

Assessing the Sociopolitical Causes, Humanitarian Consequences, and Survival Strategies Associated with Violence-Induced Displacement in Benue State, Nigeria

Egwuaba, Edward Ukwubile ¹; and Sunday, Blessing Adeyi ²

¹Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. ²Department of Sociology, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba.

Corresponding author: eu.egwuaba@coou.edu.ng

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62154/qjhcer.2025.019.01033>

Abstract

This study investigates the sociopolitical causes of violent conflict and the resulting humanitarian conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Makurdi Abagena IDP camp, Benue State, Nigeria. The study grounded in Structural Violence Theory and the Human Security Framework; the study was guided by four specific objectives: examined the structural and sociopolitical factors driving the killings and displacement in Benue State; assessed the living conditions and multidimensional insecurities faced by IDPs in Makurdi camp; explored the coping strategies adopted by displaced persons; and recommended policy and humanitarian responses for durable solutions. A qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design was adopted. Data were collected from a purposive sample of 60 respondents using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Findings reveal that the displacement crisis is rooted in unresolved land disputes, political marginalization, weak governance, and environmental pressures. Within the camp, IDPs face widespread food insecurity, inadequate shelter, gender-based violence, and psychosocial trauma. To survive, displaced persons rely on informal labour, NGO assistance, and sometimes risky coping strategies such as survival sex and early marriage. These outcomes reflect the insecurities described in the Human Security Framework and point to structural violence as the foundational driver of the crisis. The study concludes that humanitarian assistance alone is insufficient to break the cycle of displacement. It recommends an integrated response involving land tenure reform, community based peacebuilding, psychosocial rehabilitation, and long term resettlement planning. The research offers critical insights for policymakers, humanitarian actors, and scholars working on displacement and conflict in Nigeria.

Keywords: Displacement, Gender-Based Violence, Humanitarian Crisis, IDPs, Makurdi, Structural Violence, Survival Strategies.

Introduction

Benue State in Nigeria's North-Central geopolitical zone has become a persistent flashpoint for violent conflict, especially between indigenous farming communities and nomadic pastoralists. These clashes, rooted in land disputes, resource scarcity, ethnic tensions, and weak conflict resolution mechanisms, have resulted in mass killings, destruction of livelihoods, and large-scale internal displacement (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014; Aondofa, 2015; Egwuaba & Ebisi, 2021). The failure of successive governments to mediate effectively or

enforce justice has deepened insecurity and prolonged the humanitarian crisis. Between 2010 and 2024, hundreds of communities were attacked, with thousands killed or displaced (Alobo & Obaji, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2023; Ejirefe & Egwuaba, 2023). Many survivors fled to Makurdi, the state capital, where camps like Abagena serve as overcrowded, under-resourced sanctuaries plagued by insecurity, hunger, poor sanitation, and inadequate health and education services (Oduwole & Fadeyi, 2013; IOM, 2022). Despite these harsh conditions, displaced persons remain largely sidelined in national and state-level policy interventions, with humanitarian support from governments and NGOs remaining sporadic and insufficient. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to trauma, sexual exploitation, and malnutrition (UNHCR, 2023; Egwuaba, 2018b), while overall displacement has worsened both mental and physical health among IDPs (Nte, 2016).

This crisis underscores deep-rooted structural and governance failures in Nigeria, with scholars highlighting its links to environmental degradation, politicized ethnicity, and the militarization of rural conflicts (Egwuaba, 2018a; Aghedo & Eke, 2013; Galtung, 1969). Beyond humanitarian aid, there is an urgent need for sociopolitical analysis that interrogates both the root causes of the violence and the lived experiences of the displaced. Accordingly, this study critically examines the nexus between violence and displacement in Benue State, using the Makurdi IDP camp as a case study to provide empirical insights that can inform policy responses, humanitarian interventions, and conflict mitigation strategies.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past decade, Benue State has faced recurring waves of deadly violence, largely driven by farmer-herder clashes, land disputes, and ethno-religious tensions. These attacks have claimed thousands of lives, destroyed communities, and forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom now live in overcrowded, under-resourced IDP camps in Makurdi (Alobo & Obaji, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2023). Despite sustained outcry, the killings persist, highlighting deep structural and governance failures in conflict management and internal security (Aghedo & Eke, 2013; Okoli & Atelhe, 2014; Egwuaba, 2018b).

Internally displaced persons in Makurdi camps endure precarious conditions marked by food insecurity, poor sanitation, limited access to healthcare and education, and heightened risks of gender-based violence and psychosocial trauma (Oduwole & Fadeyi, 2013; UNHCR, 2023). The inconsistent and often inadequate response from government and humanitarian agencies further compounds their vulnerability. Displaced populations face not only the loss of homes and livelihoods but also systemic neglect and exclusion from long-term development planning (Egwuaba & Ebisi, 2021). While numerous reports have documented the violence and humanitarian needs in Benue, there remains a critical gap in research that examines both the sociopolitical root causes of the killings and the lived experiences of displaced persons in camps like those in Makurdi. Most existing studies address conflict or displacement in isolation, failing to capture the crisis as a continuum of violence, vulnerability, and state inaction. This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a

comprehensive sociopolitical and humanitarian analysis of the Benue killings and conditions in Makurdi IDP camps. Without such evidence-based insight, policy and intervention efforts risk remaining fragmented, reactive, and ultimately ineffective in addressing both the causes and consequences of displacement in Benue State.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Investigate the root sociopolitical causes of the killings in Benue State.
2. Examine the living conditions and health challenges of IDPs in the Makurdi camp.
3. Assess the role of government and non-governmental actors in responding to the displacement crisis in the study area.
4. Explore the coping mechanisms and survival strategies adopted by IDPs in Makurdi camp.
5. Recommend sociopolitical and humanitarian strategies for improving IDP welfare and preventing further violence in the study area.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Definitions

Violence: Violence refers to the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation (World Health Organization [WHO], 2002).

Displacement: Displacement is defined as the forced movement of people from their habitual residence due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, or natural disasters, resulting in their status as internally displaced persons (IDPs) (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC], 2022).

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): IDPs are individuals or groups who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations but who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (UNHCR, 2023).

Sociopolitical Factors: These refer to the interplay of political, economic, and cultural conditions that shape societal structures, decision-making processes, and access to resources, often contributing to marginalization and conflict (Galtung, 1969; Aghedo & Eke, 2013).

Humanitarian Conditions: Humanitarian conditions describe the state of well-being, safety, health, and access to basic services for people affected by crises, particularly displaced populations (Oduwale & Fadeyi, 2013).

Internal Displacement as a Global Humanitarian Crisis: Patterns, Challenges, and Gaps in Protection

Globally, internal displacement has become one of the most pressing humanitarian crises. According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2023), over 71 million people were displaced internally due to conflict and violence by the end of 2022. In countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Colombia, armed conflict, poor governance, and humanitarian breakdowns have resulted in protracted displacement situations where IDPs face poverty, food insecurity, and limited access to social services (Ferris, 2014). The Human Security Framework emphasizes that displacement threatens not only physical safety but also economic, health, and social security (UNDP, 2021). Despite numerous international conventions, the plight of IDPs is often overshadowed by that of refugees due to weaker legal protections.

Internal Displacement as an African Humanitarian Crisis: Patterns, Challenges, and Gaps in Protection

Africa hosts a significant proportion of the world's IDPs, with countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia, and Ethiopia experiencing chronic displacement due to civil wars, ethnic violence, and political instability (IDMC, 2023). The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention, 2019) was a landmark effort to provide a legal framework for IDP protection. However, implementation remains weak due to political unwillingness, insecurity, and inadequate funding (Oucho, 2016). In countries such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan, displaced populations live in overcrowded camps with limited infrastructure and ongoing exposure to violence (Cohen & Deng, 2009). Gender-based violence and child recruitment into armed groups have also been widely reported.

Internal Displacement as a Nigerian Humanitarian Crisis: Patterns, Challenges, and Gaps in Protection

Nigeria has one of the highest numbers of IDPs in Africa, with over 3.5 million people internally displaced due to Boko Haram insurgency, communal violence, herder-farmer conflicts, and banditry (IOM, 2022). The Middle Belt region, especially Benue State, has been at the centre of deadly clashes between herders and farmers, which have resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of entire communities (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014; Aloba & Obaji, 2016). Government responses have been criticized as reactive, fragmented, and heavily militarized without addressing the underlying land-use conflicts, poverty, and climate pressures (Aghedo & Eke, 2013; Egwuaba & Olisa, 2020). Studies by Oduwole and Fadeyi (2013) and Nte (2016) reveal that IDPs in Nigeria face inadequate shelter, lack of access to basic services, and psychological trauma. In Makurdi, Benue State's capital, IDP camps like the Abagena camp have become long-term residences for thousands of displaced individuals. Despite their vulnerability, these populations remain largely excluded from national development and humanitarian policies. Children and women are particularly

at risk of malnutrition, early marriage, and abuse (UNHCR, 2023). Furthermore, the state's inability to prosecute perpetrators of violence or implement land reform has led to a sense of abandonment and fear among the displaced (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The root sociopolitical causes of the killings in Benue State

The underlying causes of the violent killings in Benue State are rooted in long-standing sociopolitical tensions, particularly between indigenous agrarian communities and nomadic pastoralists over land use, grazing rights, and resource control (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). The rapid population growth, desertification in the North, and the resultant southward migration of herders have intensified competition for scarce agricultural land and water sources, creating flashpoints of conflict (Aondofa, 2015; Egwuaba, & Olisa, 2020). The failure of the Nigerian government to implement sustainable land reforms or develop grazing reserves has left communities to negotiate these disputes violently. Beyond environmental and economic pressures, the conflicts are also driven by ethnic and religious identity politics. Fulani herdsman, often associated with Islam, are perceived by predominantly Christian farming communities in Benue as external aggressors, further deepening mistrust and hostility (Aghedo & Eke, 2013). The state's inability to impartially mediate these disputes has eroded public trust in the government and security forces. Galtung's (1969) theory of structural violence underscores how unequal access to land, political power, and justice perpetuates systemic oppression, leaving vulnerable communities exposed to both direct and institutionalized violence. This analytical lens is crucial for understanding why violence persists and why displaced populations often receive inadequate protection.

The living conditions and health challenges of IDPs in the Makurdi camp

The humanitarian situation in Makurdi IDP camps is dire. Displaced persons are housed in makeshift shelters with limited access to clean water, food, sanitation, and medical services (IOM, 2022). The IDPs face overcrowding, exposure to the elements, and unsanitary conditions that breed communicable diseases such as cholera, malaria, and respiratory infections (Egwuaba, 2018a). Maternal and child health indicators are particularly poor, with rising rates of malnutrition, unsafe deliveries, and poor access to immunizations (UNHCR, 2023). Mental health concerns are also significant. Nte (2016) found that IDPs often exhibit symptoms of trauma, depression, and anxiety due to the loss of family members, homes, and livelihoods. Children are disproportionately affected, facing educational disruption, hunger, and exploitation. The lack of structured psychosocial support within the camps compounds these problems. Furthermore, women and girls face heightened risks of gender-based violence, including domestic abuse, rape, and forced early marriage, often within the very camps meant to offer safety. This dimension of the crisis underscores the limitations of Nigeria's humanitarian response, which tends to focus on short-term relief rather than comprehensive care. The prevailing conditions in Makurdi IDP camp highlight a collapse of the human security ideal, where displaced persons remain

unsafe not only from violence but also from disease, poverty, and social exclusion (UNDP, 2023).

The role of government and non-governmental actors in responding to the displacement crisis

Literature reveals that Nigeria's response to the IDP crisis in Benue State has been inconsistent, underfunded, and often politicized. Although Nigeria is a signatory to the Kampala Convention (2009), which obliges African states to protect and assist IDPs, implementation has been slow and fragmented (Alobo & Obaji, 2016). Federal and state agencies frequently operate in silos, and interventions are marred by bureaucratic bottlenecks, corruption, and weak coordination among stakeholders. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based groups have attempted to fill the gap through food distribution, basic health services, and temporary education programs. However, these efforts are constrained by limited funding, donor fatigue, and security challenges that hinder access to vulnerable communities (Cohen & Deng, 2009). Reports by Human Rights Watch (2023) indicate that relief materials are often diverted by local officials, and aid allocation is sometimes influenced by ethnic and political affiliations. Moreover, displaced persons are rarely consulted in program design or implementation, undermining the effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. Studies emphasize the need for a rights-based and community-inclusive approach that ensures accountability, transparency, and long-term support (Ferris, 2014).

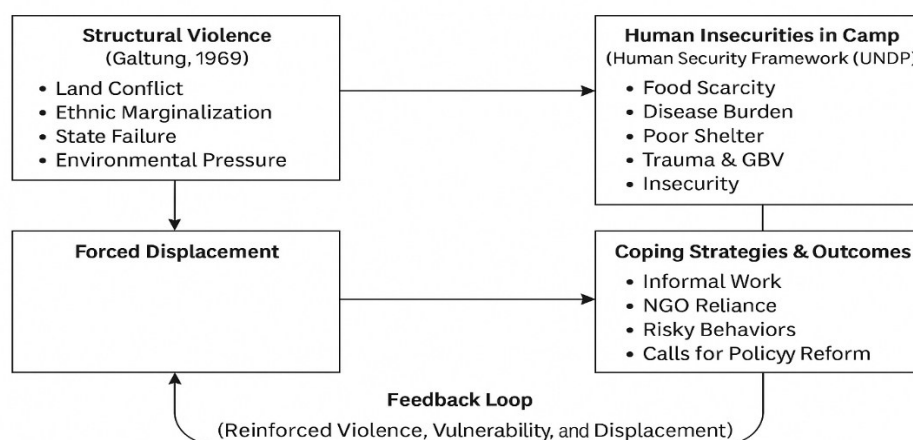
The coping mechanisms and survival strategies adopted by IDPs

Despite adverse conditions, IDPs in Makurdi have demonstrated remarkable resilience through diverse coping strategies. These include engagement in informal economic activities such as selling petty goods, farming small plots, and doing manual labour (Oduwale & Fadeyi, 2013; Egwuaba, 2016). Women often form support networks to pool resources or care for orphans, while community elders act as informal counselors and mediators. Spiritual and religious practices play a key role in psychosocial coping. Many IDPs rely on their faith for hope and community cohesion, with churches and mosques serving as spaces for healing and solidarity (Nte, 2016). Other mechanisms include storytelling, singing, and communal ceremonies that foster identity and emotional expression. However, these coping strategies are fragile and often expose IDPs to further exploitation. For instance, adolescent girls may resort to survival sex to access food or basic supplies, while boys may be recruited into criminal gangs or vigilante groups. These negative coping strategies highlight the urgent need for formal livelihood support, psychosocial care, and protection mechanisms within IDP camps.

Sociopolitical and humanitarian strategies for improving IDP welfare and preventing further violence

Studies consistently call for integrated and sustainable solutions that address both the immediate and structural dimensions of displacement. In Benue State, durable peace requires resolving land ownership conflicts through legislative reforms, community dialogue, and regulated grazing systems (Okoli & Atelhe, 2014). There is also a pressing need for early warning systems and inclusive peacebuilding efforts that involve youth, women, and traditional leaders. On the humanitarian front, literature emphasizes the importance of transitioning from emergency response to development-oriented recovery (Egwuaba & Sunday, 2023b; Ferris, 2014). This includes investment in education, healthcare, shelter, and livelihood empowerment for IDPs. Psychosocial rehabilitation, especially for trauma survivors, must be prioritized. Furthermore, displaced persons should be actively involved in decision-making and camp governance to foster dignity and agency. The Human Security Framework (UNDP, 1994) supports such a multidimensional approach, emphasizing freedom from fear and want as the foundation for recovery. Without addressing the broader social, economic, and political drivers of displacement, humanitarian interventions alone cannot resolve the crisis.

Conceptual Framework



This framework illustrates how systemic structural violence manifested through land disputes, ethnic marginalization, weak governance, and environmental pressures leads to violent conflict and mass displacement in Benue State. Once displaced, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi face multiple insecurities, including food scarcity, poor shelter, health challenges, and trauma. These reflect the Human Security Framework's emphasis on freedom from fear, want, and indignity.

To survive, IDPs adopt coping strategies such as informal work, NGO reliance, and risky behaviours like early marriage or survival sex. While adaptive, these strategies highlight the failure of institutional support and the precariousness of displacement life. A feedback loop in the framework shows that unresolved root causes and humanitarian neglect can

perpetuate cycles of violence and displacement. The framework therefore emphasises the urgent need for land reform, inclusive governance, and durable reintegration policies to break this cycle and promote sustainable peace.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Structural Violence Theory (Galtung, 1969) and complemented by the Human Security Framework (UNDP, 1994), which together illuminate the complex sociopolitical causes of the killings in Benue State and the multidimensional vulnerabilities faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi's Abagena camp. Structural Violence Theory explains how systemic inequalities embedded in political, economic, and cultural institutions result in avoidable suffering and marginalization. In this study, structural violence is reflected in the failure of state mechanisms to protect farming communities from attacks, the politicization of land and ethnicity, and the persistent neglect of displaced persons' rights and welfare. These systemic failures expose communities to both direct violence and chronic deprivation (Galtung, 1969; Farmer, 2004). Recent scholarship has built on Galtung's work by operationalizing structural violence in conflict-affected settings. For example, Farmer et al. (2019) emphasize linking structural analysis to health and humanitarian outcomes, while Ho (2007) and Biehl & McKay (2012) explore how institutional neglect perpetuates vulnerability during crises. Such work underscores the need to move from abstract critique to empirical analysis of policy failures, governance gaps, and inequalities that shape displacement dynamics. However, critics note that Structural Violence Theory can be conceptually broad and difficult to operationalize in empirical research (Uvin, 1999). Others argue it may overlook agency and resilience within oppressed groups, reducing them to passive victims (Anderson, 2014).

The Human Security Framework complements this by shifting from state-centric to people-centric definitions of security, emphasizing freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live in dignity (UNDP, 1994). This perspective helps analyze multiple insecurities faced by IDPs in Makurdi including hunger, lack of healthcare, violence, and exploitation beyond conventional security threats. Recent research has applied the Human Security approach to displacement contexts by developing more operational indicators and policy tools and have integrated human security principles into humanitarian planning, recognizing the interconnectedness of protection, livelihoods, health, and dignity in IDP responses.

Nevertheless, the Human Security approach has been criticized for its lack of analytical precision and difficulty in implementation due to its wide-ranging dimensions. Critics also note its overly normative character can make it challenging to generate measurable hypotheses. Despite these criticisms, both frameworks remain highly relevant for this study. Structural Violence Theory grounds the analysis in the institutional and historical roots of displacement, while the Human Security Framework provides a holistic understanding of IDP vulnerabilities and survival strategies. Together, they offer a robust, multi-level lens for analyzing both the causes and consequences of violence-induced

displacement in Benue State, and for informing more integrated, people-centered policy responses.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive exploratory design using a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach to investigate the sociopolitical causes of violence and assess the conditions of IDPs in Makurdi, Benue State. The research was conducted in the Abagena IDP Camp, with the study population including IDPs, government officials, NGO workers, and community leaders. A sample of 60 participants was purposively selected, comprising 40 IDPs, 10 government/NGO officials, 5 traditional leaders, and 5 healthcare or psychosocial support workers. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to reach information-rich cases and ensure diverse perspectives on displacement dynamics (Guest et al., 2013). While this non-probability sampling ensured depth, it may limit generalizability and introduces potential respondent bias. Efforts were made to mitigate bias by recruiting participants across gender, age, and role categories and by triangulating multiple data sources.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), and non-participant observation. Three FGDs were conducted with adult men, women, and youth to capture age- and gender-specific experiences, while KIIs focused on institutional responses. Interview guides were semi-structured and thematically aligned with the research objectives, drawing on existing literature and expert feedback for content validation. Instruments were pre-tested with a small group of IDPs outside the main study site to refine question clarity and cultural appropriateness.

Observational field notes documented camp conditions, infrastructure, and social dynamics to enrich contextual understanding. Data analysis combined thematic content analysis for qualitative data, aided by NVivo software, with descriptive statistics for basic demographic and response patterns using SPSS. NVivo was used to systematically code transcripts, develop themes, and visualize interconnections, while SPSS summarized participant characteristics and simple quantitative responses (e.g., frequency of reported needs or services accessed). Integration occurred by comparing and interpreting qualitative themes alongside quantitative trends to develop a holistic understanding of IDP conditions. Measures to ensure trustworthiness included triangulation of methods and sources, reflexive journaling by researchers to acknowledge positionality, and member checking with selected participants to validate interpretations. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Benue State University Ethics Committee. Informed consent was secured from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time. Ethical protocols followed WHO (2016) guidelines on conducting research with displaced populations.

This methodological approach ensured triangulation, transparency, and analytical depth in exploring the complex interplay between violence, displacement, and survival in Benue State, while recognizing and addressing inherent limitations related to sampling and bias.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 60)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)	18–25	12	20.0
	26–35	18	30.0
	36–45	16	26.7
	46 and above	14	23.3
Gender	Male	27	45.0
	Female	33	55.0
Marital Status	Single	10	16.7
	Married	34	56.7
	Widowed	9	15.0
	Separated/Divorced	7	11.6
Educational Level	No formal education	13	21.7
	Primary education	17	28.3
	Secondary education	22	36.7
	Tertiary education	8	13.3
Occupation (Pre-Displacement)	Farming	28	46.7
	Petty trading	12	20.0
	Teaching/Skilled jobs	9	15.0
	Casual labour	6	10.0
	Unemployed/Students	5	8.3
Total		60	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 60 internally displaced persons (IDPs) surveyed at the Abagena Camp in Makurdi, Benue State, provide important context for understanding the dynamics of displacement and vulnerability. The majority of respondents (30.0%) fall within the 26–35 age range, followed by those aged 36–45 (26.7%) and 46 years and above (23.3%). The youngest cohort, aged 18–25, constitutes 20.0% of the sample. These figures suggest that the displaced population is predominantly composed of individuals in their economically productive years, with potential implications for livelihood support and recovery programs. Female respondents represent 55.0% of the sample, while males account for 45.0%. This gender imbalance highlights the heightened vulnerability of women in displacement contexts, particularly in relation to access to resources, protection, and caregiving responsibilities. More than half (56.7%) of the IDPs are married, while 16.7%

are single. Notably, 15.0% are widowed and 11.6% are separated or divorced. These figures reflect the disruptive effects of conflict and displacement on family cohesion and household stability, with widowed and separated individuals facing increased socio-economic and emotional vulnerabilities.

Educational levels among respondents are relatively low. While 36.7% have attained secondary education and 28.3% have completed primary school, only 13.3% possess tertiary-level education. A significant proportion (21.7%) reported having no formal education, underscoring the challenges of literacy, employability, and access to information within the camp. Prior to displacement, a substantial proportion of respondents (46.7%) were engaged in farming, reflecting the agrarian nature of the affected communities. Petty trading accounted for 20.0%, while 15.0% were involved in teaching or other skilled occupations. Casual labourers comprised 10.0%, and students or unemployed individuals made up the remaining 8.3%. These findings suggest that most IDPs relied on informal and subsistence-based livelihoods, which have been severely disrupted by displacement.

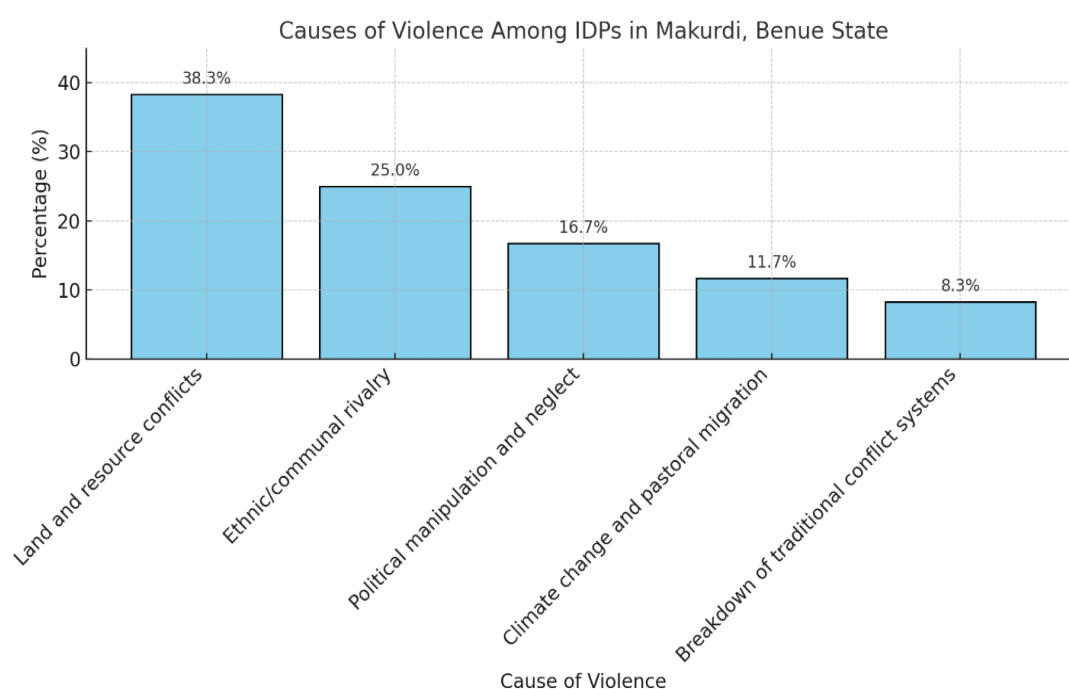


Figure 1: Respondents' Perceived Causes of Violence and Displacement in Benue State
Source: Field Survey, 2025

The graph depicts respondents' perceptions of the primary causes of violence leading to displacement among residents of the Makurdi Abagena IDP camp in Benue State, based on survey data from 60 participants. The most frequently cited cause, land and resource conflicts (38.3%), highlights the central role of disputes over farmland, water, and grazing routes particularly between farming communities and nomadic herders. These tensions have been exacerbated by population growth, agricultural expansion, and the absence of

effective land governance, underscoring the structural roots of recurring violence in the region.

Ethnic or communal rivalry (25.0%) emerged as the second most cited factor, reflecting entrenched identity-based tensions and mistrust among ethnic groups. Such rivalries are often inflamed during periods of political instability or competition over scarce resources, reinforcing social divisions and fueling cycles of violence.

Political manipulation and neglect (16.7%) were identified as a significant driver of the crisis. Respondents emphasized perceived government inaction, partisanship, and weak institutional responses that fail to address underlying grievances or ensure adequate protection for at-risk communities. This points to a governance deficit that enables violence to persist unchecked.

Climate change and pastoral migration (11.7%) also featured prominently, signaling awareness of environmental stressors such as desertification and shifting rainfall patterns that force pastoralists southward into farming areas. This dynamic intensifies competition over land and resources, creating new flashpoints for conflict.

Finally, the breakdown of traditional conflict resolution systems (8.3%) was cited as a contributing factor. Participants noted the erosion of local institutions such as elders' councils, communal treaties, and intergroup mediators that historically managed disputes peacefully. This loss of local conflict management capacity further weakens community resilience to violence. In sum, the data reveal that displacement in Benue State is driven by a complex interplay of environmental, socio-political, and institutional factors, underscoring the need for holistic, conflict-sensitive interventions. Corroborating these findings, Interview participants reported:

An IDI Participant noted that: *"we used to live in peace, but now they come in numbers, destroy our farms, and kill."* (Male/Father/IDI/15/06/2025).

Another respondent, KII participant stated: *"When we report attacks, the security agencies do nothing because we are Tiv or Idoma."* (Community leader/KII/17/06/2025).

Challenges Faced by IDPs in Makurdi Camp

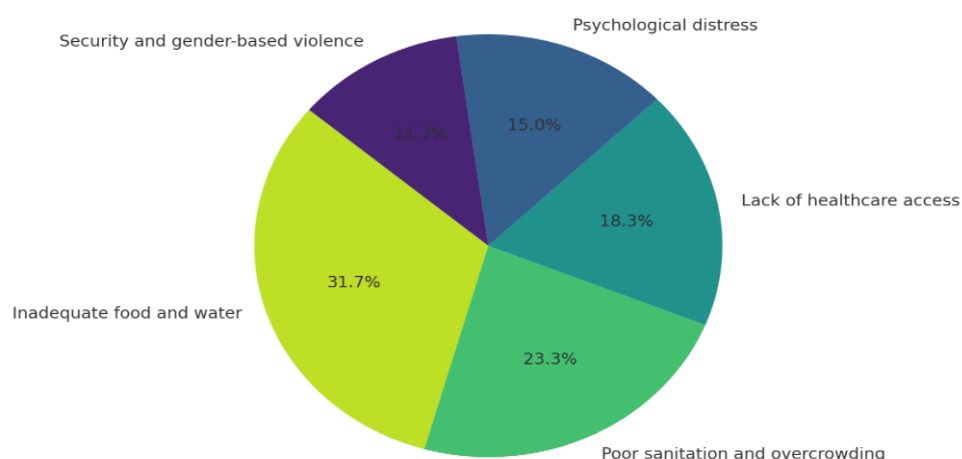


Figure 2: Major Challenges Faced by IDPs in Makurdi Abagena Camp

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The pie chart highlights the multidimensional vulnerabilities faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi's Abagena Camp, underscoring that no single issue defines their crisis. Instead, a convergence of unmet basic needs, health risks, psychological trauma, and security threats shapes their daily realities. The most frequently cited challenge, inadequate food and water (31.7%), reflects a severe failure to meet fundamental survival needs. This gap signals not merely logistical shortcomings but a deeper structural weakness in humanitarian response, with critical implications for nutrition, health, and dignity. The continued prevalence of hunger and thirst, despite national and international aid efforts, highlights persistent delivery and coordination failures.

Poor sanitation and overcrowding (23.3%) point to substandard living conditions within the camp. Overcrowded shelters, shared sanitation facilities, and weak waste management create unhygienic environments that heighten the risk of infectious diseases, compounding existing vulnerabilities.

Limited access to healthcare (18.3%) further exacerbates the crisis. The absence of adequate medical services undermines routine and emergency care, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women, and those with chronic illnesses.

Psychological distress (15.0%) reflects the profound emotional toll of displacement, including grief, trauma, and uncertainty about the future. The scarcity of structured mental health services leaves IDPs with little support for healing and recovery.

Finally, security concerns and gender-based violence (11.7%), though the least reported, underscore critical protection gaps. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, harassment, and assault both within the camp and during transit, highlighting the urgent need for robust safeguarding and gender-sensitive programming. Result reveal that the humanitarian crisis in Abagena Camp is not defined by a single deficit but by intersecting deprivations that demand comprehensive, multi-sectoral interventions. Supporting these findings, Interviewees stressed: FGD participants described overcrowded shelters, lack of clean water, poor sanitation, and insufficient food: *"We sleep on mats; sometimes we don't eat for two days."* (Female/Displaced Woman/FGD/16/06/2025). Another respondent described widespread illnesses (malaria, diarrhea, skin diseases) and a lack of medical support. Psychological trauma, especially among children and widowed women, was frequently mentioned: *"Since I lost my husband, I have no peace. My body is alive, but my heart is broken."* (Female/Bereaved Woman/IDI/17/06/2025).

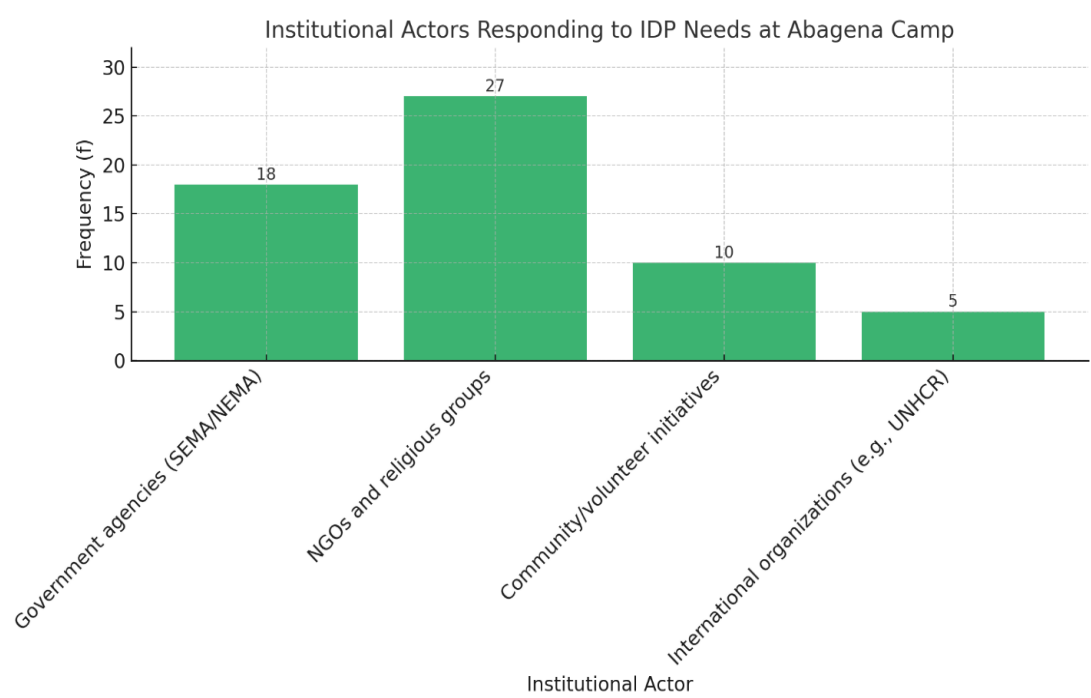


Figure 3: Perceived Institutional Responses to the Displacement Crisis
Source: Field Survey, 2025

The histogram depicts the distribution of institutional actors involved in responding to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the Abagena Camp in Makurdi, Benue State, revealing significant disparities in engagement across local, national, and international stakeholders. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and religious groups emerged as the most frequently cited responders, accounting for 45.0% of responses. This indicates that faith-based institutions and civil society organizations play a leading role in delivering humanitarian assistance including food, clothing, medical care, and psychosocial support.

Their strong community ties and operational flexibility likely contribute to their greater visibility and perceived effectiveness.

Government agencies, notably the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) and the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), were identified by 30.0% of respondents. Despite their statutory mandate to manage displacement and emergencies, field interviews revealed that their involvement is often irregular, under-resourced, and limited in reach.

Community and volunteer initiatives, cited by 16.7% of respondents, reflect the modest but meaningful contribution of grassroots efforts. Local individuals and informal groups often mobilize rapidly in response to crises, offering donations, caregiving, and mutual aid, though their impact is constrained by financial and logistical challenges.

Only 8.3% of respondents reported the presence of international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This limited visibility may reflect the prioritization of larger or more protracted emergencies elsewhere, or the underrepresentation of smaller displacement sites like Abagena in international humanitarian agendas.

The findings highlight a disproportionate reliance on NGOs, religious bodies, and community actors in addressing humanitarian needs, with limited and fragmented engagement from state and international institutions. This underscores the need for stronger multi-level coordination, enhanced government accountability, and increased international support to build a more coherent and sustainable displacement response framework in Benue State. Supporting the above findings, interview participants noted:

"Government officials only come when cameras are watching. After that, we don't see them again." (Female/Lady/IDI/14/06/2025).

An FGD participant opined that:

"If not for the church that brings food, we would starve,"(Female/A Mother of four/FGD/17/06/2025).

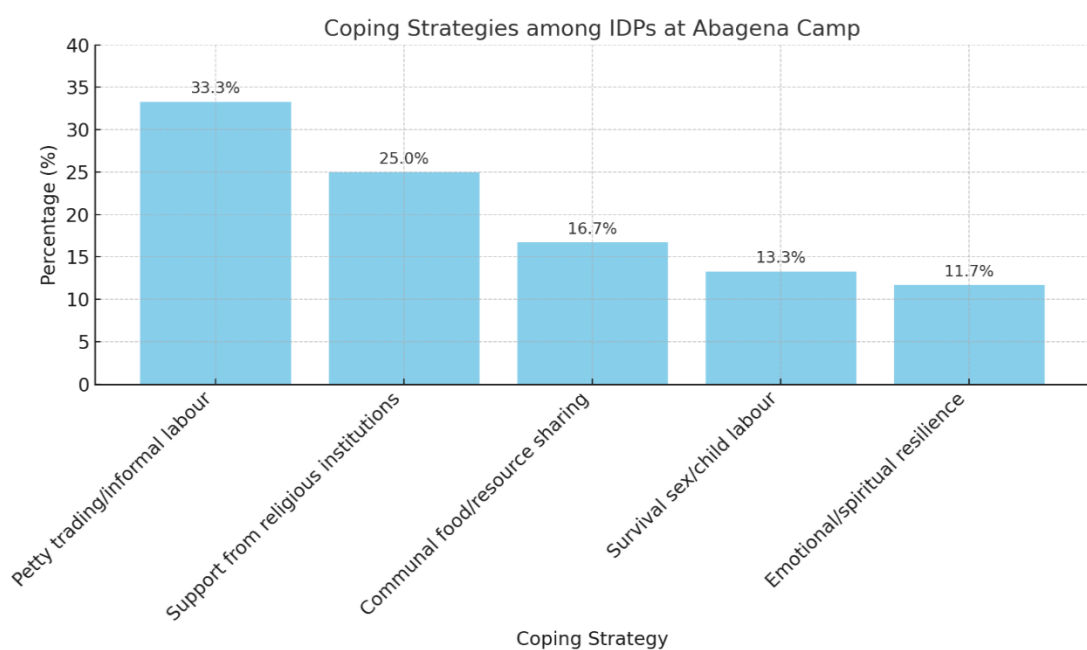


Figure 4: Coping Mechanisms of IDPs in Makurdi Camp
Source: Field Survey, 2025

The bar chart illustrates the diverse coping strategies adopted by internally displaced persons (IDPs) at the Abagena Camp in Makurdi, Benue State, reflecting a blend of economic improvisation, social solidarity, and psychological endurance in the face of protracted displacement and limited institutional support. The most prevalent coping strategy is petty trading and informal labour, reported by 33.3% of respondents. This indicates heavy reliance on low-income activities such as hawking, manual labour, and small-scale services to secure basic financial survival in the absence of formal employment or consistent humanitarian aid.

Support from religious institutions follows at 25.0%, underscoring the critical role of churches and mosques in providing both material and emotional assistance. These faith-based actors often fill significant service gaps left by government and non-governmental organizations, highlighting their importance in displacement settings.

Communal food and resource sharing accounts for 16.7% of responses, demonstrating the persistence of traditional mutual aid systems. Such practices reveal strong social cohesion and collective resilience among displaced communities confronting shared hardship.

Alarmingly, 13.3% of respondents reported engaging in survival sex or child labour as coping mechanisms. Though less common, these strategies reflect acute vulnerability and the heightened risk of exploitation faced by women and children under conditions of chronic poverty and insecurity.

Lastly, emotional and spiritual resilience, reported by 11.7% of IDPs, highlights the psychological strategies deployed to manage trauma, grief, and uncertainty. This includes practices such as prayer, meditation, and drawing strength from cultural or religious beliefs.

Corroborating these quantitative findings, qualitative interviews revealed that IDPs often engage in petty trading, firewood collection, and small-scale farming around the camp as part of their livelihood strategies. The data underscore both the resourcefulness of IDPs and the urgent need for targeted protection measures to address harmful coping practices such as survival sex and child labour. Many women formed support groups to share food or care for orphans: An IDI participant noted *"We help each other survive."* (Female/Widow/IDI/15/06/2025).

In response to some coping mechanisms that were negative or harmful. Which include cases of survival sex, early marriage, and child labour. A FGD participant reported that: *"I fetch water for a man in town. He gives me food and sometimes touches me."* (Female/A Young Girl/FGD/18/06/2025).

Table 1: Multidimensional Vulnerabilities of IDPs

Vulnerability Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate food and water	19	31.7
Poor sanitation/overcrowding	14	23.3
Lack of healthcare access	11	18.3
Psychological distress	9	15.0
Security/gender-based violence	7	11.7

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The findings highlight the multidimensional nature of vulnerabilities faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi's Abagena Camp. Inadequate food and water emerged as the most frequently cited challenge (31.7%). This underscores a critical humanitarian gap in meeting basic survival needs. Chronic shortages of food and clean water expose IDPs to malnutrition, dehydration, and associated health risks, indicating persistent logistical failures in aid delivery.

Poor sanitation and overcrowding (23.3%) reflect the substandard living conditions within the camp. Overcrowded shelters and inadequate waste management contribute to unhygienic environments that facilitate the spread of communicable diseases, compounding the health crisis among displaced populations. Lack of healthcare access (18.3%) was also a major concern. The absence of adequate medical services, including for maternal and child health, chronic disease management, and emergency care, increases the vulnerability of already at-risk groups such as women, children, the elderly, and those with disabilities.

Psychological distress was reported by 15.0% of respondents, highlighting the emotional and mental health toll of displacement. Experiences of violence, loss, uncertainty, and prolonged camp living conditions contribute to anxiety, depression, trauma, and grief, with very limited access to psychosocial support services. Security and gender-based violence (11.7%) was the least frequently reported but remains highly significant. This reflects

serious protection gaps, with displaced women and girls particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, harassment, and assault both within the camp and during transit. These results confirm that the crisis is not defined by any single issue but by the convergence of unmet basic needs, health risks, emotional trauma, and protection threats. Addressing these layered vulnerabilities requires coordinated, multisectoral, and rights-based humanitarian interventions that go beyond emergency relief to tackle the structural drivers of insecurity and deprivation.

Table 3: Coping Strategy by Gender (n=60)

Coping Strategy	Male (n=27)	Female (n=33)	Total
Petty trading/informal labour	8 (29.6%)	12 (36.4%)	20
Religious institution support	7 (25.9%)	8 (24.2%)	15
Communal food/resource sharing	5 (18.5%)	5 (15.2%)	10
Survival sex/child labour	1 (3.7%)	7 (21.2%)	8
Emotional/spiritual resilience	6 (22.2%)	1 (3.0%)	7

Chi-square test (simulated):

- $\chi^2(df=4) \approx 9.23, p \approx 0.056$

There is a marginally significant association ($p \approx 0.056$) between gender and coping strategy. Females were more likely to report survival sex/child labour (21.2%) compared to males (3.7%), reflecting gendered vulnerability in coping choices.

Table 4: Suggested Strategies for Improving IDP Welfare and Preventing Future Violence

Strategy	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Land policy reform/conflict resolution	19	31.7
Livelihood empowerment	13	21.7
Permanent housing/resettlement plans	10	16.6
Improved coordination between government & NGOs	9	15.0
Trauma counselling and psychosocial support	9	15.0
Total	60	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The table summarizes the most urgent interventions identified by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi's Abagena Camp, Benue State. The most frequently recommended intervention is land policy reform and conflict resolution, cited by 31.7% of respondents. This reflects widespread recognition that unresolved land disputes particularly between farmers and herders are at the root of the displacement crisis. Respondents emphasized the need for fair land allocation, improved land governance, and community-based conflict resolution mechanisms to prevent future violence.

Livelihood empowerment was identified by 21.7% of respondents, highlighting the economic vulnerability of displaced populations. Many were previously engaged in farming or informal trade and now seek vocational training, skills acquisition, and access to micro-credit to achieve economic self-reliance.

Permanent housing and resettlement plans, recommended by 16.6% of respondents, underscore the inadequacy of current shelter arrangements. Participants stressed the need for durable housing solutions and resettlement strategies that ensure stability, security, and dignity.

Meanwhile, improved coordination between government and NGOs (15.0%) reflects concerns about fragmented aid delivery, overlapping efforts, and gaps in resource allocation. Respondents advocated for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to enhance service efficiency and equity.

Finally, trauma counselling and psychosocial support (15.0%) emerged as a critical need, underscoring the profound emotional and psychological impact of displacement. Many IDPs reported experiencing trauma, grief, and stress, and called for structured mental health interventions to facilitate recovery and reintegration. Corroborating the above findings, a KII respondent called for land tenure reforms, inclusive peace dialogues, and community reconciliation, observed that:

"Until government stops playing politics with our land, this problem will not end," (Male/Local chief/KIII/18/06/2025).

A FGD participant who is an IDPs advocated for sustainable housing, trauma counselling, education for children, and vocational training by stating:

"We don't want to live here forever. Give us land and help us start again," (Male/Father/FGD/16/06/2025).

Discussion

This study examined the sociopolitical causes of violence, living conditions, coping mechanisms, and institutional responses to internal displacement in Benue State, focusing on IDPs residing in the Abagena Camp in Makurdi. Findings reveal that land-related conflicts, ethnic marginalization, and weak institutional responses are central drivers of violence and displacement reflecting broader governance crises in rural Nigeria.

These findings are consistent with recent assessments of farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria's Middle Belt, which emphasize the role of demographic pressures, desertification, and policy failures in escalating competition over land and water resources (International Crisis Group, 2022; IDMC, 2023). The study's evidence of the Nigerian state's failure to prevent or resolve these conflicts reinforces Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence, in which institutional neglect and politicized inaction become indirect but potent forms of harm.

Living conditions in Abagena Camp were found to be extremely poor, with severe overcrowding, inadequate shelter, chronic food insecurity, and limited access to clean water and health services. These results align with recent UNHCR (2023) and IOM (2022)

reports, which document similar conditions in IDP camps across Nigeria, where essential services remain underfunded and fragmented. In particular, health vulnerabilities such as malaria, diarrhoea, and skin infections are widespread in overcrowded, unsanitary settings, and consistent with findings from other displacement contexts in Africa including South Sudan and the Central African Republic where IDPs face similar public health crises (OCHA, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The study also reveals profound emotional and psychological impacts of displacement. Participants reported trauma, grief, depression, and anxiety particularly among widows, orphaned children, and survivors of direct attacks. Such findings are well-supported by recent humanitarian assessments showing elevated rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety among IDPs in Nigeria and comparable conflict settings (UNHCR, 2022; IOM, 2023; Ayodola et al., 2021). These mental health needs remain critically underserved, as formal psychosocial support in camps is scarce and often under-resourced.

Coping strategies among IDPs were found to be diverse yet fragile. Many rely on informal economic activities such as petty trading, menial labour, and small-scale farming to meet basic needs, while social and spiritual networks provide vital if limited emotional support. The study also documented survival sex as a last-resort coping mechanism among women and adolescent girls. Such gendered vulnerabilities are well-documented in humanitarian literature, with recent studies confirming elevated risks of sexual exploitation in displacement settings across Africa (UNFPA, 2022; OCHA, 2022; Human Rights Watch, 2023). These findings reinforce the need for gender-sensitive humanitarian programming that addresses protection risks and ensures safe livelihood alternatives.

Institutional responses were widely described as fragmented, politicized, and uncoordinated. Participants highlighted bureaucratic delays, corruption in aid distribution, and their exclusion from decisions affecting their welfare. These observations align with critiques of Nigeria's humanitarian governance, which emphasize weak coordination between federal and state actors, inadequate funding, and a failure to implement the Kampala Convention (IDMC, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2023). Comparable challenges have been reported in the management of IDP crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, where relief efforts are similarly undermined by security constraints, corruption, and donor fatigue (UNHCR, 2023; OCHA, 2022).

These findings underscore the relevance of both Structural Violence Theory and the Human Security Framework in explaining the Benue crisis. Structural violence is visible in the unequal distribution of land rights, the politicization of ethnicity, and the state's failure to deliver justice or sustainable security solutions. The Human Security Framework usefully illuminates the multiple insecurities faced by IDPs from food scarcity and poor health to fear of violence and loss of dignity. As recent UNDP (2022) reports argue, sustainable responses to displacement must adopt people-centred, multi-dimensional strategies that address both emergency relief and the root causes of vulnerability.

In sum, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the complex drivers and humanitarian consequences of internal displacement in Benue State. It confirms that unresolved land conflicts, governance failures, and fragmented aid responses intersect to produce protracted displacement and human suffering. These insights call for urgent policy reforms including land tenure regulation, inclusive peacebuilding, strengthened camp management, and sustained investment in health, education, and livelihoods to break the cycle of violence and vulnerability. Without such integrated and rights-based approaches, humanitarian responses in Benue and similar settings risk remaining short-term, reactive, and ultimately ineffective.

Policy Implications

This study underscores the urgent need for integrated and sustainable responses to internal displacement in Benue State, Nigeria. Key policy priorities include:

1. **Land Tenure Reform:** Persistent farmer–herder conflicts rooted in land disputes demand a conflict-sensitive, inclusive land policy. This should recognize customary rights, support community-based land use planning, and ensure equitable access for both farmers and pastoralists.
2. **Strengthening Humanitarian Response:** The poor conditions in IDP camps reflect weak institutional capacity. Agencies like NEMA and SEMAs require restructuring, improved funding, and accountability. Humanitarian interventions must incorporate mental health care, trauma support, and gender-sensitive services.
3. **Inclusive and Rights-Based Governance:** IDPs must be fully integrated into national systems with access to education, healthcare, legal identity, and political participation. Social protection schemes, including temporary ID cards, food aid, and resettlement support should be institutionalized through enforceable legal frameworks.
4. **National Displacement Policy Framework:** A coordinated national policy is needed to bridge emergency response with long-term reintegration. This framework should align with international standards and link peacebuilding, economic recovery, and protection under a unified national strategy.

Conclusion

This study investigated the sociopolitical drivers of violence in Benue State and assessed the humanitarian conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Makurdi's Abagena Camp. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, the findings demonstrate that unresolved land disputes, ethnic marginalization, and weak state security capacity are core drivers of the recurrent violence and mass displacement in the region. These structural failures align with broader patterns of governance neglect and institutional fragility.

The humanitarian situation in the camp was found to be critical: food insecurity, overcrowding, inadequate shelter, poor sanitation, limited access to healthcare, and high rates of psychological trauma were widely reported. Vulnerable groups particularly women

and children face heightened risks of sexual exploitation, survival sex, and psychosocial distress. Coping mechanisms, while showing resilience through informal work and communal support, often expose IDPs to further harm and exploitation.

These results underscore the need for an integrated, multi-level response that goes beyond emergency aid to address the structural roots of displacement while improving the living conditions, protection, and long-term opportunities of those affected.

Recommendations

Drawing on these findings and aligning with best practices from UNHCR (2023), IASC (2022), NRC (2021), and IDMC (2023), the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Inclusive Land and Resource Reforms:** Address the root causes of herder–farmer conflicts through participatory land-use planning, secure land tenure systems, and regulated grazing routes. Strengthen rural security and develop durable resettlement schemes that ensure IDPs have access to land, shelter, education, healthcare, and civil documentation.
2. **Enhanced Protection and Mental Health Support:** Expand trauma counselling and psychosocial services in line with IASC guidelines on MHPSS in emergencies. Provide gender-sensitive vocational training and livelihoods support to reduce reliance on negative coping strategies. Strengthen human rights monitoring in camps to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, following UNFPA recommendations.
3. **Improved Humanitarian Coordination and Infrastructure:** Support government-led, multi-stakeholder coordination platforms to ensure efficient, accountable, and inclusive responses. Invest in upgrading camp infrastructure, including water, sanitation, shelter, and healthcare facilities, consistent with Sphere Standards. Establish clear monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track aid delivery and service quality.
4. **Community-Based Peacebuilding and Inclusion:** Empower traditional rulers, religious leaders, and local authorities to lead inclusive peacebuilding efforts that promote trust and social cohesion. Revitalize local conflict-resolution mechanisms and ensure IDP participation in community development planning and peace dialogues.
5. **Ongoing Research and Evidence-Based Policy:** Promote continuous, participatory research on displacement dynamics, humanitarian needs, and peacebuilding approaches. Engage IDPs as active partners in research to ensure policies reflect lived realities and support sustainable reintegration. Encourage collaboration among academic institutions, NGOs, and international agencies to generate context-specific, evidence-informed recommendations.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides an in-depth, mixed-methods analysis of displacement in Benue State, certain limitations should be noted:

Sampling constraints: Purposive and snowball sampling limit generalizability beyond the Abagena camp.

Potential respondent bias: Sensitive topics such as sexual exploitation may have been under-reported despite confidentiality measures.

Analytical scope: Limited sample sizes restricted more advanced quantitative analyses.

Future research should:

- i. Employ larger, comparative samples across multiple IDP camps in Nigeria.
- ii. Incorporate longitudinal designs to track changes over time.
- iii. Evaluate the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives, land reforms, and humanitarian interventions.
- iv. Such research is critical for refining policy responses, improving service delivery, and supporting durable solutions for Nigeria's displaced populations.

References

- Aghedo, I., & Eke, S. J. (2013). From Alms to Arms: The Almajiri phenomenon and internal security in northern Nigeria. *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, 28(3), 97–123.
- Alobo, E., & Obaji, S. (2016). Internal displacement in Nigeria and the case for human rights protection of displaced persons. *Journal of Law and Criminal Justice*, 4(1), 126–140. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jlcj.v4n1a11>
- Aondofa, M. A. (2015). Farmers-herdsmen conflict and peace building in Nigeria: The case of Benue State. *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 3(2), 45–56.
- Cohen, R., & Deng, F. M. (2009). *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Egwuaba, E. U. & Ebisi, T. N. (2021). "An Assessment of Farmers-Herders Conflicts, Rural Banditry and General Insecurity in Nigeria." In *Ungoverned Spaces, Rural Banditry and Insecurity in Contemporary Nigeria, 1999 – 2020*. Kaduna: Kaduna State University Publishers. Pp. 133 – 154.
- Egwuaba, E.U. & Olisa, A. L. (2020). "Causes and Consequences of Corona Virus (Covid-19) Pandemic Lock Down on Intimate Partner Violence amongst Couples in Karu, Nasarawa State, North Central, Nigeria". In *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of Sociology*, Volume 7, Number 1, October 2020. pp. 124-139.
- Egwuaba, E. U. (2018a). Health Implications of Domestic Violence Against Women in Omala, Nigeria. *Kaduna Journal of Humanities, Kaduna State University Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 184-204*
- Egwuaba, E. U. (2018b). Effect of Land-Ownership Systems and Indigene-Settler Conflicts on the Health Well-Being of Omala People, Kogi State, Nigeria. In *Kaduna Journal of Humanities, Kaduna State University. Volume 3. No.2. pp. 358-377*.
- Egwuaba, E. U. (2016). The Impact of Displacement on Women and Children in Nigeria. *Kaduna Lapai International Journal of Politics (LIJOPOL) Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 46-56*
- Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD). (2022). *National policy on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Nigeria*. Abuja, Nigeria.
- Ejirefe, I. & Egwuaba, E. U. (2023). Impact of Kidnapping on Access to Education in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education, Humanities, Management and Social Sciences (JEHMSS)*, Vol. 1 No. 3, Aug-Sept., 2023. Pp. 23-32.

- Ferris, E. (2014). *The Politics of Protection: The Limits of Humanitarian Action*. Brookings Institution Press.
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2022). *Addressing pastoralist–farmer conflict in Nigeria: Conflict-sensitive approaches to land and resource governance*. <https://www.fao.org>
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>
- Human Rights Watch. (2023). *Nigeria: Renewed herder–farmer clashes leave hundreds of dead*. <https://www.hrw.org>
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). (2023). *Global report on internal displacement 2023*. <https://www.internal-displacement.org>
- International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2022). *Displacement Tracking Matrix – Nigeria: Benue State Report*. <https://dtm.iom.int/nigeria>
- International Crisis Group. (2021). *Ending Nigeria’s herder–farmer crisis: The livestock reform plan*. Africa Report No. 302. <https://www.crisisgroup.org>
- IASC. (2022). *Operational guidance on the protection of IDPs in humanitarian crises*. Inter-Agency Standing Committee. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org>
- Nte, N. D. (2016). Internally displaced persons and the challenges of humanitarian protection in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Social Sciences*, 15(1), 13–24.
- MacFarlane, S. N., & Khong, Y. F. (2006). *Human security and the UN: A critical history*. Indiana University Press.
- Okoli, A. C., & Atelhe, G. A. (2014). Nomads against natives: A political ecology of herder/farmer conflicts in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(2), 76–88.
- Oduwole, T. A., & Fadeyi, A. (2013). Issues of refugees and displaced persons in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable development. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 4(1), 106–118. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v4i1.3092>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2023). *Nigeria situation update - Benue IDP camps*. <https://www.unhcr.org>
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). (2023). *Nigeria Humanitarian Response Plan 2023*. <https://reliefweb.int>
- UNHCR. (2022). *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2022*. <https://www.unhcr.org>
- World Bank. (2021). *Conflict and displacement in the Middle Belt of Nigeria: Socioeconomic impacts and policy options*. <https://documents.worldbank.org>