

## When the land issue undermines the humanitarian social cohesion actions in the Guemon and Cavally regions in Côte d'Ivoire

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### Abstract

Country whose economy is based on agriculture, Ivory Coast faces intercultural relations deterioration since more than two decades. They deteriorated especially since the post-electoral crisis caused interethnic conflicts, including in Guemon and Cavally areas where the confrontations were more violent and murderous. The need for attenuating the tensions led to the implication of several actors - including humanitarians - in social cohesion actions. But, after five years of activities, the results are mixed because one another's wills seem upset by the protagonists' sensitivity about the land question.

**Keywords:** property, land, migrant, autochthon, humanitarian, social cohesion

### 1. Introduction

The development of the plantation economy took place in Côte d'Ivoire with large migratory movements. It was a migration initially favoured by the indigenous peoples' need for manpower and land rent while the migrants were given the opportunity to acquire the land by purchase. Everybody was getting something out of it until the contracts of transfer were challenged by some natives from the 1990s (Vidjannangni, 2011; McCallin and Montemurro, 2009) [14, 9]. With these calls into question, tensions arise between the communities and the Ivorian rural landscape is marked by the degradation of intercommunity relations. The tensions are all the more vivid as they are fueled by politics in the context of the multiparty system which occurred in the early 1990s. In the countryside, the relationships between land interests and political crises are no longer to be demonstrated as several studies echoed it (Babo and Yvan, 2006; Vidjannangni, op cit; Chauveau, 2013) [1, 2]. In the west of Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in the agricultural regions of Guémon and Cavally, clashes between the Guéré indigenous communities and the migrant communities (Burkinabè, Malinké, Baoulé, etc.) have become recurrent since the 2002 armed rebellion. It is the most unstable area of the country (International Crisis Group, 2014) [4]. Several attempts to resolve tensions remained unsuccessful until in 2010, these two regions plunged into a great crisis that still marks the spirits, due to the numerous damage and victims recorded (Oura, 2015) [13]. And despite the mobilization of various stakeholders, including the humanitarians, to establish social cohesion in the area, the return to peace between the populations does not yet seem to have been achieved. But why are there so many tensions in these regions?

The report of the International Crisis Group N° 212 of

January 28, 2014 revealed that "The backbone of instability and intercommunity tensions in the region is land". The land issue is one of the main reasons for tensions and violence that have characterized the area since 2002 (OFPRA, 2013) [11]. And in this process of moving towards social cohesion, this issue is constantly being debated as one of the limiting factors for a return to normality. Consequently, the efforts of reconciliation and social cohesion undertaken by the NGOs and humanitarian organizations remain without major effects in the departments of Duékoué and Guiglo. How does the land issue impede humanitarian actions in the field of social cohesion in the area? The answer to this concern leads us to answer the following subsidiary questions:

- What relationships have prevailed between the migrants and the native communities around the land from the 1990s to the 2010 post-electoral crisis?
- How has this land issue hindered the social cohesion initiatives undertaken by the humanitarians since the crisis?
- What remains to be done by the humanitarians for a real return to peace between the communities?

The article is based, on the one hand, on the existing literature and on the other hand, on the data collected through interviews conducted in the Guiglo-Duékoué area with international humanitarian workers (UNHCR, DRC-DDG, SFCG, etc.), local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (AWECO, Limpia, Apoekpet, etc.) and community leaders (Niouldé, Beoua, Glapaouly, Troya villages, Burkina Faso community, non-native community). Three main points structure it. After a historical reminder of the land crisis, we show how the problems arising from it hamper the humanitarian efforts of social cohesion before suggesting, as a possible solution, the support of populations by the

humanitarians towards securing land.

## 2. From the land crisis in the 1990s to the post-electoral crisis in 2010

The post-election crisis in Duékoué and Guiglo has a history; it dates back to the lack of consensus around land management since the 1990s.

### 2.1 Migratory movements, land saturation and the first tensions in western Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, the agricultural migrations have gained importance with the development of the coffee-cocoa pair. In the west of Côte d'Ivoire, where the practice of the binomial was late, migration to the Cavally and Guémon regions is recent. It did not intervene until the late 1960s (McCallin and Montemurro, op cit). These regions had forests still virgin which attracted not only the populations of the center and the north of the country, but also the nationals of the subregion, dominated by the Burkinabè. The migrants were originally the labour force that indigenous peoples needed for the creation of the first plantations. In this context, this migration was somewhat desired to the extent that, despite its evolution, the cohabitation between these migrants and their guardians was without any real clash.

However, another migration, that of the city dwellers in lack of employment in the towns took place from 1990 when the land was becoming rare. This return coincided with the political discourse stigmatizing foreign or non-indigenous communities (Ibid). As a matter of fact, Côte d'Ivoire entered the 1990s with the return of the multiparty system and with the FPI<sup>1</sup> as the main opposition party to the Houphouët Boigny regime. Supported mainly by some forest peoples, namely the Guémon and Cavally, Laurent Gbagbo's party criticizes the PDCI<sup>2</sup> power, especially the way he managed the land through the famous sentence "the land belongs to the one who reclaims it". Without being a law, this speech delivered at the PDCI congress, will greatly influence the relations between the communities (Oura, 2014) [12]. According to the President of the FPI and his sympathizers, this speech would have been the root of the influx of migrants and the scarcity of arable land in forest areas. At the national level, this situation will really mark the beginning of violent land-based conflicts. The report of the International Crisis Group (op cit) points out that: "For a long time, these conflicts have been settled amicably through local and customary arrangements. But these systems did not withstand the economic crisis, the demographic pressure and the expansion of a xenophobic political discourse in the 1990s." A situation that will hardly improve even after the death of Houphouët Boigny in 1993. The "war of heirs" between the president of the national assembly (Henri Konan Bédié) and his prime minister (Alassane Ouattara) will only strengthen the tensions between the rural communities. Suspecting the Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara to be of another nationality, Burkina Faso, the new president, Henri Konan Bédié, created the concept of "ivoirity". This concept, which establishes, as its name indicates, the distinction between the Ivorian and the non-Ivorian, was the peak of this "war of the heirs" (Kouamé, 2006 and 2013; Babo and Yvan [6-7, 1], op cit; International

Crisis Group, op cit).

In the rural areas, there is a growing gap between the Ivorians and people from Burkina Faso, and even some nationals from the north of the country. As a result, conflicts multiplied in several parts of the country, the most serious of them being that of 1997 opposing the Kroumen to the Burkinabes who were forced to go back to their country. In 1998, the new land law voted under Bédié, was criticized by the RDR<sup>3</sup>, the party of Alassane Ouattara. This law, which excludes the Bukinabes from land ownership, is deemed unfavourable to this community (Chauveau, op cit), which is nevertheless strongly represented in the sphere of agricultural production. Koné (2006) [5] specifies that "the nationality which was not a limiting factor in obtaining the land title in Côte d'Ivoire became one obstacle from 1998 according to the law on rural land." The law was not accepted unanimously and just a year later, a coup d'état, the first in the history of Côte d'Ivoire, dismissed President Bédié from power. Guéi Robert, the putsch General lost the election in 2000 and Laurent Gbagbo took his place. Having also Alassane Ouattara as his political opponent, the latter entered a logic to pursue the policy of the ivoirity initiated by Bédié. He is naturally fought by the pro-Ouattara, and the campaign will be the privileged field of this struggle. This is due to the fact that Côte d'Ivoire is essentially rural and that the rural population contains the bulk of the electoral mass. Knowingly, each political actor seeks to lean back against it. In such a context, the land, which formerly was an economic issue, has become a political issue through the representation of different political parties. The risk of clashes increases, especially as the control of the land is now the goal of each side. In regions such as Guemon and Cavally, where the politicization of land has led to an identity crisis, the oppositions will be more intense. In the sub-prefecture of Duékoué, the indigenous and the Baoulé non-natives, the ethnic group of President Bédié already clashed in December 1997. But the tension will degenerate more from 2002, the year when the Gbagbo Laurent regime is attacked by a rebellion established in the north of the country.

### 2.2 A land crisis exacerbated by the 2002 military-political crisis

Despite being both subject to land pressure, Duékoué and Guiglo have not undergone in the same way, the land crisis which has been opposing the migrants to the indigenous Guéré since 2002. It is indeed in this year that Côte d'Ivoire saw the birth of the armed rebellion that caused the country to split into two: the north occupied by the rebellion and the south, the party under governmental control. These two parts are separated by a buffer zone to which the department of Duékoué belongs. Between 2002 and 2010, this locality was the scene of clashes between Guéré natives and Malinké communities (Burkinabè and Ivorian migrants from the north of the country). The latter are suspected by the former of supporting the armed rebellion. Indeed, according to popular opinion, Burkina Faso served as a backbone for the rebellion. In such a context, mistrust between the sides grows and the land which is the natives' heritage and main resource of agricultural production will attract the attention of everybody. For the Guéré natives, the control of land could reduce the power of foreigners, more represented in the agricultural

<sup>1</sup> Ivorian Popular Front.

<sup>2</sup> Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire.

<sup>3</sup> The Rally of Republicans.

production in the region. The pressure is therefore put more on them to force them to cede the land they have been exploiting for decades. There is then a reinforcement of the calls into question of the contracts of land transfer. The non-indigenous people are putting themselves in a position to defend the land and their farms. In this way, land became a major issue in the region, at a time when the formation of two sides seemed to be taking shape. There was on the one hand the indigenous peoples referred to as the pro-Gbagbo, the presidential side and, on the other hand, the side of all migrants, reported to support Alassane Ouattara. Henceforth, every misfortune in a camp is systematically interpreted in relation to the position of the other. Thus, for example, the murder of a Malinke driver, a migrant, caused the attacks of Guéré peasants in May 2005 in the buffer zone, an area yet known as a "trust zone". And in the month of June in the same year, following the murder of two other young Malinké, there was a generalized massacre of Petit-Duékoué and Guitrozon, with a toll of 100 dead. The atmosphere will remain so tense until the murderous post-election clashes that still mark the spirits.

### **2.3 The post-electoral crisis: the mark of the inter-community divide based on land disputes**

While the 2002 armed rebellion brought to light the deterioration of the relationship between the indigenous peoples and the migrants, the post-electoral crisis has confirmed the lack of consensus among the peoples on how to manage the land. In fact, even if these inter-ethnic clashes may have various causes, it is nonetheless true that the land issue remains one of the main causes. It would have been enough for this crisis to break so that the non-indigenous people would grab the indigenous lands and farms, just as the latter did during the years 2002 to 2010. This situation of land and plantation recovery is therefore added to the many material deaths and losses mainly in the native side. International Crisis Group (op cit) said that "the city of Duékoué experienced during this period the greatest carnage of the long Ivorian crisis, with several hundred victims killed in a few days." Inspired by the United Nations reports, the report states that between 2010 and 2011, a total of 505 deaths were recorded in Duékoué against a total of 954 in all the regions of Cavally and Guémon. And during one night of July 2012, the camp of displaced persons of Nahibly, located near Duékoué was attacked with 10 dead and 50 injured people (OFPRA, op cit).

If for these reasons the indigenous people say they cannot forget such losses, the resentment is far from leaving the migrants' side who claim to have suffered enough injustices during the ten years of governance of the FPI, the party mainly supported by the Guéré natives. In this position where no side feels obliged to tolerate the other's faults, the fracture seems more sealed than ever between them. So that after almost 5 years, the tensions remain sharp at the extent that clashes can still occur at any time. This is contrary to the theory of Lewis Coser (Géhin, 1983) <sup>[3]</sup>, speaking of the functionalism of conflicts. According to this theory, the non-natives should now be in a position to no longer see it necessary to deal with the natives because they recognize their superiority vis-à-vis them. In the same way, the latter, feeling "defeated", must not no longer feel like attacking the non-natives. This presupposes that a balance must now be

established at the point where there is no longer any fear of further clashes. Unfortunately, this is not yet the case. The two sides are still in a position not to tolerate, each of them being always installed in a position to continue to struggle until imposing his view especially on the land issue. In fact, regular clashes between young Guéré migrants militia from Duékoué and Guiglo are intimately linked to the recurrent ethnic and land problems in the west of the country (Chauveau, op cit). This land issue is the major constraint to be overcome in the framework of the humanitarian actions of social cohesion in the region.

### **3. Humanitarian actions of social cohesion and the land issue**

As they are the two main regions most affected by the post-electoral crisis, the Guémon and the Cavally today concentrate the largest number of humanitarian actors.

#### **3.1 A variety of humanitarian actors committed to a rapid return to peace**

After the clashes, the humanitarian services must take the necessary steps to restore peace in the region. A variety of stakeholders are involved in this humanitarian social cohesion project that was initiated in the area. Three main categories of humanitarian actors have been identified: the international humanitarian workers, the local NGOs and the state technical structures.

The humanitarian intervention required the implementation and / or the funding of various social cohesion activities in Duékoué and Guiglo. However diverse the different areas of intervention may be, there is a diversity of international humanitarian organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Caritas, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Search For Common Ground (SFCG), Save the Children, Peace and Security Network for Women in ECOWAS (REPSFECO), Care, Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Danish Demining Group (DDG), International Rescue Committee, Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), etc. This diversity of international actors covers a variety of fields including health, education, housing, social protection.

These humanitarians interact with the local NGOs. A diversity can also be identified. Among many others stand International Solidarity Peace and Development (SIPAID), Organization for the Development of Women's Activities (ODAFEM), Legionaries of Peace (LEPA), Flavie, Limpia, Apoekpet, International Organization for the Development and Monitoring of Projects (OIDSP), Good Action, Good Vision Africa (BVA), Land of Hope, the Center for Awakening and Coaching for basic Development (CEEDEB), Albir, Africa Women Ealth Committee (AWECO), African Development Bank (AfDB). In cooperation with international organizations, these NGOs provide services in their areas of intervention and some of their actions are supported by the state structures.

Through its technical structures which include the Aid and Assistance Service for Refugees and Stateless Persons (SAARA), the Post-Conflict Assistance Program (PAPC), the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (ADDR), the State intervenes as one of the stakeholders working towards a return to social cohesion in both regions. To these structures one should add the Agency

for Road Management (AGERROUTE) and the Legal Clinic which is active in explaining to the populations, the Ivorian legal norms which must facilitate the social cohesion. Despite the determination of these structures and humanitarians, the humanitarian interventions have not reached the expected results. In fact, after five years of activities, social cohesion between communities is not yet restored. Humanitarian actions are subject to several constraints, one of the most important remains the issue of rural land.

### 3.2 The persistence of the land issue, an obstacle to humanitarian actions

The land issue is the main cause of inter-ethnic clashes in the region (Chauveau, op cit; Oura, 2014 and 2015) <sup>[12-13]</sup>. In the same way, the land problem prevents the different sides from going frankly to reconciliation and social cohesion. According to the opinion of the interviewed persons, the problem of rural land ownership remains a key issue in this quest for social cohesion. In other words, social cohesion remains intimately linked to the resolution of the land issue, without which no form of humanitarian aid could lead to a real return to normal. A respondent at the Guiglo HCR office sums it up very well:

"For social cohesion to be strengthened, one must find the solutions of the problem which is the source of the clashes. What is causing this problem of social cohesion? And honestly the basic problem as I said is the land, it is not something else. So if there can be some difficulties, we work on the sheets of papers. We do not touch the rotten root because it is not our job, it is the government's task, it is the work of all the people who are more responsible for territorial management rather than the UNHCR. However, if we could find the solution to the problem, we would come to put people together."

The image of the root and the leaves illustrates well the difficulties of the humanitarians to obtain a satisfactory result. Since it has been at the heart of the social fragility in these two localities, the control of the land has not ceased to divide the antagonists especially as the situation deteriorated further in the aftermath of the post-election crisis. The last crisis caused the displacement of several populations mainly the Guéré community who saw several of their houses burnt. Returning from their flight, some indigenous people are still unable to recover their lands and farms now occupied by Burkinabè, or return to live in their camps. This was noted both in the department of Guiglo and Duékoué. For example, the head of the Burkina Faso community in the Cavally has had to face several complaints about such problems ("[...] Since people fled, there are some who have fled since 2002, since the first crisis they left, and they returned only two years three years later, and even after the second crisis they came back. They found that their fields are occupied by other farmers (...) Here again there were many complaints"). A Guéré native from Carrefour in Duékoué explains with regret the impossibility to return to the camps to carry out the activities: "Now if we could return to our camp we would still succeed in breeding, growing cassava... still able to manage [...] For example if you want to breed you cannot stay there (in the camps) alone, they will come to attack you". The Guéré are threatened with death by these illegal occupants. Which means that the psychosis is always present in the minds of the natives who settle in a logic of taking back their

land at any price. And any of their reactions is interpreted by others as a revenge or provocation (Oura, 2015) <sup>[13]</sup>. As a result, one's gaze towards others does not change in the sense of appeasement. So that instead of reducing the tensions with regard to the intensity of humanitarian actions, the cohabitation remains difficult. How can the situation be different if there is still no consensus on the management of the main production resource which is the land?

Sometimes, it happens that some members of the native families have had to sell their land following the displacement of their kinsmen. In such a case, the conflict becomes a family matter, that is, it opposes individuals from the same indigenous community. Illicit sales of land were accentuated in this situation, which was rendered more precarious by the crisis. Thus, rather than seeing the land situation improve with the various humanitarian actions such as those carried out by NRC, SFCG and the Legal Clinic, we tend instead to radicalize the different positions; the migrants are perceived by indigenous peoples as "invaders". The International Crisis Group (op cit) explains that "the very strong immigration causes among the indigenous, often in minority, a strong sense of dispossession." The non-natives do not want to abandon their farms, that is, the product of many years of investment. Interculturality has thus become a concept deeply undermined by conflicts around the land. A situation that undermines the humanitarian actions, so each camp is guided by its propensity to take over the other in their quest to control the land. For the natives, the migrants do not respect their rights as landowners. The head of the village of Glapaouly maintains that: "We claim our rights every time. But if they do not want to recognize our rights, we too cannot accept. So the key point for us is the land. Our rights are denied, flouted. This lack of respect is a major concern for the native people and even of all the communities present in these territories. In fact, this lack of respect is one of the major causes of informal land management and the problems it creates.

It is a set of elements, all related to the rural land issue, which contribute to hindering the humanitarian actions. Indeed, when the spirits are regularly marked by repetitive land conflicts which have caused a lot of damage and death, the capacities of the inhabitants to forget or forgive become weak. And when these conflicts induce the displacement and once the displaced people return and they are no longer allowed to re-exploit their land or farms because they are recovered by others due to their illicit sales, such things hinder the humanitarian efforts of well-being in general and namely social cohesion. Everything is therefore gathered so that the positions become radical and nobody is ready to pay attention to the humanitarian actions. This is how the problems inherent to the land have weakened the actions of social cohesion in the two regions. Given this constraint, which is the land issue, the problem of its governance is a concern to be particularly taken into account in future humanitarian actions.

### 4. Land governance, a humanitarian challenge for sustainable peace in the region

Land issues are largely the result of the governance of the land. The area is now more than ever facing the difficulties of managing the land. A climate of loss of customary authority



now prevails in the countryside just as the illegal sale of land has gained ground.

#### **4.1 The loss of customary authority and the informal sale of land**

Land conflicts are common today, but they are not a recent fact in the region. What characterizes the current situation of land crisis is the inability of the customary authority to settle them. We are witnessing the erosion of the involvement of local custom in land management (Oura, 2014) <sup>[12]</sup>.

The military-political crisis has led to the displacement of some customary chiefs, namely in the department of Duékoué. Although being the main actors in the settlement of land disputes as they are original landowners, the Guéré customary chiefs have almost lost this right. Their authority and local cultural values are running out steam. This situation has been exacerbated by the recent crisis which has led to the displacement of several people, including some village chiefs. New management systems have been set up and involve non-indigenous people, including chiefs of the Baoulé, Sénoufo and even Burkinabè alien communities in land management. The indigenous leaders then explain the failure of the cohesion projects by this lack of respect for the values and call into question the migrant populations and through them the phenomenon of migration. The chief of the village of Glapaouly expresses his dissatisfaction: "We have received you at home and you win whatever you want and you refuse to respect our values. These are factors that affect cohesion." The lack of respect for cultural values and land transfer contracts actually leads the different communities to distrust each other (N'Goran, 2012) <sup>[10]</sup>. According to the head of the Burkina Faso Community of Duékoué, the loss of the indigenous cultural values lies rather in the disrespect of the young natives for the elders. In fact, the calls into question of land transfer contracts among the kinsmen are now organized by the indigenous youth. An official from the DRC-DDG NGO agrees when he says that the presidents of youth do not respect their village chiefs. For the head of the village of Beoua, this is now experienced in almost all the indigenous villages simply because the executives proceed by the manipulation of young people. When they do not appreciate a village chief, they decide to sabotage his actions through the youth. This lack of respect for the customary authority and cultural values resulted in the informal management of the land. Informality is highlighted in the International Crisis Group (op cit) report: "There is an immense disorder around land ownership that neither the customary law nor modern law can contain."

In most Ivorian customs, land is a family property and therefore inalienable. However, this customary rule of land management was not respected till the end and had to yield under the pressure of migration (McCallin and Montemurro, op cit). "These informal practices of selling land, contrary to custom and to the law, have led to more or less voluntary misunderstandings about the nature (temporary or definitive) of land transfer," the authors say. So the land has gradually assumed a market value from a contract signed between the indigenous peoples and migrant populations. Conflicts between communities are usually explained by non-compliance with these contracts. But now, the sale of these lands has taken a new shape where there is really no authority to ensure a rigorous land governance, capable of reducing illegal sales and conflicts. International Crisis Group (op cit)

translates this state of affairs by the fact that "everyone sells to everyone." One must fear during the years to come, even more conflicts and difficulties in the efforts of social cohesion. For the land has become a much coveted resource subject to the law of the strongest (ibid). As for the management of conflicts, they are dealt with by the customary bodies whereas their legitimacy has been called into question increasingly since the crisis (McCallin and Montemurro, op cit). Hence the need, in our view, to work towards a governance according to the norms established by positive law.

#### **4.2 The humanitarians' need to accompany the process of modernizing land management**

Repeated land disputes have led to the Rural Land Law of December 23, 1998 to provide a legal framework for rural land ownership. By enacting this law, the legislation denied customary land transactions of any legal value (McCallin and Montemurro, op cit) since the customary management of the land proved incapable of guaranteeing sustainable peace in the countryside. The customary law is inoperative so that ill-regulated and subject to intense competition, the access to land ownership is a recurrent cause of Conflicts (International Crisis Group, op cit). But without being ignored, the customary law should continue to exist within ten years until the landowners had obtained their land title from the registration of their land. After this deadline the law would recognize only those lands registered when the others would be considered as lands without any master. The act N° 98-750 of December 23, 1998 on rural land, as amended by Act N° 2004 in Article 26 and Law N° 2013-655 of September 13, 2013, in Article 2, defines the rural land as one being (i) outside the public domain, (ii) outside the urban perimeters, (iii) outside the deferred development zones officially constituted (iv) and outside the classified forest estate. Article 4 of the Law sets out the conditions for the recognition of the rights exercised on land in this area. The article stipulates that "the ownership of land in the Rural Estate is established on the basis of the registration of this land in the Land Register opened for this purpose by the Administration and as for the Customary domain by the Land Property Deed (...). The holder of the Land Property Deed (LPD) must request the registration of the corresponding land within three years from the date of acquisition of the Land Property Deed". The Land Property Deed thus constitutes the document which legitimizes the ownership of the land of the customary domain. But, it is only valid over a period of three years. After this period, where the holder of the land certificate is supposed to apply for the registration of the corresponding land, these rights become null and void. This shows all the pressure around the registration. However, since 1998 when the law has been promulgated, the management of rural land still depends on the customary law at 98% and only 1 to 2% of the lands are subject to legal title (McCallin and Montemurro, op cit). Among the difficulties that can account for the low rate, the very high cost of the title and the lack of sufficient information on this law. The process is long and complex, time-consuming and costly for small farmers; the average cost of obtaining a land certificate is 700,000 FCFA (1,067 €) (Kouamé, 2015) <sup>[8]</sup>.

This means that the hope of seeing people obtain land titles on their own to eventually reduce land tensions is slim.

Hence, the actors of the humanitarian aid need for a particular orientation to help the peasants get their titles. It is a population that needs information, training and financial assistance, etc. to overcome the obstacles still hampering them in the direction of land registration in these two regions where land tensions are still far from being extinguished.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has shown that the land issue appears to be a key factor in achieving this desired social cohesion. The reasons that led to the repetition of conflicts in these two agricultural regions which are the Guémon and the Cavally, date back to several decades. As they could not be suppressed, the misunderstandings and disputes over land management have resulted in conflicts between migrants and indigenous peoples, all of them now inclined to violence and a commitment to weaken their opponents and to lead them to give up their struggle. In such a commitment, the actions of social cohesion undertaken by the State and the humanitarian actors cannot lead to stability, especially since this land issue, the backbone of these conflicts, has remained unanswered. However, enough results have been achieved since a relative peace is observed on the ground. But, we are still a long way off. For it is clear that the answers to be found to the problems related to the land are not yet obtained, a proof that these first results obtained by the humanitarians at the level of the social cohesion among the populations are far from being sustainable. They could not be lasting as long as the land issue still remains unanswered in the countryside.

A special involvement of the humanitarian actors in this region is therefore essential. This involvement must be directed towards finding ways of helping these populations to register their land, since it would be impossible to believe that they could do so on their own, given the difficulties associated with this land registration process. In fact, while land tenure, as almost all the humanitarians surveyed acknowledged, constitutes one of the main constraints of their actions in terms of social cohesion, few humanitarian and other NGOs are involved in this field. However, in conjunction with this desired commitment of the humanitarians in the field of land tenure, should not there be a much more firm involvement of the State itself which for the moment seems impotent and not determined to find definitive answers to these questions?

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