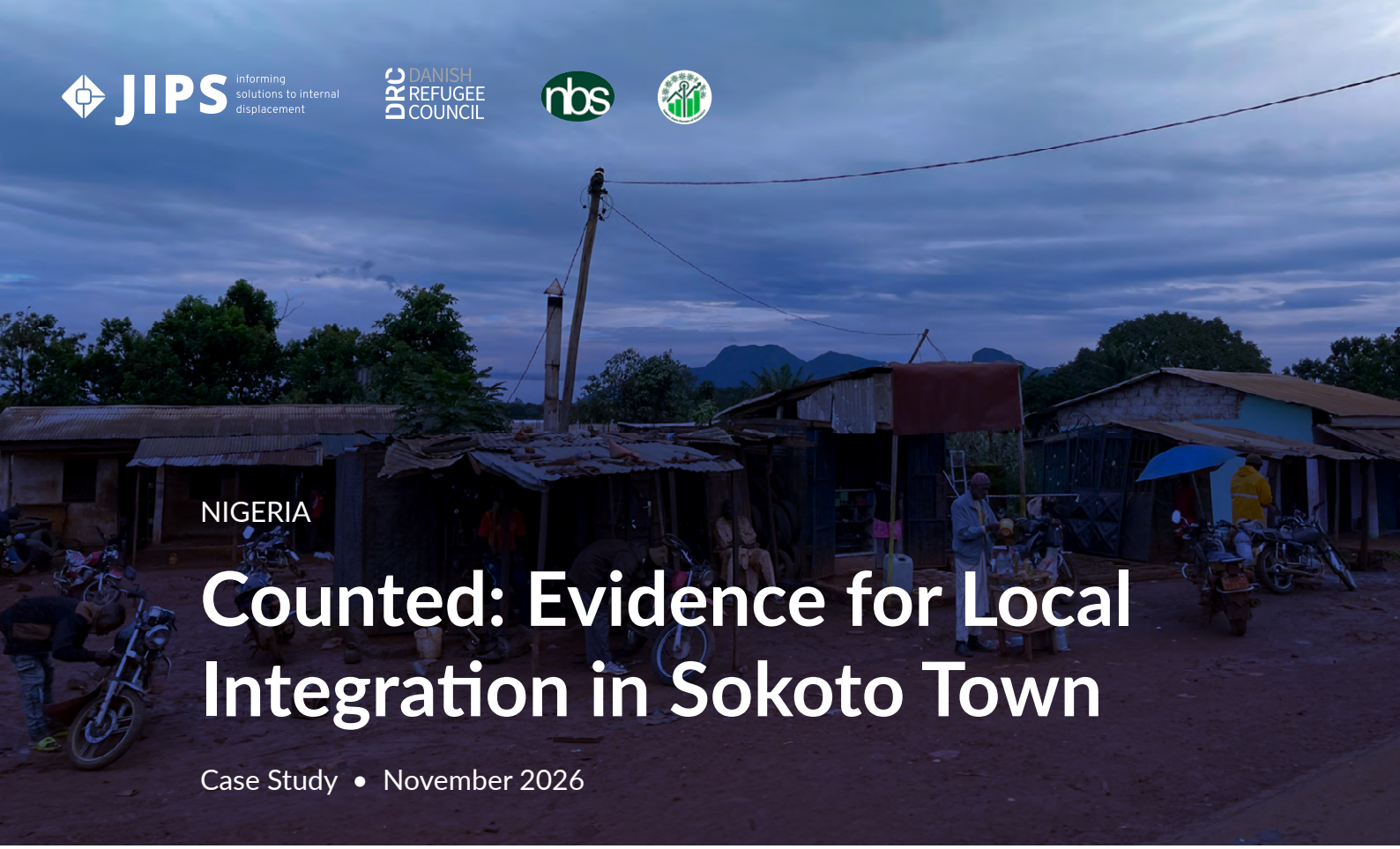


NIGERIA

Counted: Evidence for Local Integration in Sokoto Town

Case Study • November 2026

This case study highlights JIPS' work in Nigeria between 2025 and 2026. This work has helped to establish the first representative evidence base on internal displacement in Sokoto town, northwestern Nigeria. It has also supported to pilot international statistical standards for identifying internally displaced people (IDPs), together with Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics and to turn that evidence into community-owned plans for local integration. Delivered under the EU-funded *Support for Protection, Assistance and Durable Solutions in Sokoto State (EU-SPADS)* project, led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) with Pro-Health International (PHI), JIPS' support focused on two complementary areas: a **Durable Solutions analysis** — a representative household survey and comparative analysis of displaced and non-displaced populations, produced together with the Sokoto State Bureau of Statistics (SBS) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) — and a **local action planning** process, which turned those findings into three neighbourhood-level action plans.

Sokoto State, in Nigeria's north-west and bordering Niger, is experiencing a protracted, large-scale displacement crisis. Banditry, armed group activity and inter-communal violence across the state's rural and border districts have uprooted people from their homes, farmlands and livelihoods. As of early 2026, more than 181,500 people were estimated to be forcibly displaced across the state. A share of them have moved to Sokoto town — the state capital, and the region's administrative, commercial and spiritual centre — drawn by relative security, institutional presence and social networks. As of March 2026, some 2,076 IDP households, or around 10,786 individuals, were residing in the city.

Almost all of them live within the urban fabric rather than in camps. There is no officially managed or recognised IDP site in Sokoto town. Displaced families settle informally in abandoned houses or compounds, a few also are being hosted by host-families. Hosting agreements are often reached through referrals, or are negotiated directly with community leaders and host families. For households arriving from a largely rural, agricultural way of life, the shift to an urban environment is abrupt: housing, services, markets and income all require different resources, skills and relationships — and most arrive with no assets at all.

This rural-to-urban displacement movement has to be read against the backdrop of exceptional structural poverty. According to the 2022 Nigeria Multidimensional Poverty Index, Sokoto recorded the highest multidimensional poverty incidence of any state in the federation, at 91 per cent. The Sokoto State MPI 2025 documents poverty headcounts above 63 per cent in the two urban LGAs — higher than the state average of 59.1 per cent — and Standard of Living deprivation reaching 97–99 per cent. Sokoto town, in other words, has been absorbing displaced households into an environment that already offers its own residents very little in the way of infrastructure, services or economic opportunity.

Meanwhile, returning to areas of origin is largely constrained: five LGAs were inaccessible for data collection during the 2025 MPI survey because of active banditry, and the areas from which the largest IDP caseloads originate remain volatile. Of the three durable solutions foreseen under international frameworks, local integration is, for the foreseeable future, the most realistic prospect for most displaced households in Sokoto town.



Findings from the durable solutions survey presented during the dissemination workshop in Sokoto State, Nigeria, in September 2026.

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A participant shares reflections on the durable solutions survey during the dissemination workshop in Sokoto State, Nigeria, in September 2026.

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A national and state agenda for solutions

Nigeria has been building the policy architecture for solutions to internal displacement over more than a decade. It ratified the Kampala Convention — the world's only regional legally binding instrument on internal displacement — in 2012, though domestication into national law remains outstanding. The **National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons**, approved by the Federal Executive Council in September 2021 and launched in March 2022, sets out the obligations of government at all levels towards IDPs, returnees and host communities, and draws directly on the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Kampala Convention.

The National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) holds the federal mandate to coordinate implementation and to facilitate durable solutions. Its National Action Plan on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (2024–2029) provides the strategic frame for a more coordinated and comprehensive national response, and supplies the definitions — of IDPs, of host communities, and of displacement-affected communities — used throughout this work. Nigeria's engagement with the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement is visible too: in May 2024, the Government and the UN jointly launched State Action Plans on Durable Solutions for Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.



Participants attend a dissemination workshop on the findings of the durable solutions survey in Sokoto State, Nigeria, September 2026.

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At state level, the Sokoto State Government's **9-Point Smart Agenda** prioritises security, education, healthcare, agriculture, water supply, economic development, youth empowerment, religious affairs and local government autonomy. The Agenda is not a displacement policy, and does not mention IDPs as such. But it is precisely the framework within which local integration responses can be situated — every priority raised by displacement-affected communities in this project maps onto one of its pillars, and the 2026 Budget of Socio-Economic Expansion offers the corresponding financing route.

JIPS' engagement in Nigeria: From evidence to action planning

July 2025 | Scoping and site selection

A JIPS technical mission to Sokoto town (2–9 July 2025) combined working sessions, field visits and structured analytical sessions with DRC. Three neighbourhoods — Gagi/ Tudun Wada, Ramin Kura and Mabera — were selected against agreed criteria covering IDP caseload, feasibility, complementarity with other EU-SPADS components, conditions conducive to durable solutions, and the leadership structures needed for the resulting plans to gain traction.



Participants discuss the results of the durable solutions survey and their implications during the dissemination workshop in Sokoto State, Nigeria, in September 2026.

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Aug–Oct 2025 | Joint methodology design

Multi-stakeholder consultations and validation workshops brought together SEMA, SBS, NBS, NCFRMI, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, the Ministries of Agriculture, Women and Children Affairs, Budget and Economic Planning, Land and Housing, and Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the National Population Commission and NIMC, alongside community leaders including the Sarkin Yakin Gagi. DRC's protection monitoring and economic recovery teams were engaged to ensure the indicators spoke to operational realities.

November 2025 | Durable Solutions survey

The household survey was implemented by DRC under JIPS' technical supervision, with NBS enumerators and technical accompaniment from SBS and NBS throughout fieldwork.

Nov–Dec 2025 | Analysis and data sharing

JIPS cleaned, anonymised and analysed the data, and shared the final anonymised dataset with DRC and NBS — including with DRC's MEAL team, for whom the survey serves as the project baseline.

Feb–Apr 2026 | Local action planning

Following a training of trainers delivered by JIPS to DRC facilitators, three participatory workshops were held: Gagi and Tudun Wada (9–10 February), Ramin Kura (25–26 March) and Mabera (16–17 April).

May 2026 | Publication

Two reports were finalised: the Durable Solutions analysis, co-authored with SBS and carrying a foreword by the Statistician General, and the Local Action Planning report presenting the three community plans.

EU-SPADS: Project funding to support local integration of IDPs

The **EU Support for Protection, Assistance and Durable Solutions in Sokoto State (EU-SPADS)** project is funded by the European Union and implemented from February 2025 to September 2027 by DRC, in partnership with JIPS and the national NGO Pro-Health International (PHI). It addresses the compounding challenges facing displacement-affected communities in Sokoto town through an integrated package: basic service delivery, livelihoods support through a graduation approach, protection monitoring, and the facilitation of durable solutions.

JIPS' contribution sits under the project's second strategic objective — inclusive and durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations. Two activities were led by JIPS: a Durable Solutions analysis, and the development of Local Action Plans in three selected neighbourhoods in Sokoto town.

> "We are not simply collectors of data;
> our responsibility is to transform raw information
> into a functionally strategic asset for the state."
>
> – Alh. Abdullahi Abdulrahman Shagari, Statistician General, Sokoto State Bureau of Statistics, foreword to the Durable Solutions report (May 2026)

A representative Durable Solutions analysis, together with the Sokoto Bureau of Statistics

The analysis was designed as a comparative study of two population groups living side by side in the same city: internally displaced households, and non-displaced host community households. Together they constitute the displacement-affected communities of Sokoto town. The guiding analytical question was: *in which ways do IDPs still face displacement-linked vulnerabilities and discrimination, and in which areas do both displaced and non-displaced populations face similar, development-linked challenges?*

The study-design was grounded in the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions and its eight criteria, and integrated internationally validated instruments:

- **The EGRISS IDP identification module** from the International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS), enabling statistically robust and comparable identification of IDPs within a household survey;
- **The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning**, so that persons with disabilities are identified and the data disaggregated accordingly;
- **The FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)**, the measure underpinning SDG indicator 2.1.2;
- **ILO standards on employment and child labour**, following the 19th ICLS resolution, with age-specific thresholds applied for child labour.

Evidence on internal displacement – shared vulnerabilities

The study found that IDPs in Sokoto town face a distinct set of barriers to local integration: almost none hold meaningful assets, most live in insecure or makeshift shelter under real threat of eviction, the great majority have lost access to the agricultural land they once farmed, and many are shut out of civic life for reasons that are structural rather than personal. At the same time, most of the hardship in Sokoto town is shared. Severe food insecurity, cost as a barrier to healthcare, near-total informality in the labour market and child mortality affect displaced and non-displaced households at similar rates. These are the urban expression of a state-wide poverty and insecurity crisis, not consequences of displacement.



Participants attend the dissemination workshop on the findings of the durable solutions survey in Sokoto State, Nigeria, in September 2026.

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From evidence to community priorities: Local action planning

The second strand of JIPS' support translated the findings into Action Plans. The Local Action Planning process was designed by JIPS and led by DRC facilitators trained through a JIPS training of trainers covering workshop methodology, facilitation technique and structured note-taking. All facilitators and note-takers worked in the local language, and women's groups were facilitated exclusively by women.

Each of the three workshops followed the same four stages, adapted to the population profile of the neighbourhood:

- **Validating findings** — survey and protection monitoring results were presented back to parallel working groups (IDPs, women, youth, traditional and political leadership, traders, persons with disabilities), who were invited to confirm, nuance or challenge them against their own experience. Leadership sat in separate groups, so that displaced participants and other vulnerable groups could speak without authority figures in the room.
- **Prioritising challenges** — pairwise ranking, in which every challenge is compared directly against every other, produced priority orderings that reflect collective judgement rather than the loudest voices, and separated urgent from longer-horizon needs.
- **Transect walks** — groups walked the neighbourhood together to the physical sites of the identified problems, which consistently surfaced detail the data had not captured.
- **Developing action plans** — prioritised challenges were converted into specific actions with named responsible actors, resource requirements and realistic timeframes, distinguishing what communities can lead themselves from what requires external engagement.

Implementation and way forward

A number of priority activities identified through the process are being implemented directly under EU-SPADS, including through group cash transfers that put decision-making and resources in the hands of community groups themselves. The plans as a whole, however, were deliberately designed to exceed the scope of any single project: they are the communities' own articulation of what a durable solution would look like in their neighbourhood, and an open invitation to government, community-based organisations, partners and the private sector.

Several routes forward follow from the work:

- **Uptake into state planning** — the action plans and the Durable Solutions findings are intended as evidence-based inputs to the 9-Point Smart Agenda.
- **Institutionalising IDP identification** — the EGRISS module, aligned with NBS for piloting, offers a concrete pathway towards identifying IDPs in future government-led surveys, and towards making displaced populations visible in Nigeria's official statistics and SDG reporting.
- **Scaling beyond Sokoto town** — the approach is replicable: a representative, standards-aligned comparative analysis co-produced with the state statistical office, feeding directly into participatory planning with the communities the data describes.

EU-SPADS runs to September 2027, and DRC, JIPS and PHI continue to work alongside SBS, NBS, NCFRMI and the Sokoto State Government through that period.

Acknowledgement

This case study, developed by JIPS with contributions from DRC and the Sokoto State Bureau of Statistics, highlights the broader and longer-term benefits of JIPS' support in Nigeria in 2025–2026 in advancing durable solutions for internally displaced persons. Under the technical partnership between SBS, DRC and JIPS, and with the participation of NBS, NCFRMI and Sokoto State line ministries, the first representative Durable Solutions analysis for Sokoto town was produced, and three community-owned local action plans were developed. While each output is an achievement in itself, their value lies in what they make possible: a displacement-disaggregated evidence base owned by the state statistical system, a tested route towards identifying IDPs in Nigeria's official statistics, and a set of community priorities with a credible path into state planning and budgets.

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