. According to the UNHCR, since the Darfur crisis, one in every 17 people living in Chad is a refugee. Between 2019 and 2025, their number rose from around 332,000 to 1.2 million, reaching more than 906,000 in 2023 following the intensification of the conflict in April of that year (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. POPULATIONS OF REFUGEES TO CHAD (2019–2024)



Notes: The data may vary slightly depending on the source, but generally converge on the same order of magnitude. For 2023, the UNHCR does not provide a precise overall figure, but reports the arrival of 500,000 additional Sudanese refugees compared to the previous year.

Sources: the data on the total number of Sudanese refugees for the period 2019–2023 are taken from the World Bank's World Development Indicators. The figure for 2024 is taken from UNICEF (2024). The figure for 2025 comes from the UNHCR – Chad. Operational Data Portal (https://data.unhcr.org/fr/country/tcd). The number of Sudanese refugees comes from UNHCR (2019; 2020; 2021; 2022a; 2024g; 2024a; 2025c).

In April 2025, women and children accounted for 86% of Sudanese refugees registered by the UNHCR in Chad, and 65% of adult refugees were women (UNHCR, 2025a). The majority of Sudanese refugee households are, de facto, headed by women. The estimates remain imprecise and are based on data prior to the mass influx of 2023, with figures varying between 52% (Nguyen et al., 2021), 71% (UNHCR, 2017) and 82% (UNHCR, 2022b) for the period 2017–2019. Among these female heads of household, 40% are believed to be widowed, single, divorced or separated, while 60% are married (Nguyen et al., 2021).

A significant proportion of them have husbands who remained in Sudan and, from whom they have not heard news. Half of the Sudanese refugees who arrived in Chad still have family members in Sudan (Croix-Rouge Tchad and UNHCR, 2025b). In half of the cases, this situation is the result of a household decision, with the husband often remaining behind to protect property and land (ibid.).

Severe acute malnutrition among the children is rising at an alarming rate, with the number of cases exceeding projections for June 2023 by 60%. Lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation is exacerbating the situation, promoting waterborne diseases and intensifying malnutrition, particularly among children under five years of age, especially in refugee camps, where more than 58,000 children were suffering from acute malnutrition in 2024 (IPC, 2024). In addition, according to the IPC analysis of acute malnutrition – which covers four provinces, the city of N'Djamena, 56 departments and 19 refugee camps – it is estimated that approximately 2 million children aged 6 to 59 months will be affected by acute malnutrition during the period from October 2024 to September 2025. This figure remains relatively stable compared with the previous year (2023–2024), with a variation of less than 5% (IPC, 2025).

3.2 Peaceful cohabitation and cross-border solidarity between Chad and Sudan

Movement between Chad and Sudan has long been a feature of the region, linked to conflict and oppression, but also to a long-standing tradition of cross-border hospitality, facilitated by family and cultural ties. In Chad's recent past, particularly during the colonial period, populations from Ouaddaï found refuge in the Sudanese towns of Nyala, Omdurman and Khartoum (Doutoum, 1982; Yacoub, 1983, Gondeu, 2021).[7]

Eastern Chad and western Sudan share a long border and are inhabited by populations that share almost the same history and languages. The majority of Sudanese refugees from Darfur belong to the Massalit, Zaghawa, Four, Tama and Dadjo ethnic groups and to certain Arab tribes which are also present on both sides of the border between Chad and Sudan (discussion with the Eastern Coordinator of the National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees, CNARR, Abéché, December 2024).

The shared historical and geographical ties between refugees and host communities facilitate their reception and integration. For example, the Massalit and Zaghawa are cross-border groups that have long-standing relationships with local populations in Chad, thus facilitating their integration (discussion with a humanitarian actor, Abéché, November 2024). Despite the economic and social challenges, host communities with historical ties to Darfur have shown solidarity in welcoming refugees.

Far from being temporary, the exile of Sudanese refugees in Chad is a long-term phenomenon: before 2023, many had already been living in refugee camps for more than 15 years (Banque mondiale, 2024). The majority presence of women and children in Sudanese

7 The colonial era was marked by forced migration and violence (Doutoum, 1982; Yacoub, 1983, Gondeu, 2021). The Kingdom of Ouaddaï resisted French occupation, notably during the Battle of Ouadi Chock (1909), before the fall of Abeché (ibid.). To establish its domination, the colonial administration orchestrated the 'Islamic conspiracy' of Abeché in 1917, leading to massacres and deportations of religious and political leaders (ibid.). Some took refuge in Darfur, founding new neighbourhoods such as Meram in Al Oubéïd. Colonisation then established the borders between Chad and Sudan (1899–1924), often without taking ethnic realities into account. Several Franco-British treaties and international agreements (Lausanne, Poincaré-Tittoni) ratified these lines (ibid.).

camps in eastern Chad does not only reflect a different level of vulnerability: it is part of a long-term strategy to ensure family security. Men, who are more mobile, continue to travel back and forth to Sudan for economic, social or health reasons. Leaving their families in the camps guarantees them a form of right of return in the event of a further deterioration in the situation in their country of origin. This informal cross-border mobility, although contrary to the strict legal status of refugees, is widely tolerated on the ground.

The long-term integration of refugees is evident, both in the permanent structures which replace tents and in their gradual integration into the local socio-economic fabric. The camps are taking on the appearance of villages where a transition to a more autonomous way of life is beginning, even if it is heavily constrained by the reduction in humanitarian aid.

In several localities in eastern Chad, the settlement of refugees initially supported cohabitation and social integration, supported by humanitarian programmes promoting 'living together'. Shared schools and health centres, inter-community marriages, and joint sporting and agricultural activities contributed to a certain symbiosis between refugees and host populations, particularly thanks to the cultural proximity between the groups. However, the gradual drying up of aid resources and growing pressure on natural resources – water, wood, agricultural land – are reigniting tensions, fuelling perceptions of injustice among indigenous populations, who sometimes feel neglected (Tubiana, 2006). While integration policies have enabled some degree of integration at the start, they have not always been accompanied by structural investment in host territories, which is a necessary condition for sustainable cohabitation according to the theory of inclusive development (Skeldon, 2008).

3.3 Access of refugees to land in an already fragile agricultural and pastoral landscape

For refugees, access to land is often the main means of subsistence, but their massive influx puts significant pressure on land, resources and local economies, particularly in the town of Adré (Ouaddaï), which is now home to 230,000 refugees out of a population of around 40,000 (ACF, 2023; UNHCR, 2024a). Access to land, water and firewood, as well as the management and control of these resources, is a key issue, fuelling tensions between host communities and refugees. Furthermore, the increase in demand for food and agricultural inputs is changing the dynamics of local markets, exacerbating inflation and making rural households even more vulnerable (Banque de France, 2022). Year-on-year inflation rose to 8.7% at the end of August 2024, due to a readjustment of fuel prices and a rebound in food prices (FMI, 2024a).

Access to land remains marked by significant economic barriers, particularly for refugees. Approximately 90% of refugee households engaged in agriculture rent at least one plot of land, often at high costs reaching 50,000 CFA francs per hectare[8] and per year, which hinders their ability to invest sustainably (Banque mondiale, 2024; UNHCR, 2024c). Data from Project 21 for 2024 suggest that leasing, lending (including sharecropping)[9] and land donations are the main channels through which populations (hosts, refugees and displaced persons) access land in eastern Chad (Croix-Rouge Tchad and UNHCR, 2024). Thirty-six per

8 For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that the average food basket cost 72,196 CFA francs in the Sahel region in June 2024 (PAM, 2024).

9 Tenancy and sharecropping are differentiated in the study, although sharecropping is technically a form of tenancy. Tenancy involves monetary payment for fixed-term access to land, regardless of crop yields. Sharecropping involves payment through a predetermined share of the harvest and relatively greater flexibility in the period of access.

cent of the 3,327 individuals surveyed report that there are people (regardless of their status) who encounter difficulties in accessing land because the owner refuses the transaction or delays it (40% of cases), because of the high cost of renting (34%) or because the land is unavailable (25%).

The rapid growth of Chad's population and its unsustainable agricultural practices are putting increasing pressure on resources. Chad is experiencing sustained population growth, with an average annual growth rate of around 3.5% over the last five years. The local population could therefore double by 2050. Before 2023, land privatisation, unsustainable agricultural practices, overgrazing and increasing herd sizes were already contributing to accelerated soil degradation and advancing desertification (Government of Chad, 2021; Broudic et al., 2019; Rossignol et al., 2022). In addition to particularly inadequate basic services, the scarcity of functional transport, storage, irrigation and water retention infrastructure (micro-dams, filter dikes and water-spreading areas to slow down erosion – in French, zones d'épandage) relative to the size of the population reduces producers' resilience to climatic and economic hazards (CILSS, 2017; Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2024).

Gender-based violence has been on the rise in the east of Chad since 2023, mainly due to pressure on natural resources (Global Protection Cluster, 2023). Women are particularly vulnerable when they go out to collect wood or travel far from their homes (OXFAM, 2023). In 2023, the UNHCR reported a sharp increase in cases of sexual violence in eastern Chad, where the majority of Sudanese refugees are located, with more than double the number of cases compared to the previous year (UNHCR, 2024d). Other reports reveal that some Sudanese refugee women have been forced to engage in sexual acts in exchange for food, water or protection (AP News, 2024).

Agriculture and livestock farming in eastern Chad, based on rain-fed vegetable and cereal crops and sedentary livestock breeding, are exposed to climate variability (FEWS NET, 2021). Variability in rainfall and temperatures, marked by recurrent droughts and episodes of intense rainfall, undermines agricultural yields and contributes to soil degradation (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2024).

The short- and medium-term outlook is worrying in terms of climate risks. With a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.4 in 2019, Chad is one of the poorest countries in the world and the most vulnerable to climate shocks according to the 2022 ND-GAIN index. In the short term (by 2030) and medium term (by 2050), episodes of heavy rainfall and drought are likely (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2024). Rising temperatures and a greater number of dangerous heatwaves are certain phenomena (ibid.). These projections increase the risk of food crises and population displacement in border regions, particularly in the east, which suffer from the combination of limited access to basic services, high levels of multidimensional poverty, chronic malnutrition and significant inequalities (Banque mondiale, 2021).

Chad's economic outlook remains uncertain, particularly due to lower-than-expected oil prices, which are exacerbating public deficits.[10] Added to this is the country's high exposure to international economic shocks, which translates into a dependence on food and agricultural input imports, mainly from Sudan. The closure of the border in April 2023 severely disrupted

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10 The country experienced a large budget deficit in 2021, with the primary budget balance falling from approximately +2% of GDP in 2020 to -0.6% of GDP in 2021, due to lower oil revenues and increased spending to address the pandemic crisis. Although the country recorded a large budget surplus in 2022, with a primary balance of 5.3% of GDP, it returned to deficit in 2023, reaching -0.1% of GDP, due to lower oil revenues as a result of falling oil prices on the international market, with the average price per barrel of oil falling from around $96 in 2022 to around $81 in 2023.

the movement of people, goods and livestock, with temporary openings at the Adré crossing allowing only limited humanitarian deliveries.[11] These restrictions, combined with rising fuel and transport costs, are fuelling inflation, affecting public finances and hampering the regional movement of essential goods (Banque mondiale, 2024).

3.4 A system of land tenure fractured between colonial heritage and local practices

The legal framework governing land tenure includes laws dating back to the colonial period and the first decade of independence[12] which are based on the principle that land is public property owned by the state. That view of land tenure was inspired by colonial law which stipulates that the colonial state has ownership of the land and its subsoil. Colonial law clearly denies local communities any right to land ownership without legal titles issued by the public authority. Any legitimacy other than this is either temporary (access through customary law) or simply illegal.

In rural areas, law enforcement remains weak and communities resort to a variety of ancestral customary norms (Magnant, 1978; Conférence épiscopale du Tchad, 2019). In many communities, land is considered a collective resource belonging to the family or clan. Access to it is subject to the approval of village chiefs or traditional leaders (Malloum, 2020). This may involve ceremonies or rituals to formalise the transfer of land ownership rights (Magnant, 1978; Gagné, 2023). In the east of Chad, where Islam is the majority religion, certain methods of land acquisition may also be determined by religious customary norms (ibid.). For example, Islamic law (sharia) governs certain land transactions and land distribution, particularly with regard to inheritance. Different religious interpretations can also affect the way natural resources are managed and distributed, indirectly influencing land access rights (discussion with a religious actor, Abéché, December 2024).

Colonial law did not completely prohibit customary rights but instead simply tolerated them (Melone, 1986) and, for this reason, did not grant them any room for competition. This context prevails to this day, with land tenure constituting the only capital available to rural dwellers who represent 78% of the population (Government of Chad, 2009). For example, Article 4 of Law 67-23 states: "Individuals and communities who, prior to the adoption of this law, enjoyed customary rights over public property shall continue to enjoy those rights. However, the public authorities reserve the right to deprive them of these rights in return for compensation." As a result, farmers are in a state of limbo, as the state can expropriate entire populations at any time for reasons of public utility. The expropriation procedures initiated on behalf of the Chad oil project prove this. Thus, since independence, there has been no relevant response to remove these obstacles, despite several attempts such as the Pastoral Code, which had the effect of further crystallising the context of land insecurity and was subsequently withdrawn.

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11 See: https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/chad-food-security-outlook-update-atypically-high-food-prices-negatively-impact-food-consumption-poor-households-april-2023.

12 These are Law 04 of 31 October 1959, governing nomadism; Law 23 of 22 July 1967, relating to land ownership and customary rights; Law 24 of 22 July 1967, limiting land rights; and Law 25 of 22 July 1967, on the status of state property.

There are therefore two land tenure systems in eastern Chad: the so-called 'administrative' land tenure system, which represents the state and applies the colonial legislative framework on the one hand, and the customary system on the other. The administrative system theoretically governs land allocation and management. It also plays a role in land registration by issuing property deeds (land titles) and in arbitrating land disputes by intervening to settle disputes, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas (Banque mondiale, 2024). The administrative system also has an impact on land-use planning and development by defining areas for agricultural, pastoral or urban use, sometimes in conflict with customary rights (ibid.). It is a system plagued by habitual problems of corruption, administrative delays and a weak presence in rural areas. Its implementation also involves several institutions with vague or overlapping mandates, which are often in competition with each other (Gagné, 2023).

The customary system manages land allocation, resolves land disputes (through community negotiation mechanisms) and protects community lands by defending the interests of communities against land grabbing by the state, which claims ownership of any land deemed vacant (ibid.; Conférence épiscopale du Tchad, 2019). The main obstacle to the customary system is its oral nature, which is not formalised and is not recognised by the state, creating legal uncertainty and exposing landowners to contempt from local authorities in the event of expropriation (Conférence épiscopale du Tchad, 2019).

This pluralism poses a challenge for the state (Magnant, 1978; Gagné, 2023). For many years, the government has been trying to update its land laws in order to reconcile customary, religious and administrative practices. After a series of unsuccessful attempts at reform since 1990 due to political instability, a land reform bill is currently under discussion.

3.5 Access to land is still, in reality, unattainable for women and refugees

In the absence of official documents guaranteeing stable access, land insecurity among refugees remains high, regardless of the land tenure system. According to UNHCR, 64% of refugees arriving from Sudan have no personal documents, which are often lost or burned (UNHCR, 2025b). They struggle to obtain fertile agricultural plots, which are often far from the refugee camps, and therefore cultivate smaller areas than the local population (UNHCR, 2024c; Banque mondiale, 2024).

Locally, customary norms may exclude refugees from minority groups or foreigners. When they belong to ethnic groups that are distinct from those of the host populations, this can be a factor in exclusion and discrimination. Although customary systems are flexible, they tend to exclude refugees who have neither historical roots nor family ties to host communities. As a result, the latter category of refugees are more often forced to accept precarious and unfavourable agreements, with no guarantee of long-term land security (discussion with the chief of South Kobe canton, Iriba, February 2025). In some cases, refugees may have some bargaining power to access land, especially when they claim ownership of land through a family member. This phenomenon occurs mainly in areas where communities on both sides of the border are not only geographically close, but also linked by ethnic affinities and frequent interactions.

Women in Chad rarely inherit land (Gagné, 2023), which limits their control over productive resources and perpetuates their lack of decision-making power in economic and social spheres (Banque mondiale, 2024). However, in rural areas of eastern Chad, it is mainly women who cultivate the land, process the produce and market it (Government of Chad, 2016). They also face persistent inequalities in human and economic capital, with limited access to education, agricultural inputs and financial services (UNHCR, 2024c; Banque mondiale, 2024).

Most women in Chad acquire land through marriage (UNHCR, 2024c). Traditionally, land is managed communally. Women gain access to it through their family of origin or their host family, usually that of their husband. However, land does not belong to individuals, but to families. When women become widowed or divorced, they find themselves in great difficulty (discussion with an expert on the Chadian land tenure system, online, December 2024).

For refugee women, marrying a member of the host community can provide access to family land. These mixed marriages, which are relatively common, are particularly prevalent among refugees who arrived in 2023 (Watson et al., 2018). However, their success depends on harmonious relations between the communities and raises the issue of the risk of encouraging early marriage, a practice that is still common in the region despite being prohibited by law (FMI, 2024b).

Widowed refugee women may face restrictive social norms that limit their opportunities for remarriage. In Muslim communities, the practice of 'levirate' marriage – remarriage to a member of the deceased's family – remains common (Government of Chad, 2011). Those who refuse may be forced to live alone (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2015). However, there is little data available to measure the extent of this practice among ethnic groups on both sides of the border, such as the Zaghawa (ibid.). It therefore remains difficult to assess whether refugee women can really remarry freely, particularly with a member of the host community, or whether they are socially excluded.

4. LAND TENURE, REFUGEES AND WOMEN IN THE CLIMATE AND HUMANITARIAN OBJECTIVES OF CHAD AND ITS EASTERN PARTNERS

4.1 The issue of land tenure in the frameworks of responses to the displacements linked to the crisis in Sudan

Chad's legal framework for refugees has been gradually strengthened through accession to international conventions and internal legislative reforms. Refugee protection has been reinforced by constitutional provisions and the establishment of the CNARR in 2011 to manage issues relating to refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (see Table 3).

The adoption by Chad of the law on asylum in December 2020, which resulted from commitments made by the country at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, strengthens the framework for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers without discrimination (particularly on the basis of gender), thereby guaranteeing respect for several of their rights, including the right to access land.[13] Article 24 of the Asylum Act guarantees refugees the most favourable treatment possible, at least as favourable as that accorded to foreigners in similar circumstances, with regard to the acquisition and rental of land. Article 61 of the 2023 Decree, which specifically addresses local integration as a durable solution, stipulates that the government shall give priority to refugees' right to access land, and secure the land allocated to them, in order to promote their self-sufficiency.

13 Before 2020, refugees theoretically had the right to purchase land, but customary practices and administrative barriers limited this access: in 2018–2019, only 4% of refugee farming households owned a plot of land, compared to 90% of households in Chad (Nguyen et al., 2021).

TABLE 3. EVOLUTION OF THE COMMITMENT OF CHAD TO INTEGRATION AND PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

Year	Event	Principal developments
1951	Ratification of the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees	Chad becomes part of the 1951 Convention guaranteeing fundamental rights to refugees, particularly protection against forced return, access to education, employment, health care and housing.
1969	Adoption of the African Convention of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on refugees	Broadening of the legal definition of 'refugee' to include persons fleeing widespread violence, armed conflicts, or political instability, strengthening regional protections against forced return.
1974	Entry into force of the Convention of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on refugees	Consolidation of regional obligations as regards protection of refugees, completing the 1951 Geneva Convention and strengthening legal guarantees.
1996	Constitution of Chad (Article 45)	Inclusion of the right of asylum in the constitutional framework, stipulating that asylum is granted according to the conditions laid down by the law and outlawing extradition of political refugees.
2003	Beginning of the war in Darfur (in the west of Sudan)	Increase in the number of Sudanese refugees in Chad, from 12,729 to 110,000.
2011	Creation of the National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees (CNARR)	Establishment of a statutory body for implementation of the obligations of Chad by virtue of the international and regional frameworks on refugees including coordination with UNHCR.
December 2019	Commitment during the Global Refugee Forum	Chad publicly commits to adopt a comprehensive national law on asylum to strengthen the legal protections and promote integration of refugees.
2020	Adoption of the asylum law in Chad (23rd December)	Codification of the national legal protections for refugees and applicants for asylum, guaranteeing them rights to formal work, health services, education, land ownership and freedom of movement.
April 2023	New civil war in Sudan	Increase in the number of Sudanese refugees into Chad, from 403,846 in 2022 to 923,323 in 2023.
	Signature of the decree of application of the asylum law	Ten days after the start of the civil war, the transition government signs a decree of application of the law on asylum, the essential procedure to render the law operational and allow for its effective implementation.

Source: the authors, from UNHCR data.

4.1.1 The National Response Plan for the East (NRP) 2025–2027

The National Response Plan (NRP) for the East of Chad has a major ambition: to turn the mass influx of Sudanese refugees into a driver of sustainable local development. By focusing on improving infrastructure (roads, energy, water, basic social services), the plan aims to open up host regions and lay the foundations for a more resilient local economy (Gouvernement du Tchad, 2024b). This territorialised approach represents an important shift, breaking with previous responses that were more focused on humanitarian emergencies.

Nevertheless, the absence of quantified targets in the plan makes it difficult to assess its results and efficiency, particularly in a context of crisis where resources are limited. While one understands the difficulty of setting precise targets in the face of a constant influx of refugees, the inclusion of a few quantitative benchmarks – for example on food insecurity or access to land – would have enabled better monitoring of the actions announced, which are currently formulated in essentially qualitative terms.

In social terms, the NRP marks progress in terms of inclusion. Its overall objectives include supporting the local economy by creating economic opportunities for young people and women. Pillar 1 explicitly mentions promoting income-generating activities and training for women with a view to strengthening their resilience. Pillar 3, meanwhile, emphasises their role in promoting inclusive dialogue and peacebuilding efforts. However, despite these positive elements, gender issues are only partially addressed in the NRP and the specific constraints faced by women do not occupy a central place in the strategic framework.

The NRP emphasises the importance of investing in basic infrastructure (roads, schools, health centres, water points, etc.) to open up crisis-hit areas and improve access to essential services. It mobilises a wide range of actors – the ResiTchad project,[14] public authorities, technical and financial partners, local communities, refugees, traditional authorities and security forces – but does not mention the private sector, which could nevertheless play a strategic role. By drawing on its technical capabilities and performance-based approach, the private sector could contribute to the effective implementation of projects, facilitate the mobilisation of funding through public–private partnerships, shorten implementation times and strengthen the local economic impact. Its absence from the plan thus limits the levers available to maximise the results and sustainability of investments.

Finally, the lack of a clear position on governance of land tenure is a major weakness. In a context where access to land is a prerequisite for any prospect of empowerment for refugees and internally displaced persons, this limits the scope of economic inclusion efforts, particularly in agricultural areas.

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14 The Territorial Development and Resilience Project in Chad (RésiTchad), launched in 2024 for a period of four years with funding from the World Bank, provides for interventions in eastern Chad (with the World Food Programme – WFP) and in northern Chad (with the International Organization for Migration – IOM). The first phase, focused on the rapid rehabilitation of key infrastructure around the refugee camps (mobility, water, health, education, environment), is due to be completed in June 2026. A second phase will aim to strengthen local and national institutional capacities.

4.1.2 Regional plans for urgent intervention for Sudanese refugees (Sudan RRRP) (2023, 2024 and 2025)

In response to the large influx of refugees into Sudan's neighbouring countries in the Spring of 2023, an initial inter-agency regional response plan was established: the Sudan Emergency Regional Refugee Response Plan (Sudan RRRP). Since then, two further Sudan RRRPs have been published for the years 2024 (RRRP2) and 2025 (RRRP3).

The second RRRP (2024) marks a significant shift: support for resilience becomes a central objective, reflecting a desire to go beyond emergency aid. It promotes self-sufficiency, access to public services, economic inclusion of refugees and the development of livelihoods, for both displaced populations and host communities. This approach contrasts with the first RRRP, in which resilience was mainly addressed through the prism of peaceful coexistence, notably through the establishment of refugee camps based on the 'villagisation' model. The latter aims to integrate refugees into the local fabric rather than isolating them in camps. By gradually transforming camps into villages, this approach seeks to strengthen refugees' autonomy, promote their inclusion in host communities and ensure shared access to basic services such as health and education.

This strategic shift comes at a time of growing needs. By May 2023, reception facilities were already at full capacity, even before the first RRRP was published, making it difficult to plan the response (UNHCR, 2023). The number of arrivals far exceeded initial forecasts — from 100,000 in May to more than 484,000 by the end of 2023. In response to this situation, the priorities of RRRPs 2 and 3 focused on registration, relocation and covering basic needs, particularly food — as evidenced by the doubling of the budget allocated to food aid between 2023 and 2024.

4.1.3 The land constraint at the heart of the issue of empowerment

Several programmes and projects are currently aimed at promoting the gradual empowerment of refugees and host communities in Chad by facilitating their access to land and markets. These initiatives are implemented in partnership with the government of Chad and jointly managed by UNHCR, WFP and CNARR. There is a strong interdependence between these projects and programmes, in terms of both their sequencing and their overlaps. This synergy reinforces their overall impact on the resilience of refugees and host communities by offering the prospect of access to rehabilitated land, markets, services and infrastructure, and by integrating them economically. In addition, the staff interviewed reported that there is local consultation between the various actors involved, ensuring ongoing coordination despite ministerial changes.

In support of these projects and programmes, Chad has committed to allocating land to refugees. At the Geneva Global Refugee Forum (13–15 December 2023), Chad pledged to allocate 30,000 hectares of land for agro-pastoral activities in refugee reception areas. In 2022, negotiations between UNHCR and the government of Chad had already secured 2,700 hectares of land in eastern Chad for refugees, and between 2020 and 2023, more than 15,000 hectares of agricultural land were made available to refugees in Chad for farming, under written or verbal agreements lasting from one to three years (UNHCR, 2024c). The land allocated to refugees comes from both the government and local landowners, who generously make it available as part of development programmes – often motivated by historical, ethnic and religious ties (Agence Ecofin, 2023; UNHCR, 2024b).

However, the amount of land actually made available remains low, despite significant efforts by all parties. Negotiations involving landowners, the Chad government and humanitarian actors are complex and lengthy (discussion with UNHCR, March 2025). In cases where an agreement is reached, the land offered does not always meet the necessary specifications for selection (too degraded, too far from dwellings, significantly incorrect surface area, etc.).

For example, in April 2024, of the 17,500 hectares allocated by the government and landowners under the Haguina[15] initiative, only 45% was retained, of the 68% initially assessed (UNHCR, 2024b). These constraints inevitably reduce the number of beneficiaries and highlight the need for much greater investment to extend the impact of these projects to host and refugee communities. To achieve the Haguina initiative's target of 100,000 hectares of land assessed, rehabilitated and allocated to refugees by 2029, US$380 million in funding would be required, 19 times the funding obtained in 2024. As things stand, this lever therefore remains very limited.

4.1.4 Financial constraints limiting the support to refugees

The budget required to support Sudanese refugees in Chad for the period from January to December 2025 (RRRP3) is US$701.2 million. The budget required in 2024 under RRRP2 Sudan was US$630.3 million, of which only 30% (US$191.1 million) had been funded by January 2025. The low level of funding for RRRPs must be viewed in the context of Chad's Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), which support both host communities and refugees and face the same challenges: only 46% of the necessary funding has been received for the 2023 HRP and 57% for 2024.

The budgetary resources required to implement the NRP (more than US$1.6 million) represent more than half of the overall budget of the government of Chad. Although the country benefits from the support of bilateral partners, notably the European Union and the World Bank, the international context remains worrying. In particular, the sharp decline in US aid raises concerns about a possible increase in budgetary pressure. In the absence of sufficient alternative funding, the economic situation could deteriorate further. The NRP also highlights a decline in tax revenues and remittances from nationals of Chad living in Sudan, while currently available funding covers only about 5% of estimated needs (Government of Chad, 2024b).

Analysis of the national budget allocated to the management of refugees reveals a significant decrease in funding between 2019 and 2023 (see Figure 2). The government budget allocated to the CNARR remained stable at 200 million CFA francs (US$200,000) between 2021 and 2023. However, the sharp increase in the number of refugees without a corresponding budget adjustment has led to a decrease in funds per refugee, from a symbolic value of US$0.58 to US$0.29 per head over the same period.[16] This decline in funding highlights the increasing difficulties for CNARR in fulfilling its commitments and its financial dependence on external partners, including UNHCR, the European Union and the World Bank.

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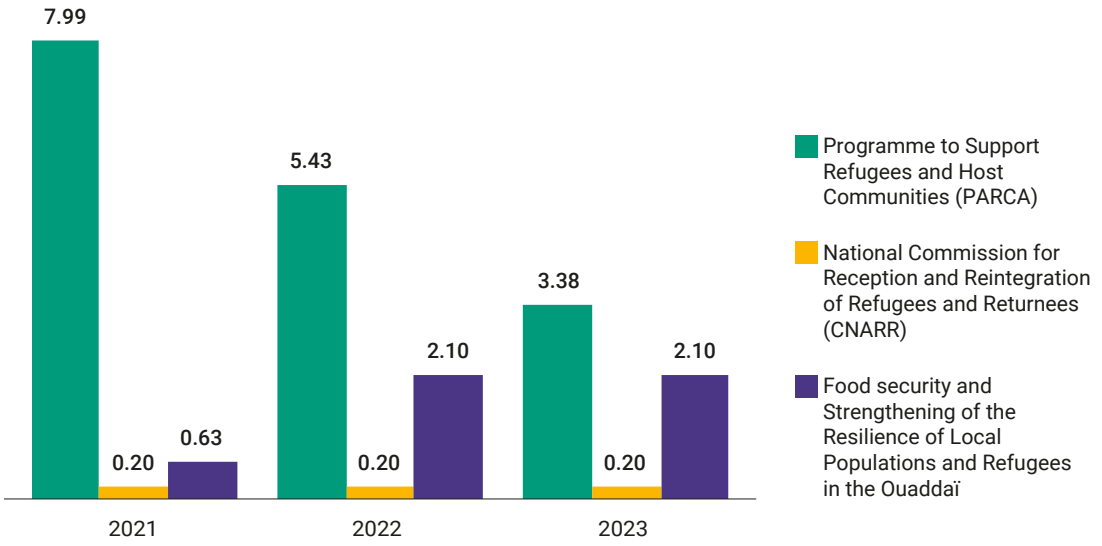
15 The Haguina initiative, led by WFP in partnership with the Government of Chad, UNHCR and GIZ, aims to restore 100,000 hectares of agricultural and pastoral land over five years for the benefit of 500,000 refugees and members of host communities, with a budget of $380 million. The process involves identifying, mapping and technically assessing the land, followed by the signing of formal land agreements and local conventions defining the terms of sustainable management.

16 These figures are purely symbolic, since not all of the funding allocated to the CNARR is directly used to assist refugees (i.e. salaries, buildings, equipment, etc.).

Nevertheless, even funding for the Programme to Support Refugees and Host Countries (PARCA)[17] (which will end in late 2025), largely supported by the World Bank, has decreased significantly, from 8 billion CFA francs in 2021 to 3.4 billion CFA francs in 2023.

FIGURE 2. BUDGET OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CHAD ALLOCATED TO THE ISSUE OF REFUGEES, IN BILLIONS OF AFRICAN FRANCS (CFA) (2021–2023)



Source: the authors, from national statistics (Ministry of Finance and Budget of the Government of Chad).

4.2 Inclusion of women and refugees in policy frameworks relating to resilience

4.2.1 The principal strategies relating to climate (2017–2022): National Strategy to Combat Climate Change (SNLCC), Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP)

Launched in 2017, the principal macro-socioeconomic development plan, currently, of Chad is 'Vision 2030, the Chad we want' (Government of Chad, 2017a; 2017b).[18] This plan is complemented by the National Strategy to Combat Climate Change (SNLCC), which identifies resilience measures until 2030 (Government of Chad, 2017c). Mitigation and adaptation actions, in line with the five strategic objectives of the SNLCC, were developed through the country's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2021 and its first National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for 2022 (Government of Chad, 2021; 2022).

17 Following a pilot project on social safety nets (2017–2019), the World Bank set up the Programme to Support Refugees and Host Communities (PARCA), initially planned for the period 2019–2023, then extended to 31st December, 2025. Led by the Social Safety Nets Unit under the Ministry of Economy, it comprises four main components: (1) improving access to basic services through infrastructure aligned with national sectoral plans; (2) targeted cash transfers to strengthen the resilience of 25,000 vulnerable refugee households; (3) support for the CNARR and social protection systems; and (4) technical and operational support.

18 A new National Development Plan for Chad is in the process of being finalised. It is not studied in this report.

In all of Chad's strategic climate policy documents, the challenges associated with the influx of refugees are mentioned in order to contextualise Chad's demographic and humanitarian situation, but no specific, cross-cutting objectives or targets (i.e. affecting refugees among other social groups) are explicitly dedicated to them. For example, each of the five[19] objectives of the SNLCC theoretically has implications for the resilience of communities (host and refugee) by 2030, but: (1) the document only explicitly articulates those implications through the promotion of so-called climate-smart and climate-responsive agricultural practices,[20] (2) refugees are not explicitly mentioned as beneficiaries, and (3) the priority actions under each objective are generally descriptive in nature and do not set concrete targets or mandates for their implementation (Opitz-Stapleton et al., 2024).

The gap between the importance given to refugees in the NAP objectives and the programmes and projects described shows the central role of external partners in implementing projects to support refugees. Although the issue of refugees is not addressed in the NAP, the document references more than 39 projects related to rural development, resilience and climate change that are aimed at refugees, regardless of their country of origin (Government of Chad, 2022). These projects and programmes are supported by 11 main bilateral donors (including Germany, USA, France and UK) and multilateral donors (World Bank, ECHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, UNHCR, WFP, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and represent 32% of the programmes they were running in support of rural development, resilience and climate change response at the time of drafting the NAP in 2021. This mainly involves food aid and livelihood support (cash transfers, distribution of inputs, tools and small livestock).

4.2.2 The National Strategy relating to Gender and Climate Change (SNGCC) (in preparation)

The objective of the National Strategy relating to Gender and Climate Change (SNGCC) is to integrate gender equality objectives into Chad's climate strategies by strengthening coordination, financing, and the participation of vulnerable groups, and by developing tools to better include gender in climate change adaptation and mitigation actions (Government of Chad, 2024a).

This climate strategy document is the first in Chad to explicitly consider refugees as priority vulnerable groups, alongside women, children, young people, persons with disabilities, the sick, the elderly, indigenous peoples and displaced persons. In its current draft, it emphasises the importance of taking into account the specific vulnerabilities of these groups in adaptation policies and actions, specifying that they were consulted during the development of national adaptation plans.

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19 The National Strategy to Combat Climate Change (SNLCC) sets out five strategic objectives: (1) to strengthen the resilience of agro-pastoral systems and urban areas, while protecting the environment and biodiversity; (2) to reduce emissions in line with REDD+ and promote renewable energies, particularly hydroelectricity, solar and wind energy, including for domestic use; (3) to improve meteorological, climate and epidemiological monitoring, as well as the capacity of early warning systems; (4) to strengthen institutional and technical capacities in climate policy, planning, implementation and learning; (5) to facilitate access to and mobilisation of climate finance (Government of Chad, 2017c).

20 Indeed, strengthening the resilience of agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries production systems to climate variability and change would lead to increased productivity and income for local communities, contributing to their food security and well-being (Government of Chad, 2017c).

However, no specific objective is earmarked for refugees, currently. In the current draft of the SNGCC, only one of its four objectives includes refugees in a cross-cutting manner, emphasising their need for empowerment through access to financial and material resources. This cross-cutting approach makes it difficult to determine the actual beneficiaries. For example, among the activities planned under this objective is easier access to land titles for women and young people, through programmes that support land security and reduce legal and social barriers to ownership. However, the description of this activity and the associated indicators do not specify whether refugees will benefit from it, particularly as there is no mention of the CNARR among the actors involved.

Focus group for discussion among young women and adults (16-40 years) at the refugee camp of Touloum, Chad.
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5. LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF LAND ACCESS ISSUES IN TOULOUM, ABOU-TENGUE AND DJABAL

5.1 Findings overall

This section discusses the findings presented in Table B2 of Appendix B. Where specified, they are put into perspective by the discussions which were held with local authorities, host communities and refugees.

5.1.1 There is a consensus on the difficulties experienced by female heads of household

All discussion groups agreed that single refugee women with dependent children represent the largest group in each refugee camp. This observation is also evident, albeit less clearly, in discussions with local authorities, who all stated that women and children are the most represented categories of persons in the camps.

Participants in discussion groups had converging perceptions regarding the increased difficulties faced by elderly women on their own (referred to as being socially 'isolated') in accessing land. On average, participants ranked the case of an elderly refugee woman, who was widowed, belonging to an ethnic minority, who had arrived alone in the camp, as facing 'moderate' to 'high' difficulties in accessing land. This combination of characteristics – age, ethnic status, social isolation – is particularly seen as a source of difficulty by women, older persons, and members of host communities, suggesting a similar assessment of the obstacles faced by these groups.

This observation was not as clear during interviews with local authorities. While there is consensus on the essential role of refugee women in agriculture, and local authority representatives emphasise that access to land was initially guaranteed to refugees, the interviews suggested that in this regard no social group is particularly advantaged or disadvantaged. This difference in perceptions suggests that certain disadvantages, such as social isolation or the lack of support networks for widows or women on their own, are not necessarily taken into account in official accounts of access to land. It also highlights the fact that local authorities often use general categories ('refugees', 'hosts', 'women', 'men') without distinguishing between sub-groups that are more susceptible to obstacles, even though they are over-represented in the camps.

The type of person accompanying a female refugee plays a central role in her prospects for accessing land. Quantitative results indicate that, in almost all sites, two characteristics strongly influence the perceived obstacles to land access for female refugees: namely, the type of accompanying person and, to a lesser extent, their age.

The principal opportunities for single refugee women to access land today are through the work of the children in their care. Young refugee women or those accompanied by older children are systematically ranked higher, i.e. perceived as facing fewer obstacles. These findings echo numerous qualitative discussions, in which older children are described as additional agricultural labour, economic actors supporting household income, or helpers in caring for younger children. From the hosts' point of view, their presence is reassuring and a guarantee of productivity, which makes these women more 'eligible' for land contracts. This suggests a transfer of economic responsibilities to children, a critical issue for humanitarian actors and the government of Chad in terms of protecting children's rights.

This perception is widely shared and constitutes a social expectation that participants in discussion groups never questioned. They never presented it as a risk to the child. The focus group conducted in Djabal with only young men under the age of 18 showed that they were aware of this expectation, which they perceived as a duty on them given the economic vulnerability of the household. In Abou-Tengué, discussions also revealed that participants believe that an elderly refugee woman who is a widow will have a better chance of accessing land if she is accompanied by older children, although they also highlighted the total lack of available land. This point, which is marginally reflected in the quantitative findings, must be viewed in the context of the survey, where the issue of access to land was largely considered inapplicable. Thus, rather than reflecting a real possibility of access, the perceptions expressed highlight a social expectation even in a context where land access seems unobtainable.

In some cases, perceived vulnerability – for example, being a woman alone with young children or belonging to a minority – is presented as an asset for accessing land, relying on the supposed solidarity of host communities towards refugees. In Abou-Tengué in particular, this idea came up frequently: all groups questioned in the host community, with the exception of young men, said that a refugee woman considered to be very vulnerable would have a better chance of obtaining a plot of land, although the criteria for this vulnerability varied depending on who is interviewed. The idea that ethnic minorities are privileged also emerges in the quantitative analysis, where belonging to the majority ethnic group is sometimes perceived as a disadvantage.

This type of viewpoint – echoed by some humanitarian actors and members of host communities – also seems to reflect a valued vision of past hospitality, or even an ideal of inter-community solidarity that is more strongly asserted than practised. In reality, the obstacles to accessing land mentioned by participants in discussion groups and interviews are related less to ethnicity than to factors such as social isolation, family responsibilities or a lack of local connections. Many refute the idea that ethnicity is a determining factor, emphasising instead the central role of trust and personal networks.

Access to land thus appears to be as much an issue and process of relationships as it is an economic one: land is a social good negotiated in a context of social interactions. In this context, strengthening cohesion between refugees and hosts is not merely a complement to economic solutions, but a precondition of their effectiveness. Hence the importance of investing in mechanisms for dialogue and trust, and of better understanding the local dynamics that shape these relationships.

5.1.2 Understanding of the difficulties in accessing land is fragmented

In the three refugee camps studied, access to land is based on the negotiation of contracts between refugees and host communities.[21] A 'common understanding' of land issues and peaceful coexistence between hosts and refugees therefore plays a key role in access to land. However, the study reveals that coexistence is fragile and that perceptions are influenced by dominant narratives that obscure the specific obstacles faced by refugees.

The illusion of shared understanding between hosts and refugees masks silent divisions. In the quantitative analysis, while women, older people and members of host communities appear to converge in their perceptions of the factors limiting access to land, this apparent consistency does not stand up to closer scrutiny. The refugee women interviewed stand out clearly, calling into question the idea of a broad consensus between groups. This difference suggests that the dominant perceptions reflect, first of all, the point of view of host communities, potentially influenced by the narratives of village chiefs, who themselves are the guardians of local land norms. These narratives may also be relayed by long-established refugees, thereby reinforcing a local interpretative framework that does not necessarily represent the experience of recently arrived refugee women. For example, marriage, which does not necessarily imply the presence of a husband, does not appear to be a significant factor for the majority of participants in the discussion groups, except for refugee women who consider it beneficial. This suggests that refugee women may, generally speaking, overestimate the importance of marriage in gaining access to land. Another explanation is that their perception reflects a more nuanced understanding of the criteria for social acceptability and the levers that facilitate access to land.

However, the data available on the perceptions of refugee women remains limited. This calls for caution in making comparisons and highlights the need to further explore the diversity of their experiences, particularly in relation to how long they have been settled. Such an approach would provide a better understanding of the fault lines that are often invisible in local land tenure narratives.

Men express a wide range of views, revealing little recognition of the specific obstacles experienced by refugee women. In the quantitative analysis, no particular characteristic consistently emerges as decisive in men's responses. This total lack of consensus highlights how little the experiences of land exclusion experienced by refugee women are on average clearly reflected in men's perceptions. Host men – often landowners – seem to have a different perception of access to land than refugee men, who do not own land and are generally not in charge of farming. This distinction in economic and social roles related to land could explain the diversity of male perspectives and their lower sensitivity to the factors of exclusion perceived by other groups.

Dominant narratives are also found in what representatives of local authorities said. While all agree on the vulnerability of refugees and the increasing pressure on natural resources, administrative authorities tend to emphasise existing legal frameworks and economic opportunities, while traditional leaders express more directly their concerns about land scarcity and the risk of conflict. These differences reflect distinct institutional positions: the former emphasise public policy, while the latter are rooted in the day-to-day customary management of land.

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21 No official land distribution programme by the Chad government or its humanitarian partners was mentioned by the actors and communities questioned, and there is no suggestion that any such initiative is underway in the three areas studied.

In Touloum, for example, the Sub-prefect emphasised the relative peace that has prevailed since 2003, while the Chief of the canton called for formalisation of natural resource management. In Djabal, the Secretary-General of the governorate and the Sultan of Dar Sila both recognise the high vulnerability of refugees, but disagree on the extent of tensions. In Abou-Tengué, the different accounts are even more fragmented: the administrative authorities play down the obstacles to accessing land, while local chiefs refer to the reluctance of host communities to give up their land, particularly to young women who are perceived as inexperienced.

The discussions revealed the fragility of coexistence between host communities and refugees, which is often maintained by community leaders. There is a notable gap between the discourse of the community leaders, who talk in favour of peaceful coexistence, and that of members of host communities, who frequently express criticism of refugees. A sense of injustice related to the distribution of aid frequently emerges in the discourse of hosts. While this stance may have an underlying purpose – the aim of obtaining more support – the study also highlights real tensions, echoed in a recent report by OXFAM (2023) and reflected in the testimonies of customary leaders. These tensions include the scarcity of land, firewood and water, often perceived as being a consequence of the arrival of refugees, and the reduction in food aid due to the 'villagisation' process, leading to misunderstanding and frustration. Some people accuse refugees of depleting groundwater reserves, but it is difficult to verify these causal links: other factors, such as intensive agricultural irrigation, could also play a role. These perceptions, whether well founded or not, fuel tensions and highlight the importance of clear communication on aid criteria and developments in schemes such as villagisation.

5.1.3 The confusion between access and use of land is a source of tensions between communities

Refugees often express the idea that host communities monopolise land, without understanding the criteria according to which a plot of land is granted or refused. Their expectations focus more on land use (what they can do on it), while hosts frame the discussion in terms of access (who can obtain a plot), and this fuels misunderstandings. For their part, hosts refer to a logic of 'first come, first served', while emphasising their own vulnerability and the fact that they contribute tools and inputs, which in their view justifies certain inequalities. These accounts reflect more the vulnerability of both groups, the importance for each of accessing land, and the host community leaders' knowledge of the refugees' land access rights, more than the actual access arrangements in place locally. Nevertheless, the points of disagreement and misunderstanding are real.

Misaligned expectations between the two parties – particularly with regard to material contributions or rehabilitation efforts – feed persistent misunderstandings. Some refugees claim to have been wronged in the agreements, citing non-compliance with clauses or a feeling of having been deceived. They report cases of non-payment for agricultural work and non-compliance with agreements (e.g. land being taken back after having been ceded). This precariousness is exacerbated by the lack of remuneration for essential services such as land rehabilitation, in a context where climate variability makes harvests uncertain. Some refugees even agree to work without compensation in order to secure access to land the following year. The ban on market gardening or gardening on leased land is another source of confusion and grievance for them as regards the reasons behind this ban, despite the opportunities of income that these activities could generate. Finally, in Djabal, the degradation of fields by passing animals is sometimes perceived as a deliberate act on the part of the hosts affecting the land allocated to refugees, highlighting inter-community tensions.

Perceptions of crop sharing differ in sharecropping contracts. Older men in host communities refer to equal sharing (50/50), while refugees estimate that they receive only one third. For their part, host women justify their larger share by citing their own vulnerability and the fact that they provide the tools and seeds. The discussions also highlighted an often-overlooked angle: the care of young refugee children, which is not included in the terms of the contracts (for example, more children does not necessarily mean more crops). These differences in interpretation reflect deep misunderstandings, making it difficult to identify the practices that are actually in operation.

5.2 Local gender obstacles to land access

5.2.1 The husband as lever of access to land for sharecropping in Touloum

This section considers the quantitative findings and the focus group discussions carried out in Touloum (see Tables B3 and B4 of Appendix B).

In Touloum, access to land is mainly through sharecropping; as hosts and refugees share the harvest, the choice of partner is key, and agreements can be more or less advantageous for each of these vulnerable groups.

The focus group discussions and the quantitative findings revealed widely divergent perceptions on the factors influencing access to land. This is the only area where differences in responses appear to be strongly influenced by participant characteristics (gender, age, host or refugee community). These differing results accurately reflect observations and exchanges in the field, which revealed numerous disagreements between communities.

The quantitative analysis shows that refugees see the presence of a husband as more beneficial than their hosts do. It also suggests that age differences alter perceptions of the presence of a husband and, more broadly, of marriage. This perception was widely echoed in discussions with older and widowed refugee women, who cited their status as a factor contributing to their precarious situation, particularly in relation to land contracts that were not respected by hosts. It was mentioned to a lesser extent by younger refugee women.

This tendency reflects deeply rooted gender norms surrounding the role of the husband in the way bargaining is conducted. According to both young and older refugee women, a woman who is married or accompanied by her husband carries greater social weight, which gives her a position of strength in negotiations for access to land. Although this point remains difficult to confirm, the relative consensus around marriage observed in the quantitative data suggests that the status of being married plays a favourable role for women in land negotiations.

5.2.2 Recognition of gender as a factor in exclusion from rental contracts in Djabal

This section considers the quantitative findings and the focus group discussions carried out in Diabal (see Table B5 Appendix B).

In Djabal, access to land is mainly through rental contracts negotiated with host community leaders, then validated and signed before the Sultan. Although the hosts claim not to discriminate in the allocation of these contracts, the qualitative exchanges and quantitative data indicate that the family situation of refugee women – in particular the absence of a spouse and the presence of young children – constitutes an indirect but

decisive obstacle. This combination of factors leads many of them to give up on applying for land access from the outset, in the expectation that their family responsibilities would make it difficult to cultivate the leased plots. These women turn to other, often more precarious, livelihood strategies, such as brick-making or small-scale trading. These activities are not only physically demanding – some women report becoming partially disabled as a result of manual labour – but they are also exposed to increasing economic risks, particularly in a context of inflation.

The number and age of dependent children is a major indirect barrier due to the distance to and from the land. In Djabal, a significant consensus emerges in the quantitative analysis among all participants regarding the age of children accompanying married refugee women. Between a married woman arriving with young children and another arriving with older children, the one arriving with young children will have significantly more difficulty accessing land. The one arriving with older children will be significantly more likely to be classified as having moderate rather than great difficulty accessing land.

Participants often stated that having young children makes it difficult for women to farm a plot of land due to childcare constraints and distance during the growing season. Without adequate means of transport (donkey, horse), they struggle to travel with their children and cannot always leave them in the refugee camps, which often leads them to give up access to land. Conversely, women accompanied by older children can rely on their help with household chores (e.g. childcare), with their contribution to agricultural or other economic activities making it easier for the women to overcome these obstacles

The absence of a male family guarantor is a strict barrier to establishing a rental contract. For older men in the host community, access to land is conditional on the presence of a reliable male guarantor or legal representative. In other words, any refugee wishing to rent land must present a guarantor (such as a tribal chief, husband, father, etc.). In the absence of such a guarantor, the refusal is categorical. Similarly, if the guarantor disappears, the contract becomes null and void. This practice aims to maintain social cohesion between the two communities and prevent conflicts. It could also be explained by the hierarchical structure of society, where village and tribal chiefs play a central role in regulating relationships and agreements. On the other hand, elderly refugees did not mention the need for a guarantor, but rather linked access to land to financial considerations.

Mental health is an indirect barrier because it affects the relationship of trust between the landowner and the tenant. Older men in the host community emphasised the importance of trust in establishing contracts. Although this relationship does not replace the presence of a guarantor, it plays an important role in accessing land. Furthermore, both host and refugee communities agree on the psychological burden of not having news of a husband, emphasising that this is one of the main obstacles to accessing land. Participants indicated that the uncertainty deeply affects the peace of mind of the women and can undermine their ability to seek land. For refugee women, this is a major psycho-social barrier, fuelled by trauma and anxiety. Host communities, for their part, note that this trauma can hinder the establishment of trusting relationships. A member of the humanitarian medical staff in the region shared this observation. However, on a positive note, refugee women appreciate the psychological support available in the camp, which they find helpful.

5.2.3 The exclusion of host women from land negotiations is subject to little questioning

This section is based on interviews conducted with women from host communities in Touloum, where poverty was perceived to be particularly acute. The discussions revealed tensions, with the village chief expressing frustration at the inaction of national and international NGOs towards the local community. Other points emerged during discussions in Abou-Tengué and are also referred to.

Women hosts who cultivate the land sometimes feel aggrieved by the system of land negotiation between hosts and refugees, a reality often downplayed by men. While men highlight challenges such as access to water or education, women complain of more direct inequalities, particularly in the distribution of compensation. When their land is occupied by the camp, they express a strong sense of injustice at the decisions made by the authorities and humanitarian actors. A striking example illustrates this frustration: one woman fought to obtain compensation, but her husband then confiscated it, nullifying her efforts. This type of situation reinforces the feeling of exclusion among host women in the management of resources and compensation.

This exclusion limits their ability to support refugee women who are part of their own family circle. Some women also indicated that they could not share their family land with Sudanese refugee relatives without husbands because their plots were too small. The number of dependent children, particularly those entrusted to them by relatives who remained in Sudan, exacerbates their difficulties in providing food for their households.

In Abou-Tengué, however, these grievances did not emerge from discussions with the host women, despite the significant scarcity of agricultural land. Nevertheless, several groups expressed some regret at the amount of space now occupied by refugee dwellings and the unexpected length of their stay. In the absence of clear information on the initial terms of a land agreement, it is difficult to assess whether the current grievances stem from a lack of consultation, a misunderstanding of the long-term implications, or retrospective reassessment of costs. However, these testimonies serve as a reminder that, according to local perceptions, a land agreement can be reversible, and that the lack of inclusive consultation – particularly with women – undermines the sustainability of cohabitation arrangements.

6. DISCUSSION

The government of Chad is demonstrating a growing commitment to strengthening the resilience and empowerment of refugees in the east of the country, notably through partnerships with humanitarian actors and land donation initiatives. However, the lack of clear and harmonised objectives regarding land access for refugee women – at the intersection of land, gender and climate adaptation issues – is hampering the impact of these efforts. Despite legislation guaranteeing inclusive access to land, this issue remains marginal in national refugee strategies and climate plans, limiting its reach in a context of mass displacement and growing budgetary pressures. This gap deprives partners of a coherent framework for action beyond emergency measures, and undermines the dynamics of local resilience. Although many refugee women do manage to gain access to land, this access often remains informal, precarious or dependent on local arrangements due to a lack of mechanisms designed to meet their specific needs. This insecurity limits their ability to invest in sustainable livelihoods, which, more broadly, weakens collective efforts towards long-term adaptation and resilience. Progress made, such as the development of the SNGCC, would benefit from explicitly addressing land and migration issues together, so that national ambitions for resilience do not leave behind refugee populations, many of whom have been building their future in these territories for more than fifteen years.

Very few refugees own agricultural land, and most of them have access to it through rental or sharecropping contracts lasting approximately one year and dependent on good inter-community relations (Touloum, Djabal). The amount of land allocated for five years by the Chad government and its partners also remains insufficient in relation to needs and involves complex negotiations that are not always successful. In some cases, there is simply no land available to refugees, either because the refugee camps have been established on the host community's agricultural land (Abou-Tengué) or because the rental price or distance to/from the available land is prohibitive (Abou-Tengué and Djabal).

The economic vulnerability of Sudanese refugee women, accentuated by gendered social norms, hinders their access to land – a challenge widely recognised by host and refugee communities, but rarely addressed by local authorities. The principal obstacles perceived by hosts and refugees are linked to the isolation of female heads of household and their family responsibilities, especially when land is far away: having many young children to care for, a disabled member of the household, and motherhood. The lack of news from husbands who have remained in Sudan is perceived as an additional constraint for newly arrived refugees. Conversely, youth and the support of close family, particularly adolescents, are perceived as key advantages.

When access to land becomes an economic or political issue – as in efforts to promote peaceful cohabitation – gender inequalities are amplified and yet often escape the attention of programmes. In Djabal, a male guarantor is required for a woman to obtain a rental contract for a plot of land from the hosts, which penalises the majority of refugee women, who are often single heads of households with dependent children. In Touloum, women have also expressed their frustration at being excluded by the men of the village from discussions and from compensation for land allocated for the construction of camps. These dynamics illustrate the risks for women associated with the commodification of land, who are sometimes excluded from land-related decisions, particularly when there are significant economic and political stakes (i.e. peaceful coexistence).

Confusion between access to, and use of, land is a source of tensions between communities, undermining peaceful coexistence and the programmes called 'villagisation'. Since the early 2000s, host communities have shown great generosity in welcoming refugees, but this coexistence is crumbling. The economic vulnerability of both communities leads to misunderstandings related to non-compliance with contracts or misaligned expectations between the two parties: provision of tools and seeds and recognition of rehabilitation efforts by refugees, sharing of harvests in sharecropping contracts. These misunderstandings give rise to resentments, with some refugees feeling that they have been deceived and that the terms of the agreements have not been respected.

Within host communities, anti-refugee rhetoric is emerging, fuelled by demographic pressure on resources (land, water, wood) and a feeling of being ignored by humanitarian aid initiatives. Some communities feel neglected, while others denounce their dependence on services set up in camps on their territory, over which they have no decision-making power or control. The massive influx of Sudanese refugees since 2023 has exacerbated these tensions, against a backdrop of infrastructure which is overloaded with competition for natural resources, particularly water. Some residents now associate the decline in groundwater levels with the prolonged presence of refugees. Others, faced with a lack of water when they turn on their pumps, question the quality of the facilities they have been provided with and are calling for new infrastructure. While we have been unable to verify the accuracy of these claims, they clearly reflect a growing sense of injustice and a mood of mistrust regarding past interventions. These tensions, often downplayed by the administrative authorities, are increasingly being highlighted by traditional authorities and humanitarian actors.

The land issue cannot be confined to a sectoral objective or certain types of projects: it is a cross-cutting issue that is central to all forms of support in these regions. Failure to address it amounts to neglecting the historical, economic and social realities that shape relationships and access to resources. Responding to growing needs – particularly for tools and seeds, which are in high demand among local populations – without this overall vision leads to well-documented consequences: distributions that are unsuited to agricultural calendars, increased dependency and disruption of local markets.[22]

The lessons of 2023 show that, without looking ahead, the Chad government and its partners risk being caught off guard again by the influx of refugees, especially given the decline in humanitarian funding. While they have developed pipelines of projects aimed at empowering refugees, it is essential to incorporate in-depth reflection based on both a historical review of past interventions and prioritisation of future areas of intervention. This study contributes to this reflection by showing that some areas are structurally dependent on humanitarian aid because refugees are prevented from accessing land: either directly, due to a total lack of available land, or indirectly, due to gender barriers and the prohibitive cost of land.

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22 See Wiggins et al. (2021): https://www.sparc-knowledge.org/sites/default/files/documents/resources/sparc-rapid-evidence-review-may-2021_livelihoods-and-markets-in-protracted-conflict_a-review-of-evidence-and-practice.pdf

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusion

This study, conducted in Djabal (Sila), Touloum (Wadi Fira) and Abou-Tengué (Ouaddaï), explores structural issues and local perceptions regarding access to land. Although the results obtained are not representative of the east of Chad as a whole, they bring evidence to bear on the influence of cross-cutting dynamics on those perceptions and the significant spatial heterogeneity of the economic, land and environmental challenges. In particular, gender and refugee status are not sufficient to explain who can or cannot access land. The recommendations this report makes are aimed at informing and supporting the coordination of national policy and sustainable support programmes for the benefit of host and refugee communities, particularly through access to land.

The study reveals that access to land in eastern Chad is marked by intense pressure on available land, dynamics of vulnerability and local economic transformations. In Touloum, sharecropping is the main means of accessing land in a context of intense pressure on land and of vulnerability, aggravating disagreements between host communities and refugees. In Djabal, inflation and the commodification of agricultural land make access to land more difficult, with renting as the main option. In Abou-Tengué, intense demographic pressure has created a situation where there is simply no land available, causing host communities to regret having accepted refugees on their agricultural land.

When land is available, Sudanese refugee women face obstacles to accessing it which relate to their economic vulnerability and to gender norms, whether access for rental or sharecropping. Single women, especially those with young children, are often seen as at the greatest disadvantage because of the challenges of managing a household and their social isolation. According to participants in this study, support of a family member or members, particularly adolescent children, can improve the women's chances of accessing land contracts – highlighting the heavy economic and domestic burden often borne by children. These cases of women are far from rare, occurring in the majority in the three camps studied.

Given the ongoing instability in Sudan and the likelihood of further refugee arrivals, humanitarian needs in eastern Chad will continue to increase, making better structured support for refugees and host communities essential. However, in a context of continuing decline in humanitarian funding, it is unrealistic to expect a substantial increase in resources. This means that both the Chad government and its partners need to review priorities and better target existing funding towards more sustainable and focused approaches. Although increased support for refugees' access to land remains necessary, the next five years call above all for a more strategic use of available resources, favouring low-cost interventions with a high impact on economic empowerment and social cohesion.

7.2 Recommendations

1. **Strengthen the integration of host and refugee communities into Chad's national climate strategies:** make access to land a priority for resilience and sustainable integration; include consideration of the sharing of compensation and its implications for land transactions involving refugees.

2. **Better integrate gender and land tenure issues into policies supporting communities in the east of the country:** take into account forms of exclusion linked to household composition (children, disability, widowhood) and the specific constraints faced by single women; raise awareness among local authorities; remove legal obstacles with measures adapted to gender realities (e.g. male guarantors).

3. **In the case of development actors and the government, support access to seeds and agricultural tools in refugee and host communities, while being sensitive to gender and the local socio-economic context:** assess the impacts of past distributions on resilience and inter-community tensions; support local supply and storage systems; strengthen delivery systems through public–private partnerships and better regional coordination (CEMAC, IGAD) to limit disruptions.

4. **As regards humanitarian actors involved in initiatives to donate land that has been reclaimed (e.g. Haguina), prioritise areas where land scarcity is structural**, particularly areas where refugee camps are set up on host communities' fields (lack of land) and in peri-urban areas heavily impacted by the commodification of land (prohibitive cost of access to land).

5. **In the case of the Chad government and its humanitarian partners, carry out a joint assessment of the state of roads and of the systems of water access in and around camps, including host communities:** RésiTchad has enabled some improvements, but not all camps are covered. This assessment would help to identify disparities in access, broaden the coverage of interventions, integrate local needs into national planning and limit tensions over access to resources.

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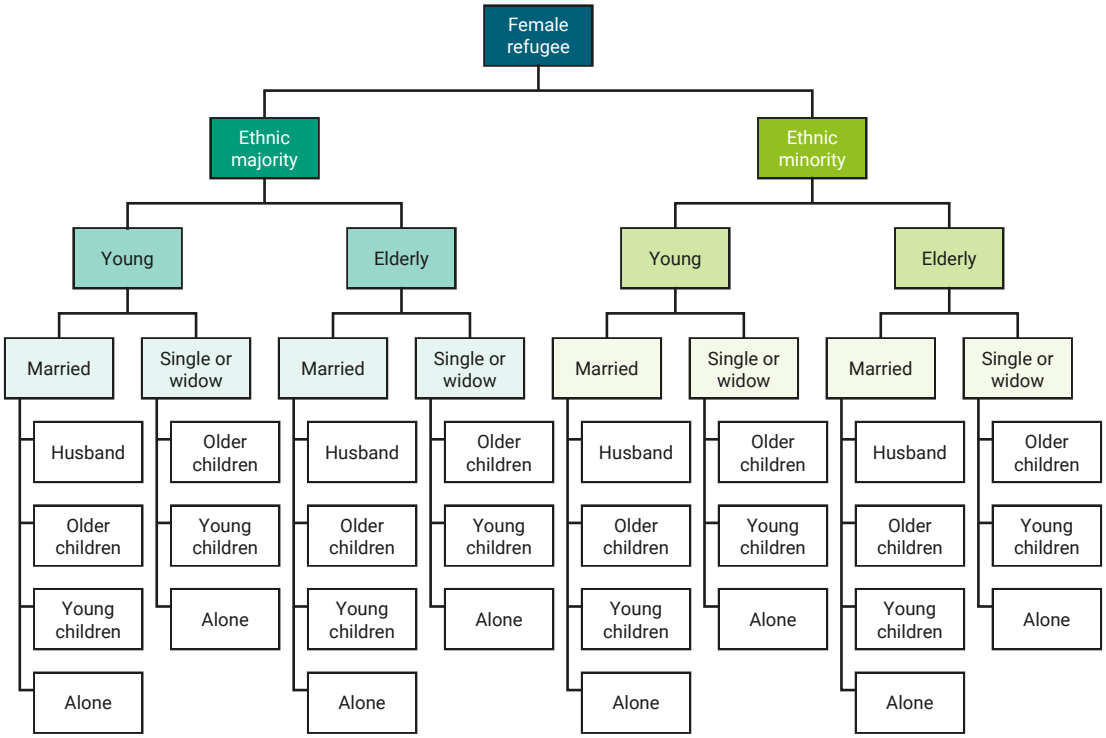
APPENDIX A. METHOD OF SELECTION OF THE VIGNETTES

The interviews and literature review enabled us to develop a tree of possibilities, illustrating 28 situations that refugee women may find themselves in when seeking land (see Figure A1).[23] Of the 28 possible cases, nine were selected to maximise the diversity of factors analysed while minimising constraints in the field (e.g. fatigue of participants and teams).

FIGURE A1. POSSIBLE VIGNETTES



Source: the authors

To ensure that the selection is representative, a Z-test was applied to verify that no characteristic is over- or under-represented in the sample (see Table A1). The results of the Z-test show that there is no statistically significant difference between the profiles of the selected vignettes and those of the available set (p-values all greater than 0.05).

23 Certain aspects, such as specific obstacles to host communities and issues related to disability, were not explored in depth. Single men, who are less involved in land access, were not a priority.

TABLE A1. DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE VIGNETTES

	Selected vignettes		Total vignettes		Disparity in percentage points	Test Z	
Characteristic	Frequency	Proportion	Frequency	Proportion		Score Z	p-value
Ethnic majority	3	33.3%	14	50.0%	16.7	-1.00	0.32
Ethnic minority	6	66.7%	14	50.0%	-16.7	1.00	0.32
Young	4	44.4%	14	50.0%	5.6	-0.33	0.74
Elderly	5	55.6%	14	50.0%	-5.6	0.33	0.74
Married	4	44.4%	16	57.1%	12.7	-0.77	0.44
Single or widow	5	55.6%	12	42.9%	-12.7	0.77	0.44
Husband	1	11.1%	4	14.3%	3.2	-0.27	0.79
Young children	3	33.3%	8	28.6%	-4.8	0.32	0.75
Older children	3	33.3%	8	28.6%	-4.8	0.32	0.75
Alone	2	22.2%	8	28.6%	6.3	-0.42	0.67

Source: the authors

APPENDIX B. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RANKINGS

Model

During each focus group discussion, participants were asked to rank the three vignettes presented in order of 'difficulty of access to land'. The results of this ranking are used in a statistical model, where the independent variables correspond with the characteristics of the refugee women depicted in the vignettes. This model makes it possible to test which responses are significantly more frequent among participants, indicating a consensus. It also identifies the characteristics of participants that influence their perceptions. The number of observations may fall to 36 in some cases, limiting the statistical significance of the results. It is therefore important to view these results as trends in perceptions.

An ordered logistic model (OLM) is used due to the ordered nature of the dependent variable (i.e., a ranking from 1 to 3) and the non-parametric distribution of the observations. The model equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Logit(P(Y \leq j \mid X)) = \alpha_j + \beta_1 Ethnie_i + \beta_2 Age_i + \beta_3 Mariage_i + \beta_4 Accompagnant_i \, , j=\{1,2,3\}$$

where i is the focus group indicator, Y is the ordinal variable representing the participants' ranking, $(P(Y \leq j \mid X)$ is the cumulative probability that the ranking will be less than or equal to j (the higher j is, the more participants believe that refugee women will encounter difficulties in accessing land) α_j represents the thresholds specific to each rank category, and β are the coefficients associated with the explanatory variables – and where 'Ethnie' refers to Ethnic group, 'Mariage' is Marriage and 'Accompagnant' refers to the existence of a person(s) accompanying the refugee. Interactions between variables are also included to assess how the characteristics of the focus groups influence their ranking.

Tables of findings

The results of the rankings are presented in Tables B2, B3, B5 and B6. Table B4 presents the results of the model with interaction in Touloum, the only area where a significant influence of group characteristics was found (the tables for Djabal and Abou-Tengué are available on request from the authors). The coefficients, expressed as log-odds, indicate the extent to which participants tend to perceive a characteristic as a disadvantage in terms of access to land. The higher the coefficient, the stronger this perception. These coefficients should be interpreted in relation to a reference case (e.g., a female refugee, from an ethnic minority, elderly, widowed and arriving alone). They measure how the perception of the reference case would have changed if another characteristic had been present. To facilitate interpretation of the results, Table B1 provides instructions on how to read each table.

TABLE B1. INSTRUCTIONS FOR READING THE TABLES OF FINDINGS

Table	Zone	Reference case	Comparison	Interpretation
B2	Average of the three areas	Female refugee of an ethnic minority, elderly, widowed and arriving alone	All possible cases	The characteristics which would reduce the likelihood of the reference case obtaining access to land
B3	Touloum	Female refugee, young, single, accompanied by young children, of an ethnic majority	A female refugee with the following characteristics: ▪ Married ▪ Accompanied by her husband ▪ Arrived alone ▪ Ethnic minority	The characteristics which would reduce the likelihood of a married female refugee obtaining access to land
B4	Touloum	The participant is as follows: A. A host B. A man C. Elderly	The participant is as follows: A. A refugee B. A woman C. Young	Influence of the characteristics of the participants on the responses
B5	Djabal	Female refugee, married, elderly, accompanied by older children, of an ethnic majority	A refugee woman, married with the following characteristics: ▪ Young ▪ Accompanied by young children ▪ Ethnic majority	The characteristics which would reduce the likelihood of a married refugee woman obtaining access to land
B6	Abou-Tengué	Female refugee, elderly, and widowed, accompanied by older children, of an ethnic majority	Female refugee, elderly and widowed with the following characteristics: ▪ Arrived alone ▪ Ethnic minority	The characteristics which would reduce the likelihood of a refugee woman who is old and widowed obtaining access to land

Source: the authors

TABLE B2. FINDINGS OF THE MODEL FOR ALL THE AREAS OF STUDY

Variable	Total	Refugees	Hosts	Women	Men	Elderly	Young	Female refugees
Ethnic								
Minority (Ref.)								
Majority	**1.524***	1.169	**2.518***	**1.965***	1.06	1.177	**2.228***	0.577
	(-0.645)	(-0.929)	(-1.078)	(-0.853)	(-1.077)	(-0.902)	(-0.983)	(-1.129)
Age								
Elderly (Ref.)								
Young	**-1.941****	**-1.894***	**-2.613***	**-2.509****	-1.326	**-1.799***	**-2.468***	-1.961†
	(-0.649)	(-0.889)	(-1.131)	(-0.913)	(-1.043)	(-0.894)	(-1.019)	(-1.087)
Marital status								
Single (Ref.)								
Married	-0.404	**-2.000***	1.039	-0.226	-0.725	-0.057	-0.759	**-2.371***
	(-0.594)	(-0.932)	(-0.904)	(-0.745)	(-1.023)	(-0.864)	(-0.841)	(-1.153)
Accompanying person(s)								
Alone (Ref.)								
Young children	-0.786	1.753	**-3.868***	-2.069†	1.109	-0.623	-1.232	2.063
	(-0.891)	(-1.328)	(-1.551)	(-1.207)	(-1.485)	(-1.263)	(-1.328)	(-1.644)
Older children	**-3.337*****	-1.417	**-6.447*****	**-4.884*****	-1.34	**-2.921***	**-4.220****	-0.885
	(-0.886)	(-1.127)	(-1.803)	(-1.335)	(-1.328)	(-1.209)	(-1.42)	(-1.395)
Husbands	-0.708	0.632	-2.479†	-1.509	0.552	0.22	-2.418	1.973
	(-0.938)	(-1.401)	(-1.42)	(-1.184)	(-1.617)	(-1.293)	(-1.563)	(-1.669)
Low vs Medium	**-3.103*****	**-2.749****	**-4.627*****	**-4.218*****	-1.762†	**-2.493****	**-4.227*****	**-2.559***
	(-0.651)	(-0.843)	(-1.303)	(-1.007)	(-0.952)	(-0.841)	(-1.131)	(-1.017)
Medium vs High	**-1.286***	-0.582	**-2.669***	**-2.393****	0.218	-0.778	**-2.003***	-0.811
	(-0.59)	(-0.728)	(-1.19)	(-0.918)	(-0.888)	(-0.777)	(-0.972)	(-0.919)
N	108	54	54	72	36	54	54	36

Notes: Ref. indicates the reference category for each variable (i.e. the point of comparison). Significance levels are indicated by: *** p < 0.001 (very significant), ** p < 0.01 (highly significant), * p < 0.05 (significant), † p < 0.10 (marginally significant). Coefficients are expressed as log-odds. Standard deviations are shown in brackets. N refers to the number of observations. A positive 'Low vs. Medium' (or 'Medium vs. High') coefficient means that the reference case is more likely to be perceived as facing medium rather than low difficulties (or high rather than average). Conversely, a negative coefficient indicates that the reference case is less likely to be perceived as such. The higher the coefficient, the more pronounced this trend.

Source: compiled by the authors.

TABLE B3. FINDINGS FROM TOULOUM

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Accompanying person(s)			
Young children (Ref.)			
Husbands	-1.218		
	(0.804)		
Single	-0.098		
	(0.765)		
Marital status			
Single (Ref.)			
Married		-1.162†	
		(0.678)	
Ethnic group			
Majority (Ref.)			
Minority			-0.610
			(0.682)
Low vs Medium	-1.187†	**-1.131***	-1.138†
	(0.625)	(0.449)	(0.616)
Medium vs High	0.301	0.356	0.274
	(0.590)	(0.405)	(0.586)
N	36	36	36

Notes: Ref. indicates the reference category for each variable (i.e. the point of comparison). Significance levels are indicated by: *** p < 0.001 (very significant), ** p < 0.01 (highly significant), * p < 0.05 (significant), † p < 0.10 (marginally significant). Coefficients are expressed as log-odds. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. N refers to the number of observations. A positive 'Low vs. Medium' (or 'Medium vs High') positive coefficient means that the reference case is more likely to be perceived as facing medium rather than low (or high rather than medium) difficulties. Conversely, a negative coefficient indicates that the reference case is less likely to be perceived in this way. The higher the coefficient, the more pronounced this trend.

Source: compiled by the authors.

TABLE B4. EFFECTS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TOULOUM DISCUSSION GROUPS ON THEIR RESPONSES

	Community of participants			Gender of participants			Age of participants		
Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Characteristic									
Hosts (Ref.)									
A= being a refugee	**3.106***	**3.225***	0.343						
	(1.389)	(1.406)	(0.764)						
Men (Ref.)									
B = being a woman				**-1.566**	**-1.617**	**0.161**			
				(1.369)	(1.378)	(0.799)			
Elderly (Ref.)									
C = being young							-0.762	-0.805	-0.716
							(1.162)	(1.180)	(0.780)
Ethnic group (vignette)									
Majority (Ref.)									
Minority	1.238			-2.080			-1.143		
	(0.966)			(1.351)			(0.944)		
Accompanying person(s) (vignette)									
Young children (Ref.)									
Husbands		0.478			-2.259			**-3.056***	
		(1.081)			(1.554)			(1.382)	
Single		2.340†			-2.076			-0.160	
		(1.218)			(1.458)			(1.037)	
Marital status (vignette)									
Single (Ref.)									
Married			-0.557			-0.903			**-2.965***
			(0.909)			(1.168)			(1.253)
Characteristic (A, B or C) x Minority ethnic group	**-4.254****			2.080			1.143		
	(1.620)			(1.577)			(1.378)		
Characteristic (A, B or C) x Husbands		**-4.307***			1.385			3.055†	
		(1.839)			(1.810)			(1.778)	
Characteristic (A, B or C) x Single		**-5.016****			2.950†			0.160	
		(1.848)			(1.759)			(1.563)	
Characteristic (A, B or C) x Married			-1.344			-0.387			2.965†
			(1.364)			(1.416)			(1.540)
Low vs Medium	-0.019	-0.058	-0.967	-2.300†	-2.415†	-1.027	-1.479†	-1.612†	**-1.522***
	(0.786)	(0.794)	(0.598)	(1.227)	(1.242)	(0.686)	(0.812)	(0.835)	(0.597)
Medium vs High	**1.667***	**1.793***	0.549	-0.833	-0.819	0.462	-0.045	0.000	0.089
	(0.846)	(0.872)	(0.579)	(1.182)	(1.186)	(0.665)	(0.773)	(0.782)	(0.527)
N	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36

Notes: Ref. indicates the reference category for each variable (i.e. the point of comparison). Significance levels are indicated by: *** p < 0.001 (very significant), ** p < 0.01 (highly significant), * p < 0.05 (significant), † p < 0.10 (marginally significant). Coefficients are expressed as log-odds. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. N refers to the number of observations. A positive 'Low vs. Medium' (or 'Medium vs High') positive coefficient means that the reference case is more likely to be perceived as facing medium rather than low (or high rather than medium) difficulties. Conversely, a negative coefficient indicates that the reference case is less likely to be perceived in this way. The higher the coefficient, the more pronounced this trend.

Source: compiled by the authors.

TABLE B5. FINDINGS FROM DJABAL

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Age			
Elderly (Ref.)			
Young	1.099		
	(0.679)		
Accompanying person(s)			
Older children (Ref.)			
Young children		**3.687*** **	
		(0.983)	
Ethnic group			
Majority (Ref.)			
Minority			1.099
			(0.679)
Low vs Medium	-0.511	1.131†	**-1.609****
	(0.409)	(0.662)	(0.623)
Medium vs High	**1.099***	**3.712*** **	0.000
	(0.446)	(0.963)	(0.557)
N	36	36	36
	(0.590)	(0.405)	(0.586)
N	36	36	36

Notes: Ref. indicates the reference category for each variable (i.e., the point of comparison). Significance levels are indicated by: *** p < 0.001 (very significant), ** p < 0.01 (highly significant), * p < 0.05 (significant), † p < 0.10 (marginally significant). Coefficients are expressed as log-odds. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses. N refers to the number of observations. A positive 'Low vs. Medium' (or 'Medium vs High') positive coefficient means that the reference case is more likely to be perceived as facing medium rather than low (or high rather than medium) difficulties. Conversely, a negative coefficient indicates that the reference case is less likely to be perceived in this way. The higher the coefficient, the more pronounced this trend.

Source: compiled by the authors.

TABLE B6. FINDINGS FROM ABOU-TENGUE

Variable	(1)	(2)
Ethnic group		
Majority (Ref.)		
Minority	0.131	
	(0.626)	
Accompanying person(s)		
Older children (Ref.)		
Single		**1.910***
		(0.785)
Low vs Medium	**-1.180***	-0.845†
	(0.529)	(0.433)
Medium vs High	0.297	0.845†
	(0.488)	(0.433)
N	36	36

Notes: Ref. indicates the reference category for each variable (i.e. the point of comparison). Significance levels are indicated by: *** p < 0.001 (very significant), ** p < 0.01 (highly significant), * p < 0.05 (significant), † p < 0.10 (marginally significant). Coefficients are expressed as log-odds. Standard deviations are shown in brackets. N refers to the number of observations. A positive 'Low vs. Medium' (or 'Medium vs. High') coefficient means that the reference case is more likely to be perceived as facing medium rather than low difficulties (or high rather than moderate). Conversely, a negative coefficient indicates that the reference case is less likely to be perceived as such. The higher the coefficient, the more pronounced this trend.

Source: compiled by the authors.

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Cover: Discussion group with young and adult women from one of the host villages close to the refugee camps of Djabal, Chad.
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