



Program participant Mamadou discusses program impact and security status with Mercy Corps Staff – April 12, Dare Village, Bankass Circle, Mopti region. Photo: Mercy Corps.

IN BANKASS, THE PROJECT TO SUPPORT DISPLACED HOUSEHOLDS A MEANS OF SURVIVAL FOR THE POPULATION

At the end of the project to support displaced households, an assessment mission was held from 11 to 12 April in the Bankass circle, Mopti region. It was a unique opportunity for our teams to discuss with the participants not only the distribution of cash and food vouchers and the impact these have had on their lives, but also the recurring challenges they still face in their conflict-affected communities.

In Daré, a predominantly Fulani village, we met El Hadj Mamadou Bah, son of the former village chief who was murdered by armed individuals. Mamadou notes, as do our agents, the massive displacement of participants in the program over the last weeks. "Out of 90 households, only 25 are still present", he explains... "This village was founded by my father and his brother. After his assassination we all lost our social references and fear drove the villagers to flee. I refused to go into exile elsewhere, because it is here that our parents are buried."

Unlike the villages located 2 or 3 km away, Daré has not been the scene of atrocities or violence. Moreover, Mamadou talks about very good relations with the Dogon neighbors, the other predominant ethnic group in the area, at the time. Now, a certain mistrust has developed, often for no reason, between the different communities. Ogossagou's atrocities have created a climate of fear in the region. The population feels neglected and has very little confidence in the Malian military, which is considered unreliable and reactive.. Mamadou still remembers their passive attitude during an incident in Sadia, a neighboring village, where the Fulani were driven out and deprived of their property without any intervention by authorities or consequences afterwards.

According to Mamadou, the villagers have been immobilized since the beginning of the crisis because no livelihood activities are possible due to insecurity. "The assistance from Mercy Corps and the Scottish

Government is the only one we have received in the area. Until today (day of the interview), it is this money that allows us to survive.”

Despite the many consultation and awareness-raising meetings to which he has been invited, Mamadou sees no immediate solution to the crisis. He concluded his interview by asking all organizational, civilian, political and military actors to work for peace in Mali. "Your initiative has really saved our lives. I pray for the prosperity of your organization and those of your employees.”



Program participant Hamid Diallo displays his voucher-supported food purchases – February 7th, Dare commune, Bankass Circle, Mopti region. Photo: Mercy Corps.

Hamid Diallo, married and father of a family, is from the village of Tegrou. Due to community conflicts and lack of opportunity, he was forced to travel to Bankass with his family. "You can't stay somewhere without a means of subsistence. I no longer had the opportunity to breed and therefore no way to feed my family.

Hamid particularly appreciated Mercy Corps' approach and the distribution of vouchers. "Depending on the value of your voucher, you are served according to your needs. We received the food in the best of conditions.” He finds the support very beneficial and estimates the consumption period at 1.5 months. "This supply of basic necessities with a substantial amount really alleviates our suffering.”

To Mercy Corps and the Scottish Government, Hamid extends his sincere thanks while asking for more support as they still do not have a significant means of subsistence. "He who feeds you preserves your life - and for that I will never stop thanking you”