

A photograph of a man with dark skin and short hair, wearing a patterned shirt with red, white, and gold designs. He is sitting in a field of green plants, looking down at his hands. The background is blurred, showing more greenery and some distant structures.

# IDP AND RETURNEE ATLAS

ROUND 18 — NORTH-CENTRAL & NORTH-WEST NIGERIA

February 2026



GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE  
DISPLACEMENT  
TRACKING MATRIX

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the publication do not imply expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants. The maps included in this report are illustrative. The representations and the use of borders and geographic names may include errors and do not imply a judgment on the legal status of territories nor acknowledgement of borders by IOM.

When quoting, paraphrasing, or in any other way using the information mentioned in this report, the source needs to be stated appropriately as follows: “Source: International Organization for Migration (IOM), February 2026. DTM IDP and Returnee Atlas 18 - north-central and north-west Nigeria. IOM, Nigeria.”

---

Publisher: International Organization for Migration  
No 55 Hassan Musa Katsina Road, Asokoro  
Abuja – Nigeria (GMT +1)  
Tel.: +234 808 522 1427  
Email: [iomnigeriadtm@iom.int](mailto:iomnigeriadtm@iom.int)  
Website: <https://dtm.iom.int/nigeria>

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

Cover photo: An IDP farming in Mega Camp, Makurdi, Guma LGA, Benue State © IOM 2025

---

© IOM 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

Executive summary	4
Methodology	4
Population category	4
Limitations	4
Estimated numbers of IDPs and returnees by state	5
IDPs and returnees in north-central and north-west Nigeria	6
IDPs per state	7
IDP location types	8
IDPs per LGA	9
IDPs per period of displacement at state level	10
IDPs and reasons for displacement	11
Returnees per state	14
Returnees per state and year of return	15
Returnees per LGA	16



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report, presents the results from Round 18 of Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessments carried out by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which aims to improve and better understand the dynamics and trend of the internal displacement in the north-central and north-west conflict-affected region. This atlas was assessed between September and October 2025 and reflects the number of IDPs and returnees from 10 states in Nigeria’s north-central and north-west geopolitical zone. In both regions, the most affected zones are Benue, Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Kogi, Niger, Nasarawa, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara states.

As of October 2025, the region hosts 1,378,124 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 428,969 returnees. IDPs are predominantly found in host communities (81%), with smaller proportions in camps, integrated settings, or relocated sites. The primary causes are armed banditry/kidnapping (54%), farmer-herder clashes (33%), communal clashes (7%), climate-related disasters (3%), and insurgency (2%). These factors vary by state and period, with armed banditry/kidnapping remaining the dominant trigger. Benue State leads in both IDP (464,543; 34%) and returnee (143,887; 34%) populations. Kogi State is the second largest for returnees (108,443; 25%), while Katsina and Kaduna also report significant figures. At the LGA level, Ibaji (Kogi) and several LGAs in Benue are major returnee hotspots.

While progress is evident in the scale of returns in certain states and LGAs, significant challenges remain. Many areas continue to experience new displacement, and conditions for sustainable return are not uniformly present. The Atlas serves as a critical tool for planning, resource allocation, and advocacy, supporting efforts to restore safety, dignity, and opportunity for displaced and returning populations in the regions.

## METHODOLOGY

The IDP and returnee atlas is the product of the DTM Master list assessment which gathers data at site/location level using multiple key informants and direct observations. Interviews are conducted face-to-face by DTM in accessible locations. The atlas provides data on the number of IDPs and returnees at the state, local government area, ward and location levels, their shelter type, the period of displacement, the areas of origin for IDPs and the areas of last displacement for returnees. The Master list presents data on the number of individuals and households using head count, previous registration, official documentation or a demographic calculator based on a sample of assessed IDPs dispersed in host communities, camps or camp-like settings.

## POPULATION CATEGORY

The population categories are defined in this report as follows:

- **An internally displaced person (IDP)** according to DTM definition is a person who has been forced to flee or to leave his or her home or place 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 has not crossed an internationally recognized state border.
- **IDPs on a pathway to a durable solution** are displaced persons who, while still displaced, is progressively addressing their displacement-related needs, such as safety, housing, livelihoods, access to services, and rights, so they can sustainably rebuild their lives through local integration, return, or relocation elsewhere in the country. **Integrated IDPs** are displaced persons who have assimilated into the local community, in the location that they were displaced to. **Relocated IDPs** are displaced persons who have physically moved (voluntarily or through organized relocation programs) from camps, unsafe areas, or high-risk zones to a new settlement/site.
- In the context of Nigeria, **a returnee** is defined by DTM as any former IDP who returned to his or her locality of origin (**IDP returnee**); or any former refugee who returned to his or her country of origin (**returnee from abroad**). **Return** is understood as a physical return and does not imply or suggest that returnees live in a safe environment with dignity and access to sustainable livelihood opportunities or adequate resources.

## LIMITATIONS

- In some north-central and north-west Nigeria LGAs, the security situation remains volatile. Therefore, not all locations were accessible at the time of the assessment. In Zamfara state, some locations in Maru, Shinkafi and Zurmi LGAs were not accessible during this round.
- The data used for this analysis were estimates obtained through key informant interviews, direct observation and focus group discussions. Thus, to ensure these estimates’ reliability, data collection was performed at the lowest administrative level (site or host community).
- In some LGAs, transportation costs have increased significantly due to banditry and attacks. This made it challenging for DTM enumerators to reach the localities to be assessed and caused delays.

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors



## ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF IDPs AND RETURNEES BY STATE

IOM's DTM provides support to the Government and humanitarian partners by establishing a comprehensive system that collects, analyses and disseminates data on IDPs and returnees to ensure timely and effective assistance to affected populations. Data collection takes place at a granular level and is repeated at regular intervals to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.

As of October 2025, DTM identified a total of 1,378,124 IDPs in 244,566 households and 428,969 returnees in 72,310 households. IDPs in host communities accounted for the majority of the displaced population (81%), followed by IDPs in camps (15%), with smaller proportions integrated (4%) or relocated (<1%).

Table 1: Estimated Number of Returnees and IDPs Per State\*

State	IDPs	IDPs (%)	Returnees	Returnees (%)
Benue	464,543	34%	143,887	34%
Kaduna	115,466	8%	59,485	14%
Kano	11,247	1%	11,185	3%
Katsina	206,071	15%	53,212	12%
Kogi	2,511	0%	108,443	25%
Nasarawa	26,760	2%	11,206	3%
Niger	45,564	3%	11,027	3%
Plateau	45,212	3%	19,161	4%
Sokoto	181,526	13%	5,677	1%
Zamfara	279,224	20%	5,686	1%
Grand Total	1,378,124	100%	428,969	100%

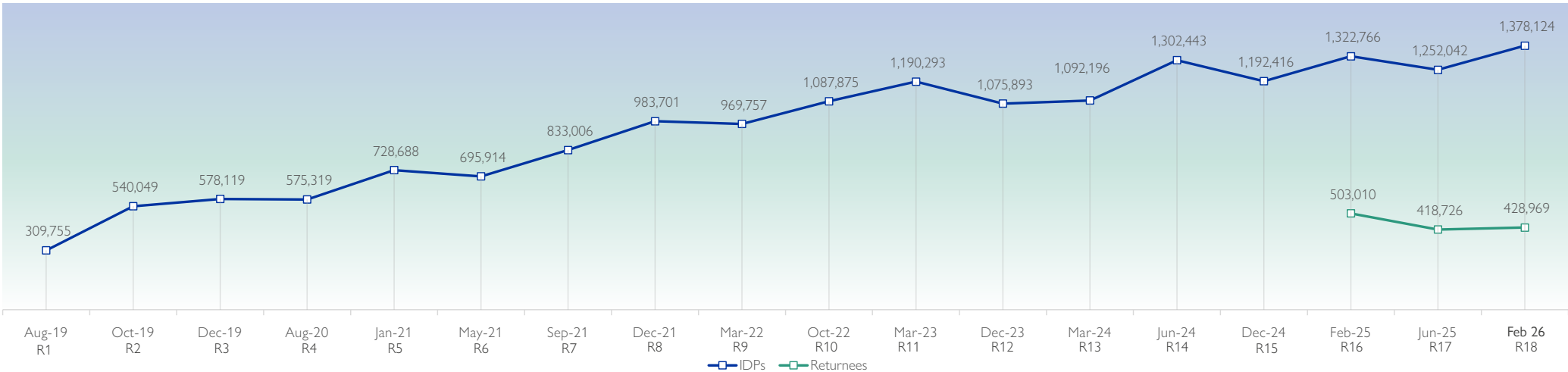


Number of IDPs **1,378,124** (as of October 2025)



Number of returnees **428,969** (as of October 2025)

Figure 1: IDP and Returnee Trends



\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

\* Dates on the trend are publication dates

IDPs AND RETURNEES IN NORTH-CENTRAL & NORTH-WEST NIGERIA

Map 1: IDP and Returnee Locations

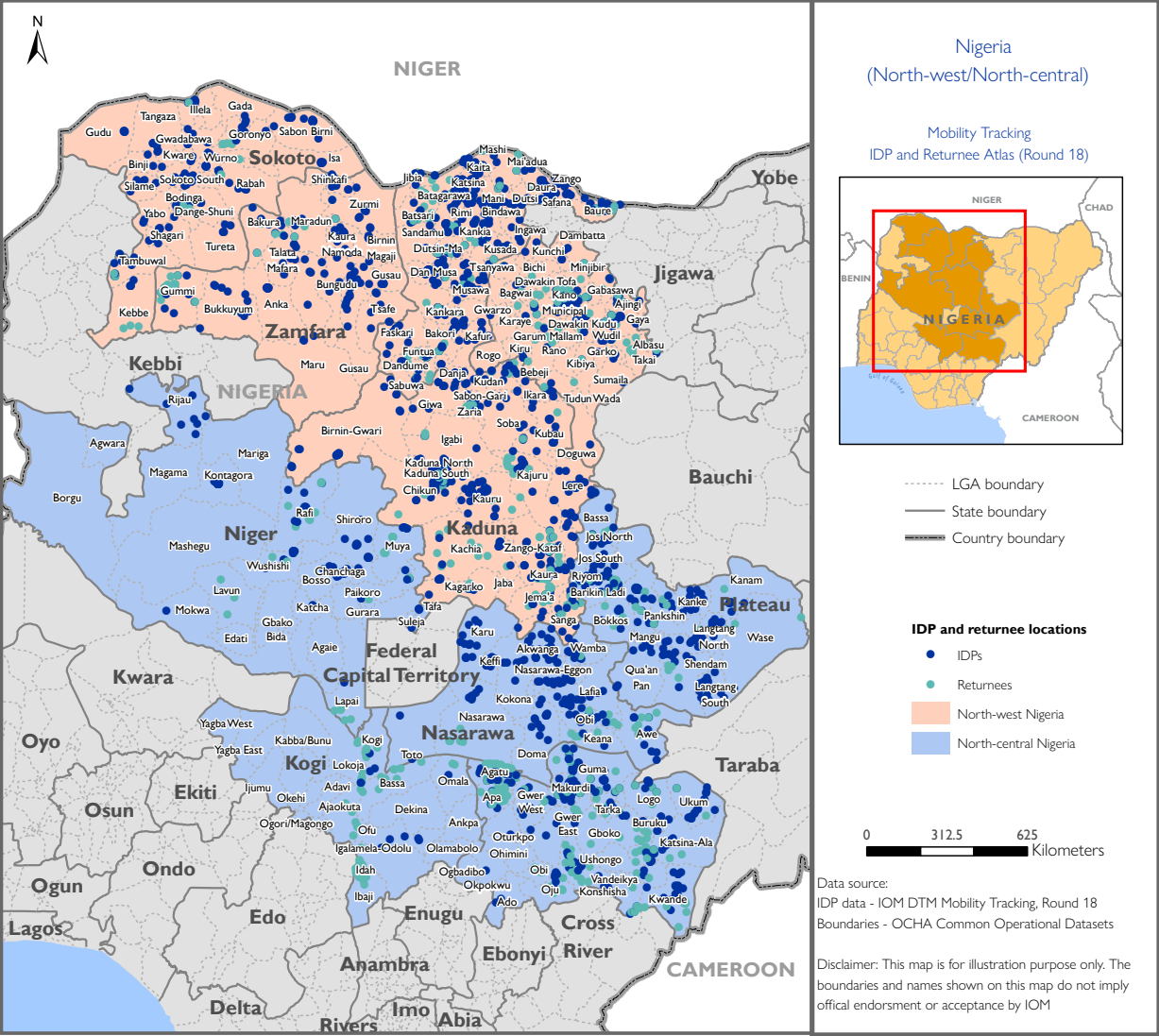


Figure 2. Gender and Age Breakdown of IDPs\*

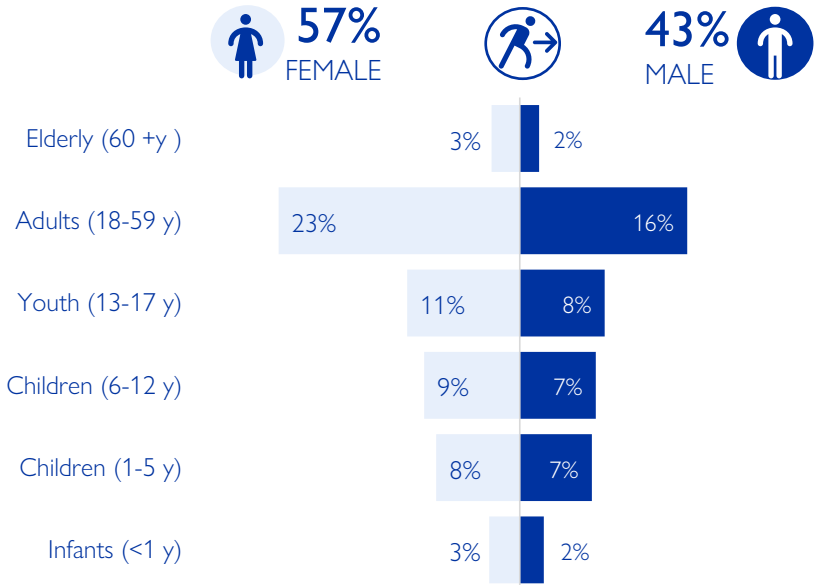
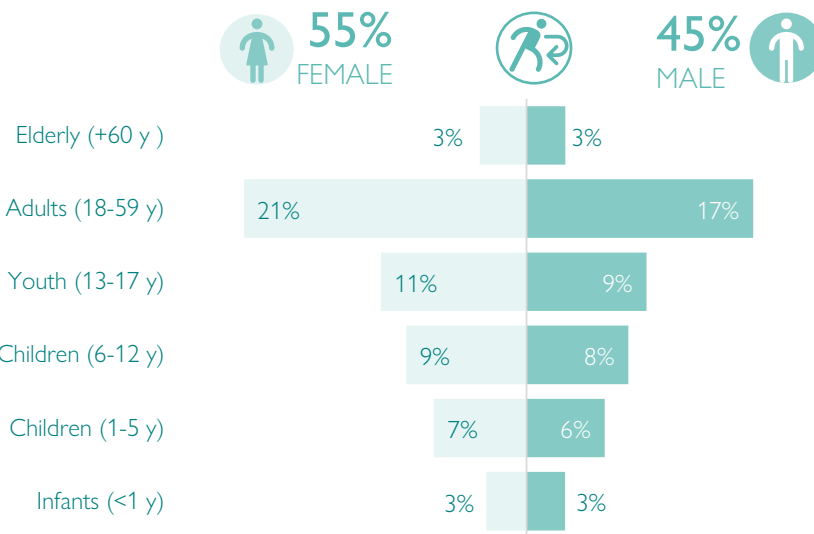


Figure 3. Gender and Age Breakdown of Returnees\*



\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

IDPs PER STATE IN NORTH-CENTRAL & NORTH-WEST NIGERIA

Map 2: Distribution of IDPs by State

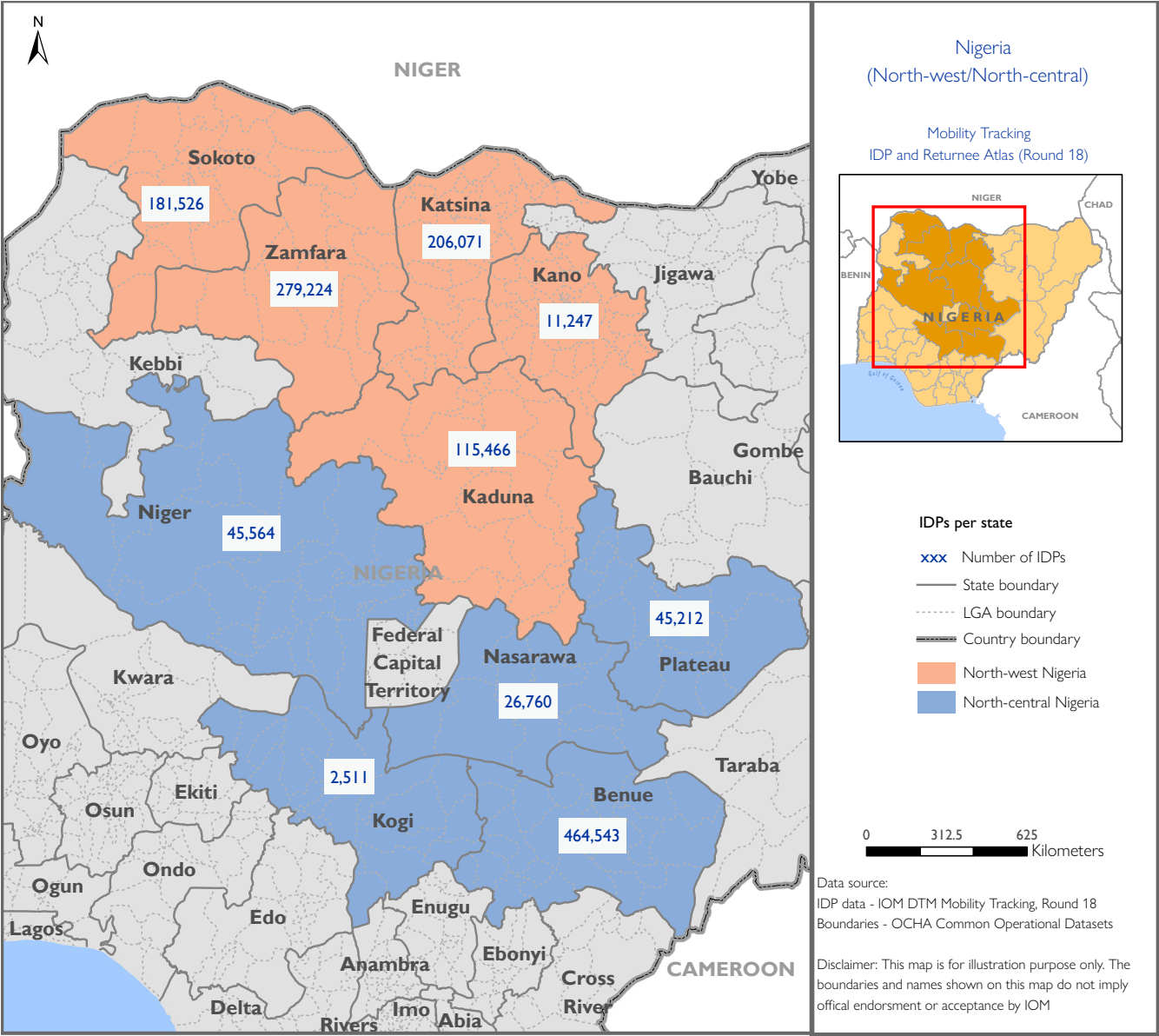


Table 2: Distribution of IDPs per State

State	IDP Households	IDPs
Benue	92,816	464,543
Kaduna	19,778	115,466
Kano	1,927	11,247
Katsina	28,915	206,071
Kogi	413	2,511
Nasarawa	5,246	26,760
Niger	7,391	45,564
Plateau	8,130	45,212
Sokoto	32,950	181,526
Zamfara	47,000	279,224
Grand Total	244,566	1,378,124



An IDP utilising the feedback mechanism in Naka IDP camp, Makurdi, Benue State © IOM 2025

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors



IDPs LOCATION TYPES

As of October 2025, 1,378,124 IDPs were identified in north-central and north-west Nigeria. Among IDPs in north-central and north-west Nigeria, 81 per cent (1,110,209 individuals) were dispersed in host communities, 15 per cent (207,267 individuals) were living in camps. Meanwhile, 60,648 individuals (5%) were on a durable solution pathway. Among the IDPs on this pathway, 58,062 (4%) were IDPs integrated in their current locations, 2,586 individuals (<1%) were IDPs living in areas of relocation/resettlement.

Map 3: IDPs Location Types

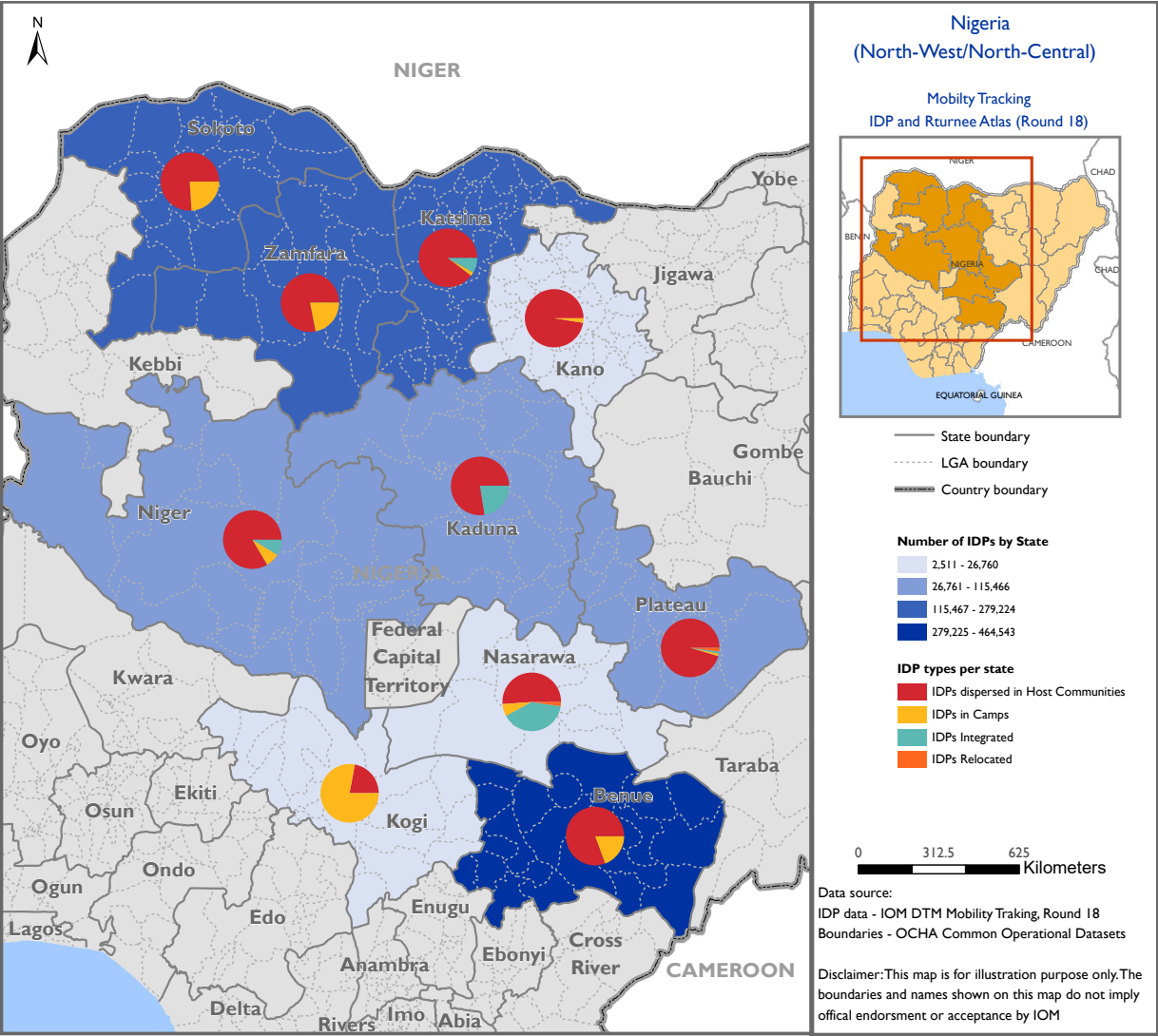


Table 3: IDPs Location Types per State

State	IDPs dispersed in Host Communities	IDPs in Camps	IDPs Integrated	IDPs Relocated
Benue	374,833	89,710	-	-
Kaduna	88,966	-	25,750	750
Kano	10,880	283	84	-
Katsina	184,624	4,272	17,175	-
Kogi	557	1,954	-	-
Nasarawa	13,715	1,830	10,598	617
Niger	37,938	3,463	3,990	173
Plateau	43,152	662	465	933
Sokoto	137,736	43,677	-	113
Zamfara	217,808	61,416	-	-
Grand Total	1,110,209	207,267	58,062	2,586

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

IDPs PER LGA

Benue State hosted the highest number of IDPs with 464,543 individuals (34% of IDPs). Among the top 10 LGAs hosting the highest number of IDPs in the north-central and north-west, six LGAs were from Benue State, hosting a combined 372,700 individuals (27% of IDPs). Zamfara State also had three LGAs in the top 10 LGAs hosting the highest number of IDPs, with a combined 136,994 individuals (10% of IDPs).

Map 4: Distribution of IDPs per LGAs

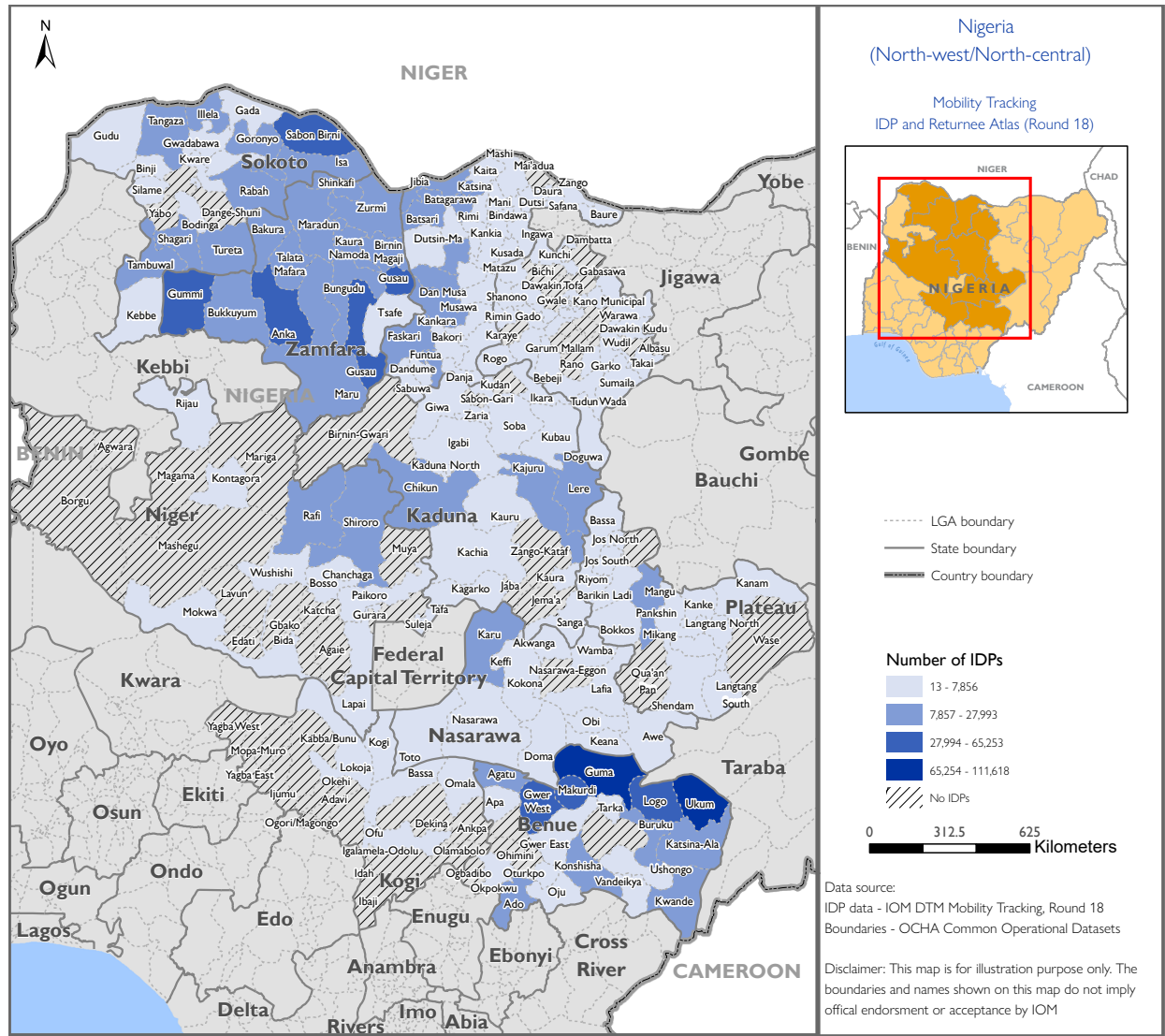


Table 4: Top 10 LGAs hosting the highest numbers of IDPs in north-central and north-west Nigeria as of October 2025

State	LGA	IDPs
Benue	Guma	111,618
Benue	Ukum	82,773
Benue	Makurdi	65,253
Zamfara	Anka	52,013
Zamfara	Gusau	51,316
Benue	Gwer West	50,849
Sokoto	Sabon Birni	40,729
Benue	Logo	34,214
Zamfara	Gummi	33,665
Benue	Agatu	27,993



\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

## IDPs PER PERIOD OF DISPLACEMENT AT STATE LEVEL

A total of 455,113 individuals or 33 per cent of the total IDP population were displaced before 2022, 165,330 individuals (12%) were displaced in 2022, 206,870 individuals (15%) were displaced in 2023, 202,988 individuals (15%) were displaced in 2024 and 348,020 individuals (25%) were displaced in 2025.

Map 5: IDP Period of Displacement by State

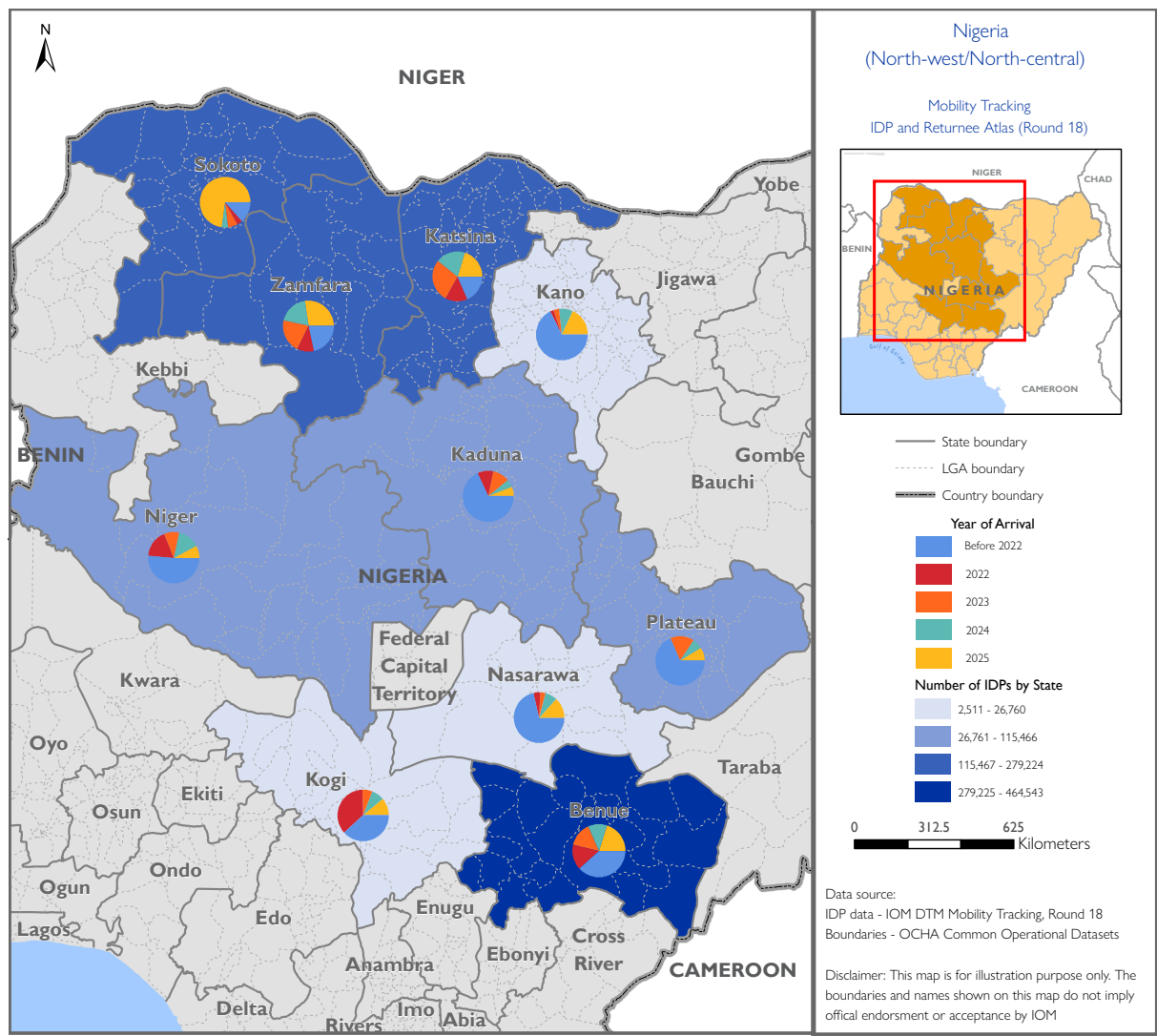


Figure 5: Total Number of IDPs per Periods of Displacement

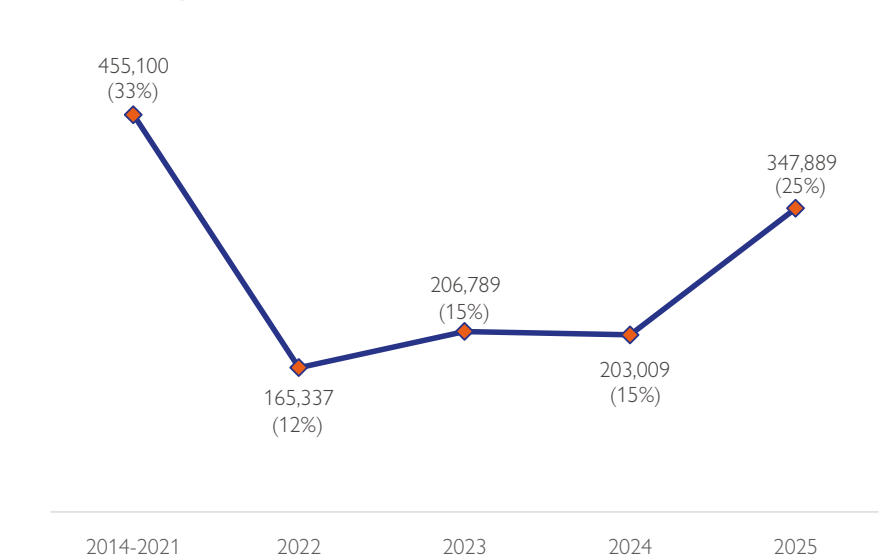


Table 5: Number of IDPs per State and Period of Arrival

State	2025	2024	2023	2022	2014 - 2021
Benue	84,362	73,403	62,912	53,785	190,081
Kaduna	5,007	4,431	14,362	15,689	75,977
Kano	1,770	1,303	551	307	7,316
Katsina	38,319	47,624	47,484	39,315	33,329
Kogi	217	210	220	834	1,030
Nasarawa	2,762	2,344	1,211	1,623	18,820
Niger	2,601	6,708	5,875	7,206	23,174
Plateau	2,989	2,904	9,130	248	29,941
Sokoto	130,612	10,573	14,711	6,447	19,183
Zamfara	79,250	53,509	50,333	39,883	56,249
Grand Total	347,889	203,009	206,789	165,337	455,100

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors



IDPs AND REASONS FOR DISPLACEMENT

Armed banditry and kidnapping account for the largest proportion of displacement in 54 per cent of the locations in north-central and north-west Nigeria, followed by farmer-herder clashes, which contribute to displacement in 33 per cent of the locations. Farmer-herder conflicts, often linked to competition over land and resources, continue to escalate tensions between agrarian and pastoral communities, leading to widespread insecurity and loss of livelihoods. In recent times, the ripple effects of the insurgency in the north-east region have been observed in the north-west region. This has been cited as the reason for displacement in 2 per cent of the locations assessed in the north-central and north-west.

Map 6: Main reason for Displacement (Before 2022)

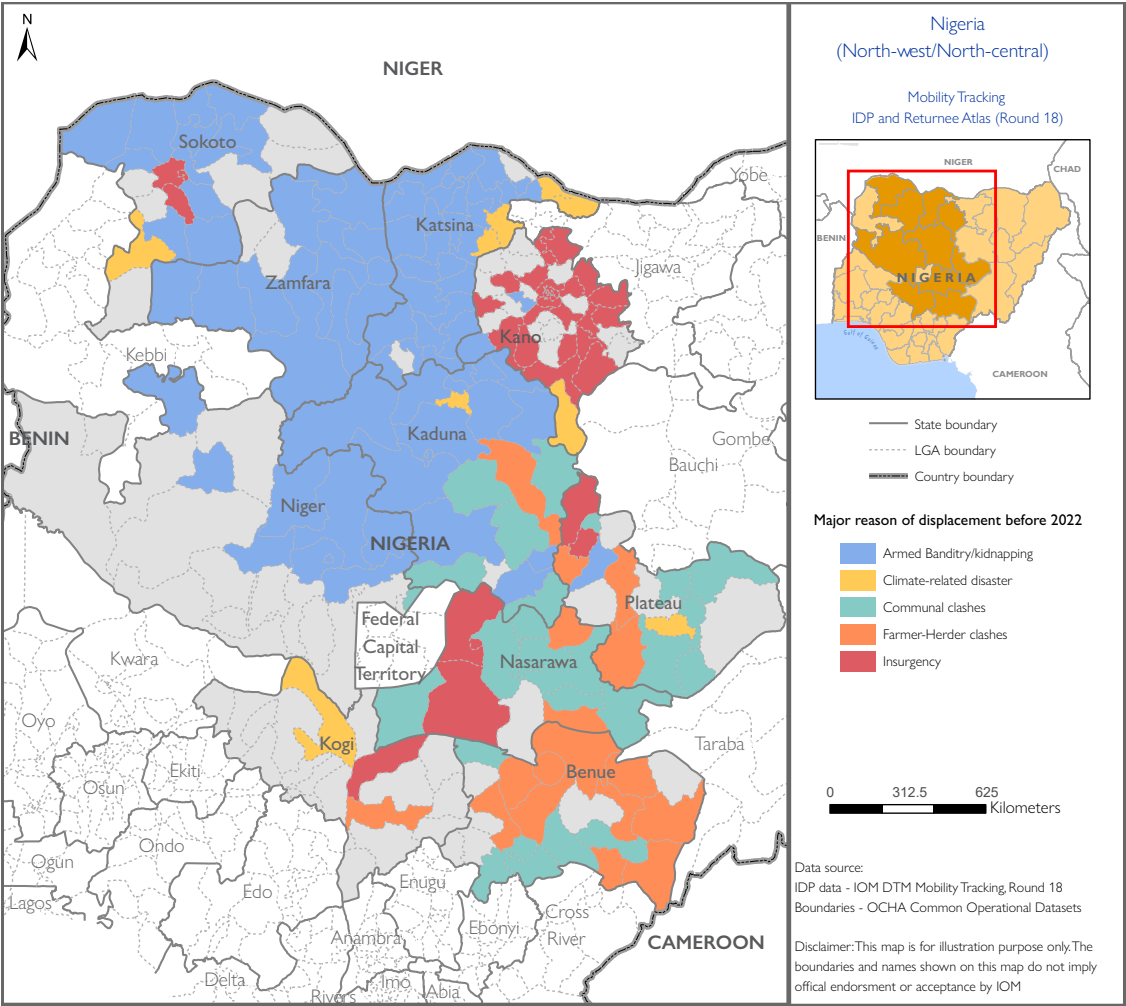


Figure 6: Reasons for Displacement (as of October 2025)

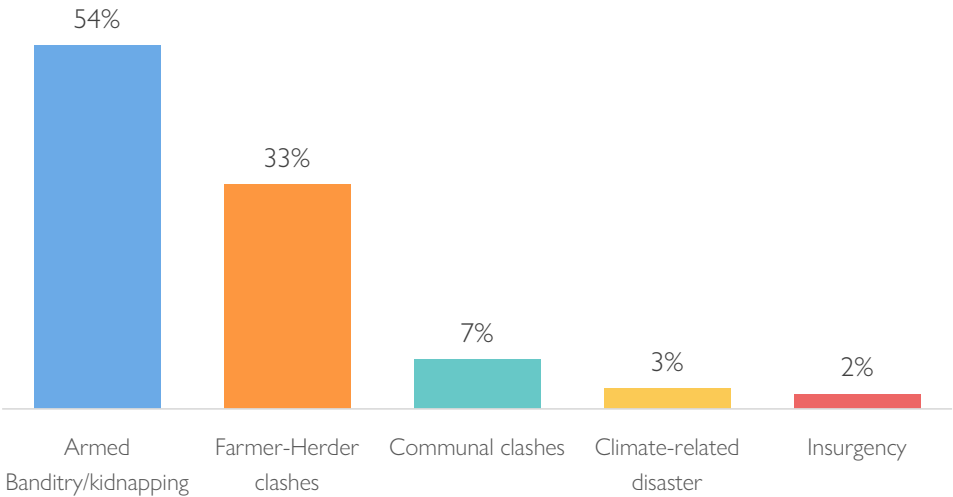


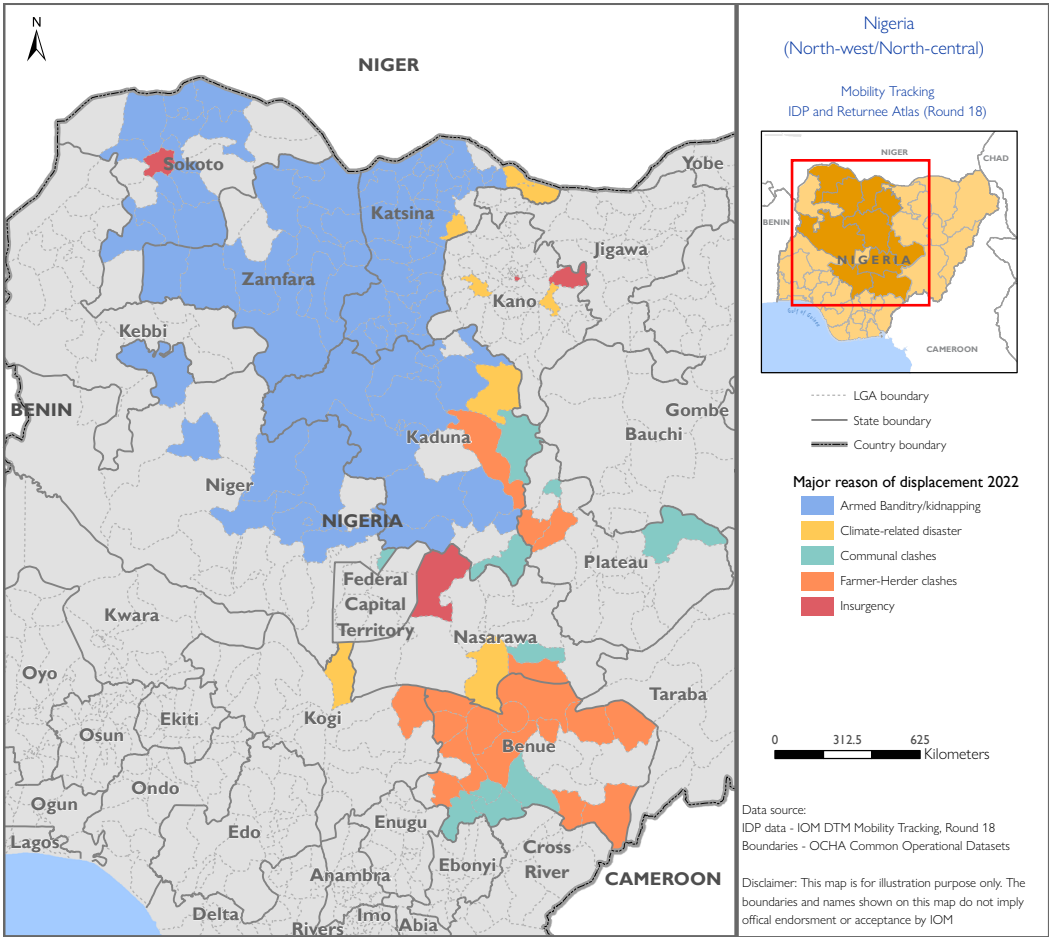
Table 6: Reasons for Displacement per State (as of October 2025)\*

State	Armed Banditry/kidnapping	Climate-related disaster	Communal clashes	Farmer-Herder clashes	Insurgency
Benue	0%	0%	10%	90%	-
Kaduna	57%	6%	24%	11%	1%
Kano	3%	31%	0%	0%	66%
Katsina	94%	6%	-	0%	-
Kogi	-	61%	-	39%	-
Nasarawa	-	13%	46%	7%	34%
Niger	94%	4%	2%	-	-
Plateau	2%	3%	32%	57%	5%
Sokoto	89%	5%	-	1%	6%
Zamfara	100%	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	54%	3%	7%	33%	2%

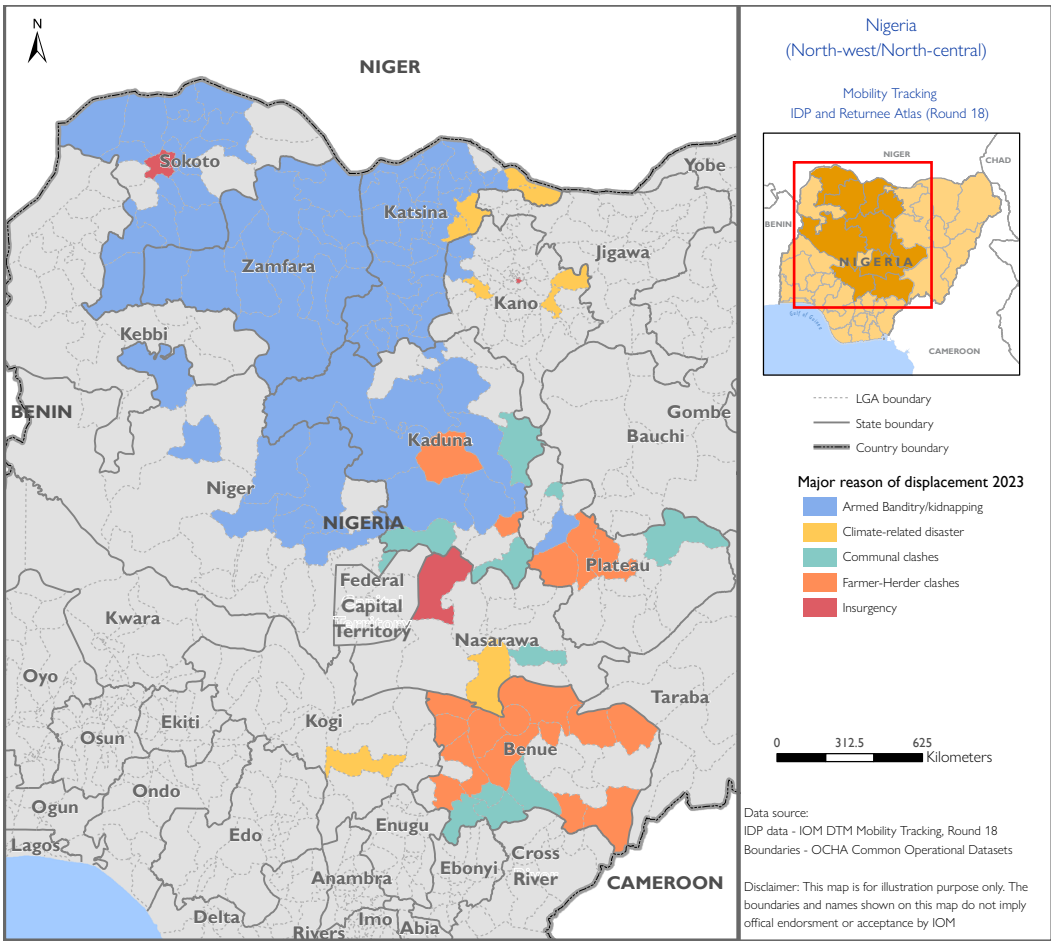
\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

IDPs AND REASONS FOR DISPLACEMENT

Map 7: Main reason for Displacement (2022)



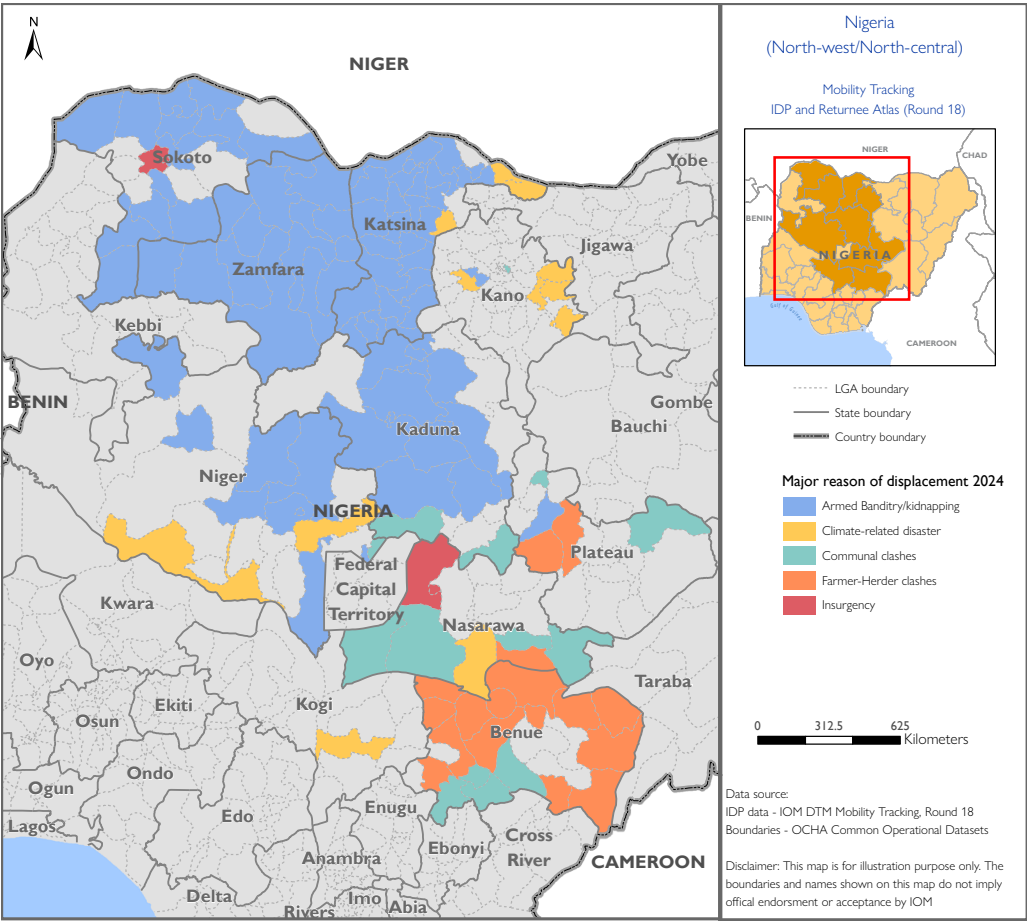
Map 8: Main reason for Displacement (2023)



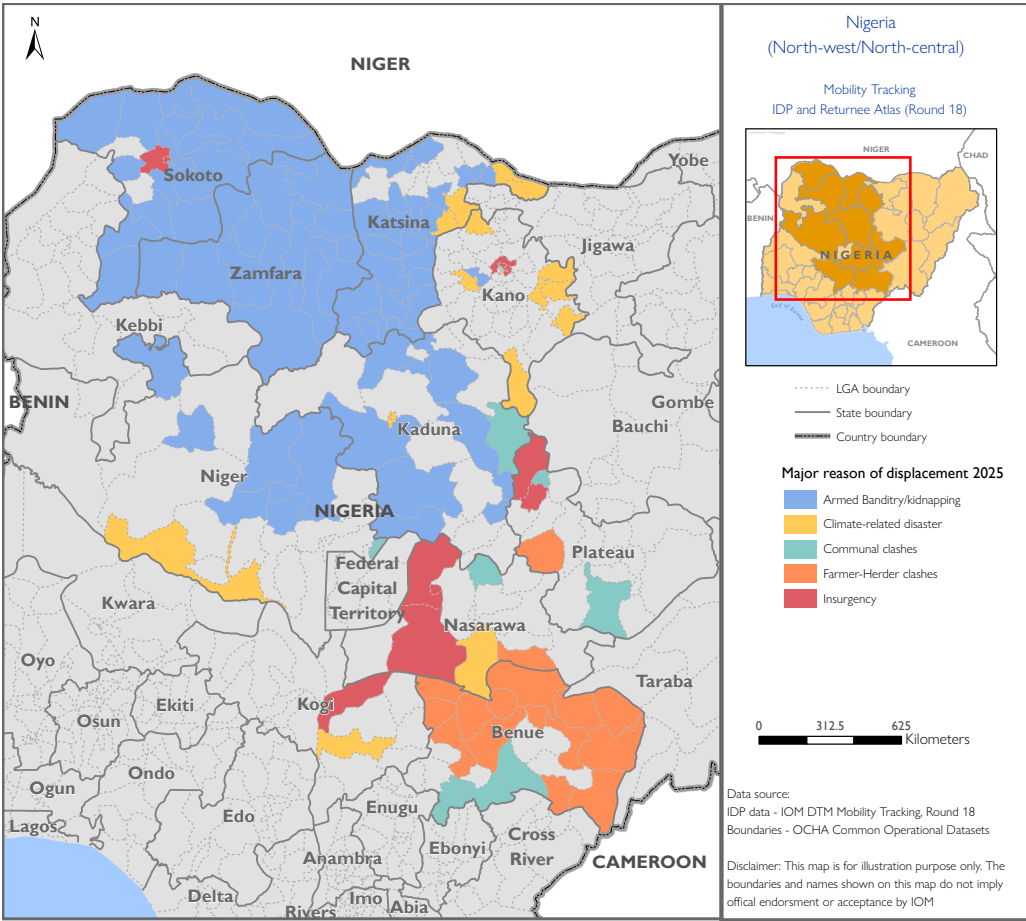
\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

IDPs AND REASONS FOR DISPLACEMENT

Map 9: Main reason for Displacement (2024)



Map 10: Main reason for Displacement (2025)





RETURNEES PER STATE

An estimated 428,969 returnees were identified across north-central and north-west Nigeria. Benue State hosts the largest proportion of returnees in the north-central and north-west region, accounting for 143,887 individuals (34%) of the total. Kogi State follows with 108,443 returnees (25%). Benue and Kogi alone account for nearly 60 per cent of all returnees, indicating substantial return movements in the north-central region. Kaduna State ranked third, hosting 59,485 individuals (14%), while Katsina State accounted for 53,212 returnees (12%), also indicating notable return trends in the north-western region.

Map 11: Distribution of Returnees per State

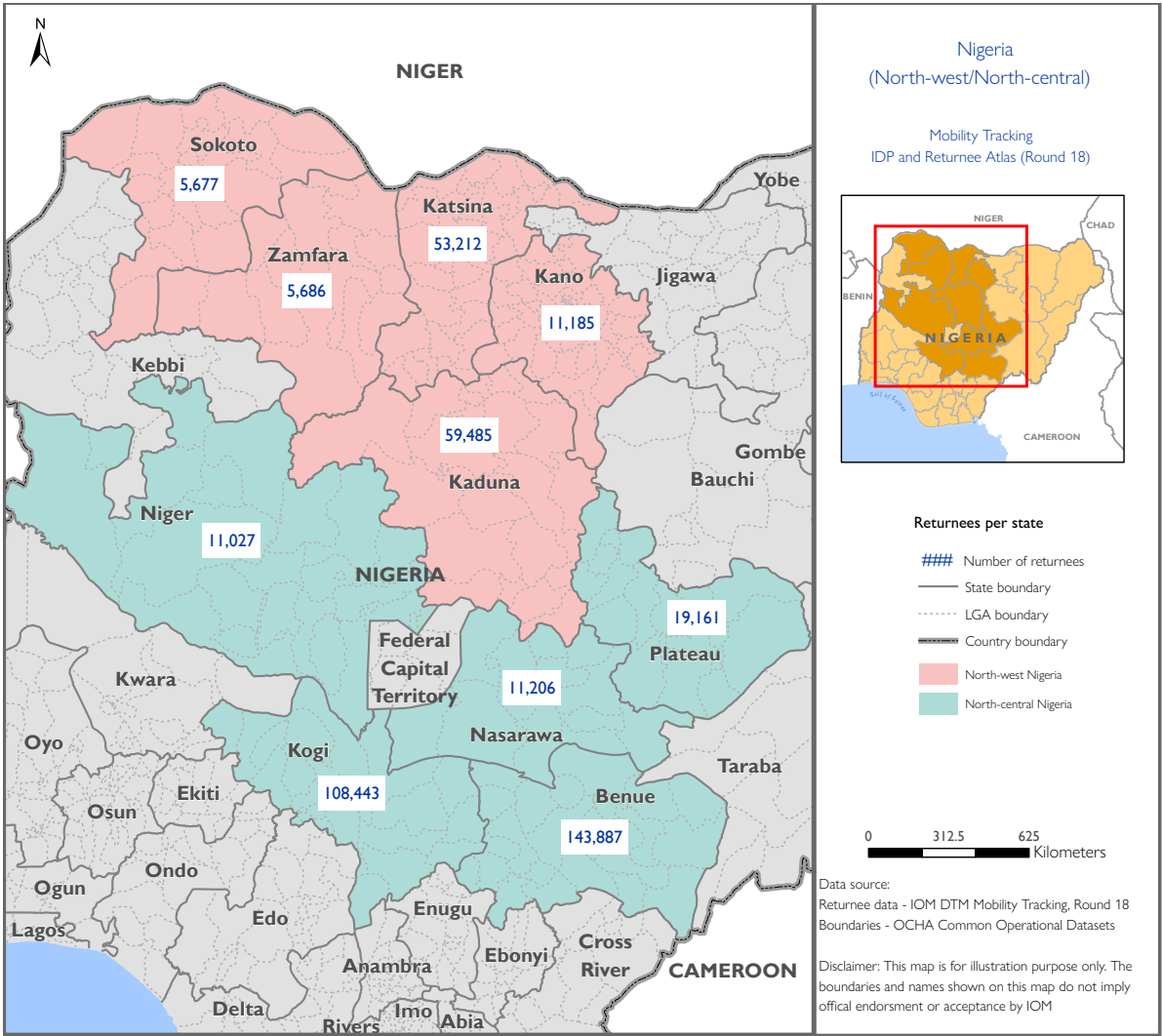


Figure 7: Number of Returnees per State\*

State	Returnee households	Returnee Individuals	Percentage of returnees
Benue	24,281	143,887	34%
Kaduna	10,147	59,485	14%
Kano	1,997	11,185	3%
Katsina	7,742	53,212	12%
Kogi	18,665	108,443	25%
Nasarawa	2,180	11,206	3%
Niger	1,915	11,027	3%
Plateau	3,306	19,161	4%
Sokoto	1,037	5,677	1%
Zamfara	1,040	5,686	1%
Total	72,310	428,969	100%

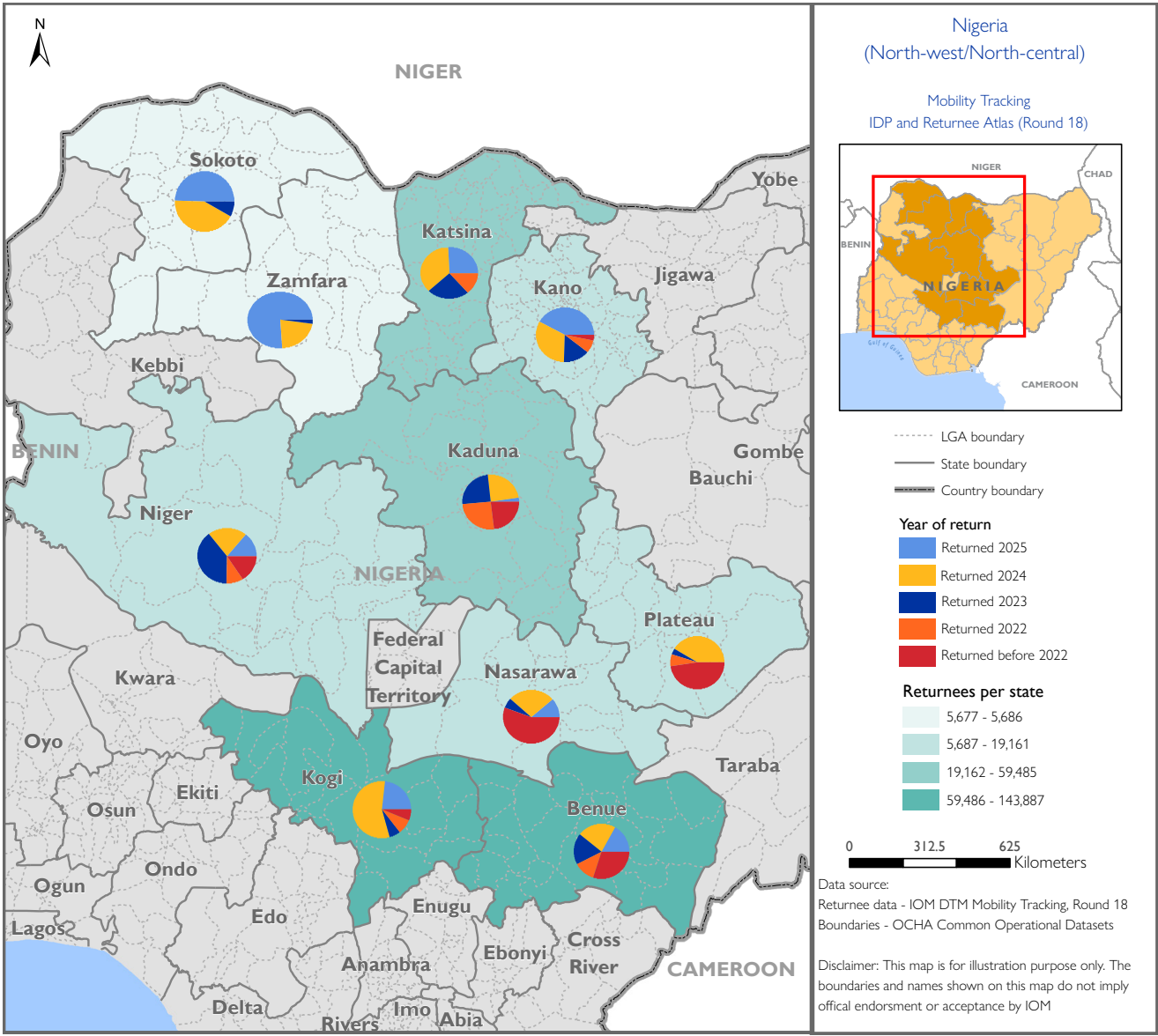


Water point for IDPs in Yelwata community, Benue State © IOM 2025

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors

RETURNEES PER STATE AND YEAR OF RETURN

Map 12: Distribution of Returnees per State and Year of Return



The new constructed Naka camp for IDPs, Benue State © IOM 2025



The new constructed Naka camp for IDPs, Benue State © IOM 2025

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors



RETURNEES PER LGA

There is a high concentration of returnees in specific LGAs, particularly Ibaji in Kogi and multiple LGAs in Benue. Ibaji LGA in Kogi State alone accounts for 15 per cent of all returnees, making it the single largest concentration point. Benue State dominates the list with five LGAs among the top ten. While these trends may indicate progress toward stabilization, IDPs still experience persistent insecurity and limited access services in other LGAs.

Map 13: Distribution of Returnees per LGA

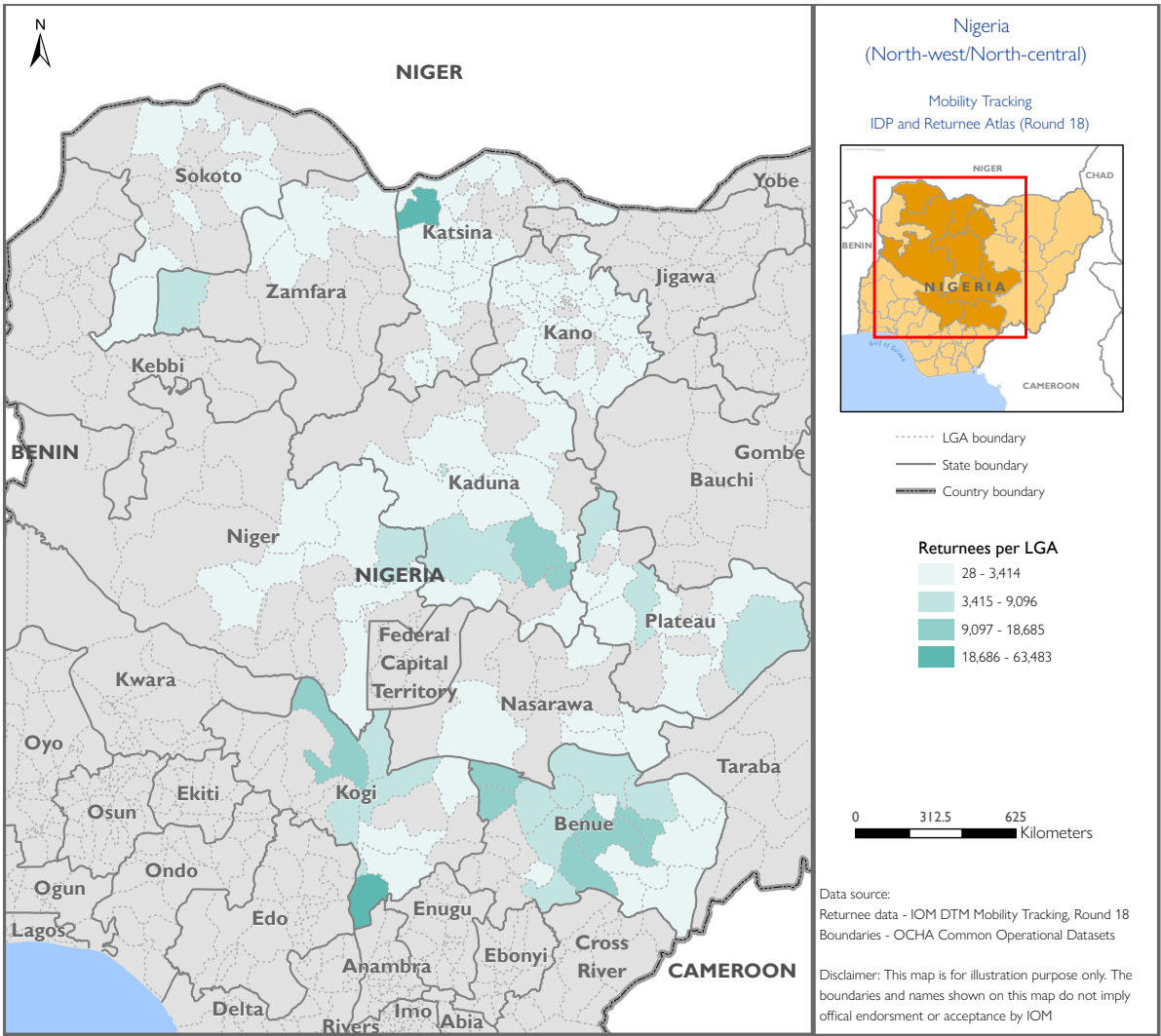


Table 7: Top 10 LGAs Hosting the Highest Number of Returnees

State	LGA	Returnees
Kogi	Ibaji	63,483
Katsina	Batsari	40,182
Benue	Apa	18,685
Kaduna	Jema'a	17,610
Benue	Buruku	17,533
Benue	Agatu	17,510
Benue	Konshisha	16,482
Benue	Gboko	16,011
Kogi	Lokoja	15,665
Kaduna	Kaura	14,070



IDPs interacting in safe spaces © IOM 2025

\* Percentages may sum to 100 +/- 1% due to rounding errors