Stability Index – DIFFA, NIGER, LAKE CHAD BASIN
FINDINGS ROUND 1 – MARCH /APRIL 2021

November 2021

INTRODUCTION: The crisis in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB), due to armed conflict and ongoing incursions by Non-State Armed Groups, has displaced 3,012,239 internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of May 2021 in Northern Cameroon, Lac Province in Chad, North-East Nigeria and Diffa in Niger. This widespread crisis impacts the social, political, and economic conditions of communities.

Since 2013, the region of Diffa in Niger has experienced significant population displacements, both within its border as well as refugees coming from the north-eastern states of Nigeria. As a result, the displacement situation in Diffa region is a complex mixed-displacement context that includes IDPs, returnees and refugees.

In order to find durable solutions for internal displacement — whether through return to communities of origin, local integration, or relocation — and to prevent new displacements in the region, it is critical to understand the relative levels of stability in locations hosting returnees or displaced populations.

Therefore, IOM has launched the Stability Index (SI) in the LCB to evaluate the stability of areas hosting returnees or displaced populations. The SI seeks to understand which factors influence a location's stability, which can inform priority programmatic interventions along the humanitarian, peace and development nexus in order to strengthen the resilience and stability and prevent future forced displacements. This report presents the result from the first Stability Index round conducted in March/April 2021 in Diffa, Niger. This data was collected shortly before a significant number of IDP returns were recorded in Diffa. The findings from all four regions of the LCB can be found in the regional report. (bit.ly/3FWWpLv)

1. Methodology

The **Stability Index** collects data through key informant interviews at the lowest possible administrative level, the locality level (*see Appendix for further information on the locality selection process*). Key informants, including mayors, community leaders, aid workers, etc. were interviewed in each location by enumerators in March-April 2021 in Diffa.

The key informant method has the advantage of allowing the coverage of many localities. Multiple key informants were interviewed in each locality, allowing IOM to cross-validate information. However, its main limitation lies in the fact that only a few informants report on the views of a community.

The index correlates data available on localities with indicators, grouped in the following **three scales**:

1. Access to livelihoods and basic services

- Access to drinking water
- Access to health centers
- Delaying medical care (due to COVID)
- Delaying medical care (not due to COVID)
- Farmland cultivation and access
- Fishing grounds usages and access
- Habitat access
- Habitat destruction
- ICT access
- Electricity access
- Local market activity and stocks
- Primary education access
- Public sector employee presence

2) Social Cohesion

- Equal access basic services
- Cattle theft reported
- Illegal occupation of HLP
- Robbery personal effects
- Daily public life activity
- Social cohesion and community support systems
- Community tension
- Identity documents possession
- Participation in public affairs

3) Safety and Security

- Access to legal remedies
- Activities by non-state armed groups
- Formal curfew
- Informal curfew
- Freedom of movement
- Local crime trends
- Security incident over resources
- Serious security incidents
- Security forces presence
- Police presence
- Non-State Armed Groups presence
- Community perception of security

These indicators together can indicate which areas are conducive to durable solutions for internal displacement. Questions on the perception of stability by the community (feeling of stability, future intentions, evolution of the situation in the last 6 months) are used as "anchor questions", which can assess the impact of each indicator (on the three scales) on this perception of stability.

1.1 Stability Index Calculation

The SI uses Principal Component Analysis to assess the impact of each indicator on the perception of stability in an area hosting displaced or returned populations. Calculating the statistical weight per indicator makes it possible to evaluate which indicators have a greater statistical impact on the perception of stability. Each indicator thus has an associated value that enables the calculation of a **"livelihood and basic services score"**, a **"social cohesion score"** and a **"safety and security score"**. The indicators from these three scores are then combined to create the Stability Index. The index ranges from 0 (low perception of stability) to 100 (high perception of stability).

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1.2 Data collection overview

The data collection for the first round of Stability Index was conducted in March and April 2021. A total of 180 localities in the Diffa region were surveyed in the departments of Bosso, Diffa, Maine Soroa and N'Guigmi. Locations for data collection were selected through of mapping exercise to identify areas where IDPs and returnees are located. (See *Appendix 7.1 Selection of Localities Explained* for more detailed information on the selection of localities.) Security was a key factor in the selection of localities, hence only three localities in the department of Bosso were included in this exercise.

Department	Locations surveyed
Bosso	3
Diffa	115
Maine Soroa	28
N'Guigmi	34

2. Stability Scores Analysis

Overall Stability Index Score	Livelihood and Basic Services	Social Cohesion	Safety and Security
Average score 79/100	**Average score 51/100**	**Average score 86/100**	**Average score 72/100**

The average Stability Index score of 180 locations assessed in the region of Diffa, Niger was 79/100. Out of the four departments assessed, the department of Diffa had localities with both the highest (98/100) and the lowest stability score (46/100). Results by the three scales revealed that the department of Maine Soroa scored the highest (82/100) while the department of Bosso (66/100) scored the lowest on **safety and security**. For the **social cohesion** scale, the departments of Maine Soroa and N'Guigmi scored the highest, each with a score of (91/100), while the department of Bosso (74/100) scored the lowest. The departments of Bosso, Diffa, and Maine Soroa had similar scores (52 to 53/100) on the **livelihood and basic services** scale while the department of N'Guigmi (35/100) scored the lowest.

Department	Stability Index Score	Livelihood and Basic Services	Social Cohesion	Security and Safety
Bosso	**66**	**53**	**74**	**64**
Diffa	**80**	**53**	**86**	**74**
Maine Soroa	**82**	**52**	**91**	**72**
N'Guigmi	**75**	**45**	**91**	**68**

2.2 Highest and lowest stability of localities (by department)

Bosso – The overall scores in the department of Bosso varied between 60/100 (lowest score) and 74/100 (highest score). When reviewing the Stability Index score at the level of localities, **Bosso ville** (74/100) has the highest stability scores and **Kaoure** (60/100) has the lowest stability scores.

Diffa – The overall scores in the department of Diffa varied between 46/100 (lowest score) and 98/100 (highest score). When reviewing the Stability Index score at the level of localities, **Ngeul Kora** (98/100) and **Djori Kolo** (97/100) have the highest stability scores and **Sedinari 2 /Matarde** (47/100) and **Ngouri Koura** (46/100) have the lowest stability scores.

Maine Soroa – The overall scores in the department of Maine Soroa varied between 65/100 (lowest score) and 96/100 (highest score). When reviewing the Stability Index score at the level of localities, **Site Aveugles** 96/100) and **Sabon Gari** (95/100) have the highest stability scores and **Ngarana** (69/100) and **Chenal** (65/100) have the lowest stability scores.

N'Guigmi – The overall scores in the department of N'Guigmi varied between 55/100 (lowest score) and 95/100 (highest score). When reviewing the Stability Index score at the level of localities, **Nguichima** (95/100) and **Kabalewa** (93/100) have the highest stability scores and **Blabrine** (57/100) and **Dileran** (55/100) have the lowest stability scores.

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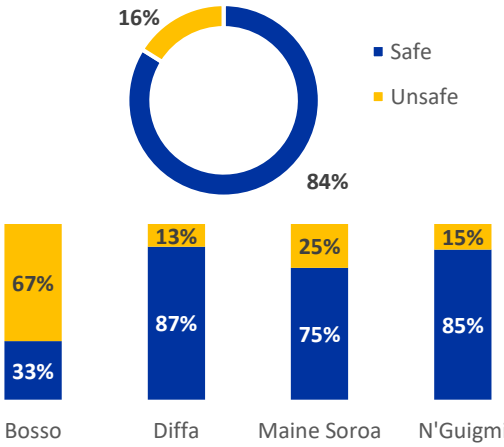
2.3 Perception of Stability

The first section of the questionnaire is focused on the key informants' perception of stability in the assessed localities. Key informants were asked three main questions to measure the perception of stability in their communities:

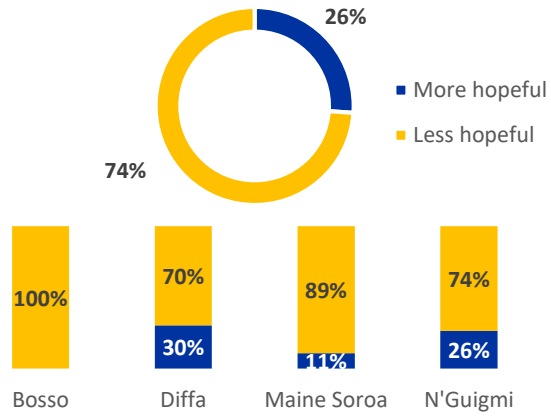
1. Feeling of stability;
2. Future intentions of the population;
3. Evolution of the situation in the last 6 months

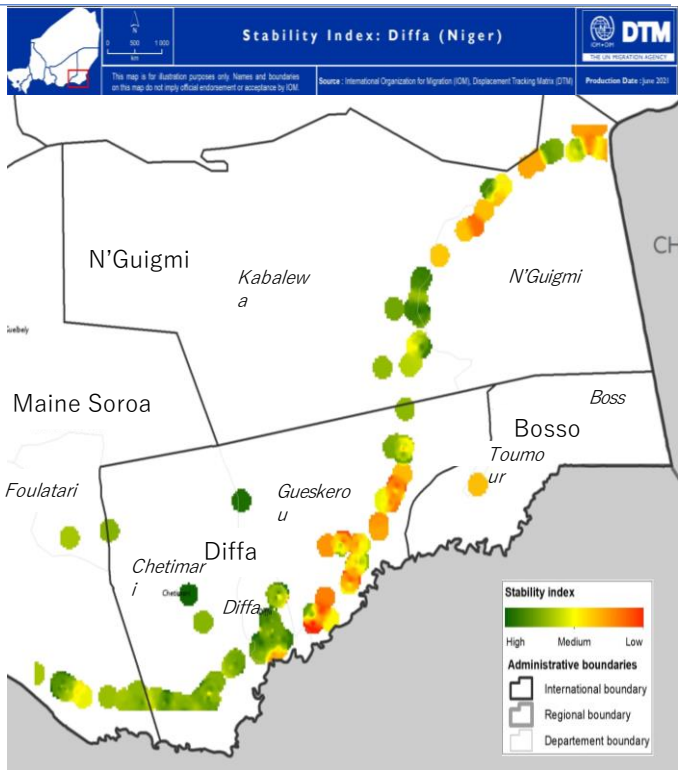
The next paragraphs analyse the responses to the three questions on stability.

Feeling of stability: Most of the key informants (84%) in the assessed communities ~~assessed~~ feel safe in their locations, while 16 per cent perceive their locations as unsafe. When looking at the department level, the largest percentage of those that feel unsafe are in Bosso — although given the small sample size (n = 3 localities), this represents only two localities.



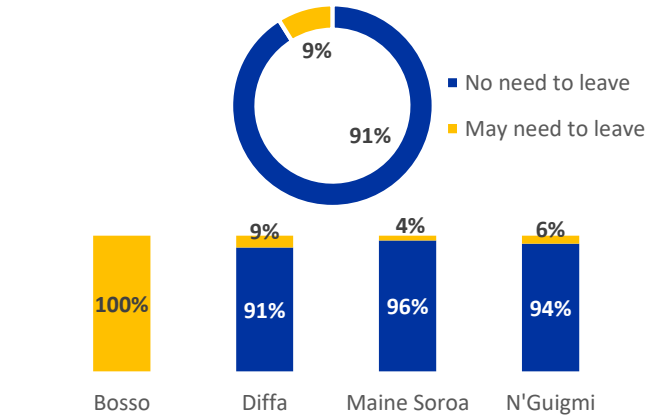
Evolution of the situation in the last 6 months: In response to the question on how feelings of the situation in their locality changed over the past 6 months, only 26 per cent of localities are more hopeful about the future state of their communities than 6 months prior to data collection. Out of the four Lake Chad Basin countries, Niger had the largest proportion of localities reporting that they are less hopeful about the future.





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Future intentions of the population: On the need to soon move from the current location due to safety and stability concerns, nine per cent of key informants reported that residents in the department of Diffa expect to move, whereas only four per cent of key informants in Maine Soroa reported that residents may need to move. The key informants in all three assessed localities in Bosso reported that residents feel that they may need to leave soon. Interestingly, although key informants in Maine Soroa were more likely to report feeling unsafe than in Diffa, only four per cent of informants in Maine Soroa reported that residents may need to leave soon – the lowest percentage in the departments assessed.



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3. LOCALITY ANALYSIS

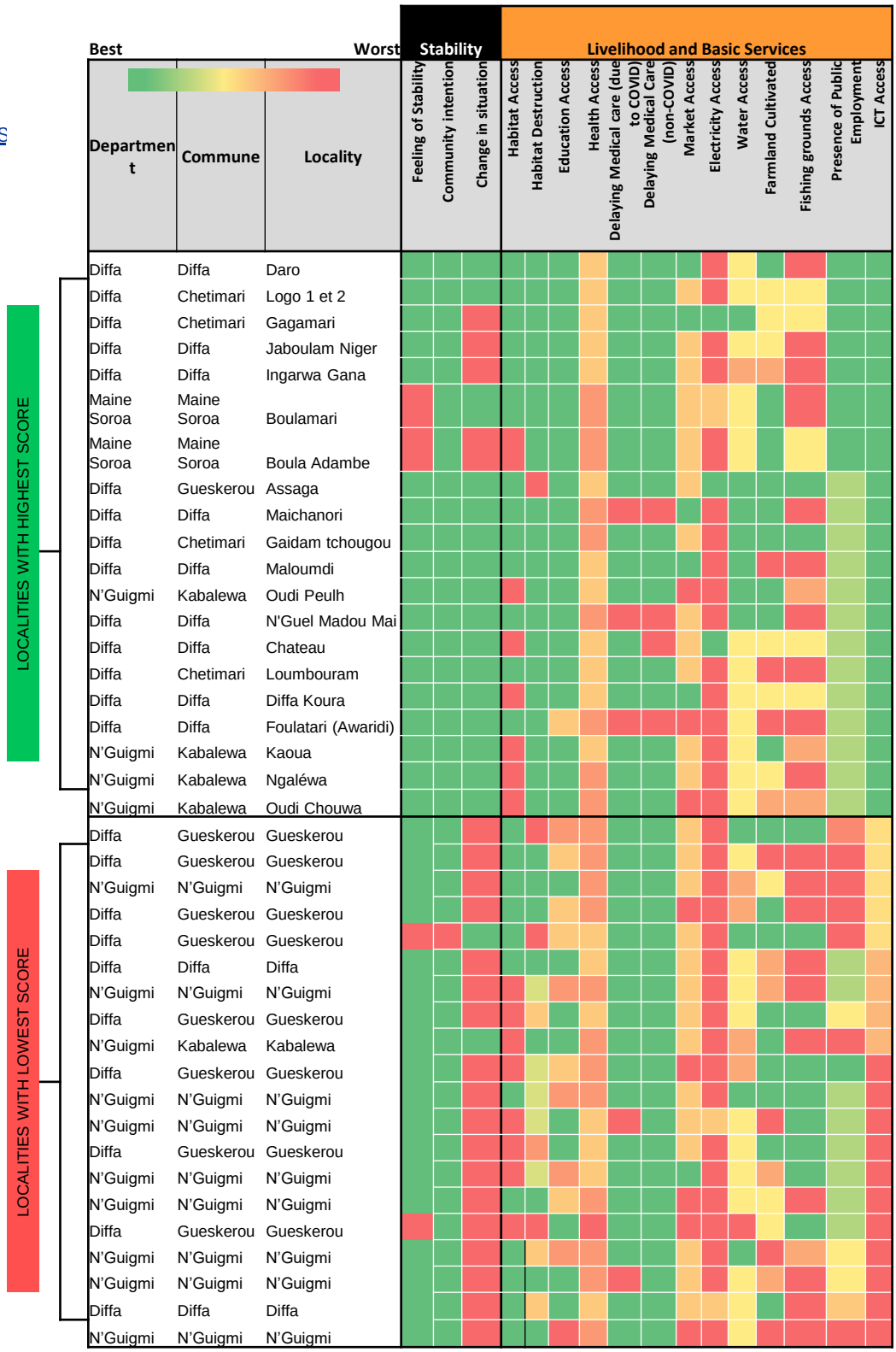
The tables below present the scores of the localities with the highest and lowest scores on the three scales used for analysing stability in the four departments in Diffa region.

3.1. Livelihood and Basic Services— Comparative analysis of localities with highest and lowest SI scores

This table shows the scores of the key livelihood and basic services indicators and the three stability "anchor questions" for the localities with the highest and lowest scores in the Diffa region of Niger.

It is interesting to note that some indicators are low (red) across both the localities with the highest and lowest scores: for example, access to electricity, fishing grounds, and healthcare. This indicates that while programmes could support these areas of focus, they would not necessarily affect the overall perception of stability, as the localities with highest stability scores also score poorly (red) on these indicators.

Other indicators, however, clearly have a significant impact on the perception of stability. **Access to information and communication technology (ICT)** is reliable in the localities with high stability scores, whereas it is unreliable or unavailable in the localities with the lowest stability scores.



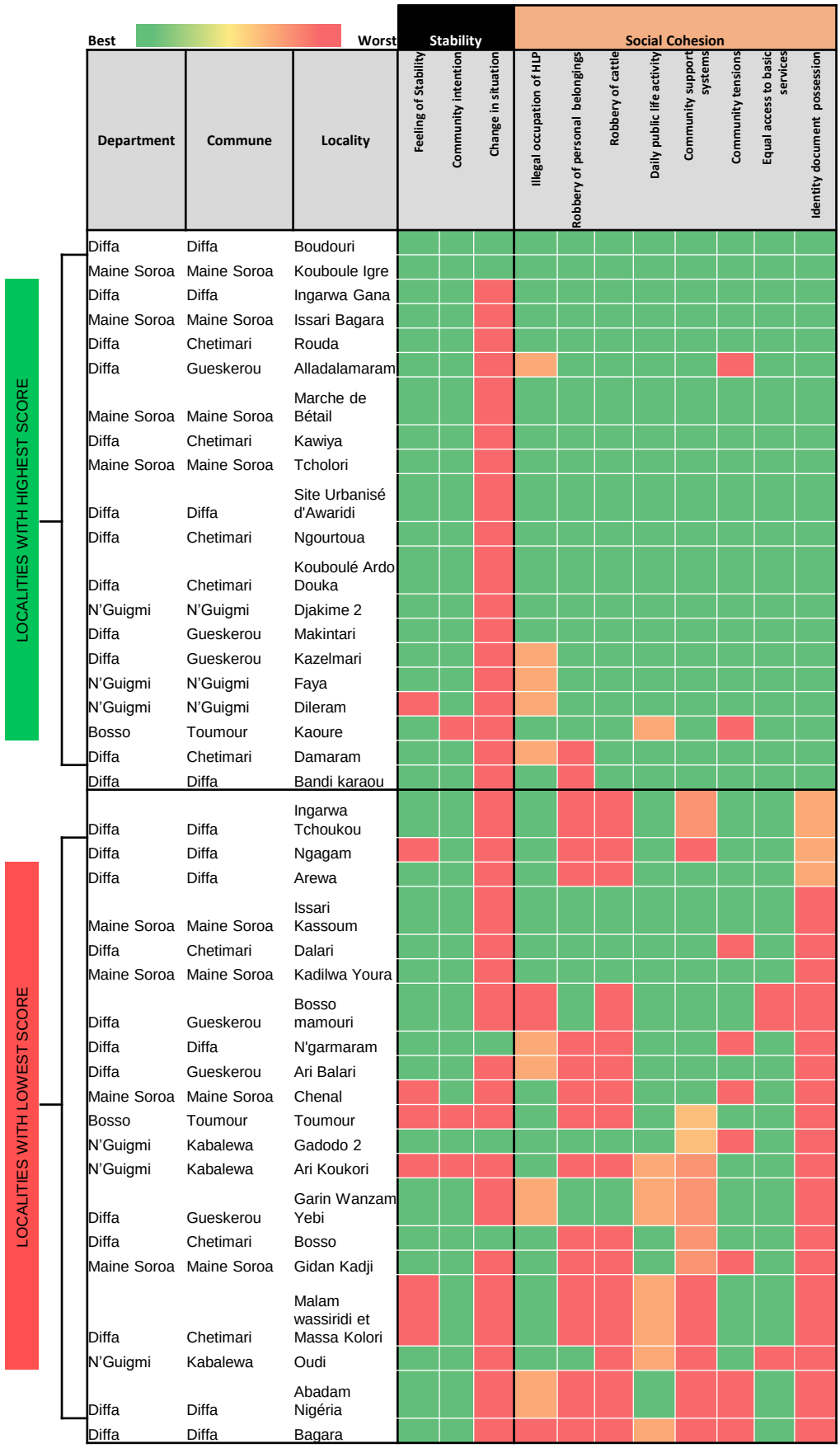
3.2 Social Cohesion — Comparative analysis of localities with highest and lowest SI scores

This table show the scores of key social cohesion indicators and the three stability "anchor questions" for the localities with the highest and lowest scores in the four regions of the Diffa region of Niger.

In contrast to the livelihood and basic services indicators analysed on the previous page, we see a stark contrast between high and low SI localities across most social cohesion indicators. This divide is less evident in factors such as the **illegal occupation of HLP**, which seems to have a lesser impact on the stability score.

Access to identity documents is sharply divided between high and low SI localities. The highest SI localities all reported that most residents have identity documents, whereas the lowest SI localities primarily reported that most residents do not have identity documents and they would be challenging to obtain.

Robbery of cattle and the presence of **community support systems** are two other indicators that are quite distinct in high and low SI localities. Whereas all high SI localities reported no cattle theft and the belief that neighbours were highly likely to come together to solve problems, low SI localities often reported recent instances of cattle theft as well as the belief that neighbours were unlikely to work together to solve problems.



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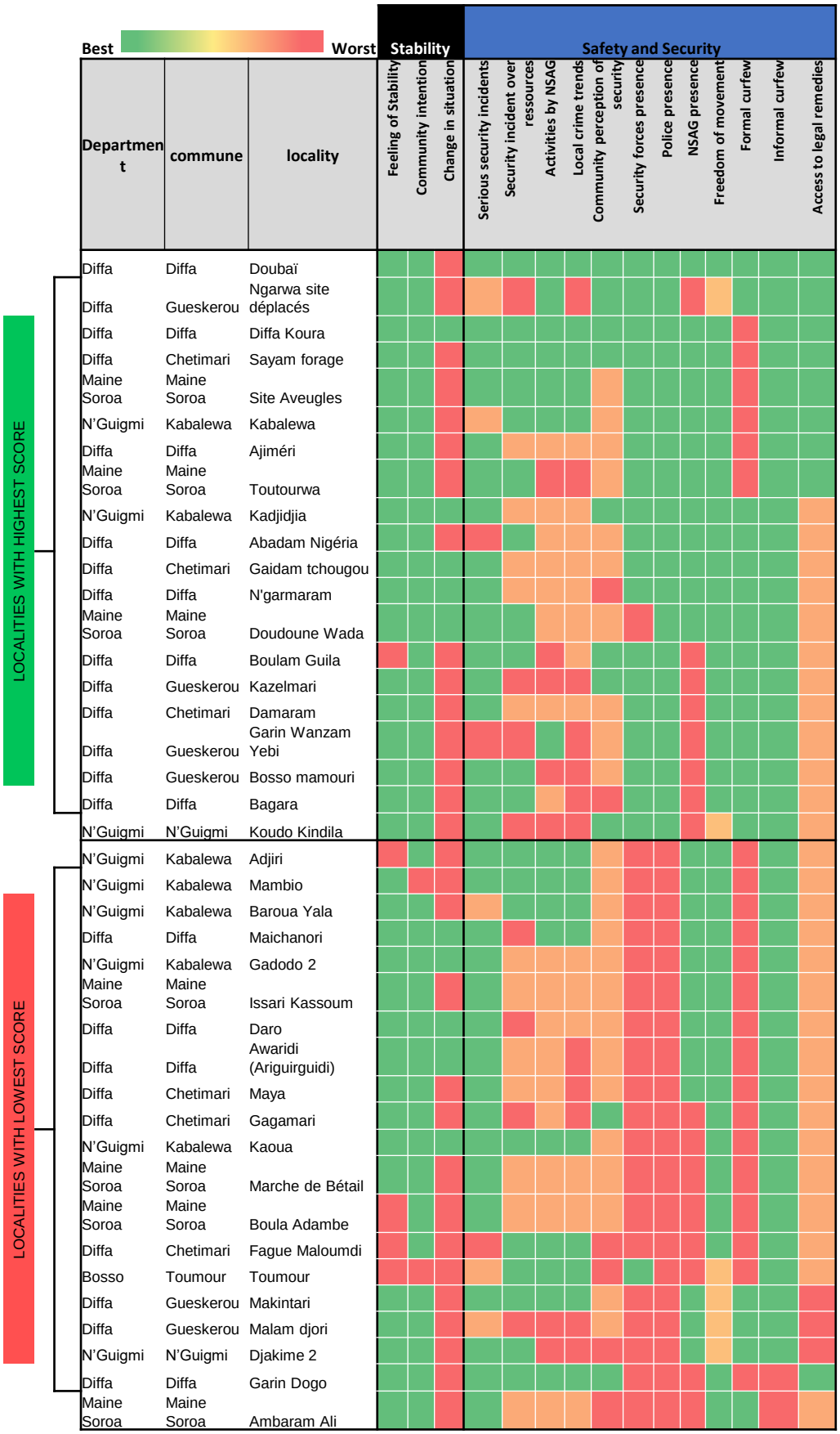
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3.3 Safety and Security — Comparative analysis of localities with highest and lowest SI scores

This table shows the scores of the key safety and security indicators and the three stability "anchor questions" for the localities with the highest and lowest scores in the Diffa region of Niger.

Indicators including **serious security incidents**, **security incidents over resources**, **informal curfews,** and **activities by NSAGs** appear roughly similar for both high and low SI localities.

On the other hand, the **presence of security forces and police** demonstrates a distinct divide between the localities with the highest and lowest SI scores. This could indicate that localities with formal security forces present tend to have overall more stable conditions – although of course it is not possible to infer the direction of causality based solely on this data.



4. Analysis of Main Indicators Influencing Stability

The Stability Index uses Principal Component Analysis to understand the impact of each variable on key informants' perception of stability in the area and then provides a specific value per indicator.

This allows for the analysis of which indicators have the most statistical impact on the perception of stability among the population. For a more detailed overview of what each indicator measures, see *Appendix.*

4.1 Top indicators influencing perception of stability in the Diffa region

LIVELIHOOD & SERVICES | SOCIAL COHESION | SECURITY

Local Crime Incidents	0.301
Non-State Armed Groups Activities	0.297
Freedom of Movement	0.296
Serious Security Incidents	0.287
Illegal Occupation of Land	0.279
Security Incidents Over Resources	0.264
Non-State Armed Groups Presence	0.240
Habitat Destruction due to Conflict	0.242
ICT Access	0.209
Habitat Access	0.199
Access to Legal Remedies	0.197
Delaying Medical Care (COVID)	0.195

This analysis provides insight into the possible programmatic and policy responses that need to be implemented in the target communities. **Safety and security** indicators appear to be the most influential in the dataset for Diffa. Notably, the four top influential indicators are from the safety and security scale: local crime incidents, activities by non-state armed groups, the freedom of movement, and serious security incidents. **Livelihood and basic service**s make up one third of the top 12 most influential indicators: habitat destruction, ICT access, habitat access, and delayed medical care due to COVID-19. Only one **social cohesion** indicator is present in the top 12 most influential variables: the illegal occupation of land, habitat, and property. This indicates that programming may be the most impactful if it focuses on the relevant indicators related to safety and security and livelihoods and basic services.

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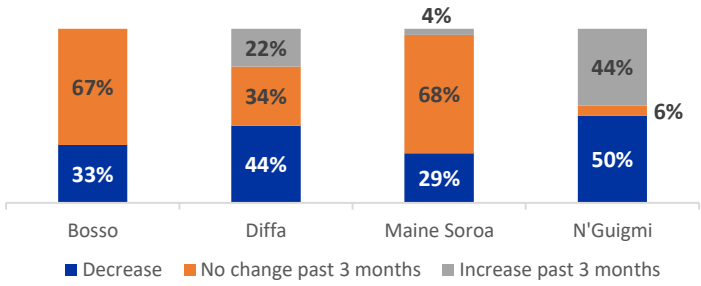
4.2 Analysis of Key Stability Index Indicators

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1. Local Crime Incidents

Safety and security

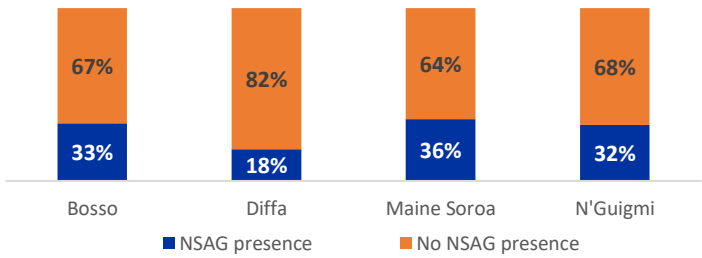
Incidences of petty crime, such as theft and other small-scale crimes in the localities assessed played a key role in the perception of stability. The department of N'Guigmi had the highest percentage (44%) of localities with increased incidence of petty crime in the past 3 months, while Diffa department has the second highest percentage of increased petty crime (22%) in the past 3 months, followed by Maine Soroa (4%).



2. Activities by Non-State Armed Groups

Safety and security

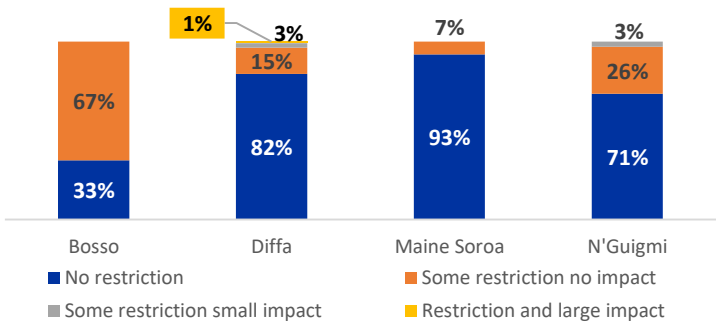
Activities by Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) in the localities assessed is the second most influential indicator in the perception of stability. Diffa had the lowest proportion of localities (18%) reporting the presence of NSAGs. Key informants in the other three departments reported that about one third of localities had some NSAG presence.



3. Freedom of Movement

Safety and security

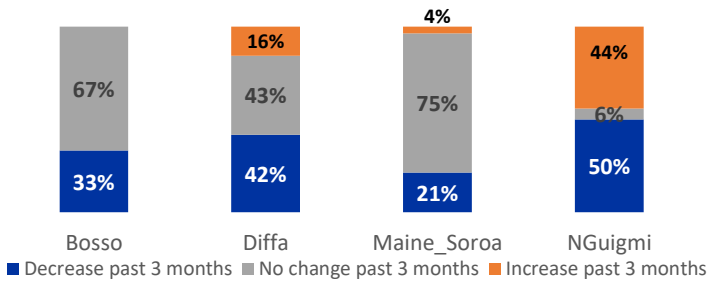
Freedom of movement is the third most influential indicator for the perception of stability in the localities assessed. Maine Sorora has the highest percentage (93%) of localities with no restriction of movement in the past 3 months, followed by Diffa (82%) and N'Guigmi (71%). It's important to note that a small portion of the population in Diffa have experienced restrictions of movement with a large impact (1%) and some restrictions with a small impact (3%) in the past 3 months.



4. Security Incidents

Safety and security

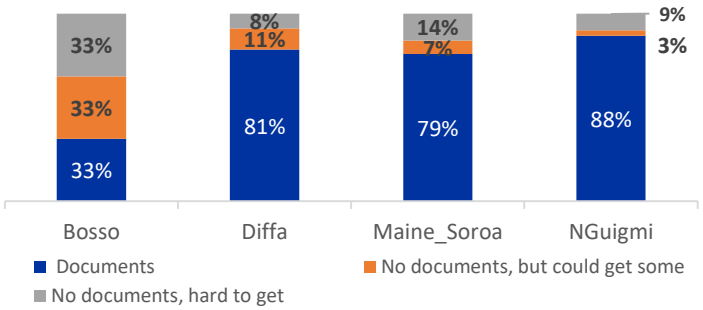
Security incidents in the localities assessed also played a key role in influencing the perception of stability among key informants of assessed localities. N'Guigmi department has the highest percentage (44%) of localities that experienced an increase in security incidents in the past 3 months. Interestingly, certain localities in N'Guigmi (50%) and Diffa (42%) also saw the largest decrease in security incidents in the past 3 months followed by Bosso (33%). Maine Soroa recorded the highest percentage of no change in the past 3 months (75%).



5. Illegal occupation of land, habitat, or property

Social cohesion

In the past 3 months, residents in the majority of localities in N'Guigmi (88%), Diffa (81%) and Maine Soroa (79%) had documents, while about 10 per cent in Maine Sora and N'Guigmi (14% and 9% respectively) did not have documents or found them hard to get. Each of the three localities surveyed in Bosso had a different response to this question, with one locality where residents had documents, one where residents did not have documents, and one where residents did not have documents but could get some.



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5. Case Study: Comparison of Low and High Scoring Localities

November 2021

Ngoui Koura

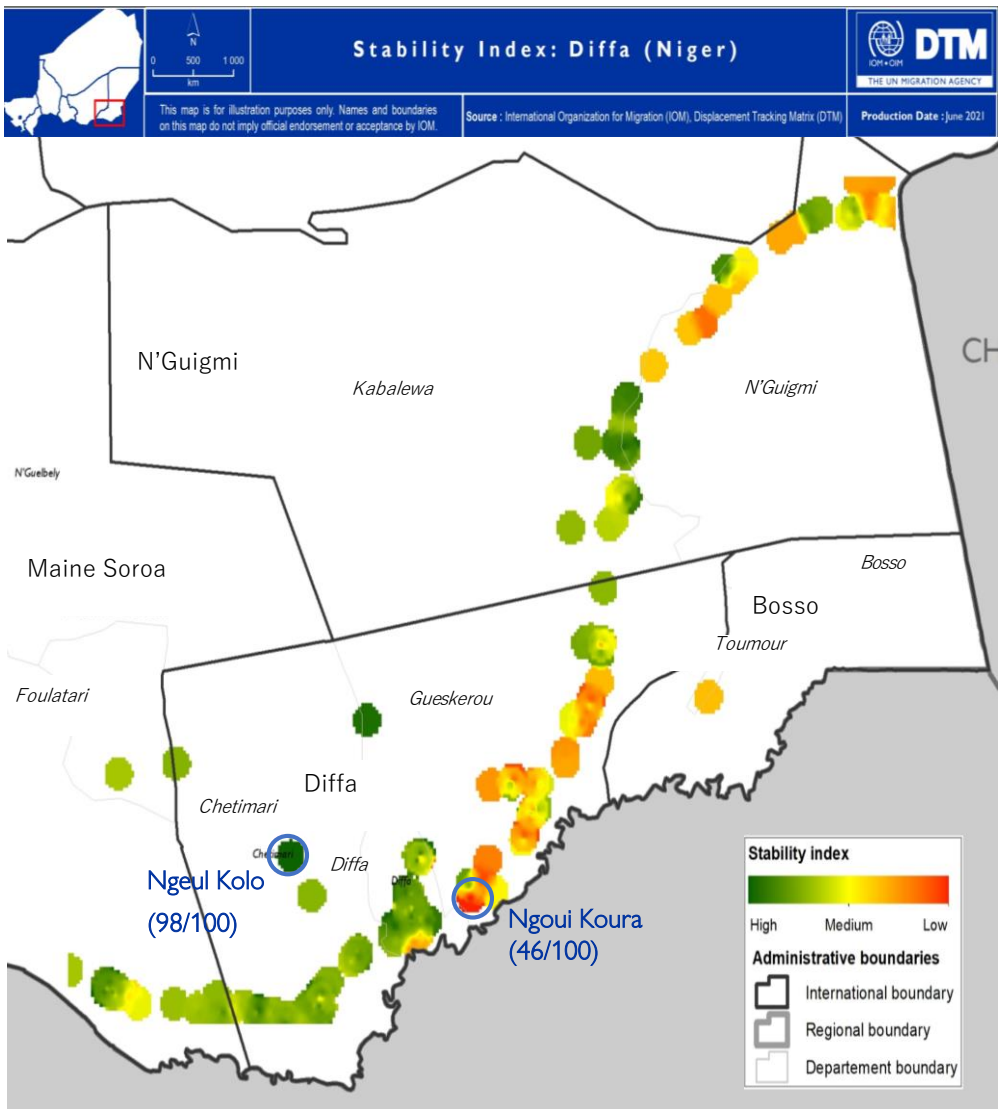
Ngoui Koura locality in the department of Diffa has a stability score of **46/100**, which is very low compared to average score for the country (79).

People in the locality indicated they may need to leave soon because of security or safety concerns. When looking at the high-impact variables in this locality, there is an increase of petty crimes observed in the three months preceding data collection. Additionally, although incidents related to armed groups decreased overall, there was a serious security incident that occurred in the locality within one month before data collection.

Ngeul Kolo

Ngeul Kolo locality in the department of Diffa has stability score of **98/100,** which is the highest stability score of all localities assessed.

People in this locality indicated that they do not need to leave soon because of any safety or security concerns. Petty crimes and security incidents decreased in the last three months. In this locality, there is no restriction on movement, and habitat and property are occupied legally.



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6. Conclusion

The results of the first round of the Stability Index data collection presented in this report reveal that a number of key indicators have a direct impact on the perception of stability in locations hosting displaced and returned populations in the region of Diffa. Findings suggest that the perception of stability in Diffa region of Niger is highly dependent on indicators on the safety and security scale, followed by livelihood and basic services scale, and to a lesser extent indicators in the social cohesion scale.

The ten most influential indicators on the perception of stability by order of impact, were: incidences of crime, activities of NSAGs, security incidents, freedom of movement, illegal occupation of land, habitat or property, resource tensions, presence of NSAGs, habitat destruction, access to ICT, and access to habitat. With the exception of the illegal occupation of land, habitat or property indicator (social cohesion scale), and the habitat destruction indicator (livelihood & basic services scale), eight of the most influential indicators are within the safety and security scale.

Indicators with the least influence on the perception of stability were mostly on the social cohesion scale: possession of identity documents, robbery of personal effects, and social cohesion and community support systems. The other least impactful indicators were under the livelihood & basic services scale: activity in local market, access to electricity.

The analysis presented in this report provides a better understanding of the main influential indicators and the various dynamics in the Diffa region and insight into possible programmatic and policy responses needed in the targeted communities.

6.1 Key Take-Aways

- Programming along the Humanitarian-Development Nexus: Analysing the differences between the localities with the highest and lowest scores on the Stability Index (section 3) can provide useful insights into programme priorities. Different programmes are needed in localities on opposite sides of the stability spectrum. For example, in localities with very low stability scores, immediate assistance might be needed to improve access to identity documents or information and communication technologies, while in localities with higher stability scores development programming may be more relevant to further strengthen resilience that may spin off on surrounding communities.

- Focus programming on Safety & Security indicators: In Diffa, four out of the five most influential variables are found in the safety and security scale, similar to the other three countries in the Lake Chad Basin. This highlights the need to develop responses that positively impact the specific variables on safety, security, in addition to the more "traditional" recovery programmes that promote livelihoods and access to basic public services.

Data Collection and Analysis Activities funded with the support of:

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7. Appendix

7.1 Selection of Localities Explained

The selection of localities was as broad as possible in areas affected by displacement and/or returns in the Diffa region of Niger.

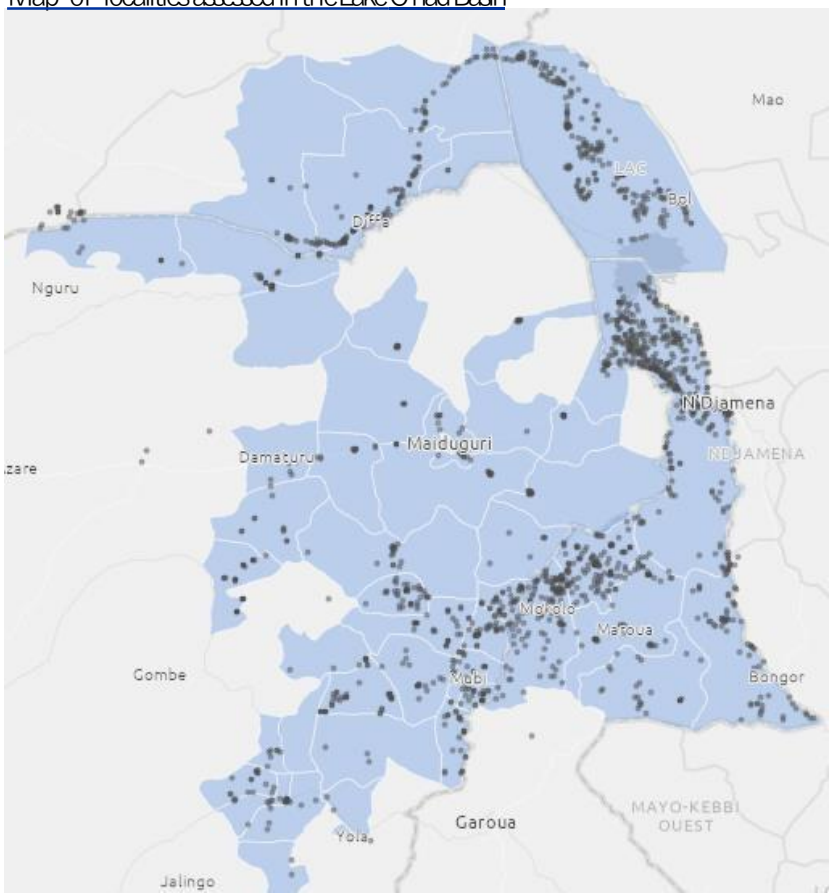
A list of localities was created based on data collected by IOM on displacement/returns and/or other existing data systems (census, administrative lists). All these localities were surveyed. The objective was to have a large enough number of localities both at country and regional level to ensure a solid statistical analysis.

A total of 1,893 locations in Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad, were covered as per map below. A locality is the administrative level 4 (lowest possible level). The level has a representation, whether formal (State) or informal (Chef de village).

Limitations
Some localities that were not accessible during the data collection period were not assessed due to security or logistical reasons. This may have introduced bias into the analysis as data points from some of the least secure locations were not collected. This limits the generalizability of the Stability Index in extremely insecure localities.

It is important to note that the Stability Index estimates informants' perceptions of stability and does not claim to provide an objective measure of this complex topic. Key informants are not randomly selected and may have different opinions about the stability in their locality than some of their neighbors.

Map of localities assessed in the Lake Chad Basin



7.2 Principal Component Analysis Explained

Principal Component Analysis is a statistical dimensionality reduction tool, which allows for the consideration of many variables by avoiding the typical concern of overfitting the model. PCA measures how each variable is associated with the others, the directions in which the data is dispersed, and the relative importance of each variable. Essentially, **PCA helps identify the indicators that are associated with the largest changes in a key variable of interest – in this case, the perception of stability**.

While each of the indicators is clearly important for informing programming along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, **PCA is particularly useful for demonstrating the impact of different indicators on one another, and the proportional influence of a given indicator on a given dataset**. For example, while the availability of electricity and access to health care are both individually important factors, they also heavily influence one another (this is called collinearity). PCA helps to see beyond the collinearity and drives at influence in a more coherent way, which is critical to understanding complex phenomena like the nature and conditions of return.

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7.3 – Survey Indicators

ANCHOR QUESTIONS: PERCEPTION OF STABILITY

These key indicators were used to measure the perception of stability in each locality. The key indicators where then tested against each of the thematic indicators below to identify the most influential thematic indicators on the perception of stability.

Feeling of Stability in the Locality

Describe the feeling of stability in the locality

Ability to Continue Living in Locality

Describes the feeling of the community about their ability to continue to live here

Changes in Stability Perception in the Last 6 Months

Change in this feelings over the last 6 months?

SCALE 1: LIVELIHOOD & SERVICES

Access to Drinking Water

Access to water and frequency of water provision in the locality

Access to Health Centers

Access to functioning health center in the locality or in neighboring town

Delaying Medical Care (due to COVID)

Residents delayed medical care because of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last 4 weeks

Delaying Medical Care (not due to COVID)

Residents delayed medical care for reasons other than COVID-19 the last 4 weeks

Farmland Cultivation and Access

Extent of farmland being cultivated in the locality

Fishing Grounds Usage and Access

Extent of fishing ground being used in the locality

Habitat Access

Proportion of community residents currently living in a habitat

Destruction of Habitat Due to Conflict

Extent of the habitat damaged due to conflict and of reconstruction access

ICT Access

Residents can connect (by mobile phone or WIFI) and improvement on network

Electricity Access

Access to electricity and frequency in the locality

Availability of Local Market

Markets open and supplied

Primary Education Access

Access to primary education and availability of schools in the locality or in neighbouring towns

Public Sector Employee Presence

Presence of public sector employee as per pre-conflict situation (public servants, teachers, nurses, etc.)

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7.3 – Survey Indicators

SCALE 2: SOCIAL COHESION

Equal Access to Basic Services

Indiscriminate access of populations in the locality to basic services and resources no matter their age, sex or group

Cattle Theft Reported

Cattle theft reported in the locality in the last 6 months

Illegal Occupation of House, Land and Property

Land, habitat or property occupied illegally (without authorization from family, neighbors, local authorities)

Robbery Personal Effects

Robbery of personal belongings in the last 6 months

Daily Public Life Activity

Street social activities and current daily public life in the locality

Social Cohesion And Community Support Systems

In case of problem with the supply of water or food in the locality, livelihood of cooperation between nearby communities

Community Tension

Incidents involving two community groups (religious, ethnic, herders/farmers, displaced/returnee/host communities) in the locality in the last 6 months

Identity Document Possession

Possession of identify documents and possibility of renewal if lost

Participation in Public Affairs

Residents' level of participation in local public and political life (civil society organizations, unions, committees, social gatherings, religious groups, sports activities)

SCALE 3: SAFETY AND SECURITY

Access to Legal Remedies

Access to legal remedies in the locality

Activities by Non-State Armed Groups

Current incident trend linked to activities by Non-State Armed Groups (kidnapping, terrorist attacks, fighting, raids bombing, killing of security forces) in the locality in the past 3 months

Curfew Imposed by State

Formal curfew for security reasons enforced by State

Curfew Imposed by Non-State Armed Groups

Formal curfew enforced by Non-State Armed Groups

Freedom of Movement

Residents' freedom of movement (to markets, to one's home, to the workplace, to farms, etc.) in the locality

Local Crime Incidents

Current incident trends linked with local crimes (theft, kidnapping, small scale crimes) in the locality in the past 3 months

Security Incidents Over Resources

Current incident trends linked to resources tensions (cattle raiding or killing, land conflict, communal clashes, etc.) in the locality in the past 3 months

Serious Security Incidents

Residents' concerned about security in the locality

Security Forces Presence

Presence of security forces in the locality

Police Presence

Presence of police/gendarmerie in the locality

Non-State Armed Groups Presence

Presence of Non-State Armed Groups in the locality

Community Perception of Security

Residents worried about security in the locality

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