



Protection Alert: A Forgotten Crisis in Chad's Lac Province

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The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is issuing this Protection Alert to draw attention to a forgotten crisis in western Chad, primarily in the Lac province, a border region characterized by high socio-economic vulnerability and water surfaces that limit access to arable land; where armed attacks, the effects of climate change, limited access to essential services, and forced displacement are heightening protection risks for local communities.

Since January 2025, there has been a resurgence of human rights violations in the Lac Province. The annual rise in lake water levels, typically observed around October, facilitates the movements of armed groups towards island areas and villages, leading to sporadic incursions into residential areas and livelihood zones (fishing, agriculture, livestock). The rising waters have already displaced around twenty villages (approximately 2,520 people) in the Fouli department and the Ngouboua area and are also hindering access to island villages to provide assistance and protection.

The gradual drying up of Lake Chad also poses a major threat: declining water levels, silting, and the retreat of islands are undermining community livelihoods, including agriculture, horticulture, fishing, trade, and livestock. Frequent flooding adds additional pressure on already vulnerable communities.

In the first quarter of 2025, 356 protection incidents have already been recorded, including physical assaults, killings, abductions (including of children), looting, theft, property destruction, and gender-based violence. The majority of attacks occur in fields and fishing areas: 56% during agricultural activities, 21% during fishing, 12% during incursions into villages or displacement sites. Due to the gendered division of labour in these communities, women and girls are particularly exposed to increased risks of violence and exploitation. Already in October 2024, more than 30,000 people (48% of whom were women and girls) were forced to flee violence perpetrated by armed groups in Hadjer-Lamis province. These individuals are now living in extreme precariousness, without humanitarian assistance, and exposed to increased protection risks.

Displacement is also fuelling intercommunal tensions, particularly between displaced persons and host communities due to scarce resources. Between January and June 2025, seven communal conflicts, including two intercommunal and five related to land disputes, resulted in six deaths and 41 people injured. Similar tensions are increasingly observed between lakeside communities, particularly in the departments of Fouli, Kaya, and Mamdi, due to disputes over newly arable or resource-rich lands suitable for agriculture, fishing, and livestock rearing.

This violence against civilians has direct consequences on the safety of individuals and the continuity of their livelihoods; the deterioration of living conditions and well-being; an increased reliance on negative

coping mechanisms; heightened food insecurity and impacts on physical and mental health and limited access to essential services.

Protection actors continue to support survivors, providing referrals for medical, safety, psychosocial, or legal support. Efforts are also underway to strengthen early warning mechanisms to help prevent and report armed group incursions.

However, these actions are taking place in a context of limited humanitarian capacity. The emergency in eastern Chad, linked to the Sudan crisis (with Chad hosting 40% of all Sudanese refugees), is drawing most of the attention and available resources. At the beginning of 2025, protection activities also slowed down due to a lack of funding and the suspension of some protection services. This imbalance is contributing to the situation in the Lac Province becoming a forgotten crisis.

The Lac Province is home to over 220,000 displaced persons and 41,000 returnees. Chad, ranked among the poorest countries in the world with 42% of the population living below the poverty line, is also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change¹. In 2024, 1.9 million people were affected by unprecedented flooding, resulting in the destruction or damage of 217,000 homes. Without an adequate response, the situation could lead to ongoing violations on the dignity of vulnerable people an intensification of intercommunal tensions, and an increase in forced displacement.

The GPC urges all relevant stakeholders to act swiftly to ensure a protection-centred response that prioritizes the safety, rights, and dignity of affected populations. Priority actions include:

- Increasing visibility and attention to the crisis in Lac Province.
- Advocating for dedicated resources to restore and sustain essential protection services.
- Advocating for unimpeded humanitarian access to all affected areas, enabling communities to receive timely assistance and ensuring humanitarian actors can operate safely and reach those most in need.

For more information on the protection situation in Chad, please contact:

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¹ <https://gain.nd.edu/our-work/country-index/>