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# ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF NON-STATE ACTORS ON INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN Niger State, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

Internal Displacement have become of Nigeria's most significant human security challenge and in recent times, Niger state in North central Nigeria where banditry, climate induced flooding and the activities of non state actors have continued to bring about the forced movement of people from their ancestral homes. This study examines the impact of non state actors on internal Displacement in Niger state within the period 2020 to 2025. The study uses the Human security theory to analyse and adopts the qualitative desk-based research design whereby data is sourced mainly from secondary sources such a as articles, news publications, policy documents, government and international organisation's document, and other peer reviews literatures. The Findings reveal that armed banditry remains the dominant driver of displacement, while recurrent flooding and jihadist infiltration have compounded humanitarian vulnerabilities by destroying livelihoods, weakening community resilience, disrupting agricultural production, increasing food insecurity, and placing significant pressure on health, education, and social protection systems. The study further finds that weak governance, inadequate institutional capacity, poverty, and poor climate adaptation measures have heightened displacement and affected effective policy responses. It concludes that internal displacement in Niger State is a multidimensional human security challenge requiring integrated rather than sectoral interventions. The study recommends strengthening community-based security and intelligence systems, improving disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategies, enhancing institutional coordination for humanitarian response, promoting livelihood recovery programmes, and implementing inclusive governance reforms that address the structural drivers of displacement. These measures are essential for achieving sustainable peace, protecting vulnerable populations, and reducing forced displacement in Niger State and similar conflict-prone regions of Nigeria.

**Keywords***: Internal displacement, human security, banditry, Climate change, jihadism, Humanitarian response*

## 1. Introduction

Internal displacement has emerged as one of the most pressing human security challenges in contemporary Nigeria. Niger State, Nigeria's largest state by landmass and a strategic corridor linking the north and south, has become a hotspot of recurrent displacement between 2020 and 2025. The crisis reflects the convergence of multiple threats; escalating armed banditry, intensifying climate-induced flooding, and expanding jihadist insurgency. Together, these dynamics have uprooted tens of thousands of households, destroyed livelihoods, and reshaped the socio-economic landscape of central Nigeria.

The Human Security framework provides a useful lens for understanding this phenomenon. Unlike traditional notions of security focused on territorial integrity, the human security paradigm centres on protecting individuals from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and violence. It foregrounds the intersection of environmental, economic, and political insecurities that drive displacement and undermine resilience. Applying this lens to Niger State reveals that displacement is not only the product of immediate violence or disaster, but also of long-standing structural vulnerabilities, poverty, weak governance, and climate fragility.

Recent data underscore the gravity of the crisis. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2024) identified over 1.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) across ten north-central and north-western states, including Niger, with the number continuing to rise. Within Niger State, displacement patterns are driven primarily by armed attacks in Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi Local Government Areas, recurrent flooding in Mokwa and Lapai, and jihadist infiltration through the Alawa Forest axis. These overlapping threats not only erode community resilience but also blur the boundaries between conflict-induced and disaster-induced displacement. Understanding the drivers of displacement in Niger State is thus critical for policy formulation and humanitarian planning. It allows for the development of context-specific interventions that bridge the gap between emergency relief and long-term recovery. This paper, therefore, examines the drivers of displacement in Niger State between 2020 and 2025, analyses their human security implications, and proposes strategic policy directions for a sustainable response.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Displacement refers to the forced movement of individuals or communities from their habitual places of residence, typically as a result of conflict, persecution, natural disasters, or development projects. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) define internally displaced persons (IDPs) as "persons or groups who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence… and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border." This distinction between internal displacement and refugeehood is crucial, as IDPs remain under the jurisdiction of their home state, often without adequate protection or humanitarian support (UNHCR, 2024).

The contemporary understanding of displacement extends beyond physical movement to encompass issues of human rights, livelihood security, and social integration. Displacement is therefore not merely a humanitarian issue but a human security concern, involving threats to survival, dignity, and freedom. Human security, as conceptualised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2012), shifts the focus from the security of states to the security of people, emphasising economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political dimensions. Within this framework, displacement can be understood as both a symptom and a cause of human insecurity.

Globally, forced displacement has reached unprecedented levels. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees *(UNHCR)* reported that by mid-2024, over 117 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide, the highest figure in modern history (UNHCR, 2024). Of this total, approximately 68 million were internally displaced, largely due to protracted conflicts, natural disasters, and climate-induced crises. The growing intersection between climate change and displacement has prompted scholars to conceptualise *climate-induced mobility* as a distinct yet overlapping category within forced migration (McLeman, 2023). Geographically, the highest burdens of displacement are borne by low- and middle-income countries, especially in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Prolonged crises in Sudan,

Syria, Ukraine, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have contributed to sustained global increases. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates that in 2023 alone, there were 28 million new internal displacements caused by conflict and 32 million due to disasters (IDMC, 2024). These statistics highlight the increasing salience of environmental insecurity as a driver of mobility, reinforcing the need for integrated policy approaches that address both human and ecological dimensions.

Africa remains the continent most affected by internal displacement, accounting for nearly 40 percent of the global total (IDMC, 2024). The primary causes include armed conflict, intercommunal violence, and climate-related disasters. Protracted crises in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have produced millions of displaced persons. Additionally, the Sahel region, stretching from Senegal to Sudan, has witnessed a sharp rise in displacement driven by the convergence of violent extremism, food insecurity, and desertification (IOM, 2023). In response, the African Union adopted the Kampala Convention in 2009, the world's first legally binding regional instrument for the protection and assistance of IDPs. The Convention underscores the responsibility of member states to prevent displacement, protect affected populations, and facilitate durable solutions. Despite this normative progress, implementation remains uneven due to weak institutional capacity, resource constraints, and recurring political instability (Okoth, 2021). The persistence of displacement across the continent underscores the structural links between insecurity, governance failure, and environmental stress.

Nigeria is among the countries most affected by internal displacement in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (2024), over 3.5 million people are internally displaced across the country, with the majority concentrated in the North-East and North-Central regions. The drivers are multifaceted: protracted insurgency by Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), armed banditry in the northwest, farmer-herder conflicts, and recurrent flooding along major river basins. The combination of insecurity and environmental degradation has made displacement a recurrent feature of Nigeria's humanitarian landscape. The Nigerian government adopted the National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in 2021, aligning domestic frameworks with the Kampala Convention. However, implementation has been limited by poor coordination between federal and state agencies, inadequate funding, and overlapping institutional mandates (Eweka & Olusegun, 2016). Humanitarian actors continue to face challenges in access, data collection, and the provision of durable solutions such as resettlement or reintegration. The situation underscores the need for state-level analyses to understand localized dynamics within the broader national context. Niger State exemplifies the intersection of Nigeria's displacement drivers. Its vast landmass, covering over 76,000 square kilometers, straddles the ecological transition zone between the semi-arid Sahel and the humid Middle Belt. This geography, while advantageous for agriculture and trade, also renders the state highly vulnerable to both security and environmental shocks. Since 2020, the state has experienced escalating armed banditry in Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi Local Government Areas, severe flooding in Mokwa and Lapai, and jihadist incursions into the Alawa Forest (IOM, 2024; Africa Defense Forum, 2025). These crises reveal Niger State as a microcosm of Nigeria's displacement dynamics, where weak governance, porous borders, and climate variability converge to undermine human security. The patterns observed in Niger reflect wider Sahelian trends in which environmental degradation, poverty, and violent extremism interact to produce chronic instability. Understanding Niger State's displacement dynamics therefore provides critical insights into how structural insecurities manifest at the subnational level and how national and regional responses might be improved.

**Major Drivers of Displacement (2020–2025)**

Displacement in Niger State is the outcome of interacting human security threats that transcend conventional conflict or environmental boundaries. Between 2020 and 2025, three interlinked drivers, armed banditry, climate-related disasters, and jihadist expansion, have emerged as the principal forces shaping the crisis. These drivers reinforce one another, creating a cyclical pattern of insecurity, livelihood loss, and forced migration.

**Banditry**

The primary driver of displacement is Armed banditry (Yahuza & Mansur, 2024) and remains the most pervasive cause of displacement across Niger State. What began as opportunistic rural crime has evolved into an organised insurgency that undermines state authority and rural livelihoods. Studies indicate that between 2018 and 2020, over 5,000 lives were lost and approximately 309,000 individuals were displaced as a result of armed attacks and kidnappings (Sani, Abdullahi, & Musa, 2024). The Shiroro–Munya–Rafi axis has been particularly affected. The escalation of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the proliferation of small arms and weak law enforcement (Africa Defense Forum, 2025). Armed groups, many with local grievances rooted in poverty, exclusion, and competition over land, have targeted farming communities, abducted residents for ransom, and razed villages. The attacks are characterised by extreme brutality intended to instil fear. In June 2024, for instance, twenty men were reportedly killed and ten beheaded in Shiroro in one of the most violent episodes recorded (Africa Defense Forum, 2025). Socio-economic deprivation and limited state presence have created fertile ground for the rise of such non-state actors. Banditry thrives in ungoverned spaces where local populations, alienated from formal governance structures, seek alternative systems of protection and justice.(Yahuza & Mansur 2024). This dynamic aligns with the human security framework, which emphasises that when economic and political insecurities persist, individuals become both agents and victims of violence. The economic implications are severe. Widespread displacement has disrupted agricultural cycles, leading to food insecurity (Abubakar, 2025). In August 2024, thirteen farmers were reportedly killed while cultivating their fields near Alawa, reflecting how insecurity directly undermines rural productivity (Channels Television, 2024). The resultant collapse of agrarian livelihoods not only displaces households but also exacerbates poverty, thus perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and violence.

**Environmental Insecurity**

Secondly, there is the environmental insecurity often manifested through recurrent flooding, which constitutes the second major driver of displacement. Between 2020 and 2025, Niger State has experienced increasingly severe flood events, most notably in Mokwa and Lapai Local Government Areas. The 2025 Mokwa flood, triggered by torrential rainfall and poor drainage infrastructure, was among the most devastating in Nigeria's recent history, submerging large portions of the town and killing more than 500 people (Al Jazeera, 2025; France24, 2025). Thousands of homes and farmlands were destroyed, displacing over 3,500 residents and disrupting regional trade networks. The disaster's impact extended beyond physical destruction. The flooding of over 10,000 hectares of cropland undermined food security and livelihoods (The Guardian Nigeria, 2025). Moreover, the collapse of critical infrastructure, including the Mokwa bridge which is an arterial link between northern and southwestern Nigeria, illustrates the cascading economic and mobility consequences of climate-induced disasters. The recurrence of floods in 2025, including an earlier event linked to water release from the Jebba Hydroelectric Power Station, highlights the governance

dimensions of environmental insecurity. Despite substantial budgetary allocations and a $10 million World Bank grant for erosion and flood control, weak implementation and corruption have limited the effectiveness of mitigation efforts (The Guardian Nigeria, 2025). This institutional failure aligns with broader critiques of adaptive governance in Nigeria, where disaster management often remains reactive rather than preventive. From a human security perspective, these floods expose the intersection of environmental and economic insecurities. Poorly planned urbanisation, inadequate drainage systems, and climate variability converge to erode community resilience. The destruction of schools and health centres during these floods further compounds social vulnerability, forcing displaced families into cycles of dependency and poverty.

**Jihadist Movement**

A third, increasingly critical driver of displacement in Niger State is the infiltration of jihadist groups, particularly the Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) faction of Boko Haram. Initially established in the Alawa Forest Reserve by a commander known as *Sadiku* in 2014, the group has since expanded operations through alliances with local bandit militias (Africa Defense Forum, 2025). By 2021, JAS had symbolically hoisted its flag in Kawuri, Shiroro, signalling de facto territorial control. Unlike the classical hierarchical Boko Haram model, the Shiroro cell operates as a *hybrid insurgency*, blending religious extremism with localised criminality. This convergence of jihadism and banditry has produced a form of networked insurgency, fluid, decentralised, and adaptive to military pressure (Institute for Security Studies [ISS], n.d.). Such groups exploit the porous borders linking Niger State to the Benin Republic and Sahel corridor, facilitating arms trafficking and recruitment (The Soufan Center, 2025). The humanitarian consequences are profound. Attacks on villages and highways have killed hundreds and displaced thousands. Forced recruitment of youth, abductions of women, and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have become defining features of the crisis (ISS, n.d.). The *human security* implications extend beyond physical violence: communities experience psychosocial trauma, economic devastation, and erosion of trust in state protection. The expansion of jihadist networks also underscores the regional dimension of displacement. Intelligence reports indicate growing interaction between the Shiroro cell and Sahel-based groups such as *Lakurawa*, designated as a terrorist organization in 2025 (ISS, n.d.). These linkages signify a shift from localised insurgency to a transnational security threat, complicating both humanitarian and military responses.

**Humanitarian Impact of Displacement**

The humanitarian implications of displacement in Niger State extend beyond population movement to encompass disruptions in livelihoods, health systems, social cohesion, and gender relations. Viewed through the *Human Security* lens, displacement represents the breakdown of multiple security pillars; economic, food, health, and community security, each reinforcing the other. Between 2020 and 2025, these effects have become more visible as the state struggles to manage recurrent crises triggered by armed conflict and climate disasters. Displacement data indicate a persistent and upward trajectory. In April 2024, the International Organisation for Migration *(IOM)* recorded 1,302,443 internally displaced persons (IDPs) across ten north-central and north-western states, including Niger, representing a 19 percent increase from December 2023 (IOM, 2024). By November 2024, the figure had risen to 1,322,766 IDPs, demonstrating that displacement drivers remain active and unresolved. Most IDPs reside outside formal camps, approximately 77 per cent live within host communities, while only 23 per cent are in camp-like settings (IOM, 2024). This spatial distribution complicates humanitarian response and accentuates the invisibility of displaced households. Host families, often living at the subsistence level, experience resource

strain that heightens local tensions and erodes social capital. Niger's displacement is thus diffuse and protracted, rather than episodic. The absence of durable solutions, resettlement, reintegration, or voluntary return, means that displacement has become a semi-permanent feature of rural life.

Economic insecurity is the most immediate impact of displacement on the people. Farming, which constitutes the livelihood base for over 80 per cent of Niger State's population, has been severely disrupted. Insecurity restricts access to farmlands, while recurrent floods destroy standing crops and arable land. The May 2025 Mokwa flood alone submerged more than 10,000 hectares of cropland, wiping out an entire farming season (The Guardian Nigeria, 2025). Banditry compounds these losses by forcing farmers to abandon cultivation zones and livestock corridors. The resulting decline in agricultural output drives up food prices, increases market dependency, and deepens household poverty. This cycle aligns with the *economic security* component of the human security paradigm, where loss of income and assets triggers secondary vulnerabilities, malnutrition, child labour, and indebtedness. Displacement has also affected informal economic networks. Traders, transporters, and artisans experience declining earnings due to market disruptions and infrastructure collapse. The destruction of the Mokwa bridge, an arterial trade route between northern and southwestern Nigeria, illustrates how localised disasters can reverberate through national supply chains.

Secondly**,** Health outcomes among displaced populations have deteriorated significantly. Flood-related displacement has exposed households to poor sanitation, vector-borne diseases, and inadequate health services. Following the Mokwa flood, the *World Health Organisation (WHO)* identified heightened risks of cholera, typhoid fever, malaria, and skin infections, aggravated by overcrowding and lack of potable water (WHO, 2025). Five primary health-care centres were destroyed, while dozens of others operated below capacity. Insecurity-related displacement presents parallel challenges. Communities in Shiroro and Munya report limited access to medical care due to road closures and attacks on rural health posts. Pregnant women and children are disproportionately affected, facing long travel distances to obtain antenatal services or immunisation. The absence of mental-health support further compounds the trauma experienced by survivors of violence or natural disasters. Environmental degradation poses significant and multifaceted health risks that are often exacerbated in situations of displacement. For instance, stagnant floodwaters, commonly resulting from heavy rainfall or poor drainage, create ideal conditions for the proliferation of mosquitoes. These insects are known carriers of various vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever, which can severely impact the health of affected populations. Meanwhile, the contamination of wells and water sources often leads to outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases, including cholera, which can spread rapidly in crowded and unsanitary conditions typical of displacement scenarios. The interplay between these health threats highlights the critical intersection of health and environmental security for displaced individuals and communities. This situation calls for a holistic approach that integrates humanitarian efforts with public health strategies.

On the Gendered Dimensions of Displacement, Aondover el at (2025) reports that women and children constitute the majority of displaced persons in Nigeria and experience distinct vulnerabilities. Displacement erodes traditional livelihood systems such as petty trading and subsistence farming, pushing women into informal or exploitative labour markets. Gender-based violence, including sexual assault, early marriage, and transactional sex, has increased in IDP settlements and host communities (Acha-Anyi, 2024).The collapse of the educational

infrastructure further marginalises girls. Schools destroyed by floods or closed due to insecurity deprive thousands of children of continuous learning, with long-term implications for gender equality and community recovery. The human security framework's *personal and community security* dimensions are thus undermined, as displacement disrupts social networks and protective institutions.Despite the severe economic, social, and psychological challenges faced by internally displaced women, evidence suggests that they demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of displacement. Studies from Northern Nigeria show that, even under violent conditions caused by armed banditry and insecurity, displaced persons exhibit adaptive coping mechanisms grounded in faith, social networks, and entrepreneurial activity (Yusuf, 2023; Olorunsola & Adebisi, 2023). For instance, research among displaced populations in the Federal Capital Territory reveals that women in the New Kuchingoro IDP camp augment humanitarian support by initiating micro-enterprises, engaging in trade, and mobilising informal support systems to sustain their families (Okeke, 2021). Such findings portray displaced women not as passive victims but as active agents of survival, agency, and transformation. Similarly, in the broader North-West and North-Central regions, resilience manifests through self-organised protection groups and community-based initiatives aimed at mutual support and income generation (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2024. Furthermore, psychological studies indicate that resilience and social support significantly predict positive coping outcomes among internally displaced persons exposed to conflict in Northern Nigeria, including Niger State (Olorunsola & Adebisi, 2023). These findings converge on a central theme that while displacement imposes profound hardship, displaced women consistently demonstrate agency, adaptability, and resilience across contexts of forced migration (Okeke, 2021; Yusuf, 2023). Nevertheless, the scope and dynamics of this resilience, particularly in Niger State, where armed banditry remains the primary driver of displacement (Afolayan & Oloruntoba, 2021; IOM, 2024), remain underexplored and warrant deeper empirical attention.The humanitarian impacts observed in Niger State illustrate the multi-dimensional nature of displacement. Economic losses, health crises, gender-based vulnerabilities, and social fragmentation reinforce one another, producing chronic human insecurity. The situation confirms that displacement is both a cause and a consequence of weak governance, environmental stress, and violent conflict. Addressing any single dimension in isolation is therefore insufficient; what is required is a holistic approach that restores livelihoods, rebuilds institutions, and enhances community resilience.

**Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the Human Security framework, as originally conceptualised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), and complements it with Forced Migration Theory to analyse the dynamics of internal displacement in Niger State. The Human Security approach marked a significant shift from the traditional state-centric conception of security, which focused primarily on protecting territorial sovereignty and military interests, to a people-centred approach that prioritises the safety, dignity, and well-being of individuals. The UNDP (1994) identified seven interrelated dimensions of human security—economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security—arguing that threats to human well-being are multidimensional and mutually reinforcing rather than isolated phenomena.

The concept has since evolved considerably. The Commission on Human Security (2003) refined the framework by defining human security as the protection of the "vital core" of human lives while simultaneously expanding people's freedoms and opportunities. Similarly,

the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/290 (2012) characterised human security as people-centred, comprehensive, context-specific, and prevention-oriented, recognising that sustainable security cannot be achieved through military responses alone but requires policies that address structural vulnerabilities. More recently, the United Nations Development Programme (2022) reconceptualised human security within the context of the Anthropocene, arguing that contemporary threats such as climate change, violent extremism, pandemics, economic instability, and environmental degradation are increasingly interconnected and require greater solidarity alongside protection and empowerment. This evolving conceptualisation is particularly relevant to displacement studies because it acknowledges that multiple insecurities often converge to produce humanitarian crises.

Within this framework, Human Security Theory posits that threats to individuals, whether arising from violent conflict, poverty, environmental degradation, weak governance, or climate change, are interconnected and therefore require integrated rather than fragmented policy responses (Brauch et al., 2011). The theory rejects the assumption that national security automatically guarantees individual security and instead argues that insecurity at the human level often persists despite the existence of sovereign state institutions. Consequently, displacement is understood not merely as the movement of people from one location to another but as a manifestation of deeper failures in governance, development, and social protection.

Complementing this perspective is Forced Migration Theory, which explains displacement as the outcome of interacting "push" and "pull" factors influencing both voluntary and involuntary mobility (Castles et al., 2014). Push factors include armed conflict, environmental disasters, economic deprivation, political instability, and human rights violations, whereas pull factors comprise perceived safety, livelihood opportunities, access to humanitarian assistance, and stronger institutional protection in destination communities. Rather than viewing migration as a single event, the theory conceptualises population movement as a continuum shaped by multiple structural and contextual factors operating simultaneously.

The integration of Human Security Theory and Forced Migration Theory provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the displacement crisis in Niger State. Human Security Theory explains why overlapping threats such as armed banditry, jihadist violence, climate-induced flooding, poverty, and institutional fragility have eroded the security and resilience of communities, while Forced Migration Theory explains how these conditions compel households to relocate in search of safety and survival. The convergence of these factors demonstrates that internal displacement in Niger State is not simply a humanitarian consequence of isolated violent incidents or natural disasters but the outcome of cumulative and reinforcing structural vulnerabilities.

Applied to Niger State, the framework reveals that insecurity generated by armed banditry in Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi Local Government Areas, recurrent flooding in Mokwa and Lapai, and the expansion of jihadist activities around the Alawa Forest collectively function as powerful push factors. Simultaneously, relatively safer communities, internally displaced persons' camps, and humanitarian support networks constitute pull factors that influence the direction and pattern of displacement. Since most displaced persons remain within Nigeria's borders, their experiences are shaped primarily by domestic governance structures, institutional capacity, social cohesion, and the effectiveness of humanitarian and development interventions. Consequently, the persistence of internal displacement reflects not only

immediate security threats but also the inability of existing governance systems to address the underlying economic, environmental, and political conditions that perpetuate human insecurity.

Viewed through these complementary theoretical perspectives, internal displacement in Niger State emerges as a multidimensional governance and human security challenge rather than solely a humanitarian emergency. The framework therefore provides a robust basis for analysing how non-state armed actors, environmental shocks, and institutional weaknesses interact to undermine human security and generate protracted displacement, while also informing integrated policy responses that prioritise prevention, resilience, and sustainable recovery.

**Conclusion**

The displacement crisis in Niger State between 2020 and 2025 exemplifies the convergence of violent conflict, environmental stress, and governance fragility that characterises human insecurity in the Sahelian belt. This study has shown that displacement in Niger State is not a singular event but a complex, multi-causal process driven by armed banditry, climate-related disasters, and jihadist expansion. These forces operate within and are reinforced by, structural weaknesses in governance, poverty, and institutional capacity. Viewed through the *Human Security* lens, displacement in Niger State represents a systemic erosion of people's safety, livelihoods, and dignity. Insecurity in Shiroro and Munya has destroyed rural economies and undermined food security; recurrent flooding in Mokwa has exposed governance and infrastructural weaknesses; and jihadist expansion has blurred the boundaries between criminality and insurgency. Together, these dynamics illustrate how environmental, economic, and political insecurities interact to produce chronic vulnerability.

The evidence presented here reinforces the central argument of *Human Security Theory*: that the well-being of individuals. not merely the stability of the state, must be the organising principle of policy and governance. Traditional security responses, dominated by military operations and reactive relief, have failed to address the deeper socio-economic and environmental causes of displacement. A more holistic approach, integrating livelihood recovery, climate adaptation, gender inclusion, and governance reform, is essential to restore security and resilience.

The study also contributes theoretically to the evolving literature on internal displacement in Africa. It demonstrates that the Niger State experience reflects broader continental trends where state fragility, environmental change, and violent extremism converge to undermine human development. By situating local dynamics within global displacement patterns, this analysis underscores the need for multi-scalar policy thinking, linking local resilience to national capacity and regional cooperation.

From a policy standpoint, the persistence of displacement in Niger State exposes the inadequacy of the interventions. Relief measures mitigate immediate suffering but cannot reverse the structural drivers of crisis. Institutional weaknesses often manifested in corruption, delayed response, and coordination failure always continue to erode public trust. Addressing displacement, therefore, requires a shift from crisis managementt to structural prevention, grounded in accountability and human-centred governance.

To forge a successful path forward, we must embrace three essential strategic transformations. First, we need to shift our focus from militarisation to human security. This means prioritising protection, participation, and justice instead of relying on coercive

measures. Second, we must transition from a model that emphasises relief to one that fosters resilience. This involves integrating our humanitarian responses with long-term development planning to ensure sustainable support for communities in need. Finally, we should move away from fragmentation and towards integration, striving to align our security, climate, and social policies within a coherent governance framework. By adopting these transformations, we can create a more just and sustainable future for all.

Ultimately, the resilience of displaced communities in Niger State attests to the agency and endurance of ordinary people who, despite limited state protection, continue to rebuild their lives. Their experiences challenge policymakers to reimagine security not as the absence of violence but as the presence of opportunity, justice, and dignity. If Nigeria and its partners can operationalise a human security–centred approach**,** where economic recovery, climate adaptation, and inclusive governance reinforce each other, then displacement can shift from being a symptom of crisis to a catalyst for institutional transformation. The future of Niger State, and indeed Nigeria's stability, depends on this transition from reactive relief to proactive human security.

**Recommendations**

Addressing displacement in Niger State requires moving beyond emergency relief toward structural transformation grounded in human security principles. Recommendations encompass immediate humanitarian interventions and long-term strategies across multiple dimensions. Firstly, Security and Humanitarian Access: The government must restore security in vulnerable areas like Shiroro, Munya, and Rafi through intelligence-driven operations and community policing that incorporates local vigilante groups. Community security councils including traditional leaders, youth representatives, and women's organizations would strengthen legitimacy and reduce recruitment into armed groups. Safe humanitarian access must be guaranteed through established corridors, while NEMA and NSEMA capacity should be enhanced with funding, rapid deployment units, and early warning systems linking meteorological forecasts to community response.

Secondly, Infrastructure and Climate Adaptation: Emergency rehabilitation of bridges, roads, schools, and health facilities should follow "build back better" principles emphasising resilience and sustainability. Niger State needs a comprehensive climate adaptation strategy aligned with national policy, including floodplain construction restrictions, watershed management infrastructure, improved dam operation protocols, and community-led ecosystem restoration programs. These measures require institutional collaboration among Environment, Agriculture, and Water Resources ministries. Thirdly, Economic Development: Revitalising rural economies through agricultural rehabilitation, security-backed farming zones, youth vocational training, and microcredit for women and IDPs transforms displaced populations from aid recipients into active recovery agents, reducing dependency and recruitment into armed groups. And Finally, Governance and Peacebuilding: Strengthening political security requires transparent budgetary oversight and capacity-building for local officials. Community dialogue platforms integrating customary and formal conflict resolution can address grievances, while social cohesion initiatives rebuild trust between IDPs and host communities. Sustainable solutions require integrating human security indicators into planning, aligning humanitarian and development priorities, and fostering participatory governance. As Human Security Theory emphasises, durable solutions emerge when individuals are protected from threats, economically empowered, and included in decision-making. Niger State must transition from crisis response to structural transformation.

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