



KEY FIGURES

+374,000
AFFECTED PEOPLE

+285,000
IDPS IN DJIBO TOWN

32
WATER SUPPLY
FACILITIES DESTROYED

+35
CIVILIANS KILLED
SINCE JUNE

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- Since 17 February 2022, armed groups affiliated with the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) have surrounded Djibo town in Soum province, located at the border with Mali. The groups have been controlling the access routes to the city, preventing the entry and exit of people and goods (RFI 19/02/2022; Libération 26/07/2022). The population of Djibo (over 89,000 community members and at least 285,000 IDPs) depends on the few escorted supply convoys to access food and other essential items (OCHA 24/06/2019). These convoys often fall under the attacks of armed groups, who have systematically planted improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along strategic roads. These IEDs have killed civilians and prevented movements (DW 27/09/2022).
- More than eight months after the armed groups surrounded the town, thousands of people have become food-insecure. Food and medicine shortages are reported. Staple food prices have also increased considerably because of speculation on the few items still available (FEWS NET 02/09/2022; L'Obs Paalga 16/04/2022).
- Access to water has become particularly difficult since armed groups have sabotaged many facilities. The destruction of telephone installations hampers communications. The JNIM has also destroyed infrastructure, such as bridges, to further isolate Djibo from the rest of the country (Solidarités International 04/05/2022; Sahelien.com 23/03/2022).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

Armed groups have been preventing movements and the entry of supplies into the city for many months. Media sources report that the situation has amounted to a 'siege', the longest and most severe since Islamist armed groups emerged in Burkina Faso in 2015 (Libération 26/07/2022). The presence of armed groups in the area is not weakening despite military interventions by the Forces de Défense et de Sécurité (FDS), the country's armed forces and police, around the city. People in Djibo will probably remain deprived of essential goods for several months. Since this blockade is not the first time that armed groups

have surrounded Djibo, such episodes will likely happen again in the future (RFI 19/02/2022; Franceinfo 12/08/2020; Sahelien.com 15/09/2021).

The number of food-insecure people is likely to increase given food shortages, movement restrictions, and insecurity preventing aid delivery by road by many humanitarian organisations (FEWS NET 02/09/2022).

The Djibo health district (including health facilities of other towns in Soum province) hosted 49 health facilities in 2020. Most of them are already functioning at a minimum. They will probably no longer be able to treat patients given the shortage of medicine and medical equipment and lack of medical personnel, some of whom have fled because of the violence (Health Cluster 25/08/2022; DGESS 04/2021; Lefaso.net 07/06/2022; L'Obs Paalga 16/04/2022).

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS CONSTRAINTS

Humanitarian access has been almost impossible since the beginning of the blockade. Some humanitarian organisations are ready to provide assistance, but insecurity prevents them from accessing the town. Most of the time, armed groups deny these organisations access. The presence of IEDs on Djibo road and the multiple attacks on supply convoys also prevent aid delivery. Humanitarian flights connecting Djibo to Ouagadougou are irregular and often suspended for weeks because of insecurity. The 27 September attack on the supply convoy in Gaskindé (about 20km from Djibo) resulted in a lack of goods closing the local market. As a result, the FDS and humanitarian organisations supplied food and medicine to Djibo by air from 4–6 October (OCHA accessed 17/10/2022; Le Monde 07/09/2022; MSF 27/06/2022; RFI 05/10/2022 and 27/09/2022; OCHA 10/10/2022).

Armed groups suspecting them of collaborating with the authorities have physically attacked some humanitarian workers. State authorities have still not accepted the request of certain humanitarian organisations to set up convoys without the escort of soldiers. This setup likely decreases humanitarian access as armed groups attack all convoys (carrying goods for trade and humanitarian aid) with an FDS escort (OCHA accessed 17/10/2022; Libération 26/07/2022).

LIMITATIONS

Access constraints prevent any recent or regular needs assessment for Djibo. As a result, it is difficult to capture with accuracy the current humanitarian conditions and any updates on the situation in the town.

CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Djibo is located in Soum province (Sahel region of Burkina Faso), in the triborder area also known as Liptako-Gourma straddling Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. This area has become the epicentre of violence in central Sahel since 2019 (UN 19/11/2019). The JNIM, affiliated with Al-Qaeda, whose modus operandi is kidnapping civilians, attacking state symbols, and planting IEDs, is one of the most active armed groups in Sahel region. The JNIM brings together several armed groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda operating mainly in Mali and has been present in Soum since 2017 (Global Initiative 03/08/2022; RULAC accessed 17/10/2022). The JNIM instrumentalises ethnic tensions in Soum province to establish its presence in Sahel region. To avoid any counterspeech, the group has killed and threatened the customary and religious authorities playing the role of peacemaker between ethnic communities. A part of the population who feel aggrieved by ethnic rivalries in Soum province adhere to the discourse of the armed groups (Burkina 24 23/05/2020; France 24 15/08/2020).

Since 2020, attacks by armed groups in Djibo have been attributed to the JNIM (ACLEDA accessed 04/10/2022). In early 2022, the activity of the JNIM intensified following a major operation in Soum province by the military, who had just come to power after a coup in January 2022. The operation aimed to limit trade between Djibo and certain secondary towns, which are areas of entrenchment of armed groups. It also aimed to block food delivery to smaller localities to prevent the risk of supplying armed groups. In retaliation, the JNIM forced the inhabitants of the villages around Djibo to flee and gather in the town and then surrounded them (Libération 26/07/2022). The control of movement and supplies allows the JNIM to negotiate from a position of power over local authorities and obtain the possibility of moving more freely within the region. Armed groups also strategically surround towns to force people to submit to JNIM-imposed rules and end any collaboration or contact between the population and national authorities (Solidarités International 15/04/2022; Sahelien.com 23/03/2022; ACSS 26/09/2022; Africanews 30/05/2022).

Armed groups have surrounded Djibo since 2020, making the entry of supply into the town almost impossible. Following negotiations between armed groups and the country's authorities, the former has lifted their control over movement and supplies in the town, although the details of the said agreement remain unrevealed (Sahelien.com 15/09/2021;

TV5MONDE 14/02/2021). The JNIM perceives the military operations of early 2022 as a breach of the non-aggression agreement between the FDS and the armed group (Burkina 24 23/05/2020; RFI 22/08/2020; Lefaso.net 15/05/2020).

PRIORITY NEEDS

Food and livelihoods

The multiplication of JNIM attacks against supply convoys and road infrastructure has considerably reduced the entry of supplies into Djibo. The population highly depends on the rare supply convoys escorted by the FDS. Staple food prices in Djibo, which is increasingly isolated from the capital Ouagadougou, have more than doubled compared to the five-year average. Shortages of millet, oil, sugar, and sorghum have been reported since armed groups surrounded the town. In August 2022, the price of maize, one of the most locally consumed cereals, increased by 150% in Djibo compared to the same period in 2021 (FEWS NET 02/09/2022; Le Monde 07/09/2022; Food Security Cluster 19/08/2022 and 19/03/2022).

Local food production has considerably dropped given the water deficit and abandonment of agricultural and pastoral activities. Many herders have sold their cattle at low prices after the surrounding of the town reduced grazing space and water supply. As a result, dependence on supply convoys is growing. More than 97,000 people among both host and IDP communities are expected to have faced Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food insecurity in June–August in Soum province. As at 3 October, at least eight children had died of hunger in Djibo (Solidarités International 20/05/2022 and 15/04/2022; FEWS NET 02/09/2022; Food Security Cluster 19/08/2022 and 19/03/2022; IPC 15/05/2022; AA 04/10/2022; France 24 07/10/2022).

WASH

As at 4 May 2022, armed groups had destroyed at least 32 water points across the country since the start of the year. Most of the destruction took place in Djibo, where people currently have access to less than 3L of water a day to cover all their needs (7L per capita per day is the minimum 'survival' allocation according to international standards) (UN 28/07/2010). Armed groups have also destroyed the water points NGOs installed to cope with the influx of displaced people into the city (Solidarités International 04/05/2022; DW 24/05/2022; Libération 26/07/2022). The destruction of WASH facilities between January–March has affected around 233,000 people in the town (UNICEF 22/03/2022).

Armed men often threaten and intimidate people (mostly women) on their way to water points by firing warning shots, causing injuries or death in some cases. To further reduce access to water, armed groups dump fuel or animal carcasses into water points, making the water inappropriate for consumption. They also often target the electricity network that supplies certain water points, causing interruptions or malfunctions in the water service (OCHA accessed 17/10/2022; Sahelien.com 23/03/2022; Solidarités International 04/05/2022).

Health

Djibo is one of the towns where access to healthcare is the most limited in Burkina Faso. In the Djibo health district, which covers Djibo and several other neighbouring towns, insecurity has closed several health facilities and deprived more than 448,000 people of access to care. Health facilities that are still active operate at a minimum capacity and are overwhelmed by the number of patients. Essential generic drugs are no longer available while the supply of health facilities is disrupted (Health Cluster 25/08/2022; Insecurity Insight/Safeguarding Health in Conflict 11/07/2022; OCHA 13/02/2022; MSF 27/06/2022; L'Obs Paalga 16/04/2022).

Dozens of health workers have left their posts because of attacks and intimidation by armed groups, further reducing the availability and quality of healthcare. People without access to healthcare in Djibo cannot go to referral health centres outside the town for specialised healthcare because of the JNIM blockade (Insecurity Insight/Safeguarding Health in Conflict 11/07/2022; MFPTSS 03/08/2022; Lefaso.net 07/06/2022; L'Obs Paalga 16/04/2022).

Shelter

The influx of IDPs – who amount to at least five times the number of community members – because of insecurity has considerably increased shelter needs in the town. Some IDPs live with host families, further stretching the latter's already limited resources. Others live in makeshift shelters (OCHA 13/02/2022; Le Monde 07/09/2022).

Many displaced people have joined convoys escorted by the FDS to leave Djibo and go to the capital Ouagadougou because of insecurity and the limited availability of emergency shelters for the elevated number of IDPs. Humanitarian organisations have been unable to provide adequate shelter assistance because of access constraints (Infowakat 11/04/2022).

Protection

Armed groups, who also loot and burn property, kill or regularly abduct civilians. Around 50 civilians are reported missing following an attack on a military-escorted supply convoy on 27 September (France 24 28/09/2022; Africanews 30/05/2022). The JNIM forces people to leave peripheral districts and gather in the centre of Djibo, where they can more easily control the population's movement. The group either kills or mutilates those who refuse (RFI 19/02/2022).

On the roads linking Djibo to other main cities in the country, civilians are exposed to attacks by armed groups against public transport and convoys escorted by the FDS. IEDs planted on the roads leading to Djibo have killed at least 35 civilians since the start of the year (France 24 28/09/2022; AP 06/09/2022).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Destruction of critical infrastructure

Armed groups have destroyed water points and tank trucks and damaged generators servicing public water networks (Sahelien.com 23/03/2022; Burkina 24 17/03/2022; Solidarités International 04/05/2022). They have also sabotaged telephone installations to prevent people from making or receiving calls, isolating them from the rest of the country, and limit the coordination of humanitarian activities (Minute.bf 16/07/2022; Sahelien.com 23/03/2022).

Armed groups are destroying road infrastructure to further isolate Djibo from the rest of the country. They destroyed the Wousse bridge on the Koungoussi Djibo route on 15 July, forcing a supply convoy to turn around (VOA 19/07/2022; Africanews 22/07/2022).

Displacement

The population of Djibo has increased from 60,000 in 2019 to more than 350,000 in 2022 given an influx of IDPs fleeing violence in other localities in Soum province. The JNIM has forced the population of the outlying districts of Djibo to flee towards Djibo, considerably increasing the need for emergency aid while humanitarian access remains very limited (RFI 19/02/2022; Burkina 24 17/03/2022).

Political instability

A military coup overthrew the former democratically elected president of Burkina Faso in January 2022. Another group of militaries from the FDS, who blamed the ruling military for their handling of the security situation, has since overthrown the latter on 30 September. The JNIM is not weakening and is maintaining pressure on the population and controlling certain areas (France 24 24/01/2022; BBC 01/10/2022; Reuters 01/10/2022).

INFORMATION GAPS

Information on shelter needs lacks precision. Although most of the displaced people are known to live in makeshift camps, there are relatively few sources describing their living conditions.

Data on WASH infrastructure destroyed or damaged by armed groups is scattered. Few sources describe their state and the coping strategies of the population to access water.

Although an estimate of the number of food-insecure people in Soum is known, figures for the town of Djibo are unavailable.

The count of killed or abducted people remains imprecise at this stage because of the dispersion of attacks attributed to the JNIM.