

**NIGERIA**

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# Navigating the in-between

IDPs' Search for Security in  
Northwest Nigeria

**January 2023**



### **About REACH**

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information please visit [our website](#). You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.



## SUMMARY

**This report presents the findings of an assessment on the movement dynamics of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Northwest Nigeria.** The study was conducted by REACH Initiative Nigeria between March and September 2022 and aimed to provide humanitarian and development organisations in Nigeria with information to guide their planning and programming efforts in the region. The report focuses on the factors that contribute to and shape displacement in the displacement-affected states of Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara, and examines the availability and nature of refuge for displaced populations, as well as their plans and future movement intentions.

### **Insecurity was the main driver of displacement.**

- Overall, findings suggested insecurity was the main driver of displacement, with slight variances in the types of insecurity triggering displacement observed between the assessed states. **Armed banditry** was the most reported driver among IDP households interviewed in Sokoto (78%) and Zamfara (68%). Whereas, in Katsina, the most reported driver of displacement was **kidnapping and abduction** (65%). FGD participants reported that while insecurity had been a general experience for a prolonged period of time, the perceived intensification of violence was often reported to have triggered displacement. Further analysis suggested that displacement decision-making was a complex process shaped by various direct and indirect factors. For instance, focus group discussion (FGD) participants interviewed in Katsina and Zamfara states also commonly reported sexual and gender-based violence as an important driver of displacement. In addition, while FGD participants in all three states mentioned that food insecurity due to lack of access to farms was a factor in displacement decision-making, participants often reported that threats to personal security were decisive in triggering displacement within their community.

### **Bandit attacks enroute was the most reported protection concern, posing a barrier to mobility in some instances.**

- Bandit attacks were reported as posing a serious threat to security for those travelling between settlements. Attacks could reportedly lead to kidnapping and robbery. For many IDPs, especially in Zamfara and Katsina, the high probability of such attacks was acting as a barrier to their mobility, preventing many from leaving an unsafe location. Most IDPs reported using bush paths to travel during displacement to avoid bandits. Other barriers to mobility reported by FGD participants across all three states included road closure, lack of transportation and lack of financial means to travel.

### **Findings suggested that towns and urban centres were perceived to have some form of security apparatus and were thus sought after for refuge.**

- IDPs reported seeking refuge in towns and urban centres under the presumption that these locations would provide them with security and access to sources of livelihood and basic services.

### **In Katsina and Zamfara, displacement appeared to be mostly localised, within LGA boundaries. In Sokoto, IDPs reportedly usually travelled to the state's headquarters in the centre of the state.**

- In Katsina and Zamfara states, IDPs reported staying within their Local Government Area (LGA) of origin through the course of their displacement. Staying close to their area of origin was reportedly important for IDPs in these states as they **anticipated returning in the near future**. This was the case despite the high prevalence of IDPs who had experienced re-displacement after attempting to return in both these states. Long distance journeys appeared more common in Sokoto, with findings suggesting this was mostly due to the availability of state and NGO-supported camps and camp-like structures in the state capital.

### **Multiple displacement and re-displacement after return was reported by at least one of every two IDP households interviewed in Katsina and Zamfara**

- Displacement patterns including multiple instances of displacement (from one place of displacement to another) and re-displacement (displacement after temporary return) were more commonly reported in Katsina and Zamfara compared to Sokoto, with 56% and 50% of IDP households in Katsina and Zamfara respectively reporting re-displacement after temporary return (compared to 19% in Sokoto) and 63% and 54% of IDP households in Katsina and Zamfara respectively reporting having been displaced multiple times (compared to 26% in Sokoto).

**Daily displacement was commonly observed in all three states.**

- In all three states, daily displacement was also reported, with IDPs moving to and from their area of origin and area of displacement on a regular basis in search of safety and security. In Northwest Nigeria, where poverty levels are high, movements like daily migration may have helped communities **negotiate between the resources required to displace in the first place and the insecurity experienced** in the event of being rendered involuntarily immobile.

**Household separation and reunification was a commonly reported phenomenon with variation across the three states.**

- Separation from household members during displacement was reported by a considerable proportion of IDP households in Sokoto (23%), Katsina (39%), and Zamfara (35%). Qualitative data from FGDs in all three states also showed that some participants had **left their children behind during displacement**. Reunification rates were higher in Katsina (79%) and Zamfara (83%) than in Sokoto (42%), potentially due to shorter displacement journeys in the former states.

**Vulnerable groups may be experiencing involuntary immobility.**

- The assessment also identified people left behind during displacement, including elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and pregnant women. These groups reportedly often faced additional challenges and were more vulnerable to the impacts of insecurity.

**Overall, the findings of this assessment highlighted the need for credible information and access to possible durable solutions for IDPs in Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara.**

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## List of Acronyms

<b>IDP:</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>CDD:</b>	Centre for development and democracy
<b>LGA:</b>	Local Government Authority
<b>FGD:</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>MSF:</b>	Médecins Sans Frontières
<b>IOM:</b>	International Organisation of Migration
<b>DTM:</b>	Displacement Tracking Matrix
<b>LSE:</b>	London School of Economics
<b>UN:</b>	United Nations
<b>INEC:</b>	Independent National Electoral Commission
<b>HH:</b>	Household
<b>MSNA:</b>	Multi Sector Needs Assessment
<b>GIS:</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>NW:</b>	Northwest
<b>PPS:</b>	Probability Proportional to Size
<b>KII:</b>	Key informant Interview
<b>MOPOL:</b>	Mobile Police
<b>AoO:</b>	Area of Origin
<b>AoD:</b>	Area of Displacement
<b>SGBV:</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SEMA:</b>	State Emergency Management Authority
<b>HQ:</b>	Headquarter
<b>IVCP:</b>	Illegal Vehicle Checkpoint
<b>UNHCR:</b>	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
<b>AOG:</b>	Armed and Opposition Group
<b>NSAG:</b>	Non-State Armed Group
<b>WASH:</b>	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
<b>NFI:</b>	Non-Food Item
<b>ERL:</b>	Early Recovery and Livelihoods

## Geographical Classifications

<b>Zone:</b>	Nigeria is divided into 6 geopolitical zones, and each zone encompasses a series of States.
<b>State:</b>	Administered by State governments, the second tier of government below the national government. In total, Nigeria has 36 States in addition to the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja). This MSNA covers 3 states in the (NWT) Northwest zone.
<b>LGA:</b>	Administered by local government councils. Nigeria counts 774 LGAs.
<b>Ward:</b>	Each LGA is subdivided in 10-20 wards, each administered by a councillor who reports to the LGA chairman.
<b>Settlement:</b>	An informal grouping of houses, neighbourhood, town, or agglomeration of towns not classified for administrative purposes.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of an assessment on the movement dynamics of IDPs in Northwest Nigeria conducted between March and September 2022 by REACH Nigeria. It seeks to provide humanitarian and development actors in Nigeria with information upon which to build displacement-sensitive and local programming. Drawing on primary and secondary data, the report focuses on issues that impact and drive displacement in the Northwestern states of Sokoto, Katsina, and Zamfara.

**This assessment comes at a time of increasing insecurity and displacement in Northwest Nigeria.** The politicisation of petty criminality in a region severely affected by poverty, climate change and resource scarcity has led to a spiralling crisis generally referred to as bandit insurgency in the Northwest (and North Central) states of Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> In September 2022, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) called for the humanitarian coordination to pay attention to the Northwest of Nigeria, which was suffering from a malnutrition crisis it described as “catastrophic and a critical emergency”.<sup>2</sup> In a report based on data collected in September 2022, 551,969 individuals in Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara States were reported as displaced, of which about 17% (97,431 individuals) had crossed over to Niger as refugees and the rest remained in Nigeria as IDPs.<sup>3</sup>

In this context of increasing internal displacement, escalating insecurity, malnutrition<sup>4</sup>, and resource scarcity<sup>5</sup>, which could potentially result in more displacement and damage to life and property, **this report seeks to provide an understanding of the drivers and patterns of displacement, the nature of refuge available to populations, and their movement intentions.**

## Background

The earliest crisis-causing elements within the region came in the form of resource stress and competition that led to small scale conflicts between farming communities, nomadic or migrating pastoralists, as well as criminal gangs rustling cattle.<sup>6</sup> Buttressed by a slew of factors, including climate change, food insecurity, poverty<sup>7</sup> and the proliferation of small arms and ammunition, these incidences evolved to take the form of a general trajectory of deteriorating rural insecurity since the 2000s that fostered large scale banditry and criminality,<sup>8</sup> originating first in Zamfara and then spilling into nearby States, including Katsina and Sokoto.<sup>9</sup>

Early in 2010 and 2011<sup>10</sup>, leading up to the 2011 parliamentary and presidential elections, a spike in the incidence of violence was observed, followed by further intensification in 2013.<sup>11</sup> In response to renewed violence, groups of civilians mobilised into local militia groups known either as *yan sakai* or *yan banga*, from late 2014 onwards.<sup>12</sup> While this provided a sense of security in some communities, it also led to inter-ethnic tensions in other cases as militias targeted groups and individuals belonging to

<sup>1</sup> Igwe Uche, “What do the armed bandits terrorising Nigeria want?” Africa at LSE, September 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “UN must recognise ‘critical emergency’ malnutrition crisis in northwest Nigeria,” September 2022.

<sup>3</sup> IOM DTM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, “Nigeria North-West and North-Central Crisis Monthly Dashboard #1,” December 2022.

<sup>4</sup> MSF, “UN must recognise ‘critical emergency’ malnutrition crisis in northwest Nigeria,” September 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ezenwa E. Olumba, “The Politics of Eco-Violence: Why Is Conflict Escalating in Nigeria’s Middle Belt?” Terrorism and Political Violence, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Abdulyakeen Abdulrasheed, “Armed Banditry and Human Security in Northwestern Nigeria: The Impacts and the Way Forward,”

Journal of Humanities Social and Management Sciences Edwin Clark University, Vol 1 NO 1, July 2021

<sup>7</sup> As of 2019, all seven states in the zone had poverty levels above the national average of 40.1 per cent, led by Sokoto (87.7 per cent), Jigawa (87 per cent) and Zamfara (74 per cent). Source: National Bureau of Statistics, “2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary,” May 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “Zamfara state gripped by humanitarian crisis as violence escalates,” June 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Bilesanmi Olalekan, “Zamfara report on banditry: Two ex-Govs indicted, another for trial, 15 Emirs to be removed,” Vanguard, September 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Ransoms paid to kidnappers between June 2011 and March 2020 amounted to a minimum of \$18 million. Source: Aljazeera, “Nigeria outlaws Ransom payments. Kidnap now punishable by death,” April 2022.

<sup>11</sup> The Governor of Zamfara has banned all political activities, including gatherings and rallies, in the state pending the official commencement of electioneering. Source: “In New Zamfara Law, Terrorists, Informants, Kidnappers Face Death Penalty,” August 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Chitra Nagarajan, “Analysis of Violence and Insecurity in Zamfara,” February 2020.

specific ethnicities, viewed them with suspicion, and blocked them from accessing towns, markets and other essential services<sup>13</sup> inciting retaliatory cycles of violence.<sup>14</sup>

The State governments made many attempts to curb this escalating conflict by setting up military “super camps” in select locations across the three States and mobile police units in major towns or LGA council headquarters<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, in an attempt to impede bandit operations, government security forces conducted military operations and other measures, such as closing down markets and cellular networks,<sup>16</sup> banning motorbikes and imposing restrictions on the purchase of gasoline.<sup>17</sup> They also allegedly provided support to some local militias<sup>18</sup> to help communities feel a sense of security and negotiated various peace treaties with bandit groups.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, levels of violence continued to rise, especially since 2017–18<sup>20</sup>, and non-State criminal organisations and other armed groups multiplied, organised, and started to use more advanced weapons. Attacks became more frequent, resulting in more mass kidnappings, rapes, injuries, fatalities, population displacement, livestock losses, property damage, food insecurity, and disruptions to livelihoods and socioeconomic life in general.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “[Criminal Gangs Destabilizing Nigeria's Northwest](#),” December 2021.

<sup>15</sup> Umar Shehu, “[Insecurity: Buratai Flags Off Army Super Camp In Katsina](#),” July 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Abubakar Ahmadu Maishanu, “[Banditry: Sokoto shuts down telecommunications networks in 14 LGAs](#),” September 2021.

<sup>17</sup> The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “[Criminal Gangs Destabilizing Nigeria's Northwest](#),” December 2021.

<sup>18</sup> When 2019 elections were fast approaching, the state government formally registered and employed 8,500 of them as informal security outfit. Source: Bilesanmi Olalekan, “[Zamfara report on banditry: Two ex-Govs indicted, another for trial, 15 Emirs to be removed](#)”, Vanguard, September 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Chitra Nagarajan, “[Analysis of Violence and Insecurity in Zamfara](#),” February 2020.

<sup>20</sup> A report submitted in October 2019 by a fact-finding committee set up by the government of Zamfara estimated that there were at least 105 bandit camps in and around the state of Zamfara from which bandits launched attacks. By January 2022, the Federal government altered its language and began to officially refer to the bandits in Northwest Nigeria as “terrorists.”

## METHODOLOGY

### Rationale

This report seeks to provide **an understanding of the dynamics of displacement, the factors causing displacement, and the impact of insecurity on the lives of IDPs in Northwest Nigeria.**

It particularly aims to answer to the following research questions:

1. What are the **common trends** in terms of length of displacement, places of transit, and multiple or onward displacement within the context of Northwest Nigeria?
2. What have been **the key drivers** of contemporary population displacement within this region since the onset of the crisis? How do they overlap and interact with other displacement-causing drivers?
3. What trends have emerged in terms of **displacement routes** since the onset of the crisis?
4. What **challenges and vulnerabilities** do populations face along these routes?
5. To what extent are **family structures** impacted by displacement, such as through separation?
6. What are the **living conditions and needs of IDPs** in this region?
7. What are the **movement intentions** of these population groups?

### Introduction

This assessment deployed a mixed-method approach, comprising structured household (HH) interviews across *three insecurity and displacement-affected states Katsina, Sokoto, and*, complemented by semi-structured focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) in select accessible locations. The HH interviews were collected as a part of a larger survey conducted by REACH in the Northwest, the [Multi-Sector Needs Assessment](#) (MSNA), which is representative at the State level. The data from this survey provided a general understanding of State-level patterns of displacement and population movement, while the FGDs and KIIs were used to gather nuanced perceptions of IDPs' journeys, their current living situations, their decision-making processes, and the protection concerns that characterised their journeys.

The qualitative tool was thus designed as a follow-up to the quantitative component and was shaped by preliminary findings from the HH survey. Additionally, the FGDs included a comprehensive mapping exercise that aimed to identify the various displacement and migration routes, and provide information on the barriers and restrictions along these routes.

A total of **1389 IDP HHs** were surveyed across the three States as part of the quantitative component. The qualitative component comprised **12 FGDs** and **24 KIIs**, conducted in purposively selected locations that were accessible for in-person data collection. A breakdown of the data collection tools deployed for the qualitative component can be found in the qualitative portion of the sampling strategy section below. For a detailed overview of the quantitative data collection tools, please refer to the [MSNA Terms of Reference](#).

Quantitative data collection took place from the 14th of March to the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2022. Qualitative data collection took place from the 28<sup>th</sup> of June to the 8<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 in Sokoto and Katsina, while qualitative data was collected in Zamfara between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August and the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.

## Sampling strategy

### Quantitative component

In the absence of a comprehensive list of all HHs residing in the assessed states at the time of data collection, the sampling framework was based on the available list of all settlements and villages in the three assessed States. In light of this, sampling was done through a two-stage cluster sampling approach. The following two datasets were used for the sample design:

- The GRID3 Nigerian Population Estimates dataset (most recent data from February 2021) contains the estimated population figures for Nigeria, with granularity up until admin 4 (settlement) level. The data retrieved from this dataset was further disaggregated and triangulated using zonal statistics to cross-reference the names of administrative units and retrieve the final list of settlements.
- Information on the presence of IDPs was derived from the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). At the time of the assessment design, data from the most recent iteration of the IOM DTM came from July 2021.

Sample size targets were set to retrieve a sample that would be representative of the displaced and non-displaced population at a 92% confidence level and a 10% margin of error for both population groups. On the basis of the available data, the sample targets for non-displaced HHs were set to achieve representative data at [Local Government Area](#) (LGA) (admin 2) level, **while the target sample for the IDP HHs can only be representative at the State level.**

The sample for the quantitative section of the assessment was stratified along the following lines:

- IDPs residing in Sokoto, Zamfara, and Katsina States, including both IDPs hosted by the local community as well as IDPs in collective sites. In this analysis, HHs were considered "internally displaced" if they reported having been forcibly displaced at least once since the escalation of insecurity in 2013.
- Non-displaced HHs, including HHs that are hosting IDPs. These HHs reported not having been displaced since 2013.

Due to the absence of population data on returnees in the Northwest, returnees were not included in the sampling framework. However, returnees may have been interviewed as part of the final sample.

For more information about the quantitative sampling, consult the [Northwest MSNA Sampling Frame](#).

### Qualitative component

Preliminary findings from the quantitative component were used to produce a short list of towns and LGAs most commonly reported by IDPs as locations of refuge. From this short list, locations that were physically accessible for data collection teams and where FGDs could thus be conducted, were selected as locations for qualitative data collection. In cases where the entire state was not accessible for in person interviews, the previous selection criteria took precedence and interviews were collected remotely.

FGDs including a participatory mapping exercise with IDPs and KIIs with IDPs, host community leaders, and local guides were conducted to provide more granularity to the quantitative findings.

The aim was to conduct at least two FGDs (one with women and one with men) in every location, in at least three locations within every assessed State, totalling six FGDs per State, keeping the option of additional interviews open if needed to attain data saturation. While in-person interviews were conducted in Katsina and Sokoto States, accessibility issues in Zamfara hindered the team from doing

the same within the State. Instead, four IDP KIIs (two with men and two with women) were conducted in three different locations within the State, making it a total of 12 IDP KIIs in Zamfara. All FGD groups were composed of approximately 6-8 IDPs. Participants for IDP KIIs and FGDs were purposively sampled to ensure adequate representation in terms of gender and area of origin.

### Detailed overview of qualitative data collection

Location of qualitative assessment	IDP qualitative data collection		Host community qualitative data collection
Katsina			
Jibia LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader <sup>21</sup>
Daddara LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader
Batsari LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader
1 unstructured KII based on preliminary qualitative data findings with local guide			
Zamfara			
Anka LGA	2 KIIs with men	2 KIIs with women	1 KII with host community leader
Gunmi LGA	2 KIIs with men	2 KIIs with women	1 KII with host community leader
Bakura LGA	2 KIIs with men	2 KIIs with women	1 KII with host community leader
1 unstructured KII based on preliminary qualitative data findings with local guide			
Sokoto			
Sokoto North LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader
Tambuwal LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader
Arkilla LGA	1 FGD with men	1 FGD with women	1 KII with host community leader
1 unstructured KII based on preliminary qualitative data findings with local guide			

## Analysis

All quantitative data was collected through the Kobo platform, after which all data was anonymised and shared with the REACH team for checking and cleaning, which happened daily throughout data collection. Quantitative data was analysed using R software, focusing on selected sectoral, cross-sectoral, and thematic indicators, disaggregating data where interesting by factors such as location, area of origin, and gender of the respondent. To account for the unequal distribution of households, results were weighted at LGA level. For more information on the analytical framework employed for the MSNA, please refer to the [MSNA Methodology Overview](#).

Analysis of qualitative data was conducted according to thematic areas of focus based on the research questions. This analysis structure adopted a twofold (macro and micro) approach while seeking to understand the displacement dynamics prevalent within the region. The macro approach focused on the following thematic areas: drivers of displacement, patterns of displacement, family separation during displacement, reasons for selecting areas of refuge, and movement intentions.

<sup>21</sup> Host community leaders were selected through snowballing method from amongst residents who had been living in the location for at least 20 years. These were usually influential persons locally known as liman (limam, a religious head), and Mai Unguwar (the head of a ward).



Inquiry informing the micro approach was conducted through participatory mapping exercises where IDP participants mapped their journeys, provided details on their experience of the crisis and insecurity within their areas of origin, the various coping mechanisms they employed to deal with these conditions of insecurity, the factors that caused them to consider leaving their homes and the events that eventually triggered their displacement, the barriers and contextual factors that affected their displacement related decisions, the circumstances that led to instances of family separation, the living conditions in their areas of refuge, and the nuances of future movement intentions.

Thus, while the macro approach sought to establish country wide or region wide displacement trends, the micro approach aimed to achieve a contextually situated understanding of these trends.

All qualitative data from the FGDs and KIIs was analysed through the construction of data saturation and analysis grids, based on these macro and micro thematic areas, to identify patterns across the FGDs and KIIs.

## Secondary data review

To support the contextualisation of the findings from the primary data collection, additional sources of information were consulted. Where available, this information was used to triangulate primary data collection findings, and was integrated and referenced throughout this report.

## Challenges and limitations

- **Sampling:** For the purpose of this study, returnees were counted as non-displaced populations. This is because there is no data recording the number of returnees in this region, which makes it difficult to stratify for this population group separately. Accordingly, the qualitative data component also does not interview returnees separately, or disaggregate for returnees as a population group with a separate and unique displacement status. This particular caveat should be explored in further studies on this topic.
- **Accessibility:** Due to accessibility-related challenges, many areas in Katsina and Sokoto and almost all LGAs in Zamfara were not accessible to REACH enumerators. While, during the quantitative exercise, partner enumerators could resort to remote data collection in some inaccessible areas, collecting qualitative data proved more challenging. Accordingly, in Sokoto and Katsina, where in-person data collection by REACH teams was possible, locations of assessment were selected on the basis of accessibility as well as on preliminary quantitative findings that reported on number of IDPs in all locations across the two States. In all the 6 locations eventually selected, REACH teams were able to conduct FGDs and mapping exercises in person. However, time constraints related to security, including curfews, meant that many KIIs with host community members in these locations were conducted remotely on a daily basis once the field teams had returned to their bases. For Zamfara, all qualitative data was collected remotely and assessment locations were based on preliminary findings from quantitative data, as well as the availability of partner and enumerator networks to scope out IDPs. In general, scoping IDPs proved to be difficult in Zamfara, causing the qualitative data collection in the State to be delayed several times.
- **Mapping exercise:** Base maps for the mapping exercise were developed using GRID3 information. In the Northwest context, this information is not very detailed and may be potentially inaccurate. Many settlements have been recorded using their alternative names and many settlements have either newly come up or ceased to exist, and may have not been updated in the database. This meant that many locations reported by participants during the mapping exercise had to be marked on the map anew with the name and approximate location recorded based on the enumerators' and participants' understanding of the area. In the production phase, utmost care was taken to try and find appropriate GRID3 coordinates and names for reported locations when possible. However, not

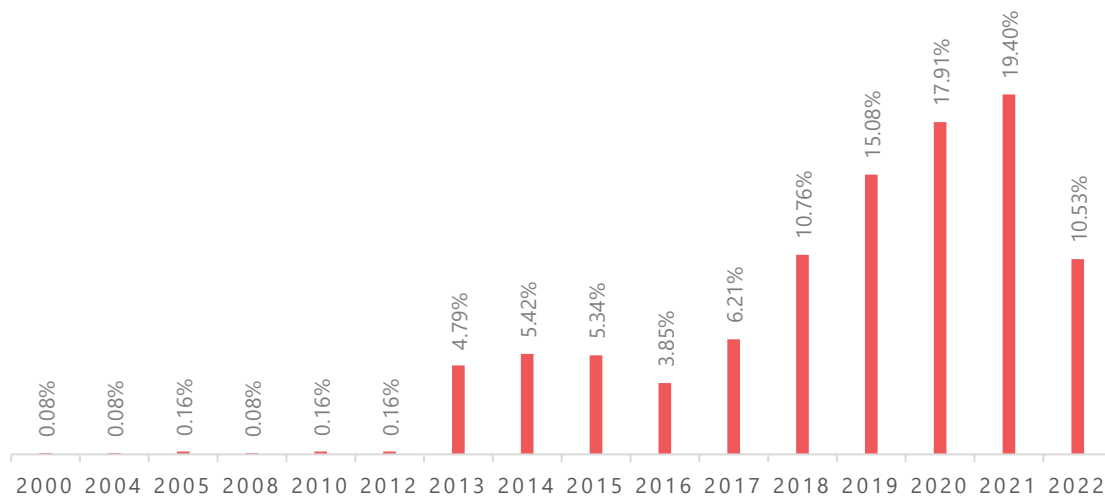
all markings are based on accurate coordinates, especially markings that report locations of attacks or barriers. However, these were nonetheless marked and reproduced on the map indicatively in the closest possible location based on surrounding areas.

## FINDINGS

### Chronology, nature and spread of crisis

**HH survey data findings suggest that displacement increased considerably from being almost non-existent in the early 2000s, particularly prior to 2013, to being a more common phenomenon in the past 5 years.** Only a handful of respondents reported having been displaced prior to 2013. In 2013, however, the proportion of respondents reporting having been displaced increased to 4.79% (n = 61). In 2022, as of March (at the time of data collection), already 10.53% of all IDP HH respondents (n = 134) reported having been displaced for the first time since the start of the year.<sup>22</sup>

**Figure 1: % of IDP HHs by year of first displacement**



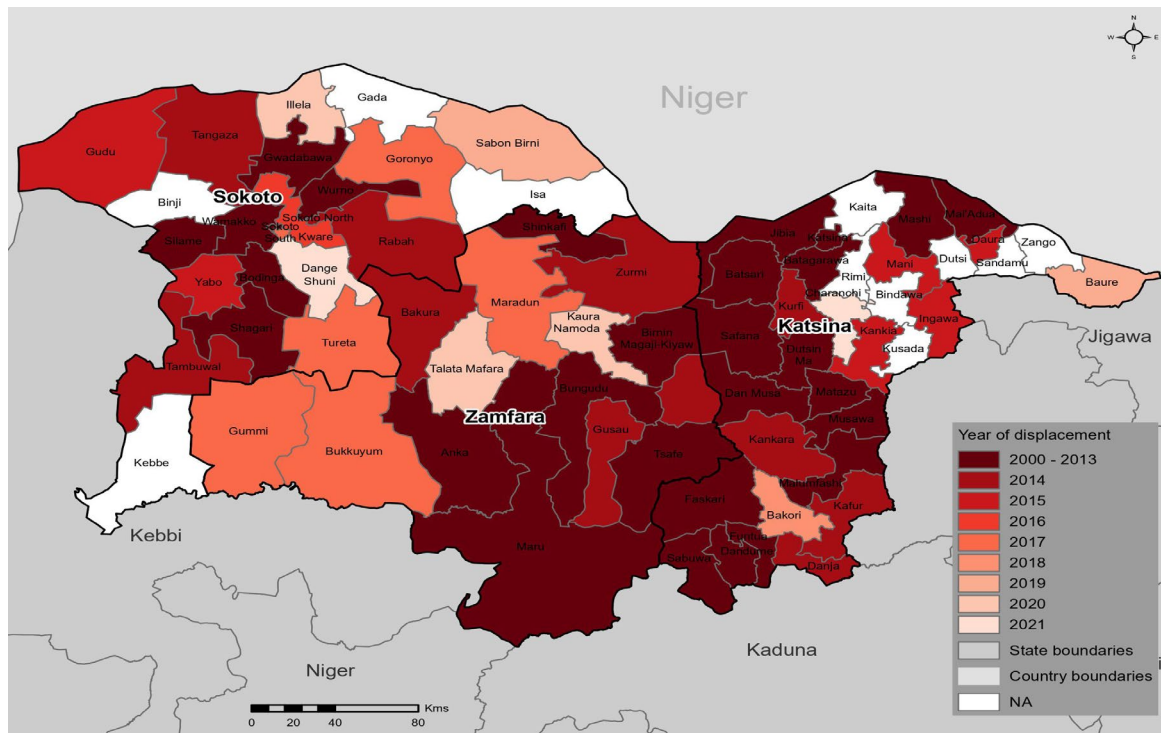
There appears to be a general agreement across the literature that the crisis began in Zamfara and spilled over to nearby States. During the MSNA, HHs reported that the first instances of displacement in their LGA took place as far back as 20 years ago, implying the start of possible conflicts between farmers and herders. These findings also revealed that the first instances of displacement took place in the south-eastern parts of Zamfara, reaching south-western parts of Zamfara, such as Gummi LGA, only in 2016-17 and central parts of Zamfara, such as Talata Mafara LGA, in 2020.

In Sokoto, HH survey data showed that displacement and crisis spread to parts of the state closest to Zamfara in 2014, and then towards the centre of the state (where the state council headquarters are located) over the next few years. Qualitative findings suggest a similar trend, with respondents reporting the crisis spread first to the north-eastern parts of Sokoto, spreading further inwards northeast to Rabah and Goronyo LGAs in 2017 as it intensified.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Displacement is a symptom of crisis, and the trajectory of this symptom provides an important proxy to understand the spread of the crisis itself.

<sup>23</sup> Intensification of crisis is described diversely by FGD participants as comprising of one or more of the following: attack by armed men, stealing of cattle, kidnapping, killing, capturing a settlement, and setting fire to property.

**Map 1: Geographical spread of displacement, earliest reported year of first displacement per LGA, as reported by IDP HHs**



Secondary data suggests that the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya in 2011 contributed to proliferation of small arms and light weapons across West Africa. A report by Conflict Armament Research claims that batches of these weapons were trafficked into Nigeria and deployed across Katsina, Zamfara and nearby states experiencing this crisis.<sup>24</sup> Reports suggest that the proliferation of these arms dramatically impacted the nature of pre-existing farmer-herder conflicts, leading to the rise of criminal gangs that appropriated and exploited related grievances and caused an escalation of violence in the region.<sup>25</sup> In addition to this, the end of 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections led to a spike in incidents of violence as a candidate not originating from the northern region of the country was declared winner, causing the region to break out into a divisive controversy questioning regional representation within the federal government.<sup>26</sup> This, in turn, caused local communities to organise into militias credited with reportedly attacking nearby settlements and communities belonging to certain ethnicities. The resulting circle of violence and retaliation further reinforced the rationale behind the existence of bandit gangs and militias and cemented the crisis into a complex and multidimensional one.

Local guides further elaborated on the factors motivating the spread of criminal gangs across the region. According to their accounts, although the beginnings of the crisis in the form of cattle rustling and kidnapping could be traced back to Zamfara, once criminal gangs allied themselves with warring parties, bandits quickly moved to Katsina in 2015-2016,<sup>27</sup> due to the prevalence of national and international traditional herder routes, known as *Biltali*, passing through the State, which provided them with better opportunities to rustle cattle. Local guides further explained that bandits then spread over to other States, like Sokoto,<sup>28</sup> and eventually returned to Zamfara with tactics that had evolved to enable attack and capture of settlements within Zamfara's farm-based economy. Indeed, as noted

<sup>24</sup> Conflict and Armament Research, *Nigeria's Farmer Herder Conflict*, CAR case Studies, March 2018

<sup>25</sup> Chitra Nagarajan, "[Analysis of Violence and Insecurity in Zamfara](#)," February 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Centre for Democracy and Development, "[Northwest Nigeria's Bandit Problem](#)," February 2022.

above, primary data findings point to a return and resurgence of bandit activities in Zamfara, with respondents reporting that they believed the crisis intensified in 2020 and 2021 in Zamfara.<sup>29</sup> In the Northwest as a whole, while bandits typically originated from Zamfara, they often shifted their bases quickly and strategically, even allying themselves with other local bandit groups.<sup>30</sup>

Attacks had previously been primarily confined to rural areas, but according to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, as of 2022, bandits started venturing further away from these locations into towns.<sup>31</sup> According to the source, this shift might be attributed partly to rural areas having become increasingly abandoned due to displacement following repeated raids. As a result, bandit gangs reportedly began focusing on metropolitan areas to increase their income, rustle more cattle, and demand higher ransoms.<sup>32</sup> Attacks on local government buildings and larger villages that were adjacent to federal highways became more regular as of 2021 and 2022, especially since the proliferation of arms enabled these gangs to upgrade to more sophisticated weapons to take on more significant targets.<sup>33</sup>

Communities with a mobile police patrol team (MOPOL) were reportedly considered “safer” compared to those without.<sup>34</sup> Like the garrison towns of the Northeast, IDPs from areas without a comparable police presence moved reportedly moved to such MOPOL guarded communities, either permanently or temporarily when there was a spike in attacks. In addition, it was also reported that the presence of vigilante or community-based armed organisations discouraged bandit attacks in some communities.<sup>35</sup>

## Interstate patterns of movement

### State Level

HH survey data suggests that most IDPs displaced within their state of origin; 99% of IDP HHs from Katsina, 98% from Sokoto, and 87% from Zamfara reported a ward inside their State of origin as their area of displacement at the time of data collection (See figure 2). This suggests that, while displacement is common across the Northwest, displacement remains a local, intra-state phenomenon.

<sup>29</sup> The nature of crisis evolved from one reportedly consisting of cattle rustling and farmer herder conflicts within the context of climate change and resource depletion, into an emergency with armed and organized nonstate groups, kidnapping, attacking and intensifying the impact of poverty, resource scarcity and slow onset climate disasters that now characterise the region.

<sup>30</sup> Centre for Democracy and Development, “[Northwest Nigeria's Bandit Problem](#),” February 2022.

<sup>31</sup> The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “[Criminal Gangs Destabilizing Nigeria's Northwest](#),” December 2021.

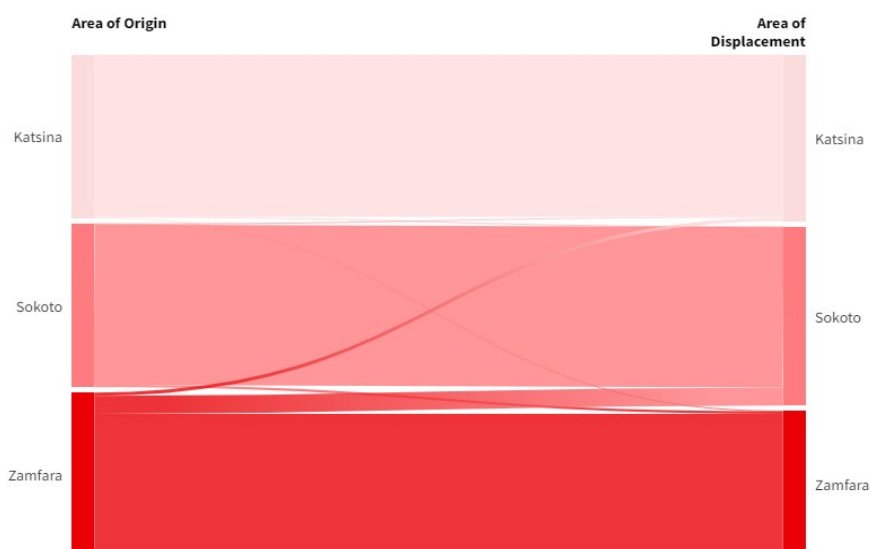
<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, bandits targeted police and military facilities in Zamfara and Sokoto in 2022, giving them access to more firepower.

<sup>34</sup> The Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “[Criminal Gangs Destabilizing Nigeria's Northwest](#),” December 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 2: % of IDP HHs per state of displacement by state of origin**



### LGA level

Additionally, indicative data from HH survey of IDPs suggested that most IDPs within the LGAs of Katsina and Zamfara had been displaced within their LGAs of origin. Refer to Annex I for commonly reported migration corridors by ward of origin and destination.

## Drivers of displacement and settlement

### Drivers affecting the decision to leave (Push factors)

Factors related to insecurity, incidents of violence, and threats to life and property

**Across all three assessed States, the main reported drivers of displacement were all related to violence and insecurity. Armed banditry** was the most reported driver for IDP HHs in Sokoto (78%) and Zamfara (68%), whereas **kidnapping and abduction** emerged as the most reported main drivers in Katsina (65%).

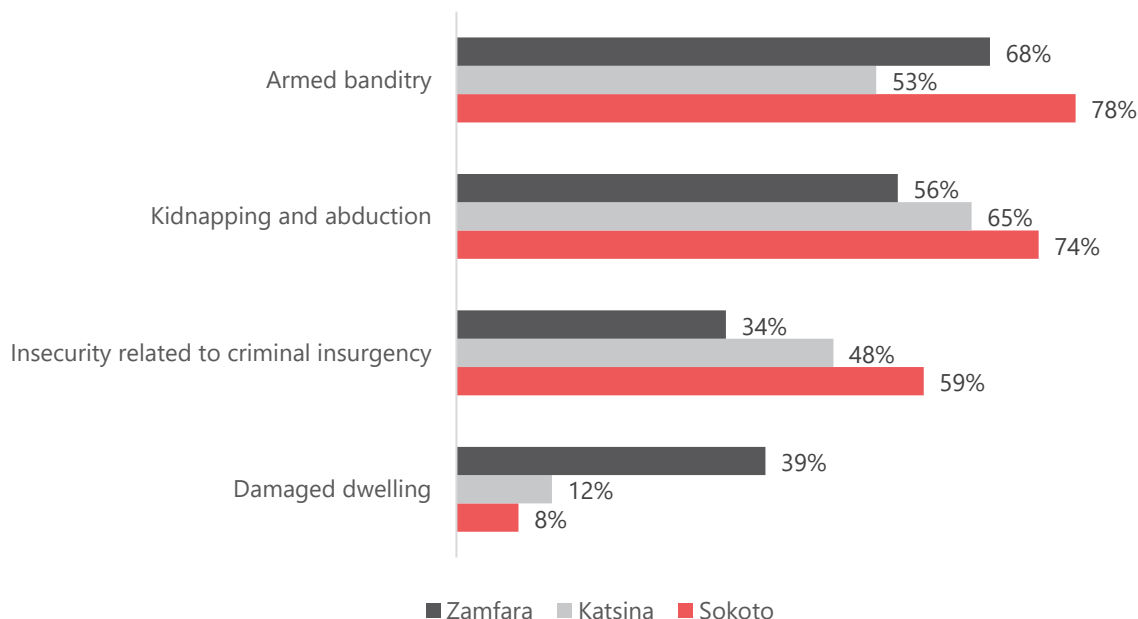
**Findings suggest that while banditry is not a new phenomenon in the region, the increasingly violent nature and impact of banditry was a common displacement trigger.** FGD participants explained that they had been living with instances of banditry involving cattle rustling for years before they decided to leave their homes. According to these participants, banditry and rustling activities shifted in character in recent years, with banditry increasingly including acts of violence like rape and killing, and incidents of abduction and attack reportedly becoming increasingly common. IDPs participating in FGDs across the three states unanimously reported that acts of violence by “unknown armed men” triggered their displacement.

Despite narratives in secondary literature implying that community clashes were one of the main factors contributing to violence in Northwest Nigeria,<sup>36</sup> a relatively low percentage of respondents in Sokoto (3%), Katsina (4%) and Zamfara (7%), reported being displaced due to this reason.

<sup>36</sup> “Disputes between herders and farmers are one of the key phenomena in this crisis.” Source: IOM DTM, “[Nigeria — North Central and Northwest Zones Displacement Report 3](#),” December 2019; “Disputes over land and water prompted both herders and farmers to form armed self-defense groups, fueling a cycle of retaliatory violence that has taken on a communal dimension.” Source: International Crisis Group, “[Halting the Deepening Turmoil in Nigeria’s Northwest](#),” May 2021.



**Figure 3: Most commonly reported drivers of displacement, by % of IDP HHs**



#### Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

**FGD participants interviewed in Katsina and Zamfara reported sexual and gender-based violence as an important driver of displacement.**<sup>37</sup> FGD participants across all three states further reported that, according to their perception, men were more often targeted for kidnapping and ransom and women were more often targeted in instances of sexual violence.

#### Lack of access to farms

Lack of access to sources of livelihood, due to bandit-imposed restrictions of access to farms, was also reported by FGD participants as **exacerbating fears of looming food insecurity** and causing communities to leave their areas of origin.

### Drivers affecting the decision to resettle<sup>38</sup> (Pull factors)

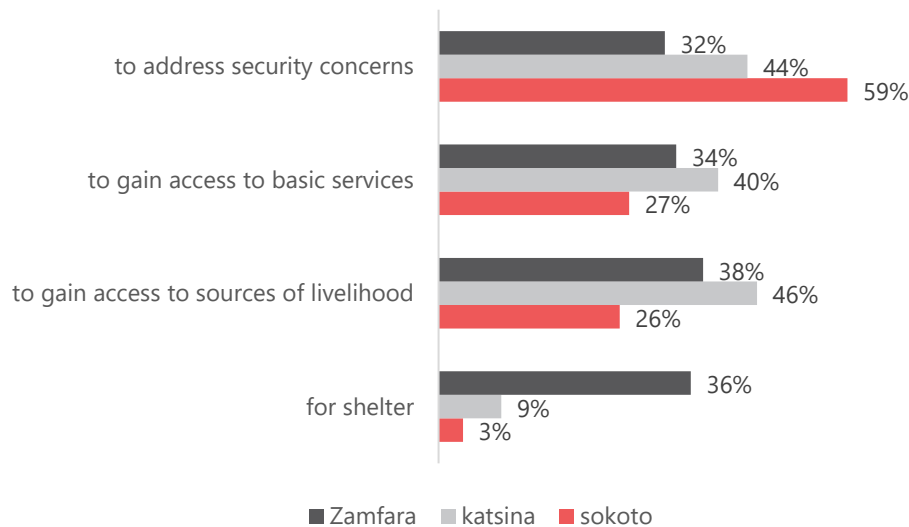
#### Better security conditions and access to basic services and sources of livelihood

IDP HHs across the three states reported that **better security conditions, access to basic services, and access to sources of livelihood were the factors that affected their decision to pick a location to resettle in.** IDP HHs in Zamfara particularly, also placed importance on the **availability of shelter** while deciding where to seek refuge and resettle.

<sup>37</sup> Specifically, IDP respondents originating from Shekewa and Yasore communities within Batsari LGA reported that instances of SGBV had started to become very common, driving them eventually into displacement.

<sup>38</sup> Framing the question in terms of resettlement instead of settlement helps create more distance between factors that affect the decision to leave from and the decision to leave to. As shown in the next section, while these factors work together to determine the nature of displacement, length of stay and number of locations, it is helpful to analytically understand what pushes people into displacement and what pulls them to resettle.

**Figure 4: Most commonly reported drivers of resettlement, by % of IDP HHs**



#### Presence of relatives/friends

Qualitative data collected through FGDs across the three states also revealed that the presence of relatives/friends was another important factor in the decision to move somewhere when seeking refuge and/or resettlement. An FGD participant interviewed in Jiba said “the reason we chose Jiba is because we can easily get shelter and some among our community members have friends and relatives living in here who can help.”

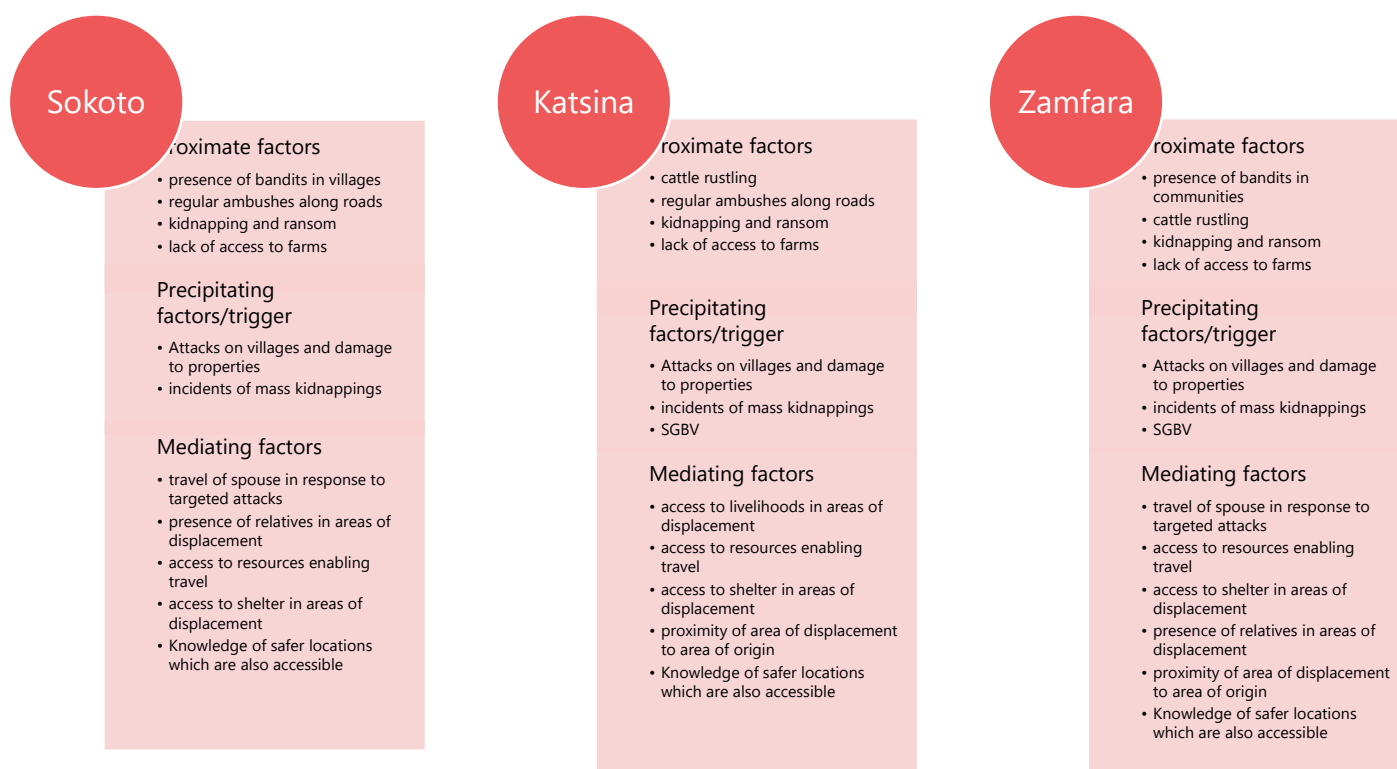
### How drivers affect the nature of displacement

**Previous research shows that population movements are often the product of a sequence or combination of drivers.**<sup>39</sup> Reflecting this, analysis in this report suggests that factors associated with the decision to leave and the decision to seek refuge elsewhere were often considered together with considerations associated with the displacement route and journey. Together, these factors determine the nature of movement and stay for IDPs. Accordingly, analysis in this report categorised each movement by a single main driver, better understood as the explicit trigger or “precipitating factor”<sup>40</sup>, that finally prompted a household or household members to move. FGD reports also indicated various underlying factors that overlapped and operated together in creating conditions that incited communities to displace, both consisting of underlying drivers/push factors or “proximate factors”, and perceptions about the areas of displacement or routes to be travelled (“mediating factors”) (see Figure 5).

<sup>39</sup> REACH, “Population Movement Baseline, South Sudan,” September 2020; Nicholas Van Hear, Oliver Bakewell & Katy Long, “Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44:6, 927-944, October 2017.

<sup>40</sup> Proximate factors contribute to the making of an environment that may induce displacement -example economic downturn, generalized insecurity etc; precipitating factors are those that actually trigger departure; mediating factors enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, diminish or consolidate migration. These work together to influence the nature and decision of displacement. Framework based on ; Nicholas Van Hear, Oliver Bakewell & Katy Long, “Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44:6, 927-944, October 2017.

**Figure 5: Complex factors affecting the nature and decision of displacement, according to FGD participant**



FGD participants commonly reported having experienced general insecurity in their areas of origin already for a long period of time before a particular attack. However, change in the nature or intensity of attacks, finally drove them to leave their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, indicating that an **intensification of insecurity was a key driver of displacement**. As one respondent from Yasore reported, “not until 2021, when bandits started kidnapping, harassing women and shooting freely in the air and killing anyone they could” did they decide to leave their homes in search of safer locations.

Along with this main trigger, findings suggest that IDPs' decision to leave also factored in other variables; participants reported considering better security conditions in areas considered relatively accessible, the presence of relatives or availability of shelter, availability of livelihood opportunities in the areas of displacement, and the presence of factors that enabled mobility, for instance, physical health and resources.<sup>41</sup>

As can be seen in Figure 5, FGD participants reported that **knowledge of accessible locations** that were likely to have **better security conditions**, **access to food and livelihood opportunities**, and **presence of friends and relatives**, substantially determined their decisions to not only settle in an area of displacement but to also respond to a displacement-causing trigger in a context where insecurity and generalised violence, as well as deprivation, had been present for a long time. The below case study demonstrates how mediating factors affect displacement decisions

<sup>41</sup> FGD in Arkilla on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2022; FGD in Tambuwal on July 4<sup>th</sup> 2022; FGD in Sokoto North on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2022.

#### Case study 1

FGD participants interviewed in Daddara town, Katsina State, reported that a lack of accommodation and source of livelihood to rely on in the displaced locations acted as barriers restricting some HHs' ability to move to certain locations despite the existence of displacement triggering factors in the location they found themselves in. The participants from Falale village on the outskirts of Falale town in Gangara ward reported that some HHs from their areas of origin had sought refuge in Falale town instead of Daddara town despite Falale town being considered unsafe because they had no access to accommodation or source of livelihood in Daddara or the safer locations.

Lastly, findings suggest that IDPs in the region may have been operating with **a lack of credible information** in a rapidly changing security context. As an IDP in Zamfara reported during an FGD, "we were thinking it's just a story until it reached us." This may have affected the time IDPs took to make the decision to leave their homes causing them to, possibly, spend more resources during their displacement. Furthermore, FGD participants reported that phone connectivity was sometimes disabled as a measure to curb bandit activity, which affected the level and quality of information accessible to IDPs at their areas of origin.

## Journeys

Information on detailed journeys undertaken by all IDP participants was collected through a participatory mapping exercise conducted during each FGD in Sokoto and Katsina States, whereas for Zamfara State, enumerators discussed participants' journeys in detail remotely through phone interviews. Furthermore, HH survey data was used to understand distances travelled during displacement.<sup>42</sup>

**Moving to the nearest big town was reported as a commonly practiced displacement-related strategy.** This is because **big towns and urban centres were expected to have relatively better security with mobile police or army checkpoints in place.** In a context characterised by lack of information, where security conditions could alter quickly and suddenly, IDPs commonly reported relying on this general approach.

## Sokoto

**In Sokoto State, HH survey data revealed that long distance journeys (63%) were more commonly undertaken than medium (18%) or short distance journeys (17%).<sup>43</sup>**

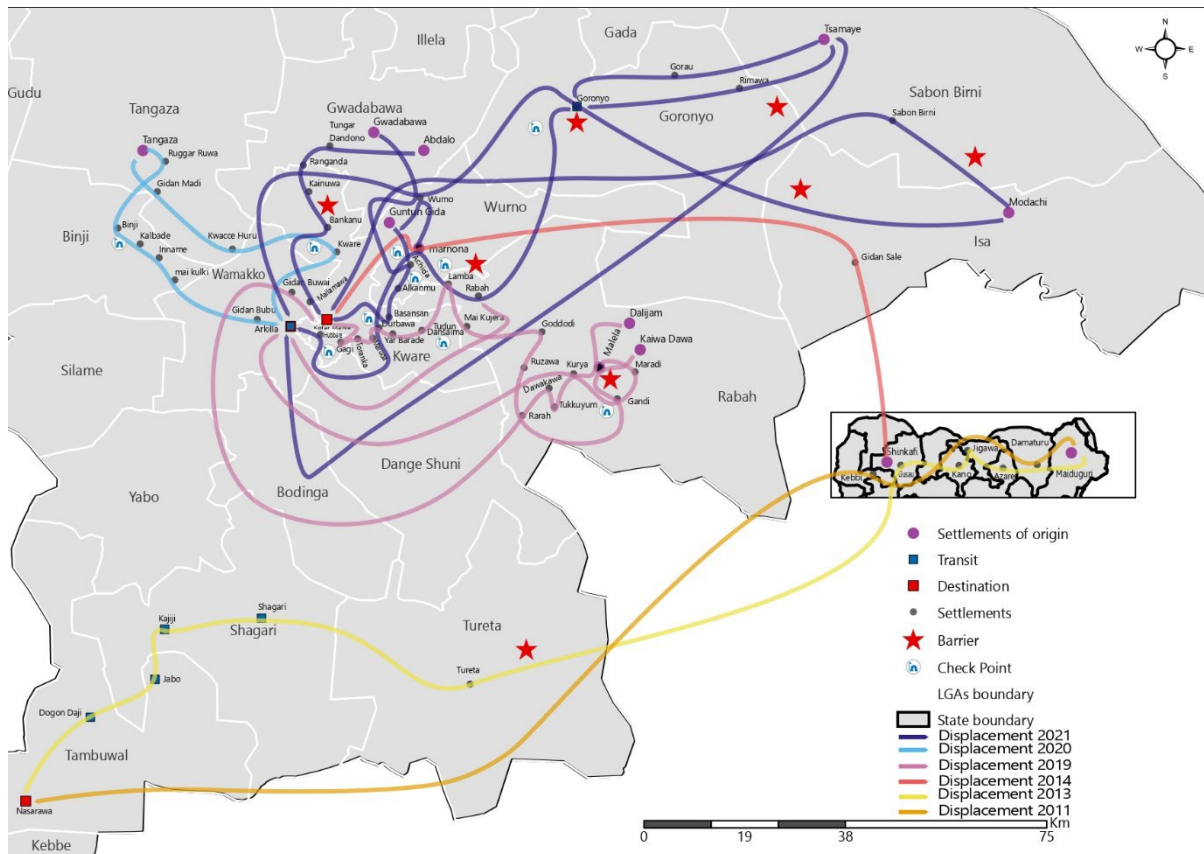
FGD participants reported that Sokoto town was yet to be affected by incidents of kidnapping and abduction and was generally considered to be safe at the time of data collection. In September 2022, local civil society partners and State Emergency Management Authority (SEMA) officials reported that several informal camps had been set up to house IDPs in Sokoto State. While some camps were recognised by the state government, some camps were reportedly set up by local communities and civil society organisations. **This development was seemingly unique to Sokoto state, from the three assessed states, potentially making for a strong pull factor to areas in and around the Sokoto town,** where such camps had been established. It is thus possible that IDPs in the state chose to travel longer distances to reach areas where safety and basic services were perceived to be accessible.

<sup>42</sup> For this a composite indicator was created that categorised HH survey participants' journeys as follows:

- Short distance – if participants' AoO and AoD are within the same ward.
- Medium distance - if participants cross the ward administrative boundary but remain displaced within their LGA of origin.
- Long distance – if participants' AoO and AoD are located in different wards as well as LGAs.

<sup>43</sup> It is helpful to note here that this composite indicator represents cumulative journeys, i.e., journeys representing all the instances in which a participant was displaced in total. Thus, it does not give insight into how far IDPs typically travel in one go.

**Map 2: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Sokoto State**



FGD participants in Sokoto commonly reported having undertaken overall long journeys to the centre of the State where the State council Headquarter of Sokoto town was located, transiting through points located relatively close to their areas of origin before arriving to the town.

As can be seen in Map 2, apart from some IDPs originating from Borno State in the Northeast, **all IDPs interviewed in Sokoto State chose to travel to Sokoto Town to seek refuge.**<sup>44</sup>

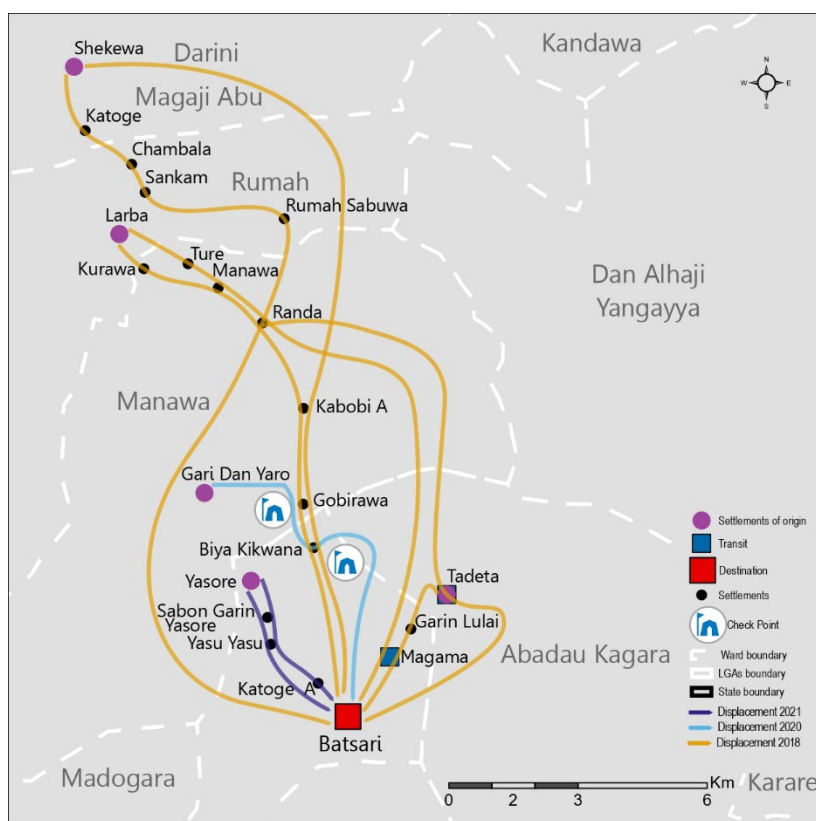
## Katsina

In Katsina, IDP HH survey data revealed that **short distances journeys (74%) were more common than long distance (9%) and medium distance (14%) journeys.**

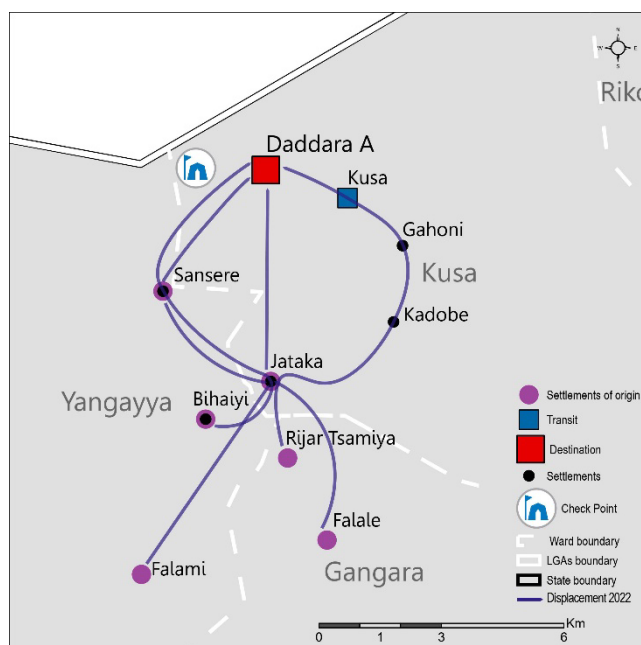
<sup>44</sup> The IDPs originating from Borno were displaced due to reasons unrelated to the crises in Northwest and had undertaken a long onward journey of continual displacement across the north of Nigeria as well as some parts of Niger to come to Tambuwal where they had relatives living. At the time of interview, they expressed that they would like to go back to their homes in Borno if they received some aid to cover transportation.



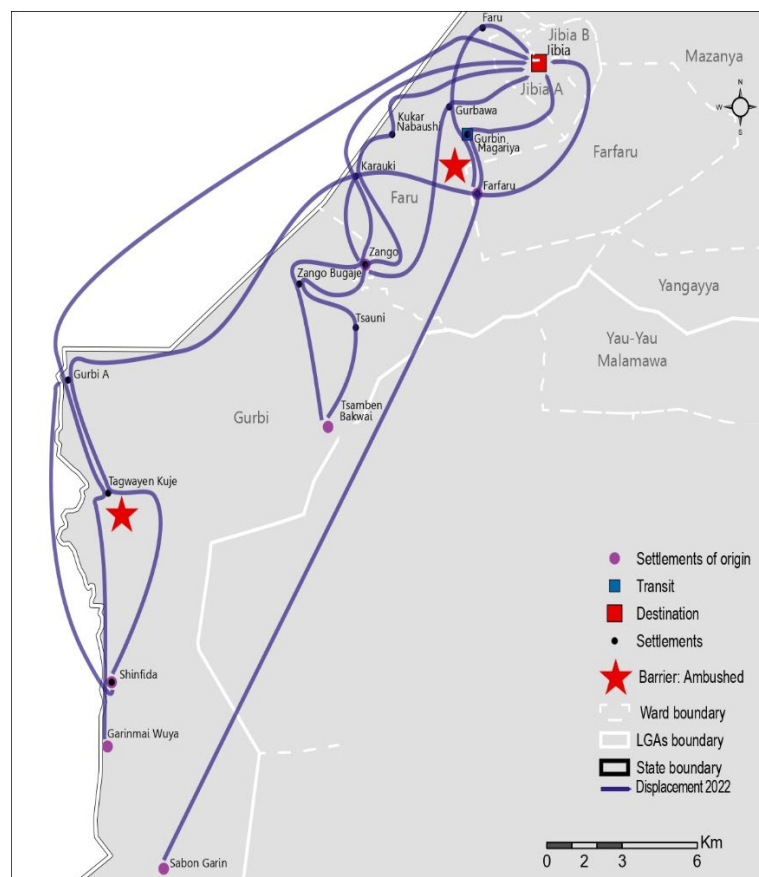
**Map 3: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Batsari Town (Katsina State)**



**Map 4: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Daddara Town (Katsina State)**



**Map 5: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Jibia Town (Katsina State)**



Maps 3, 4 and 5 show all journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants in Katsina. **Most participants reported not having crossed any LGA boundaries throughout the period of their displacement, despite incidents of violence being prevalent within the LGAs.** This seemed particularly the case in Jibia LGA, where FGD participants reported that they preferred seeking refuge within the LGA despite the common incidence of violent events resulting in deaths that had been recorded in Jibia between 2020 and 2022,<sup>45</sup> yet respondents commonly reported having stayed within Jibia LGA when they displaced.

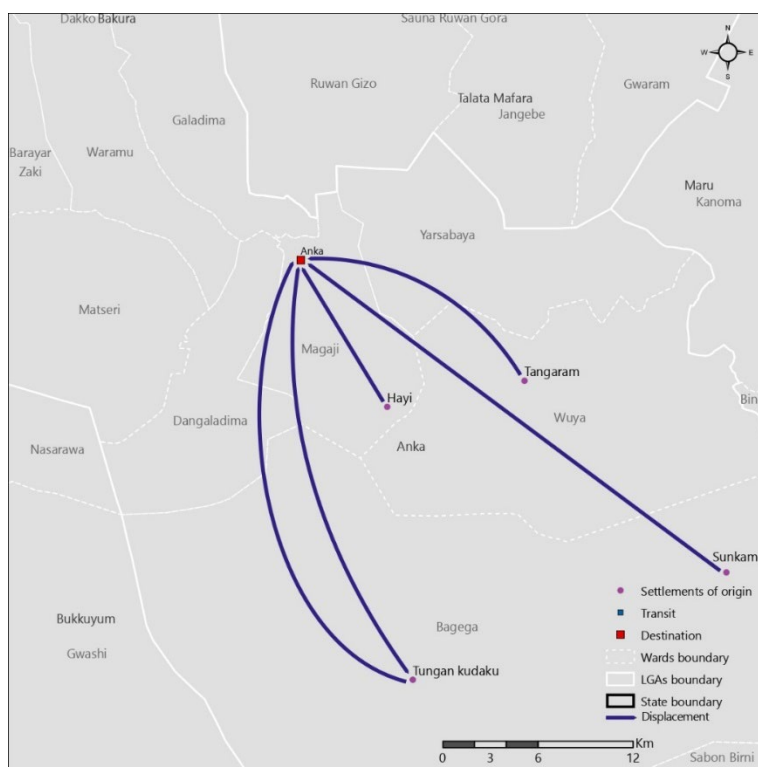
FGD respondents across the three assessed locations in Katsina State also reported returning to their AoOs and being re-displaced multiple times within the same year, suggesting that the security situation remained unpredictable.

## Zamfara

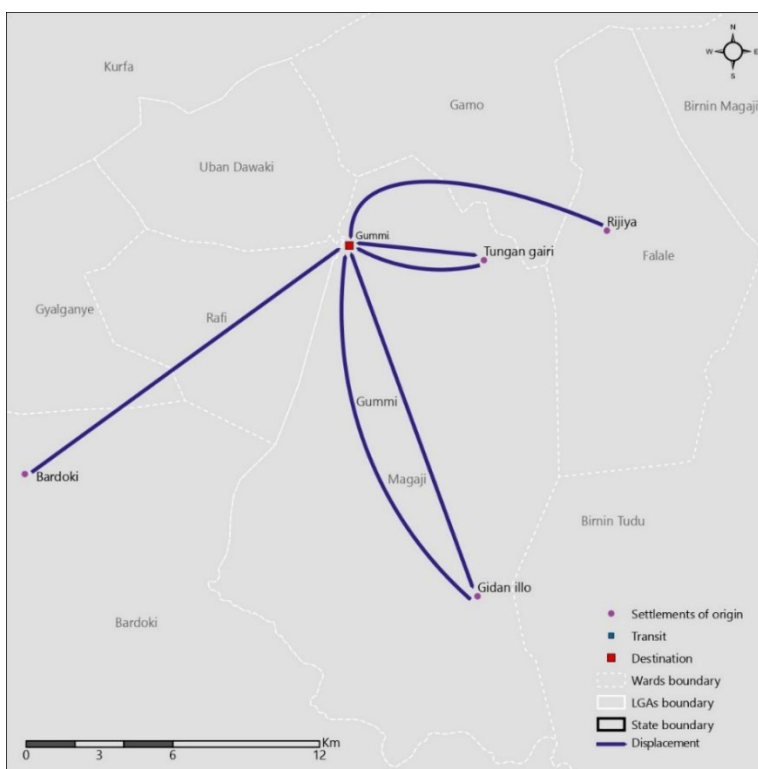
In Zamfara, **short distance (reported by 65% of IDP HHs) journeys were found to be more commonly practiced as compared to long distance (8%) and medium distance (25%) journeys.**

<sup>45</sup> Council on Foreign Relations, [Nigeria Security Tracker](#), March 2022

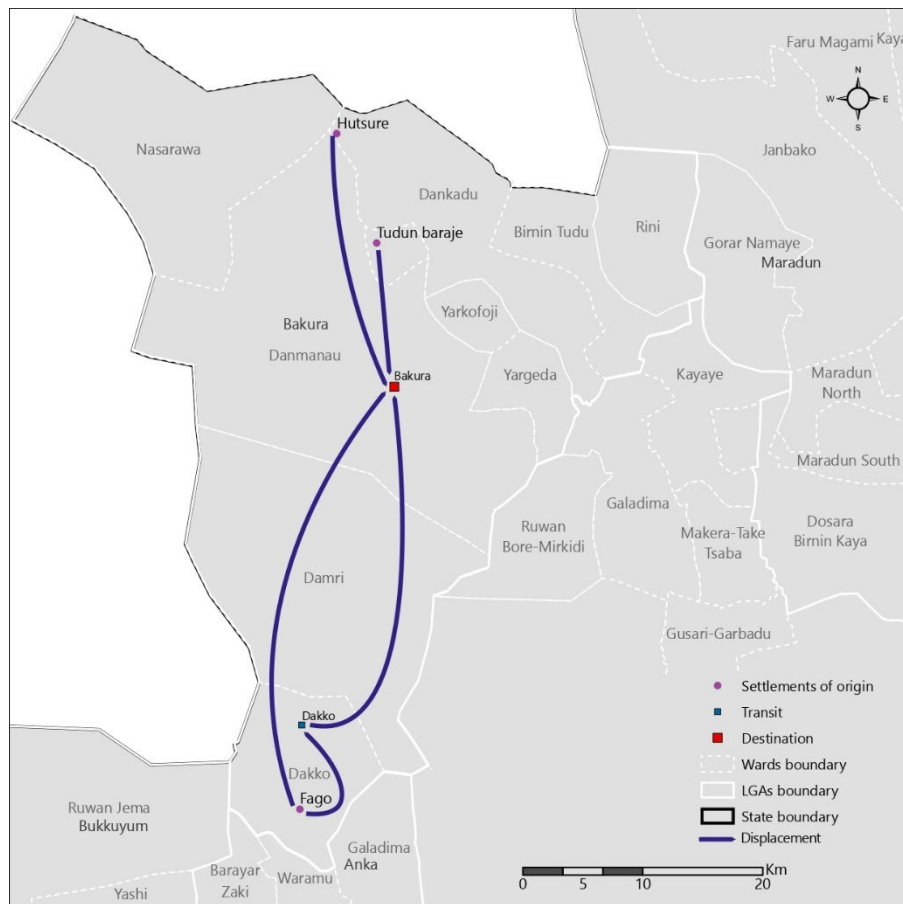
**Map 6: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Anka town (Zamfara State)**



**Map 7: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Gummi town (Zamfara State)**



**Map 8: All journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants interviewed in Bakura town (Zamfara State)**



Maps 6, 7, and 8 show all journeys and barriers reported by FGD participants in Zamfara State. **Return and re-displacement was reported by several FGD participants.** According to the FGD participants, this pattern of frequent return and re-displacement was rooted in a desire to return to their area of origin more definitively in the near future. Hence, **staying relatively close to their areas of origin was important for them to enable them to return as soon as their area of origin was perceived to be safe.**

## Movement barriers and protection concerns

### Protection Concern

**Across all three states, FGD participants commonly reported bandit attacks as a threat to protection while enroute.** Perhaps reflective of this fear, a UNHCR factsheet on Sokoto published in 2022<sup>46</sup> reported a daily average of two illegal vehicle checkpoint (IVCP) incidents between January to March 2022 in the State, with IVCPs reportedly being a part of the modus operandi of bandit groups operating there. During the participatory mapping exercise in Sokoto, participants recounted eight specific instances of bandit attacks during their displacement journeys.

### Movement Barriers

In Zamfara and Katsina, reports by FGD participants suggested that bandit attacks often occurred enroute. While participants themselves reportedly experienced lesser instances of attacks than those reported by participants in Sokoto, the prevalence of a possibility of such an attack in these two states reportedly functioned as a barrier to movement. For instance, across all FGDs and KIIs conducted with IDPs in Katsina and Zamfara, it was reported that short distance displacement using the bush path was

<sup>46</sup> UNHCR, "[Factsheet for Sokoto – North-West](#)," March 2022.

the norm by IDPs as they feared they would be attacked enroute. Fear of being attacked by bandits enroute also reportedly prevented some people from leaving their area of origin in the first place in these two states.

**Following bandit attacks, findings suggest that road closures more generally were another common movement barrier.** According to FGD participants, roads were reportedly rendered inaccessible mainly due to two reasons: 1) regular attacks and illegal checkpoints had rendered them unsafe for use, in which case nearby communities or mobile police/army checkpoints would divert people from using such routes, or 2) they had been closed due to precautionary measures taken by state governments to curb bandit activity. Specifically, under the Security Challenge Containment Order No.3, 2021 (September 2021),<sup>47</sup> certain routes were closed to motorised bikes, FGD participants reported that this caused groups of IDPs to reroute if some members were on two-wheelers.

FGD participants spoke often about having to change routes in response to bandit attacks or hearsay of attacks enroute, which in turn affected the distance they travelled and the duration of their stay in their area of refuge. Findings from FGDs and KIIs conducted across the three states suggest that **IDPs' perceptions of security along the route and in places of refuge shaped their movement. FGD participants' narrative accounts suggest that these perceptions were created and recreated throughout their displacement journeys** (see Case study 2).

#### Case study 2

During participatory mapping exercises with FGD participants in the state of Sokoto, participants originating from Dalijan settlement in Rabaah LGA explained that attacks experienced enroute during displacement from their area of origin to Kuryar Gandhi town in the same LGA influenced their decision to move onwards to Sokoto town. Together with other displaced persons in Kuryar Gandhi town they decided to leave Rabaah LGA altogether and go to Sokoto town instead.

An FGD participant originating from Alela village in Wurno LGA reported that after his departure from his area of origin, he sought refuge at a friend's home in Achida town in Wurno LGA, where he recounted the incidents that triggered his displacement. Anticipating that attacks from nearby Rabaah LGA would soon affect Achida town as well, he and his friend both decided to move onwards to Sokoto town. In this way, IDPs initially arrived at a location to seek refuge, however as they shared news of rapidly spreading insecurity, they also triggered the displacement of others from their initial areas of displacement.

Lastly reports by IDP participants during FGDs and KIIs suggest that lack of resources in terms of wealth, including vehicles, as well as limited physical capital (i.e., perceptions of not being capable of enduring displacement), also acted as barriers to movement for communities across the three states. In light of these barriers, findings additionally suggest that access to (wealthy) social networks can in turn act as an enabler of movement, as illustrated by case study 3 below.

#### Case study 3

FGD participants originating from Rabaah LGA, Sokoto State, came from the following settlements: Kalhu, Rakwamni, Dalijan and Malela. They were all reportedly displaced in the year 2019, in response to attacks by armed bandits. Once displaced from their respective settlements, they sought refuge in Gandhi town of Rabaah LGA, where they lived for a few months. According to the FGD participants, they sustained their stay in Gandhi primarily through help from relatives and friends, who assisted them financially and/or by providing other resources. In 2020, in response to a reported increase in incidents of kidnapping and attacks orchestrated by bandits, they eventually joined IDPs from other nearby settlements and travelled to Sokoto town. **According to FGD participants, their time in Gandhi was essential for them to accumulate much-needed resources that would allow them to continue their journey to a safer location and meet other IDPs with whom they could pool resources for the journey.** Reportedly no one was left behind in Rakwamni, while some members of the community remained in Kalhu. Those in Kalhu were reportedly subject to repeated attacks.

<sup>47</sup> Peters Ifeoma, "[Sokoto State Governor Signs Security Challenges Containment Order](#)," DNL Legal and Style, September 2021.



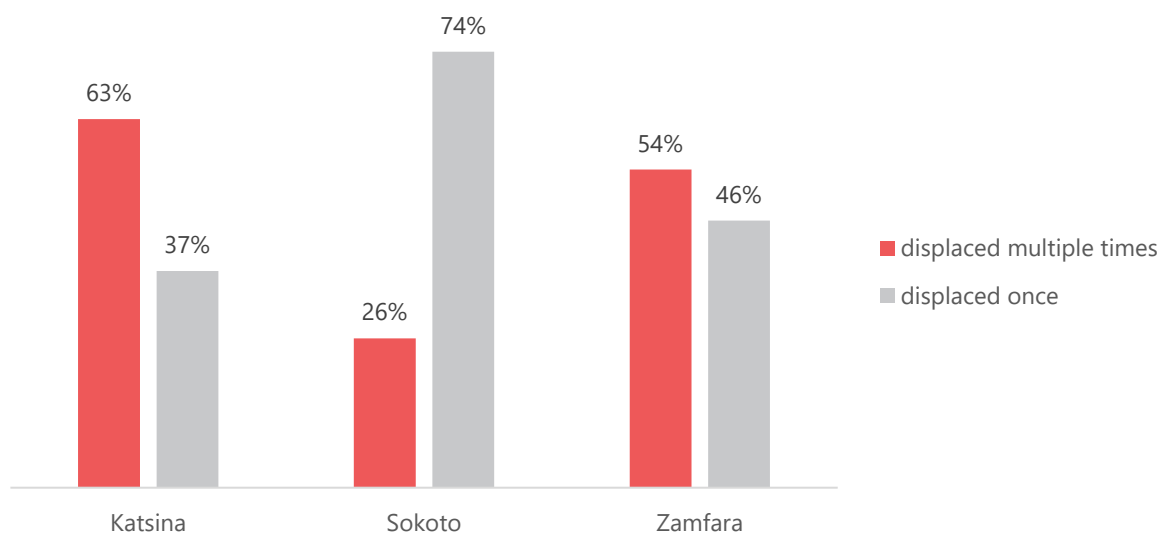
## Displacement patterns

### Multiple displacements

Both quantitative and qualitative data suggests that **multiple displacements**, a type of protracted displacement during which people are forced to move repeatedly from successive sites of refuge,<sup>48</sup> **were common in all three states**. IDPs sought refuge in a location from which they were subsequently re-displaced to another location. This would often involve first displacing to a nearby town, then collecting resources or coming together with other IDPs seeking refuge in the location to undertake a longer journey all together, as shown in the case of IDPs from Rabaah in Case study 3.

**In Sokoto state, 26% of interviewed IDP HHs reported having been displaced multiple times, whereas in Katsina and Zamfara the proportion was even higher; respectively 63% and 54% of IDP HHs in those states reported having been displaced more than once.**

Figure 6: % of IDP HHs reporting having been displaced once or multiple times, by State



Another pattern of multiple displacement reported was that of return and re-displacement. FGD participants reported going back to their areas of origin with the intention to return and stay there. **In all reported instances, participants found the conditions in their area of origin not conducive to life, prompting them to return to their area of displacement eventually.**

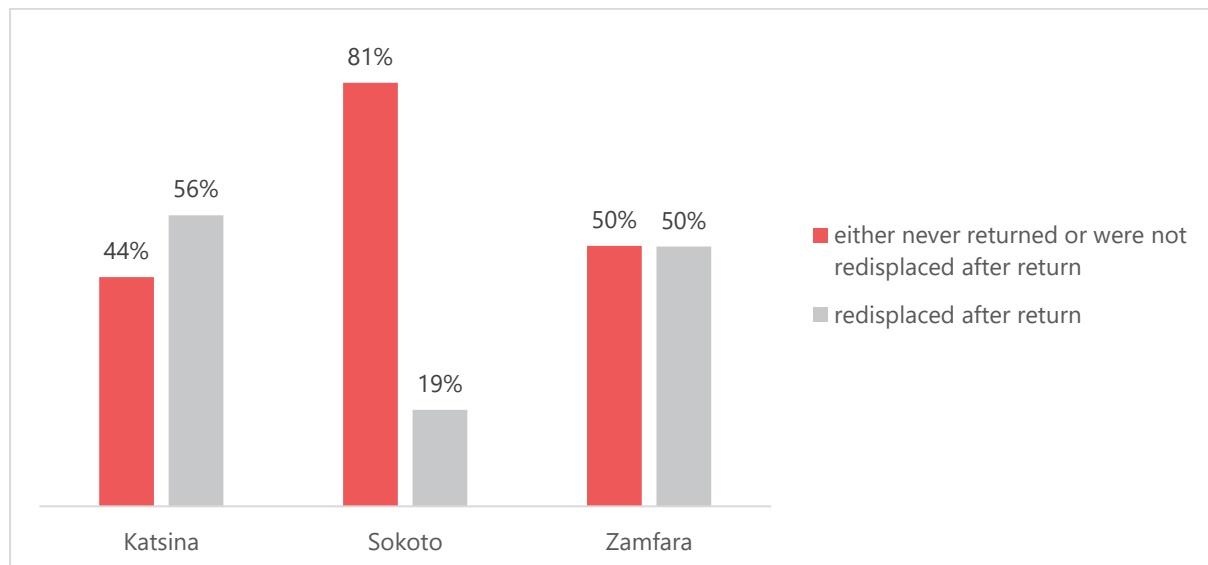
**If both return-and-re-displacement multiple times to the same area of displacement, and displacement to multiple different areas of displacement, were counted as instances of multiple displacements, then participants in a majority of FGDs reported having experienced some kind of multiple displacement.** HH survey data reflects a similar trend, with approximately **56% of IDP respondents from Katsina and 50% of respondents from Zamfara reporting that they were re-displaced after they had returned to their areas of origin.**

**The percentage of IDP HHs reporting re-displacement after return was relatively smaller in Sokoto, at 19%,** possibly due to the comparatively longer journeys undertaken by IDPs in the state as indicated by the qualitative findings, which could be a factor disabling multiple attempts at return. FGD participants' responses in the state rarely indicated intentions and attempts to return to their

<sup>48</sup> Beytrison, Fran and Kalis, Olivia, "[Repeated displacement in eastern DRC](#)," Forced Migration Review, May 2013.

areas of origin for good, and returns were mostly conducted in the form of visits intended to collect belongings.

**Figure 7: % of IDP HHs per state reporting having been re-displaced after return**



## Daily displacement

Secondary data sources<sup>49</sup> report that, in the Northwest, it is not uncommon for communities to leave their homes in the evening to spend a night in a place they consider relatively safe and then return to their homes the following morning.

**Qualitative data collected in all three states seems to chime with such claims of “daily displacement.”** For instance, FGD participants reported having practiced daily displacement for extended periods of time to mitigate perceived insecurity before deciding to leave their homes for good when security concerns escalated. This practice reportedly stemmed from the dynamic and instable character of the conflict in the region. Participants reported that, within such a context, daily displacement allowed communities to deliberate and arrange for the possibility of more longer-term displacement while they were able to secure some sense of relative safety, without uprooting themselves completely and experiencing the resource stress that comes with this.

For instance, in Yasore village in Katsina state, which reportedly started seeing cattle rustling and armed attacks by bandits in 2019, IDPs reported practicing daily displacement until the frequency of kidnappings and demand for ransom, as well as SGBV against women, increased dramatically, causing them to leave their homes to seek refuge in Batsari town for a longer period of time.

**Findings suggest the types of and reasons for daily displacement were context-specific.** For instance, according to some FGD participants, people who were more vulnerable to attacks practised daily migration while others in their community continued to live in their homes, as illustrated by Case study 4.

HHs were often reportedly forced to make choices between physical safety and meeting basic needs, and sometimes individual family members had to take on more risks to increase their family's chances of survival. See case study 4 for further details.

<sup>49</sup> Adebajo Kunle, “Displaced By ‘Bandits’ (3): Bustling By Day, Barren By Night... Nigeria’s Part-Time Villages,” Humangle, August 2021.

Furthermore, this daily displacement also reportedly reflected **the lack of capacity of many communities to leave and seek more permanent refuge in safer locations**. Literature on refuge and displacement acknowledges that those with resources are more likely to be able to take decisions to reach safer areas more quickly than others. In Northwest Nigeria, where poverty levels are high,<sup>50</sup> **daily migration may allow communities to negotiate between the resources required to displace in the first place and the insecurity in their area of origin**. However, despite daily displacement being a viable method for some, it should be noted that cases of involuntary immobility were also reported by some FGD participants. Involuntary mobility will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming sub-chapter [People remaining in the areas of origin](#).

It was observed during FGDs that participants who had been practicing daily displacement before eventually being displaced for longer periods of time did not consider themselves to have experienced multiple displacements. There is thus a possibility that the actual number of those who experienced multiple displacements is much higher than what is reflected in the HH survey data.

#### Case study 4

A community of IDPs originating from Tsamaye settlement in Sabon Birni LGA, Sokoto State, reported that the first wave of displacement from their AoO was observed in 2019, in response to an increase in the frequency of attacks. The respondents were themselves displaced along with caravans from their community in 2021. **From 2020 to 2021, they reportedly practiced daily migration**, with members of community travelling to nearby bushes every night to sleep and return the next day to their homes. **This daily migration was practiced selectively by the men of the community, while the women were reportedly able to travel back and forth more easily, and sometimes also slept in their own homes**. This was because, in Tsamaye, bandits and NSAGs reportedly initially only targeted men for kidnapping and other violent activities, and women were relatively safe during those years, even as bandits continued to attack and capture their homes. In 2021, in response to a life-threatening attack on the men of the village, participants asserted that all men dispersed and travelled in small groups directly to Sokoto town. Once they sent word to their families back home, women organised to leave the area of origin as well and travelled in large caravans until they reached Sokoto town.

## Family separation

**Findings from the quantitative survey suggest that family separation during displacement is a relatively common phenomenon in the Northwest**; 23% of IDP HHs interviewed in Sokoto, 39% in Katsina and 35% in Zamfara reported that they or other member(s) of their household **had experienced separation from their household during the course of their displacement**.

Qualitative data reflects a similar trend as some participants in FGDs and KIIs across all three states reported being separated from members of their HH at the time of data collection. Participants who reported being separated from their family members during displacement reportedly sometimes had to leave behind their children and/or parents with friends or relatives, or were separated from them while fleeing in different directions.

This might suggest that, in some circumstances, **those more vulnerable and less capable of fleeing on their own were left behind during displacement**. Relatedly, **participants noted seeing or hearing about children travelling unaccompanied**.<sup>51</sup> In all such cases, FGD respondents reported that **caravans would often “adopt” unaccompanied minors and help them find their families**. Furthermore, **unaccompanied minors or adults helping them often resorted to going to urban centres in search of their parents**.

<sup>50</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, “2019 Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary”, May 2020.

<sup>51</sup> One participant reported hearing that unaccompanied children were being taken to Kebbi State, another participant mentioned that the district head of Batsari was attempting to reunite children with their families. Another participant reported that hearing about children travelling unaccompanied, families would devise strategies to keep each other safe if they found themselves under attack, for instances, mothers would pre-determine a meeting place with children and instruct them to run and wait in such a specified location in the event of an attack.

However, FGD participants also reported of more intentional family separation practices employed as a diversification strategy after reaching an area of displacement to enable some members to live in other locations for work purposes.

FGD participants across all three states reported that people generally preferred to travel with family members as much as possible, and yet **sometimes family members were separated during displacement. For instance, in the case of an attack, people who were targeted reportedly fled in every direction**, which in some accounts caused them to be separated from their family.

As in the case above, participants reported that **people often went back to search for members of their HH that had been separated**. In other cases, separated family members **reportedly waited in a hiding place nearby before moving towards a selected place of refuge for others from the community to join them, or, tried to go to the nearest safe settlement and search for or wait for others from their family**. Many FGD and KII participants reported that they were sometimes able to reunite with estranged family members upon reaching the areas of refuge.

Accounts from FGD participants in Sokoto and Katsina revealed instances of bandits primarily targeting adult men, sometimes prior to wider community attacks. In such cases, women and children reportedly sometimes stayed behind in their villages while men fled for their safety. According to FGD participants, men would then typically try to find a suitable area of refuge before picking up the rest of their families to join them in displacement.<sup>52</sup>

In some exceptional instances, reported by participants across all three assessed states, women fled the village first. Specifically, in Katsina and Zamfara, some FGD and KII participants reported that people left their homes due to sexual- and gender-based violence. In such cases women were sent to safer locations often with their children before the men left the village with their belongings.

**Findings from the quantitative survey suggest that HHs that had gone through separation had commonly been able to reunite at a later stage, particularly in Katsina and Zamfara.** Among those HHs who reported having experienced family separation during their displacement in Sokoto (n=71), Zamfara (n=165), and Katsina (n=281), 42%, 79%, and 83%, respectively, reported having been able to reunite with their families later. Although the findings from these subsets are not sufficiently robust to establish conclusively that reunification is lower in Sokoto, nor to unearth the potential reasons, the generally longer displacement journeys undertaken in Sokoto, as suggested by the participatory mapping findings, might be a particular barrier to reunification. In other words, **the prevalence of shorter distance displacement in Katsina and Zamfara may be useful for separated family members to reunite with their families by searching for them from a smaller pool of more closely situated locations.**

In most cases, FGD participants reported travelling in **large groups with other members of their community** during their displacement. Reported caravan sizes ranged from 150 to 1500 people. According to FGD participants, where possible, the entire community from the settlement travelled and settled together in a place of refuge.

In one FGD, participants who originated from Borno State in the Northeast but had now settled in Tambuwal LGA reported perceiving that, in contrast to the Northwest, HHs in the Northeast seemed to more commonly travel in small groups to avoid attracting attention from Armed Opposition Groups (AOGs) while enroute.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> This was reportedly the case in Katsina State in Garin dan Yaro (2016) and Shekehwa (2018) until in 2019, armed bandits started attacking everyone. Similarly, in Sokoto in Tsamaye and Modachi until 2021.

<sup>53</sup> FGD in Tambuwal town, Sokoto State on 4 July 2022

## People remaining in Areas of Origin

While participants commonly reported that most people from their areas of origin had left, there seem to generally be two reasons for people to remain in their areas of origin at the time of data collection. Either people had never left, due to a variety of reasons, including limited mobility, not knowing where to go, or not wanting to leave farms behind, or people had returned to look after possessions and access farmland.

**Findings suggest that vulnerable community members, for instance persons with disabilities, children, and older persons, were sometimes left behind when most other residents had fled for violence.** In some FGDs, participants mentioned various strategies employed by vulnerable groups to stay safe during attacks, before seeking opportunities to potentially reunite with other family members. For instance, FGD participants in Katsina recounted that people who had been left in their area of origin during an attack had hidden themselves in nearby caves or underneath the beds until the bandits had left, after which they returned to wait for their family members to come back.<sup>54</sup>

FGD and KII participants interviewed across all three states commonly reported **that those left behind in the areas of origin were being subjected to repeated attacks by bandits.** Those left behind were also reportedly **dealing with resource stress** in some instances, meaning that they would go, preferably at night, in search of food. Conducting activities during specific times of the day was commonly used as a tactic by civilians to gain some sense of security (please refer to the sub-chapter [Daily Displacement](#)).

FGD and KII participants from across all three states reported knowing of instances of IDPs returning to their areas of origin to access farmlands, even if they had to pay levies to armed men for accessing them. According to the participants, most people who had tried to return had decided that it was not safe enough yet and had re-displaced (please refer to the sub chapter on [Multiple Displacements](#)).

## Conditions characterising IDP refuge in Areas of Displacement

### Host-IDP relations

**Participants in all the FGDs reported that there were no conflicts or tensions between the host community and their community. However, they reported that members of host communities often asked them to refrain from stealing and to not clutter the city and that some members of the host communities exhibited behaviours that may suggest that they held negative preconceptions of IDPs.** This sometimes took the form of informal rules dictating the conduct of IDPs. For instance, in an informal IDP camp located in Sokoto, water was not easy to come by, making it a contested resource. Here, IDPs reported that they were required to wait until all host community members had filled their water containers before filling their own.

Participants also commonly reported that, while there were no tensions or conflicts between the two communities, **they did not receive too much support from host communities.** Participants often reported that there were no resource sharing arrangements between host and IDP communities. **The main resource that host community members reportedly helped IDPs with was shelter. Some participants also reported receiving support in the form of food during the time of Ramadan.**

Findings suggest that IDPs in Sokoto were generally hosted by NGOs, while local communities and community leaders were commonly reported as hosting in Katsina and Zamfara. **In Katsina and Zamfara, some KII and FGD participants reported feeling like they had overstayed their**

<sup>54</sup> FGD in Batsari town, Katsina State on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**welcome, and expressed a desire to return to their areas of origin to access sources of livelihood.**

## Living conditions

**FGD participants across all three states reported that markets were functioning**, albeit in some cases with decreased frequency or availability of goods. However, they felt that **the prices were high and increasing regularly, rendering the items largely unaffordable for them.** Some participants described their living conditions as “very difficult”, for instance in an informal camp in Sokoto town, where FGD participants reported living in **crowded spaces**, to the extent that there was no space for the men to sleep indoors.

Some participants reported having established small business to make a living, ranging from setting up Okada<sup>55</sup> service, to selling food on the streets, working as domestic workers for host community members, and establishing nail cutting shops. In most FGDs, however, participants reported relying **on begging as a coping mechanism to be able to buy food and other essential items on many days.**

## Needs

**Shelter, food, and water were frequently identified by FGD participants as the most urgent needs for new arrivals across all three states. This was followed by clothing and employment opportunities.**

The most reported needs of IDPs already in the areas of displacement were food and clothing, followed by shelter arrangements, capital for small business, medical aid in the form of access to health centres, access to medicines and medical attention on arrival, support in obtaining birth certificates and documentation, aid in accessing WASH facilities including access to water, and, lastly, support with non-food items (NFIs) like bedding, utensils etc.

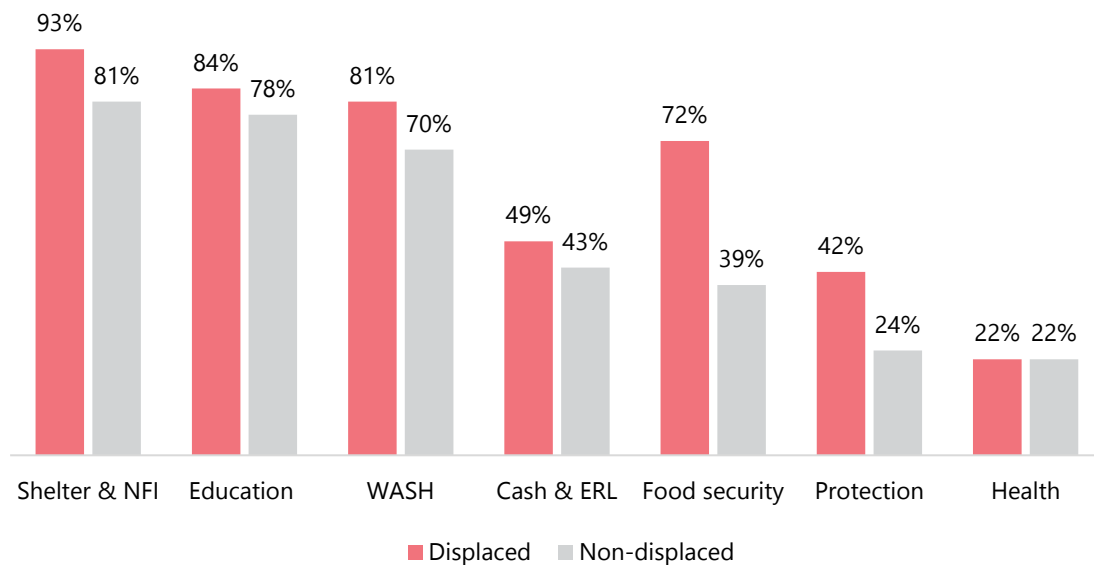
HH survey data on IDPs' sectoral and inter-sectoral needs was analysed in the Northwest Nigeria MSNA.<sup>56</sup> MSNA findings indicated that **IDP HHs' needs across Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara states were most severe in the sectors of Shelter and NFIs, Education, WASH, and Food security and nutrition**, as can be seen in the graph below.

<sup>55</sup> Two-wheeler taxi service.

<sup>56</sup> According to the MSNA analysis framework, needs (defined as Living Standard Gaps), are measured through composite sectoral indicators that categorise the degree of severity of deprivation per sector on a scale from 1 (none/minimal) to 4+ (extreme). For more information on the MSNA Methodology, please refer to the [Methodology Note](#).



**Figure 8: % of IDP and non-displaced HHs with multisectoral needs per sector**



Furthermore, as can be seen above, findings highlighted a marked difference in the percentage of non-IDP HHs found to be in need in the domains of Food security, Protection, Shelter and NFI and WASH compared to the percentage of IDP respondents. For more in-depth analysis of the humanitarian needs of IDP and non-displaced HHs in the Northwest, please refer to the [MSNA outputs](#).

## Movement intentions

FGD participants generally reported feeling a sense of relative security in their areas of displacement and consequently, **commonly reported wanting to stay in their areas of displacement for the foreseeable future**. However, difficult living conditions, including high costs of living and limited access to livelihoods, reportedly drove some participants to hope to return to their areas of origin **if the security situation improved** to a manageable level. Some participants planned to never return, irrespective of the security situation, while other participants reported having attempted to return to their area of origin but not having been successful due to lack of financial resources or due to persisting insecurity in the area of origin. Only in a few instances did participants mention having a strong wish to return to their area of origin, again reportedly only on the condition of an improvement of the security situation.

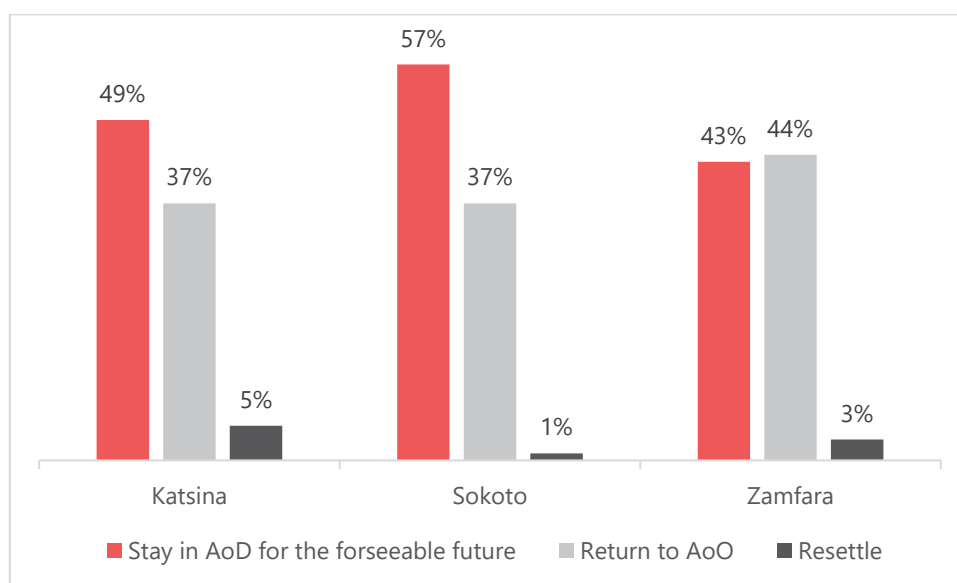
**The exception was KII participants in Zamfara, who commonly expressed an intention to return.** This, they reported, was mainly due to the unsuitable environment of refuge they found themselves in, where they could not find jobs to meet their everyday needs while host communities' resources appeared to be running thin due to a large number of new IDP arrivals in the urban centres. Despite accounts of people returning and being re-displaced multiple times due to persistent insecurity, **KII participants in Zamfara commonly expressed a strong desire to return if their community leaders could negotiate with bandits and ensure their safety** (see Case study 5).

#### Case study 5

An IDP KII interviewed in Gummi town, Zamfara State, for instance reported that community leaders sometimes reconciled with bandits by agreeing to terms set by bandit groups to ensure safe return. These ranged from paying some amount of “protection money” to bandits who would in turn ensure the IDPs’ safe return and stay and protect them from other bandit groups, to working for bandits on farms as bonded labour.

HH survey data findings further reflected the qualitative findings, suggesting a similar preference to stay in the area of displacement, with surveyed IDP HHs across Sokoto, Katsina and Zamfara States commonly reporting wanting to stay for the foreseeable future (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: % of IDP HHs by reported movement intentions for the 6 months following data collection, per State**



## CONCLUSION

**Against a backdrop of spiralling insecurity and displacement in Northwest Nigeria**, REACH conducted a qualitative population movement assessment in the Northwest, in parallel to the quantitative Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), to provide humanitarian and development actors in the region with updated information to support a displacement-sensitive humanitarian response. Findings from the qualitative component provided an indicative overview of the displacement journeys, movement intentions, and experiences of IDPs in three displacement-affected states of the region: Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara.

Findings suggest that, while insecurity has been common in the region since at least 2013, a change in the character of the conflict, including a geographical spread and intensification of violence, caused an uptick in displacement across Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara in recent years. While FGD participants reported having sustained general insecurity in their areas of origin for extended periods of time, they commonly recounted specific attacks on villages, mass kidnappings, and instances of SGBV as factors eventually triggering their displacement. During such attacks, findings suggest family separation was not uncommon, with people reportedly losing sight of each other in the heat of the moment and vulnerable, less mobile populations, including children, reportedly sometimes being left behind, further indicating the haphazard conditions associated with the above-mentioned triggers that seemed to characterise initial displacements.

The ever shifting and evolving nature of the spread of the crisis appears to have caused IDPs to be uncertain about responding to threats and finding durable solutions to repeated bouts of insecurity and violence, causing displacement to become a reactionary mechanism in the region rather than a long-term response to threats to personal security. **A lack of credible information about the security situation in potential areas of displacement and insecurity along the route** were commonly reported barriers to movement, with findings suggesting that IDPs on the move often had to **re-route or seek temporary refuge** before displacing again. To this effect, the prevalence of longer distance single displacement observed in Sokoto as against shorter distance, multiple displacements seen in Katsina and Zamfara suggests that the existence of camp and camp-like structures, as well as information about the existence of these options, might potentially help IDPs determine a more sustainable displacement journey once they have been made to leave their homes.

Findings suggest that **limited access to community support, a lack of livelihoods, and perceptions of dwindling resources** potentially causing increased tensions with host communities, were important factors that made IDPs consider returning to their area of origin. However, FGD participants, KIs, and HHs overwhelmingly reported **that a stable security situation in their area of origin was a necessary condition for return**, leaving many to report **intending to stay in their area of displacement for the foreseeable future**. Others reportedly dealt with the difficult trade-off between access to livelihoods and safety through engaging in daily displacement, which could have negative implications for their safety.

Due to the limited access to livelihoods and resources in areas of displacement, IDPs were reportedly often resorting to extreme coping strategies such as begging and/or relying on their social support networks to access basic needs. In light of the regions' chronic poverty, high level of multi-sectoral needs among displaced and non-displaced communities alike, and the commonly reported intention to remain in the area of displacement, findings highlight the need for credible information and durable solutions to support communities making informed movement decisions and meeting their basic needs in safety and through sustainable means. Considering the indicative nature of the findings and the breadth of this assessments' objectives, additional, area-based research focused on potential durable solutions pathways in areas of displacement could prove relevant to further support context-sensitive programming.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: List of most commonly reported migration corridors by ward of origin and ward of displacement

This data is analysed from the responses of IDP HHs participating in the MSNA survey. It is indicative in nature. Ward to ward journeys reported by 10 or more IDP HHs were compiled to create an indicative list of most commonly reported migration corridors represented in the table below:

LGA of displacement	State of displacement	Ward of displacement	Ward of origin	State of origin	LGA of origin
Anka	Zamfara	Anka	Anka	Zamfara	Anka
Bakura	Zamfara	Bakura	Bakura	Zamfara	Bakura
Batsari	Katsina	Batsari	Batsari	Katsina	Batsari
Bakura	Zamfara	Birnin Tudu	Birnin Tudu	Zamfara	Bakura
Dandume	Katsina	Dandume B	Dandume B	Katsina	Dandume
Funtua	Katsina	Dukke	Dukke	Katsina	Funtua
Jibia	Katsina	Faru	Faru	Katsina	Maradun
Faskari	Katsina	Faskari	Faskari	Katsina	Faskari
Illela	Sokoto	Illela	Salewa	Sokoto	Tangaza
Kankara	Katsina	Kankara	Kankara	Katsina	Kankara
Kankara	Katsina	Kukashaka	Kukashaka	Katsina	Kankara
Mani	Katsina	Machika	Machika	Katsina	Sabuwa
Anka	Zamfara	Magaji	Magaji	Zamfara	Anka
Dandume	Katsina	Magaji Wando A	Magaji Wando A	Katsina	Dandume
Dan Musa	Katsina	Maidabino A	Maidabino A	Katsina	Dan Musa
Maradun	Zamfara	Maradun South	Maradun South	Zamfara	Maradun
Bukkuyum	Zamfara	Ruwan Jema	Ruwan Jema	Zamfara	Bukkuyum
Zurmi	Zamfara	Zurmi	Zurmi	Zamfara	Zurmi

## Annex 2: Terminology

**Area of origin** - The area where an IDP was habitually residing before they faced their first ever displacement. Area of Origin is the location **FROM** where an IDP is displaced when first displaced. There can only be one area of origin for an IDP.

**Area of displacement** - An area where an IDP gets relocated **TO** due to displacement. This may or may not be a safe location. An IDP can have multiple areas of displacement.

**Area of refuge** – Another name for an area of displacement.

**Daily displacement** – A kind of displacement where IDPs stay in their area of origin during some parts of the day and stay in nearby villages, urban towns, or bushes, during some parts of the night. In the context of this analysis, daily displacement was reported to allow people to access some level of security from bandit attacks.

**Okada** – Motorcycle taxi service.

**Internally displaced person (IDP)** - persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.<sup>57</sup>

**Mediating factors** - Mediating factors enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, diminish or consolidate migration. These work together to influence the nature and decision of displacement<sup>58</sup>

**Multiple displacement** - A type of protracted displacement during which people are forced to move repeatedly from successive sites of refuge.

**Proximate factors** – Proximate factors contribute to the making of an environment that may induce displacement -example economic downturn, generalized insecurity etc.<sup>59</sup>

**Precipitating factors/triggers** – Precipitating factors are those that actually trigger departure; mediating factors enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, diminish or consolidate migration.<sup>60</sup>

**Return and re-displacement** – A pattern of displacement where an IDP returns to their area of origin with the intention to stay there but is re-displaced from their area of origin and must leave again.

**Returnee** - Returnees are defined as any formerly displaced persons who have returned to their place of origin or habitual residence.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> UNOCHA, "[United Nations Guiding Principle on Internal Displacement](#)," August 1998.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas Van Hear, Oliver Bakewell & Katy Long, "[Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration](#)," Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44:6, 927-944, October 2017.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> IOM, Displacement Tracking Matrix, "[Libya: IDP & Returnee Report Round 14, September - October 2017](#)," October 2017.