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IDP INTENTION SURVEY BENUE STATE



NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS



BENUE SDGs
LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



August 2025



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IDP Intention Survey – Benue State

August 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IDP Intention Survey conducted in Benue State provides critical insights into the future intentions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in camps and camp-like settings. The survey, implemented by the Benue State Government in collaboration with key partners including BSEMA, BSBEPE, BSCPR, BSBS, BSSDGs, MHADM, NCFRMI and supported by the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF), reached 911 households across 18 sites in five LGAs. It aimed to assess IDPs' preferences to return to their places of origin, integrate locally, or relocate elsewhere in Nigeria, and to identify the conditions influencing these decisions.

The displacement patterns among respondents show a diverse timeline, with significant movements occurring in recent years. A notable 25 per cent of the population was displaced in 2025, while 22 per cent were displaced in 2018. These figures reflect the ongoing and recurrent nature of crises in the area, shaped by repeated incidents of violence, loss of livelihoods, and persistent insecurity. The overwhelming majority of respondents, 95 per cent, expressed an intention to return to their place of origin. Only one per cent preferred to integrate locally, while less than one per cent intended to relocate elsewhere in Nigeria. A small proportion, three per cent, remained undecided, highlighting the importance of maintaining flexible and context-specific approaches to durable solutions.

Decisions regarding return, integration, or relocation are largely made by heads of households and are influenced by factors such as security, availability of livelihoods, adequate housing, and social ties. The findings also indicate significant uncertainty around timelines for action, as many respondents were unable to specify when they might move forward with their chosen option.

The findings are intended to guide durable solutions planning by the Benue State Government and partners, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based, voluntary, and respectful of IDPs' choices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Benue State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management

Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA)

Benue State Bureau of Statistics (BSBS)

Benue State Commission for Peace and Reconciliation (BSCPR)

Benue State Budget and Economic Planning (BSBEP)

Benue State Sustainable Development Goals (BSSDGs)

National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI)

National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS)



INTRODUCTION

Benue State grapples with a protracted displacement crisis, driven primarily by farmer-herder clashes, communal violence, and armed attacks, and compounded by environmental shocks such as floods. Since the escalation of violence in 2014, the state has faced a complex humanitarian emergency, resulting in large-scale internal displacement and significant challenges to recovery and reintegration.

In response to this enduring crisis, the Benue State Government—through the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA), the Benue State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MHADM), and other key MDAs—has intensified efforts to pursue durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs). These efforts have been significantly bolstered by the support of the **Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF)**, which has provided a strategic platform for the government to collect, analyze, and disseminate critical data on displacement dynamics and future intentions of IDPs.

As part of this initiative, and in collaboration with key government partners including the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA), the Benue State Bureau of Statistics (BSBS), the Benue State Commission for Peace and Reconciliation (BSCPR), the Benue State Budget and Economic Planning (BSBEP), the Benue State Sustainable Development Goals (BSSDGs), the Benue State Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), a comprehensive Intention Survey was conducted in IDP camps across the state. This survey aimed to assess the future intentions of displaced households—whether to return to their places of origin, locally integrate, or relocate—within the next 12 months. By reaching 911 households, the survey provides a robust evidence base to inform policy and programming that respects the choices of IDPs and supports safe, voluntary, and dignified solutions.

The data generated through this exercise not only reflects the voices and aspirations of displaced communities but also strengthens the capacity of the Benue State Government to plan and implement targeted interventions. It demonstrates the state's leadership in advancing recovery and resilience, while reinforcing the collective commitment to ensure that no one is left behind in the journey toward sustainable peace and development.

OBJECTIVES

The Intention Survey tool aims at understanding IDPs' preferred solution options and the conditions that influenced such preferences. The main objectives of the survey are as follows:

- I. To assess IDPs who wish to return, relocate, and locally integrate.
- II. To map out areas to which IDPs wish to return, relocate, and locally integrate.
- III. To understand the conditions in (actual and intended) locations of solutions.
- IV. To determine the estimated timelines for return, relocation, and local integration.

METHODOLOGY

A structured, face-to-face interview methodology was chosen for the survey to allow for in-depth responses and to account for literacy levels. Interviews were conducted by trained enumerators who administered the survey instrument to each sampled head of household across the camps in Benue State.

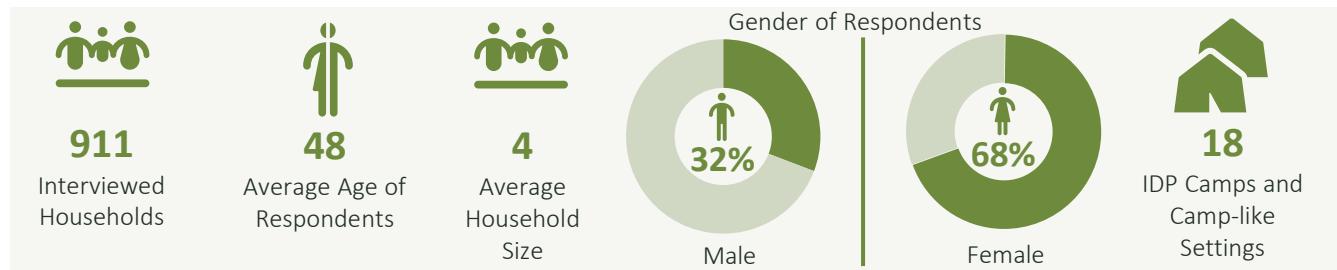
Given the population size of IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings in Benue State, the survey targeted a sample of households. This approach ensured representative coverage and maximized data accuracy for analysing household intentions.

The questionnaire was developed to capture demographic information, household size, length of stay in the camp, and specific intentions regarding return, local integration, or relocation. Additional questions were included to understand factors influencing these choices, such as safety, access to basic services, livelihood opportunities, and family considerations.

A team of enumerators fluent in English and local languages, including Tiv, Idoma, Igese, and Jukun and familiar with the cultural context of the camps, from BSEMA and partner agencies, were trained. The training covered survey objectives, interview techniques, ethical considerations, and the importance of neutrality and confidentiality.

Household Interviews: Enumerators visited each household within the camps and conducted interviews with the heads of household. In cases where the head was unavailable, a senior household member was interviewed. Responses were recorded digitally on tablets to ensure accuracy and facilitate real-time data entry.

Informed consent was obtained from each respondent before beginning the interview. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and responses were anonymized to protect identities. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no repercussions for opting out. Data collected was cleaned, anonymized, and processed for analysis.



To understand the future intentions and aspirations of IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings in Benue State, the state government through the Durable Solutions Data Management Working Group surveyed five Local Government Areas (LGAs) where IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings were situated. A total of 911 displaced households living in 18 camps and two camp-like settings across the state were sampled and interviewed. Respondents were primarily heads of households, and in cases where the head was unavailable, a senior household member participated in the interview.

Figure 2: Number of Displacement

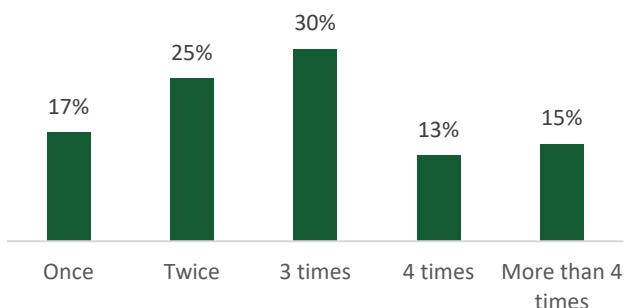
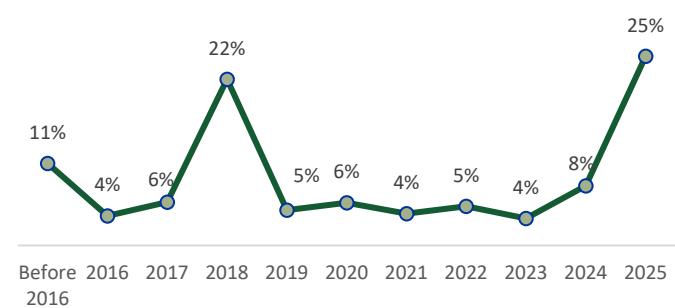


Figure 3: Year of Displacement



FUTURE INTENTION

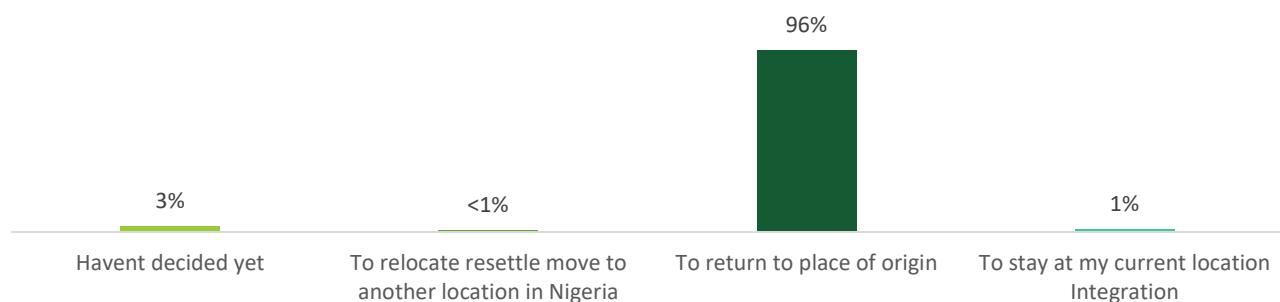
The future intentions of IDPs in Benue State show a strong preference for returning to their places of origin. A significant 95 per cent of respondents expressed the intention to return, underscoring the deep connection many have to their home communities and their desire to rebuild their lives in familiar surroundings.

A small proportion, about one per cent, indicated a preference to remain at their current location and integrate locally, while less than one per cent planned to relocate or resettle in another part of Nigeria. Only three per cent of respondents reported being

undecided, reflecting some uncertainty driven by factors such as security, livelihoods, and housing conditions.

These findings highlight the need for coordinated interventions that prioritise safe, voluntary, and sustainable returns, while also addressing the needs of those seeking to integrate or relocate, and supporting the small number who remain undecided.

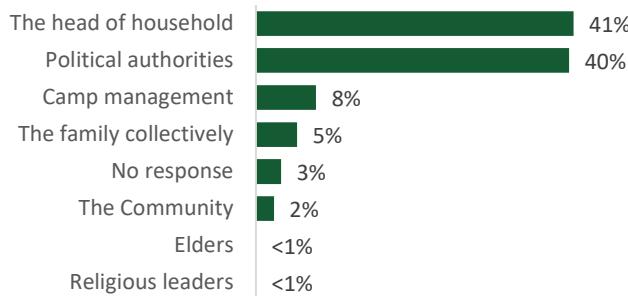
Figure 4: Future Intentions





INTENTION TO RETURN TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

Figure 5: Who Makes the Decision to Return



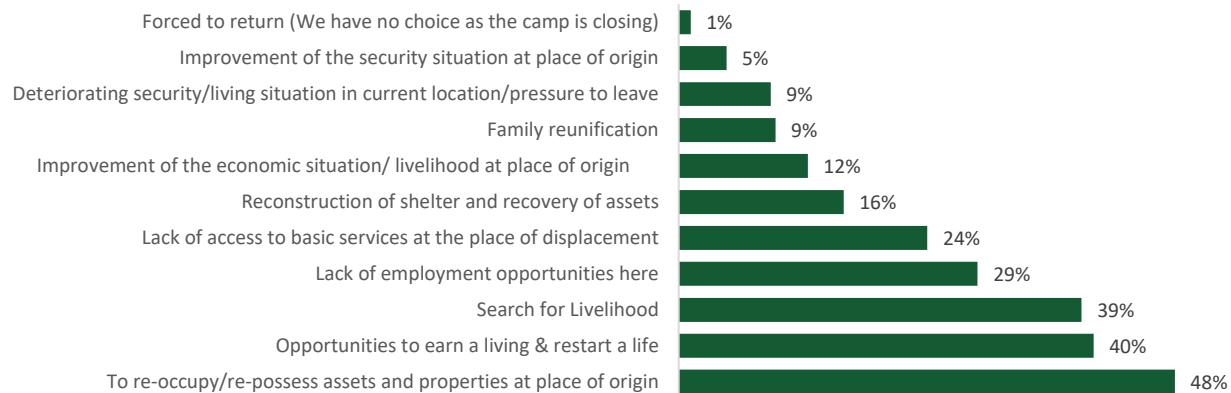
The head of household emerged as the primary decision-maker in determining whether to return to the place of origin, accounting for 41 per cent of responses. Political authorities were the second most influential, cited by 40 per cent of respondents, highlighting their significant role in shaping return decisions. Camp management influenced eight per cent of decisions, while five per cent reported that the decision was made collectively by the family. The community influenced two per cent of cases, and less than one per cent each cited elders or religious leaders. Three per cent provided no response.

Figure 6: Intended Time of Return



There is notable variation in the timelines displaced populations envision for their return. Almost half of respondents, 46 per cent, anticipated returning within one month, while 24 per cent stated they "Don't know yet" when they intend to return. Twenty-one per cent expected to return within three months, six per cent within six months, two per cent within one year, and one per cent within nine months.

Figure 7: Reasons to Return to Place of Origin*



The reasons to return to the place of origin reflect a combination of economic, social, and security-related factors influencing displaced individuals' decisions. The most frequently cited motivation was to re-occupy or re-possess assets and properties at the place of origin, reported by 48 per cent of respondents. This was followed by opportunities to earn a living and restart life at 40 per cent, and the search for livelihood at 39 per cent.

Other notable reasons included the lack of employment opportunities in the current location, mentioned by 29 per cent, and lack of access to basic services at the

place of displacement, cited by 24 per cent. Reconstruction of shelter and recovery of assets was reported by 16 per cent, while 12 per cent noted the prospect of improved economic conditions at the place of origin.

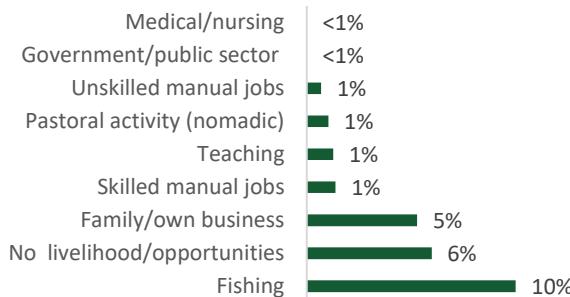
Family reunification and deteriorating conditions or pressure to leave the current location were each reported by 9 per cent, while improvement of the security situation at the place of origin was mentioned by 5 per cent. A small share, one per cent, stated they were compelled to return due to camp closure.

*Multiple options selected



INTENTION TO RETURN TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

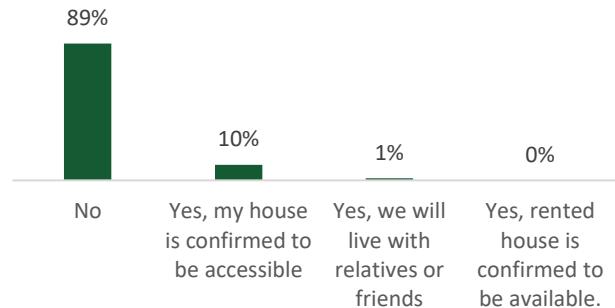
Figure 8: Access to Livelihood in Place of Origin



Focusing on the economic landscape in areas of origin, a key factor influencing IDPs' decisions to return, fishing emerged as the most accessible livelihood option, reported by 10 per cent of respondents. This was followed by family or self-owned businesses, cited by 5 per cent, which often provide a direct pathway to re-establishing income and stability upon return.

Other livelihood options included skilled and unskilled manual jobs, teaching, and pastoral activity, each cited by 1 per cent. Employment in the government or public sector, as well as medical or nursing roles, were each reported by less than 1 per cent. Meanwhile, 6 per cent of respondents reported no livelihood opportunities

Figure 9: Available/Accessible Housing in Intended Place of Return



available in their areas of origin, highlighting the importance of targeted economic recovery efforts to support sustainable returns.

Housing availability is a major barrier to return for IDPs. A significant 89 per cent of respondents reported that no housing is currently available or accessible in their intended place of return. A majority of displaced individuals may face structural or financial obstacles that hinder their ability to re-establish residence.

Areas of Intended Return

State	LGA	Percentage of Return
Benue	Agatu	2%
Benue	Guma	73%
Benue	Gwer West	8%
Benue	Makurdi	16%
Benue	Ukum	1%



INTENTION TO INTEGRATE (STAY AT CURRENT LOCATION)

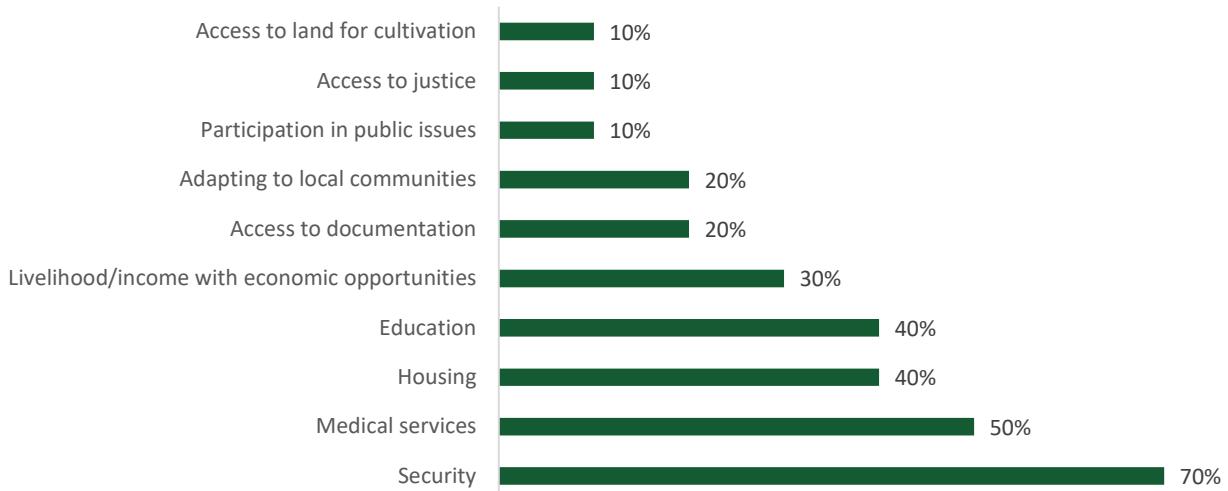
Current Location of IDPs Willing to Integrate

State	LGA	Site Name	Percentage of Integration
Benue	Guma	Gbajimba Camp 2	20%
Benue	Guma	Gbajimba IDP Camp	20%
Benue	Guma	LGS Quarters	10%
Benue	Guma	Uikpam Camp	20%
Benue	Guma	Uikpam Clinic	10%
Benue	Makurdi	Abagena Camp	20%

The majority of IDPs intending to integrate are located in Guma LGA, with 20 per cent each choosing Gbajimba Camp 2, Gbajimba IDP Camp, and Uikpam Camp.

Abagena Camp in Makurdi LGA also accounts for 20 per cent of intended integrations, reflecting its importance as a preferred location. Uikpam Clinic and LGS Quarters, both in Guma, each represent 10 per cent of the responses.

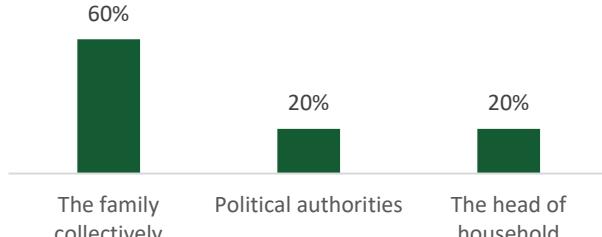
Figure 10: Conditions to Ensure Integration





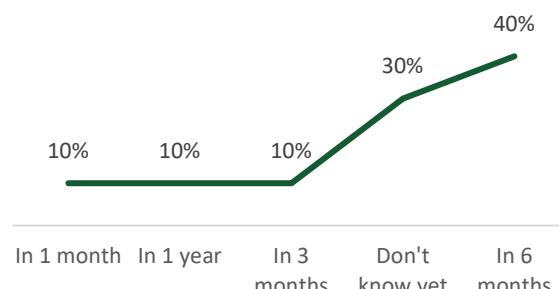
INTENTION TO INTEGRATE (STAY AT CURRENT LOCATION)

Figure 11: Who Makes the Decision to Integrate



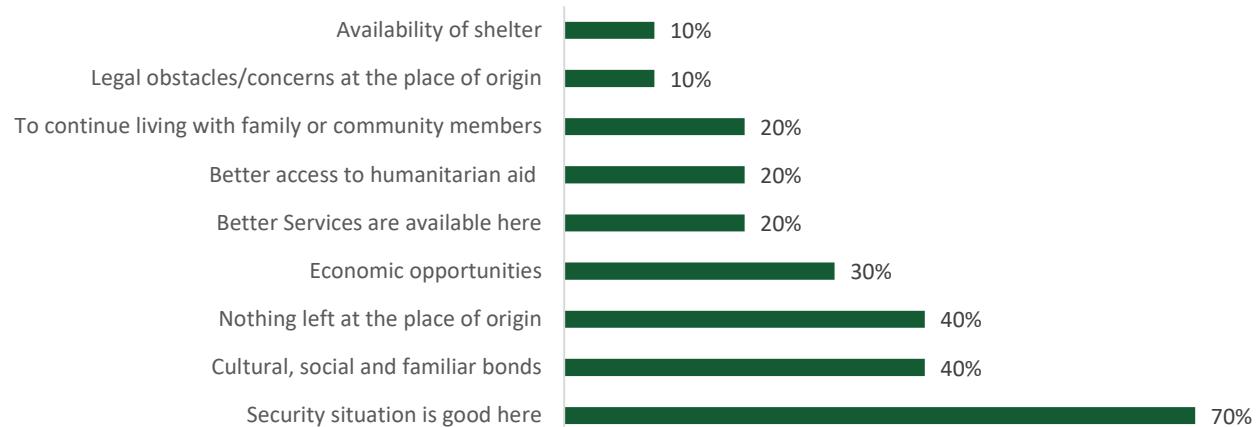
Decisions to integrate are most often made collectively by the family, cited by 60 per cent of respondents. Political authorities were identified as decision-makers by 20 per cent, while another 20 per cent indicated that the head of household is primarily responsible. These findings suggest that integration-related programming should engage both families as a unit and key authority figures who influence settlement decisions.

Figure 6: Intended Time to Integrate



Forty per cent of respondents expect to integrate within six months, making it the most common timeframe among IDPs. Thirty per cent indicated that they “Don’t know yet” when they intend to integrate, reflecting ongoing uncertainty. Smaller proportions foresee integrating within one month, three months, or one year, each cited by 10 per cent of respondents. These findings point to the need for targeted support and clear pathways to facilitate timely and informed integration decisions

Figure 13: Reasons to Integrate*



Security and economic stability remain the primary drivers of integration among displaced populations. The most cited reason is the good security situation in the current location, mentioned by 70 per cent of respondents, followed by cultural, social, and familiar bonds at 40 per cent, and the fact that nothing is left at the place of origin, also at 40 per cent.

Economic opportunities were noted by 30 per cent of respondents, while better services and better access to humanitarian aid were each cited by 20 per cent. Continuing to live with family or community members was also mentioned by 20 per cent, reflecting the

importance of social connections in integration decisions.

Less frequently, 10 per cent of respondents highlighted the availability of shelter and legal obstacles or concerns at the place of origin, such as land disputes or documentation issues, as influencing their decision to remain in their current location.

*Multiple options selected



INTENTION TO RELOCATE OR RESETTLE ELSEWHERE WITHIN NIGERIA

Areas of Intended IDP Relocation/Resettlement

State	LGA	Site Name	Percentage of Relocation/Resettlement
Benue	Guma	Daudu	20%
Benue	Logo	Ugba	20%
Benue	Logo	Anyiin	20%
Benue	Makurdi	Ankpa	20%
Benue	Makurdi	Asase II	20%

All respondents intending to relocate indicated plans to move to other locations within Benue State. Relocation intentions are evenly distributed across five LGAs and sites, with Daudu in Guma LGA, Ugba and Urban Town in Logo LGA, and Ankpa and Asase II in Makurdi LGA each accounting for 20 per cent of responses.

This concentration within the state suggests that familiarity, existing social networks, and perceived stability are key factors influencing relocation choices among displaced households.

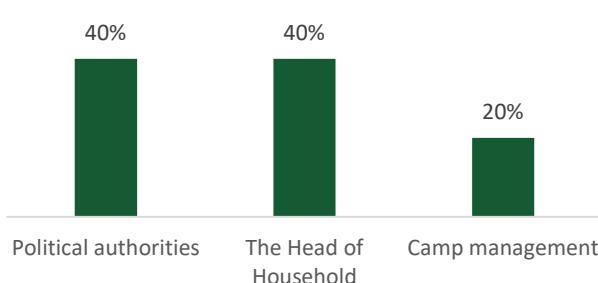


Arrival of an IDP into the Mega Camp, Makurdi LGA, Benue State © IOM Nigeria 2025



INTENTION TO RELOCATE OR RESETTLE ELSEWHERE WITHIN NIGERIA

Figure 14: Who Makes the Decision to Relocate



Seventy-nine per cent of relocation decisions are made by the head of household. Meanwhile, seven per cent of respondents attributed the decision to the family collectively, the community, or gave no response, respectively.

While relocation decisions are predominantly individual (household-level), a small but significant portion of the population may be influenced by broader social or communal factors, or may not disclose their decision-making structure.

Figure 15: Intended Time to Relocate/Resettle



Similar to the intentions to return to places of origin or integrate in current locations, there is also a notable level of uncertainty among displaced populations regarding the timing of their intended relocation. Forty per cent of respondents who plan to resettle elsewhere indicated that they “Don’t know yet” when they will relocate. An equal proportion, 20 per cent each, expect to relocate within one month, six months, or nine months. These findings highlight the need for flexible planning and support mechanisms that can accommodate varied timelines for relocation.

Figure 16: Reasons to Relocate/Resettle Elsewhere Within Nigeria



Economic motivations are the dominant drivers of internal relocation, with 80 per cent of respondents citing the availability of economic opportunities as the main factor influencing their decision. This indicates that displaced populations prioritize destinations where they can sustain themselves and rebuild their livelihoods.

In comparison, 20 per cent of respondents pointed to a favourable security situation as their primary reason for choosing a relocation destination. While safety remains important, it appears secondary to economic viability in shaping relocation preferences.

*Multiple options selected



CONCLUSION

The IDP Intention Survey in Benue State underscores the urgent need for a multi-pronged, context-sensitive approach to durable solutions. The majority of IDPs expressed a strong desire to return to their places of origin, with a smaller proportion preferring local integration in LGAs such as Gbajimba, Ukpam, and Abagena. Relocation intentions are limited, with planned movements focused entirely within Benue State, including destinations such as Daudu, Ugbu, and Ankpa. However, the presence of respondents who remain undecided about their future reflects the fluid nature of displacement dynamics and the ongoing barriers, particularly housing, security, and livelihood challenges, that must be addressed to enable sustainable solutions.

Key barriers to return are led by the absence of housing, cited by 65 per cent of respondents. Other significant obstacles include the inaccessibility or insecurity of return areas, occupation of houses or land, and trauma or psychosocial distress. For those considering integration, the availability of security, cultural and social bonds, and the fact that nothing remains at their place of origin are decisive factors. Meanwhile, relocation intentions are driven primarily by economic motivations, with a preference for destinations within Benue State.

The findings emphasize the importance of supporting voluntary and informed return, strengthening local integration frameworks, and facilitating safe and sustainable relocation pathways. Addressing the needs of undecided IDPs through targeted outreach and support, while centering IDPs' voices and intentions, remains crucial. The survey reinforces the Benue State Government's commitment to durable solutions that are safe, voluntary, and dignified, and provides a roadmap for humanitarian and development actors to align their interventions with the aspirations and realities of displaced communities.

The intention survey shows that most IDPs in Benue State intend to return to their place of origin, with only a small number considering integration or relocation, and a few remaining undecided. Economic viability, security, and access to services continue to be central factors in decision-making, with household heads playing a key role in guiding these choices.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Facilitate Voluntary Return:

- Prioritize addressing housing reconstruction and property restitution to overcome the leading barrier of destroyed or damaged housing.
- Enhance security and service delivery in areas of origin to enable safe and sustainable return for IDPs.

2. Support Local Integration:

- Strengthen access to livelihoods, safe housing, and essential services in preferred LGAs where IDPs opt to locally integrate.
- Promote social cohesion and inclusion programs that support peaceful coexistence with host communities.

3. Enable Informed Relocation:

- Provide accurate information on viable relocation destinations for those considering relocation as a durable solution.
- Support economic reintegration and access to housing in relocation sites to ensure sustainability.

4. Target Undecided Populations:

- Expand counseling, legal aid, and community dialogue initiatives to support IDPs who remain undecided about their future.
- Ensure access to timely and updated information on all available durable solutions.

5. Engage Decision-Makers:

- Tailor communication and programming to heads of households to influence decision-making positively.
- Involve elders and community leaders in outreach and planning to strengthen community acceptance of durable solutions.

LIMITATIONS

- The findings presented in this report represent weighted results, and due to rounding off, some percentages may be slightly above or below (+/-1%) 100 per cent.
- The results in this report represent a 95 per cent confidence level with a 5 per cent margin of error at the state level (Admin II).
- The absence of mobilization funds to support enumerators going to distant LGAs greatly hindered the prompt assessment of the IDPs on their future intentions and socio-economic conditions.