

Internally Displaced Persons and Socio-territorial Integration in the Commune of Kaya in Burkina Faso : what sustainable solutions to the crisis ?

ABSTRACT

Burkina Faso, hitherto spared from destabilization of all kinds, suffered its first terrorist acts in April 2015 in Samorogouan¹. These first terrorist acts were followed by several others that led to the forced internal displacement of nearly 2,000,000 people. 301 municipalities spread over the 13 regions of the country have been chosen by these IDPs² as destinations for refuge. The main objective of this study is to analyse the living conditions and socio-territorial integration of IDPs and durable solutions to address the crisis of forced internal displacement in the commune of Kaya. The methodological approach consisted of collecting data from a literature review and a field survey. The results of this study show that IDPs in Kaya commune face precarious living conditions. On the other hand, their conditions for socio-territorial integration are good in view of the cordial relations that the IDPs maintain with the host populations of the commune. In addition, durable solutions to address the forced internal displacement crisis include the resettlement of IDPs in other parts of the country, return to areas of origin and integration in IDP-hosting areas. These solutions could address forced internal displacement and address those affected. This would facilitate the reintegration or socio-territorial integration of IDPs either in their areas of origin or in their reception areas.

Keywords : *Internally Displaced Persons, Socio-territorial integration, Durable solutions, Crisis, Kaya.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of the popular uprising that toppled former leader Blaise Compaoré, Burkina Faso, reputed to be a stable country and a haven of peace in the West African sub-region, is facing a series of GAT attacks³. These GAT attacks accompanied by communal conflicts have led to the forced internal displacement of 1,882,391 people as of December 31, 2022, throughout the country [1]. This represents a 19.4% increase in the number of IDPs compared to the data on 31 December 2021 [1]. The Sahel, the North, the East, the Boucle du Mouhoun and the Centre-North are the regions hardest hit by this forced internal displacement crisis because they are the areas heavily infested by ATGs. These people are forced to leave their homes, property and socio-economic activities and move to the capitals of the above-mentioned regions, which are considered to be safer areas [2].

Kaya, the capital of Sanmatenga province and the Centre-North region, has been hosting large flows of IDPs since the beginning of the security crisis facing the country. As of 31 December 2022, 114,776 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have taken refuge in Kaya. Indeed, the urban commune of Kaya is chosen as a destination by these IDPs because of a number of opportunities it abounds in, unlike other communes in the Centre-North region which are often confronted with GAT attacks and inter-communal conflicts. In addition, the gendarmerie and police stations, and the military camp of Dondolé make the town of Kaya a safe and secure place, spared from terrorist attacks and intercommunal conflicts, which attract a multitude of IDPs. But, once in Kaya, the IDPs are confronted with the harsh reality of the city's difficult living conditions for their socio-territorial integration. They face overcrowded housing, precariousness and limited access to basic services and infrastructure. They also face difficulties in finding livelihoods and new sources of income because they can no longer carry out their socio-economic activities, which are essentially rural activities. To cope with these vicissitudes, some IDPs are adopting socio-economic integration strategies, [2] and [3]. They engage in a range of informal socio-economic activities.

¹ Samorogouan (a rural commune in the province of Kénédougou in the Hauts-Bassins region of western Burkina Faso)

² IDPs: Internally Displaced Persons

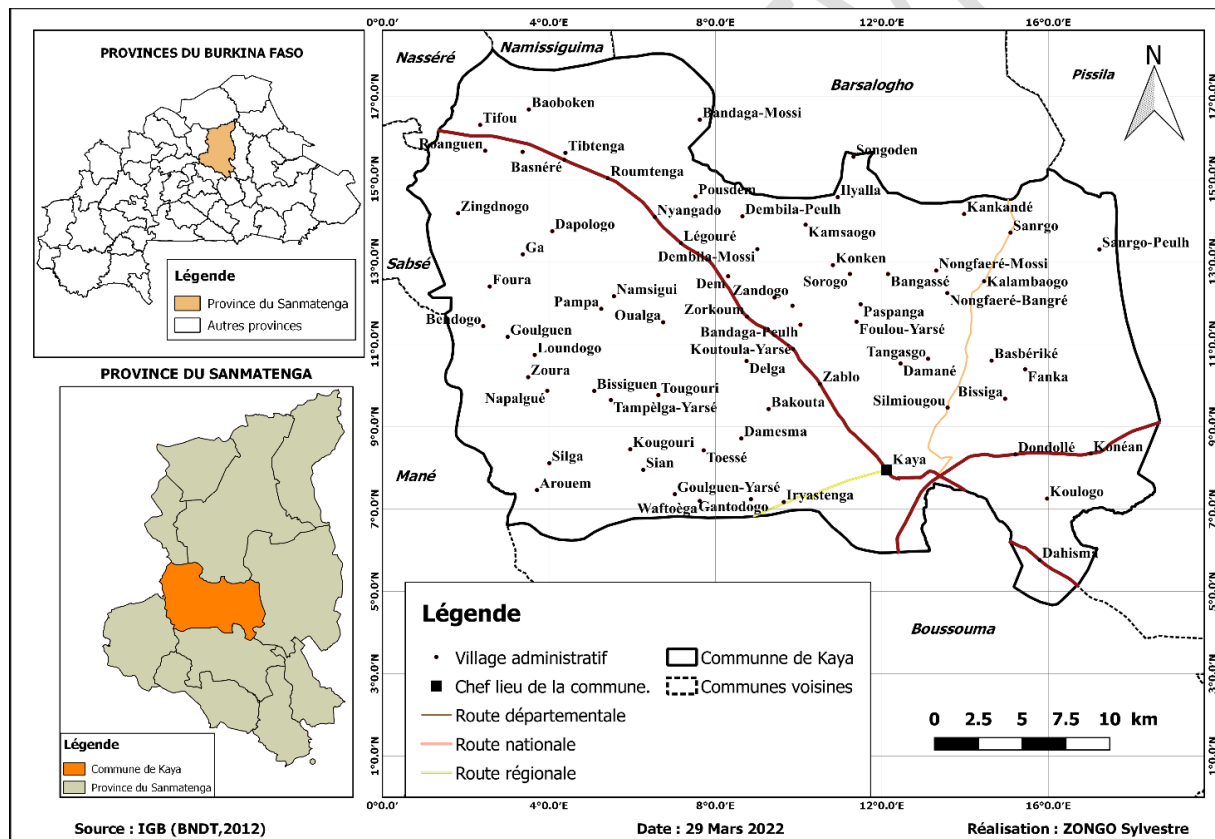
³ GAT: Armed Terrorist Groups

The main question of this study is: what are the living conditions and socio-territorial integration of IDPs in the commune of Kaya? The specific questions that arise from the main question are as follows: (1) In what conditions do IDPs live and integrate socio-territorially in the commune of Kaya? (2) What are the possible durable solutions to address the crisis of forced internal displacement in Kaya commune?

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE STUDY

Kaya Commune is located in Sanmatenga Province. It is also the capital of the Centre-North region and the province of Sanmatenga. It covers an area of 922 km² and is bordered to the north by the rural commune of Barsalogho, to the north-west by the rural commune of Namissiguima, to the south-west by the rural communes of Sabcé (Bam) and Mané, to the west by the rural commune of Nasséré (Bam), to the south by the rural commune of Boussouma and to the east by the rural commune of Pissila. The commune of Kaya is located about 100 kilometers from the capital, Ouagadougou. The main access road to the commune is the RN3 National Road which connects Ouagadougou to the town of Dori in the Sahel region. (Map 1)

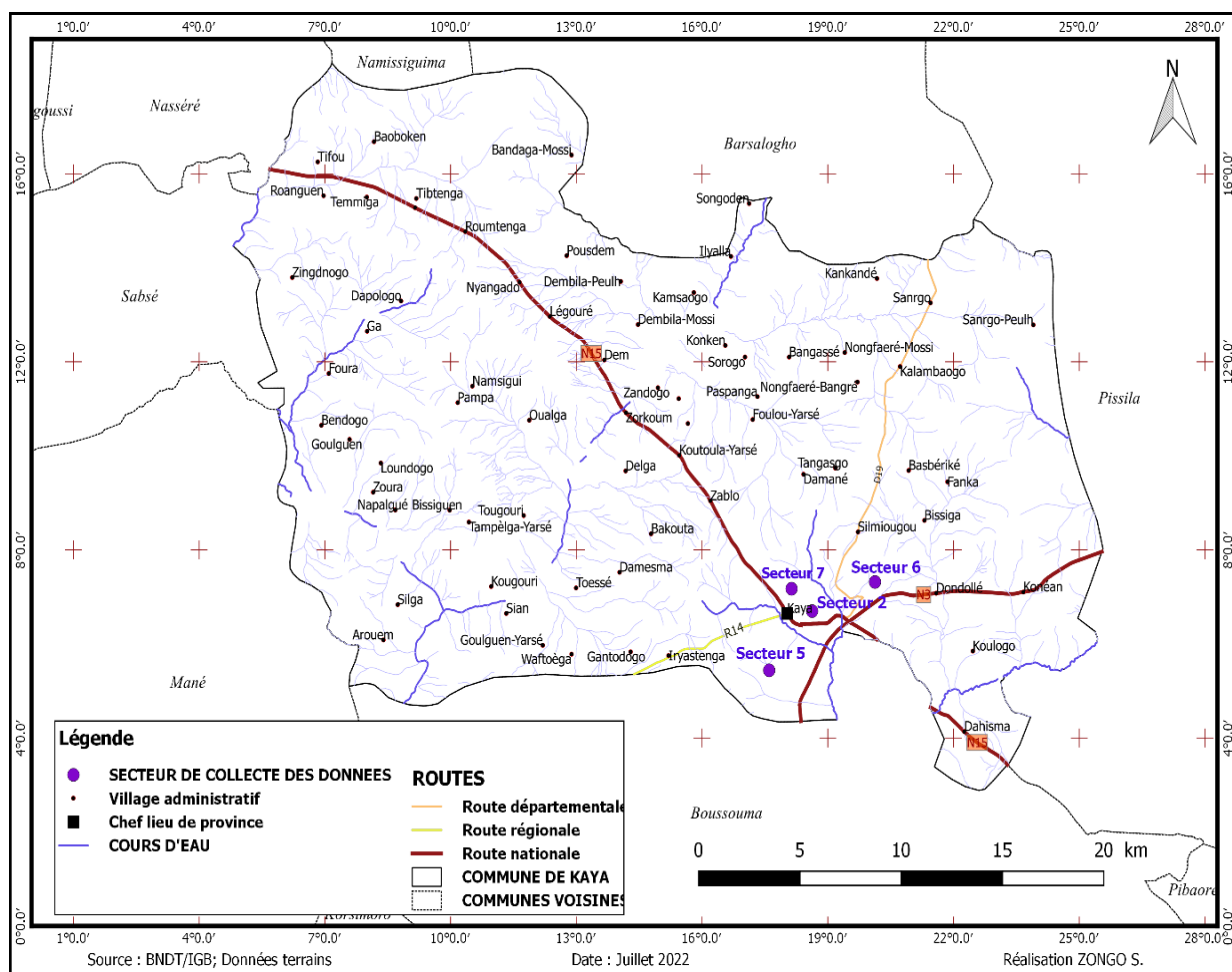
Map 1: Location of the study area



The methodology of the study consists of a literature review on the theme in question, the collection of primary data through a survey conducted from a questionnaire among IDP households, an interview with some social action actors in the city of Kaya and a direct observation in the field of study.

The surveys covered a demographic sample of 216 IDP households. Spatial sampling was carried out on 06 sites, including 2 manned IDP clustering sites and 4 uninhabited IDP clustering sites. These sites are spread over 04 sectors out of 07 sectors in the municipality of Kaya. These are sectors n°2, n°5, n°6 and n°7, (map n°2). The choice of these sectors is justified by the fact that they are home to the largest number of internally displaced persons in the municipality.

Map 2. Spatial sampling



Data was collected from KoboCollect and processed with the Excel 2016 spreadsheet for the production of statistics and graphs. The maps were made using Arc Gis 10.2 software, based on data collected in the field with the Global Positioning System (GPS).

3. STUDY RESULTS

The analysis resulted in results addressing the various research questions. These are (i) the living conditions and socio-territorial integration of IDPs, (ii) durable solutions to the forced displacement crisis in the commune of Kaya.

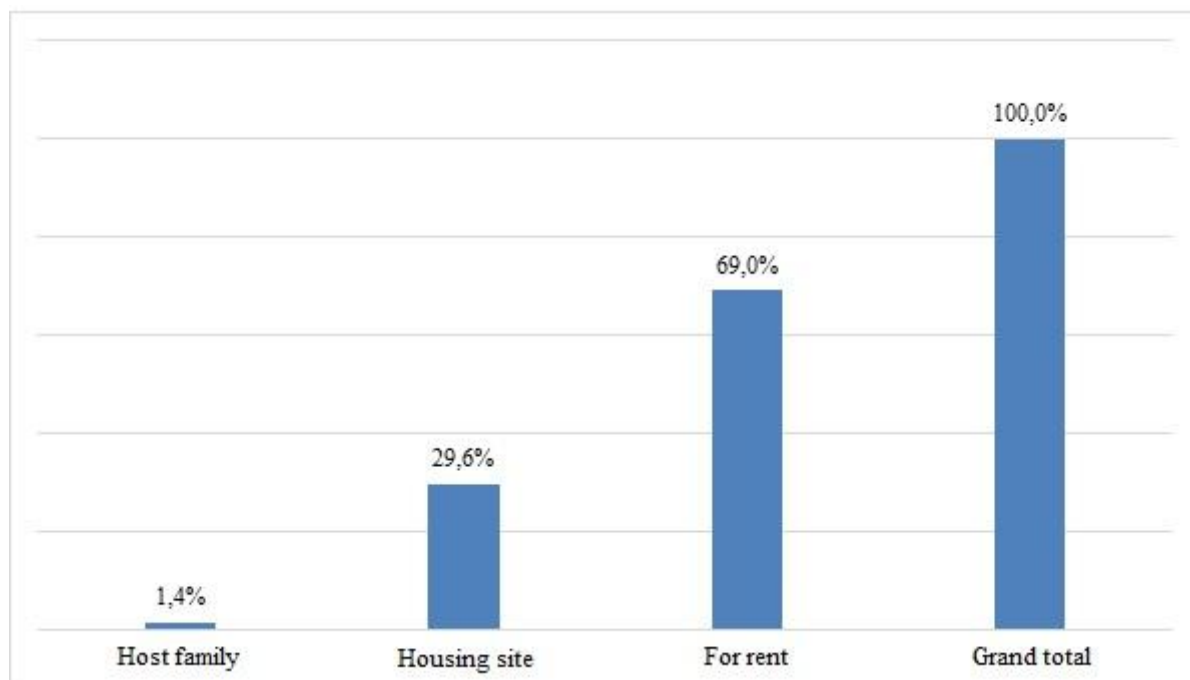
3.1. The living conditions and socio-territorial integration of IDPs in the commune of Kaya

3.1.1. The living conditions of IDPs in Kaya commune

Displaced by compulsion, Internally Displaced Persons, without means of subsistence because they have been stripped of all their belongings, are confronted with precarious living conditions in the commune of Kaya. They face enormous difficulties in accessing decent housing, livelihoods, health care and sanitation, and education.

IDPs in the commune of Kaya face a variety of difficulties in finding housing. Not all households are accommodated by humanitarian assistance. Only 31% of IDP households received a housing offer upon arrival in Kaya. Of these households, 56.7% consider their housing to be indecent and unsuitable for their lifestyle. The vast majority of IDP households, 69%, live in rented accommodation. 1.4% live with host families and 29.6% live in IDP regroupment sites in tents and vaults as shown in Figure 1 below.

Fig 1. Distribution of IDP Surveyed Households by Dwelling Type



Source :Field data, June 2021

The housing difficulties of IDPs are mentioned by the former mayor of Kaya who said in these terms: "Some IDPs sleep where the night finds them. Others are in schools where they risk expulsion in order to allow students to return to classes at the start of the school year."⁴ IDPs in Kaya live in shelters that are often precarious and overcrowded, lacking a minimum of amenities and conditions conducive to the spread of infectious diseases (covid-19). Above all, during the rainy season, some accommodations, especially tents and vaults, are soaked and filled with water when there is a heavy rain, (*photo 1*). This is due to the high number of IDPs, land tensions and problems on the ground.

Photo 1. Housing in the form of a vault soaked with water in the rainy season

⁴ February 4, 2020 release by WWW.Burkina24.com



Source: IOM (23/07/2019)

Access to livelihoods is a Chinese 'headache' for IDPs. Despite the fact that all IDPs without exception are entitled to livelihoods up to the limit of the available stock, 30.6% of IDP households surveyed did not receive livelihoods upon arrival in Kaya. 92.7% of households that received livelihoods consider them inadequate. This is explained by the average household size of 15 individuals per household and the weak capacity of the Burkinabe government and its partners (OCHA, ⁵UNHCR⁶, APIL,⁷ WFP⁸, NCR⁹, UNDP¹⁰, Plan Burkina, etc.) to meet the food needs of all IDPs throughout the country. Livelihoods consisting of money and food (cereals, foodstuffs of all kinds, etc.), in addition to being inadequate, often meet the food needs of IDPs with a few exceptions, because of the religious sensitivities of some people regarding food.

Upon arrival in the commune of Kaya, IDPs are registered, but do not benefit from any health checks (according to 100% of the heads of households interviewed). However, health outposts supported by humanitarian partners are being set up to deal with cases of minor diseases on the spot. In addition, there are rudimentary health centres set up at IDP clusters. The most critical cases of illness are evacuated to appropriate health centres for proper management. However, although the health infrastructure is close to the IDPs, it remains insufficient in relation to the number of displaced people and the host population of the commune. Indeed, health centres, which are insufficient for the host population, are saturated and become sources of other pathologies for distraught IDPs. Not all IDPs are fully covered by health care. 42.6% of IDP households are not supported at all. They are treated at their own expense in public and private health facilities in the municipality. 37.5% of IDP households are partially covered compared to only 19.9% are fully covered for their health care (*Figure 2*).

⁵ OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

⁶ UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

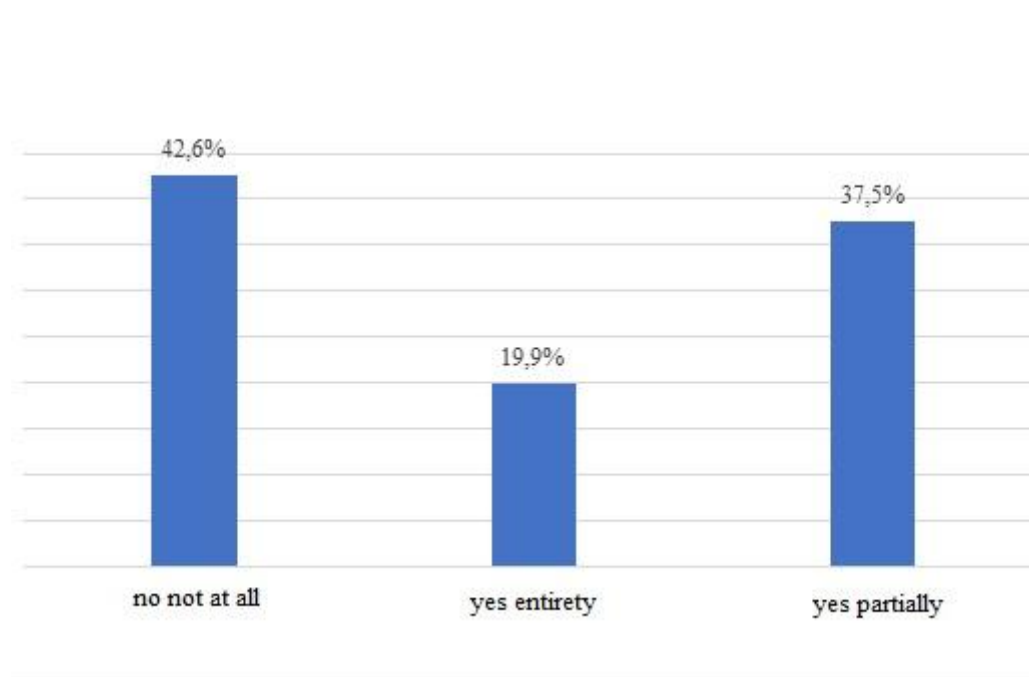
⁷ APIL: Action for the Promotion of Local Initiatives.

⁸ WFP: World Food Programme.

⁹ NCR: Norwegian Refugee Council.

¹⁰ UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

Fig 2. Levels of health care care care of IDPs surveyed



Source :Field data, June 2021

These trends easily explain the persistent health problems among displaced people in Kaya, who do not have sufficient financial means to treat themselves (consultation fees, hospitalization and purchase of medicines, etc.).

For access to education, provisions are being implemented to enable children with disabilities to continue their schooling in the commune of Kaya, their reception area. These provisions are education in emergency situations set up by the Ministry of National Education, Literacy and the Promotion of National Languages (MENAPLN), the allocation of solidarity funds to educational structures and the creation of education hostels within IDP regroupment sites by the social partners. All of these provisions make it possible to ensure the education of people on the move. Despite these efforts, not all school-age children with disabilities are enrolled in a school. This is corroborated by 70.4% of the heads of household surveyed who have some children who are still in school after forced displacement. 22.2% have no children in school after displacement. Only 7.4% of the heads of households surveyed have all their children in school. These are households that don't have many children. The lack of information on the actual number of IDP children, the presence of unaccompanied children and child heads of household, insufficient funding for the education of IDP children, and the poverty of IDP parents are all reasons why not all IDP children attend school.

3.1.2. Socio-territorial integration of IDPs in the commune of Kaya

For a variety of reasons, it is not always clear that IDPs have good relations with the populations in their host area. However, in the town of Kaya, IDPs appear to have cordial relations with the host populations, probably because of the family ties that exist between many of them. As a result, contrary to the living conditions considered precarious, the conditions for the social and territorial integration of IDPs seem to be good. These good conditions for the social and territorial integration of IDPs in Kaya can be explained by the fact that 89.9% of respondents do not feel any feeling of hatred regarding their presence in public places (markets/commerce, leisure, etc.) compared to only 7.3% who face a feeling of hatred on the part of the host populations and 2.8% who do not know the feeling felt by the host populations towards them. In addition, 80.8% of respondents do not face a feeling of mistrust among indigenous populations in public places. 16.4% of respondents feel mistrust and 2.8% do not

know what indigenous people think of them. These trends reflect the good coexistence of IDPs with host populations. This could contribute to further improving the conditions for the social and territorial integration of IDPs in their host area; the municipality of Kaya.

3.2. Durable solutions to the forced internal displacement crisis in Kaya commune

The crisis of forced internal displacement requires a serious look not only from the central authorities of Burkina Faso, but also from the municipal authorities of the commune of Kaya. Durable solutions must be found to provide relief to victims who continue to move from one locality to another, across the country.

3.2.1. The return of IDPs to their areas of origin

The return of displaced persons to their areas of origin is a viable solution to the crisis of forced displacement of IDPs in Kaya. This solution is supported by a very large majority of the IDP heads of household surveyed, i.e. 89.8%, who wish to return to their areas of origin. The IDPs' intention to return is motivated by the fact that they are still nostalgic for their areas of origin. They do not have favourable conditions to carry out their socio-economic activities, which are essentially rural activities. In addition, they consider living conditions in the city to be difficult compared to those in the countryside. Idleness and a desire to take care of themselves are other reasons cited by IDPs for their desire to return to their areas of origin. However, the return of internally displaced persons to their areas of origin must be subject to a number of conditions. First of all, peace and tranquillity in these areas of origin should be guaranteed through the return of security. Secondly, to prepare the communities of origin for the return of IDPs. In addition, repair infrastructure and services (schools, health centres, roads, water and electricity supply networks, homes, etc.) that have been attacked by ATGs. Finally, provide livelihood assistance and psychological support to victims of forced internal displacement. All these conditions must first be overseen by the voluntary and individual decision of IDPs to return to their localities of origin.

3.2.2. Local integration of IDPs in their host area (Kaya commune)

Ideally, IDPs should be able to integrate locally in their host area, i.e. in the commune of Kaya. But first, certain conditions would have to be met. Indeed, it is a question of promoting social cohesion between IDPs and host populations. Host populations must first accept IDPs before any process aimed at their local integration. In addition, there is a need to ensure adequate and regular access for displaced persons to basic social services including drinking water, livelihoods (cash and food), health care and sanitation (34.5% of IDP households surveyed in Kaya do not have toilets), education, employment, decent housing, etc. IDPs must also benefit from socio-psychological care, especially those who have been victims of particular trauma (sexual assault, looting, atrocities committed by the ATGs, etc.). In addition, municipal authorities supported by the central government and its humanitarian partners must implement local economic development programmes to facilitate the socio-economic integration of IDPs. These programmes could focus on socio-vocational training in trades such as welding, painting, dyeing, weaving, threading, etc., and in activities such as cattle fattening and small trade, for the benefit of IDPs, especially youth and women. Also, settlement kits and funds for Income Generating Activities (IGAs) can be made available to IDPs who want to take care of themselves so that they can take care of their families instead of relying solely on humanitarian assistance, which is not always easy. The effective implementation of all these above-mentioned conditions is a guarantee of the successful local integration of displaced persons in the commune of Kaya.

4. DISCUSSION

This study shows that IDPs in Kaya commune, like all people in a situation of forced displacement, face precarious living conditions. They face enormous difficulties in meeting their most basic needs

such as access to decent housing, livelihoods of sufficient quality and quantity, health care and sanitation, education, etc. This is corroborated by authors like [3] and [4] in their various writings. According to the authors, displaced people are often deprived of basic needs such as food, shelter, health care or basic infrastructure. [5], goes on to say that the fundamental rights of victims of forced displacement, such as the right to life, equality, freedom of movement, work, education, housing in dignified conditions and social security, are generally undermined in their reception areas. According to [6], IDPs face eight main risks which are loss of land, loss of employment, loss of home, marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to community resources, and disintegration of their communities. Mortality rates among IDPs are up to 60 times higher than average mortality rates [7]. [8], for its part, states that internally displaced persons may also face the increased risk of tensions with the communities hosting them or, the increased risk of being victims of violence, especially women, who constitute one of the most vulnerable groups.

It is not always easy for people who are victims of forced internal displacement to be able to integrate socio-territorially in their host areas. However, in the case of IDPs in Kaya commune, the situation is quite different. Their socio-territorial conditions of integration, in contrast to the living conditions considered precarious, seem to be good. This is justified by the cordial relations that IDPs have with their hosts. This assertion of IDPs is refuted by authors such as [9]; [10]; [11]; [12]; [13]; [5]; [2], [3] and [14] who claim that displaced persons are generally segregated from the host population in camps or slums located on the outskirts of urban centres, lacking basic socio-economic infrastructure. Their freedom of movement is restricted by inappropriate regulations and laws put in place by the authorities of the host areas. IDPs who do not live in camps or slums are scattered throughout urban centres and do not benefit from humanitarian assistance to people on the move. Finding viable employment for these displaced people is an uphill battle. Because of their status as displaced persons, most of them do not have access to informal employment, let alone formal employment. Those who are lucky enough to have a job only work in the informal sector where low incomes do not allow them to lead a decent life. The situation of displaced women is even more delicate. They are finding it increasingly difficult to find work compared to men. According to [12], the types of jobs available to them are those of waitresses or dishwashers in restaurants and domestic servants. In shelters, displaced women often face all kinds of ill-treatment, sexual exploitation and abuse by their employers, and non-payment of their wages.

It is clear that in order to resolve this crisis of forced internal displacement, which puts many families in situations of precarious living and extreme destitution, solutions must be considered. These possible solutions can be the return of IDPs to their areas of origin and the local integration of IDPs in their host area (Kaya commune). The return of IDPs to their areas of origin, as a solution to the forced internal displacement crisis, is supported by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) [15] which stipulate that the decision to return rests with the displaced persons and must be individual and voluntary. The Danish Refugee Council goes further, stating that return must be subject to a minimum of conditions. These conditions include consideration of immediate needs, respect for the rights and dignity of displaced persons, and peace and security in deserted areas. The local integration of IDPs in their host areas, as a solution to the crisis of forced internal displacement, is defended by the Kampala Convention cited by [16].

5. CONCLUSION

At the end of this study, we can conclude that people who are victims of forced internal displacement in the urban commune of Kaya face difficult living conditions. They face many vicissitudes in accessing basic social needs. On the other hand, their socio-territorial conditions of integration seem to be good in view of the cordial relations that the IDPs maintain with the host populations of the commune of Kaya. However, durable solutions can be envisaged to address the forced internal displacement crisis in Kaya. These durable solutions are the return of displaced persons to their areas of origin and the local integration of IDPs in their host areas. These durable solutions could enable IDPs to recover decent living conditions, either in their areas of origin or in their host areas.

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