

## Children Stolen From Mali

I'm sure many of you have heard the stories of children being sold as slaves. I've heard it, but I guess it was so incomprehensible that I was never really impacted by it.

This week in our little town of Yako, a van was stopped for a common police check. They found about 30 children, average age 12-16 en route to the capital city where buyers were awaiting their arrival. Apparently they were 'stolen' from Mali, just 100 km north of Yako.

They are currently being held in a room in our local Social Services offices while the authorities determine how they will get them back to where they belong. The really sad thing is, several of them had gone willingly. Of course they were fooled by promises of work and a better life in the capital city of Burkina; but to think life could get that desperate for children that young. Those who have parents may have been willingly sent by their parents who struggle to provide for their children; so this seemed like their only choice.

I visited them on Thursday and they seemed okay on the outside. But, oh, what must be happening on the inside. It's heartbreaking.

We were able to provide food to the Social Services agency to help care for them. It's probably better care than any of them will get once they get back 'home'. Please pray!