

Risk management in Ivory Coast : Case study of population evictions in Port-Bouët, Abidjan

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Introduction

Beginning in 2011, the State of Ivory Coast decided to evict populations in risk zones of the Autonomous District of Abidjan in order to reduce the impacts of natural disasters. The last major eviction operation concerned the cleansing of the coastline in the Port-Bouët commune, threatened – according to authorities – by the advancement of the sea.

Objectives

- To analyse the evolution of the coast in the commune of Port-Bouët during the period 2001-2016.
- To measure the surface area of zones evacuated by the authorities in October 2014.

Where ?



Methods

The coastal dynamics and the surface area of the evacuated coastal zone have been analysed using high resolution spatial images available in Open Access on *Google Earth* between 2001 and 2016.

Results



The diachronic comparison of 29 satellite images available from *Google Earth* from June 2001 to January 2016 show, as is illustrated below, that the coastline is stable throughout the commune of Port-Bouët.



The eviction at the end of 2014 covered a zone of 10,4 km. The most densely populated area is the destroyed stretch between the main road and the beach, which varies in width between 63 et 289 m. The total surface of evictions is 123,75 ha.

Conclusion

Eviction is synonymous with forced displacement, violent and authoritarian that has direct and indirect consequences on the health, economic and social wellbeing of affected populations. Additionally, the justifications given for the evictions were the threat imposed by coastal erosion in Port-Bouët and the construction of a highway connecting Abidjan to Grand-Bassam. However, our analysis proves that the coastal dynamics have been relatively stable over the past 15 years. The government's arguments are therefore unsubstantiated. What's more, the forced displacement of these populations should respond to a number of requirements, such as the Kampala Convention (ratified by Ivory Coast) that guarantees the protection of people internally displaced by natural disasters, development projects or armed conflicts. The Ivory Coast has therefore agreed to « provide just and fair compensation and other forms of reparation, where appropriated, to internally displaced persons for damage incurred as a result of displacement » (Art. 12.1 of the Kampala Convention). . Clearly, this has not been respected.