



# Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR)

Yunusari LGA, Yobe State, Nigeria

June 2022

## OVERVIEW

Yunusari local government area (LGA) is located in the north-eastern Nigerian state of Yobe, bordering Niger. Insurgent attacks and violence have been widespread in many parts of Yunusari, particularly Kanama town, which has a history of heightened armed opposition group (AOG) attacks between 2003 and 2009.<sup>1</sup> By 2015, Yunusari was one of seven LGAs in Yobe that were inaccessible to humanitarian actors and all United Nations (UN) activities in Yunusari LGA were suspended due to insecurity.<sup>2</sup>

As of the first quarter of 2020, displacement trends in Yobe started to change, with the state seeing a progressively larger proportion of internally displaced persons (IDPs) originating from within Yobe.<sup>3</sup> Based on reports by International Office for Migration (IOM) field staff in Yobe and Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), IDPs from Yobe State mainly originated from Yunusari, Gujba, Tarmua and Geidam LGAs.<sup>4</sup>

While contemporary reports highlight increasing insecurity and displacement, little is known about the situation of IDPs and returnees in Yunusari LGA. In response to attacks on Kanama and Geidam town in April and May 2021, humanitarian partners launched an assessment on the state of services for those planning to return.<sup>5</sup> However, considerable gaps in information remain at the time of writing, especially regarding the displacement of people within Yunusari LGA itself, as well as regarding the state of services in Yunusari town. According to IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), as of March 2022, there are still 1,203 IDPs in Yunusari ward within which Yunusari town is located and 265 in Mairari ward, within which Kanama town is located.<sup>6</sup>

To address some of these persisting information gaps related to IDPs and returnees, REACH launched a Rapid Overview of Areas of Return (ROAR) assessment at the

end of March 2022, to better understand needs, current displacement patterns, and returns in these areas. The ROAR assessment looks at the motivations behind return, along with the current context related to protection issues, livelihoods, and the provision of basic services in areas of Yunusari that are experiencing returns.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Displacement and Return

- IDP key informant reports allude to the **existence of displacement-causing insecurity over a decade in various settlements within the Yunusari LGA**. The most recently displaced IDP interviewed reported having been displaced on the 3rd of May 2022, reportedly in response to an AOG attack near Kanama town.<sup>7</sup>
- Multiple displacements, including relocations after attempts to return, were reported by several KIs.
- Considerations about **work and the presence of income sources, and reclaiming belongings and assets like farmland or livestock left behind in areas of origin (AoO)**<sup>8</sup>, emerged as the main drivers of return, followed by the perceived stabilisation of the security situation.
- Among KIs that were in displacement at the time of interview (IDP KIs), the main reasons given for not returning were a perceived absence of peace in their AoO and/or relative safety in their area of displacement and a perceived lack of job opportunities in their AoO.
- According to IDP KIs, **most IDPs in their communities have a definite intention to return**.

<sup>1</sup> African Studies Centre, Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique (IFRA), [Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria](#), West African Politics and Society Series, Vol. 2 (Leiden 2014).

<sup>2</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview Nigeria](#): (Nigeria 2014).

<sup>3</sup> UN OCHA, [Yobe State - Damaturu | Humanitarian Situation Overview: January - March 2020](#) (Nigeria 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Cooperazione Internazionale, UN OCHA, [Early Recovery and Livelihood Assessment following the Displacement and Return Movements after the NSAGs attack in April 2021](#): Geidam and Yunusari LGAs, Yobe State (Nigeria 2021).

<sup>6</sup> IOM DTM, [Nigeria Baseline Assessment round 40](#) (Nigeria 2022).

<sup>7</sup> This has not been triangulated or investigated further.

<sup>8</sup> The following terminologies have been used interchangeably in the analysis: 1. area of displacement (AoD) and place of refuge; 2. area of origin (AoO) and area of return, 3. key informants (KIs), subject-matter experts (SMEs) and respondents.

### Protection

- Three of five returnee KIs estimated that almost everyone in Yunusari town lost some property.
- Interviewed subject-matter experts (SMEs) estimated that **about 30% to 65% of Yunusari town residents had their property looted or destroyed when they were displaced.**
- While all returnee KIs reported feeling safe in their AoO at the time of the interview, **six out of the seven interviewed reported perceiving that it had been safer in Yunusari town before the crisis compared to now.** Only one returnee KI reported feeling safer now compared to prior to their displacement, attributing their feeling of safety to the regular visits conducted by authorities in charge of security.
- The IDP KI recently displaced from Kanama town reported that they never felt safe in their community due to an ever-present fear of AOG attacks, citing the recent attack that occurred shortly before the interview that caused them to become re-displaced after they had returned.

### Livelihoods

- While **farming and livestock rearing were reported to be popular livelihood activities, the livelihoods SME reported a perception that these activities are no longer sufficient to earn an income,** and are only practised for subsistence.
- In addition, the livelihoods SME reported believing that the **destruction of farms and cattle during various violent incidents has resulted in relatively small yields of farm produce and smaller herds in the area.**
- The community representative KI estimated that about 60% of the population in Yunusari town has no source of income.

### Access to basic services

- According to the health SME, the **healthcare system in Yunusari town has only one doctor** who is hired contractually and does not work on weekends. Additionally, they report, **none of the healthcare facilities in the town provide emergency services** nor do they have access to ambulances or transport vehicles to facilitate transfer to nearby hospitals.
- The **IDP KI displaced from Kanama town reported that a significant part of one of the primary healthcare centres was burnt down by**

**AOGs.** Most of the health staff reportedly left the facility during the attack and only a few continue to come to attend to patients from the functional section of the centre.

- Four of the five interviewed returnees reported that **violent incidents that occurred during times of heightened insecurity have left some water points in a state of damage and disrepair.**
- KIs commonly reported perceiving a **decline in the presence of teachers in schools since the crisis intensified.**
- KIs reported that classes are generally grouped together to compensate either for the lack of teachers or the lack of classes for students to sit in.

## METHODOLOGY

REACH enumerators collected data from 18 key informants (KIs) from Yunusari LGA in Yobe State. The KIs included: five returnees in Yunusari town, seven internally displaced persons (IDPs) from different parts of Yunusari LGA who remain in displacement, one community representative from Yunusari, and five subject-matter experts (SMEs) with specialist knowledge in either education, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), protection, health, or livelihoods, in Yunusari. Snowball sampling was used to scope KIs who were identified through local guides in the area and REACH KI networks. For more information on the methodology, please refer to the [Terms of Reference](#).

Returnees assessed had mainly returned to Yunusari town, whereas assessed IDPs predominantly originated from eastern parts of Yunusari, around Kanama town and Bultuwa Ward.

Data collection took place both in-person and remotely by telephone, from March 20th to March 26th, 2022. Due to accessibility issues, 16 interviews were conducted remotely, and two interviews were conducted in-person. Additionally, the local guide was re-consulted for a follow-up on the status within Yunusari town on the 13th of May. Lastly, on May 16th, an additional interview was conducted with an IDP who had recently displaced from Kanama town to gain more insight into the state of services and remainees in Kanama town.

**Table 1: Number and type of KIs**

Type/Area of Expertise	Number
Education SME	1
Protection SME	1
WASH SME	1
Health SME	1
Livelihood SME	1
Community representative also commenting on all sectors (Education, Protection, WASH, Health, Livelihoods)	1
Returnee	5
IDP	7

## LIMITATIONS

1. Findings from KIs should be interpreted as indicative only and are not statistically representative of the entire population.
2. Population figures are provided as estimates rather than exact figures and are based on the perceptions of KIs.
3. Findings from some KIs (IDPs and returnees) are based on reports of their own experiences and not the whole community's experiences.
4. Accessibility issues made it difficult to gain more information or visibility about the situation in Kanama town, and all reporting related to this is based on one IDP KII specifically designed to inform on the state of services, IDPs and returnees in the town. This IDP was displaced from Kanama 13 days before they were interviewed and is thus believed to have the most recent information on the town.

5. Due to the remote nature of many interviews, food security related questions were not included in the tools as it would not be possible to capture anthropometric measures. Yet some KIs reflected on community experiences with access to and availability of food during their interview, which were mostly captured in movement intentions and livelihoods-related sections.

## Movement dynamics and insecurity in Yunusari LGA

The latest round of IOM DTM baseline data identifies 1203 IDPs in Yunusari ward (also referred to as Ngirabo ward)<sup>9</sup>, most of whom have reportedly been displaced in 2015.<sup>10</sup> This was echoed by the local guide, who also perceived that 2015 marked the peak of displacement. According to this KI, many returnees came back to the town in 2016. That said, returnee KIs also commonly identified an attack on Yunusari town in 2014 as a significant point in the crisis in terms of the damage and the displacement it caused.

More recently, 2021 and 2022 have also seen a few incidences of violence involving AOGs, the most well-known of these was the attack in late April/early May of 2021 in Kanama town, Yunusari LGA.<sup>11</sup> Located 90 km away from Kanama, Yunusari town has also seen unrest and insecurity in some instances through the past two years. Most significantly, on 24 May 2021, just a few days after the attack on Kanama town, suspected AOG operatives infiltrated Yunusari town.<sup>12</sup> The town is host to over 7,000 IDPs from Geidam and Kanama towns and maintains two transit sites for newly arrived IDPs.<sup>13</sup>

On 25 May 2021, armed men suspected to be AOG operatives also mounted a brief illegal vehicle checkpoint along the Yunusari-Yusufari road. In addition to causing fatalities and damage to property amongst the residents of the town, these events triggered secondary displacement of IDP households to Gashua, Yusufari, Nguru and Damaturu, adding to the dire situation of the IDPs.<sup>14</sup> Below is a list of the latest recorded incidences of conflict and violence within the Yunusari LGA.

<sup>9</sup> IOM DTM, [Nigeria Baseline Assessment round 40](#) (Nigeria 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Cooperazione Internazionale, UN OCHA, [Early Recovery and Livelihood Assessment following the Displacement and Return Movements after the NSAGs attack in April 2021](#): Geidam and Yunusari LGAs, Yobe State (Nigeria 2021).

<sup>12</sup> UN OCHA, [Nigeria: Yobe State - Weekly Situation Report No. 1](#) (Nigeria 2021).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Compiled from unpublished security and incident reports from humanitarian partners.

**Table 2: Recent recorded incidences of violence in Yunusari LGA**

Date	Recorded incident
January 2021	AOGs sighted in Yunusari and proceeded to Geidam, kidnapping three customs officers.
February 2021	AOGs attacked staff during a Building Resilience in Complex Crisis (BRICC) project cash distribution exercise.
February 2021	AOG attack in Bultuwa community led to the killing of one civilian.
April 2021	AOGs attacked Kanama town.
May 2021	AOG operatives attacked Yunusari town and killed a civilian, burnt two vehicles in the vicinity of the maternal and child health centre.
March 2022	The district head of Gurusulu community of Mairari ward was reportedly kidnapped by AOGs.
April 2022	AOGs kidnapped four people, killed three of them and released one.

### IDP journeys and experiences

IDP KIs traced the start of their displacement journeys at different points across the past decade, ranging from 2012 to 2022. Some of this variation can be explained by the variation in settlement and wards where the KIs originate from; it is possible that the severity of insecurity or displacement-causing triggers varied across place and time over the decade within Yunusari LGA itself.

There is some indication that there may be commonly preferred places of refuge at a certain point in time, potentially offering relative security compared to other places within the LGA. For instance, two IDP KIs displaced around the same time from Kanama and Yunusari towns chose to temporarily seek shelter in the same place, Fulameri, in Kargi ward, before moving on to Zangoma in Yusufari LGA. However, this is not a consistent finding across all KIIs and due to the indicative nature of this assessment, conclusions as to locations that have been considered relatively safe by IDPs to seek refuge in, cannot be drawn.

Most notably, the variation in displacement times and journeys alludes to the existence of over a decade of insecurity causing displacement in various settlements within the Yunusari LGA. The most recently displaced IDP interviewed

was displaced on the 3rd of May 2022, reportedly in response to an AOG attack near Kanama town.<sup>16</sup> According to the IDP, many people from their settlement were displaced in response to this attack.

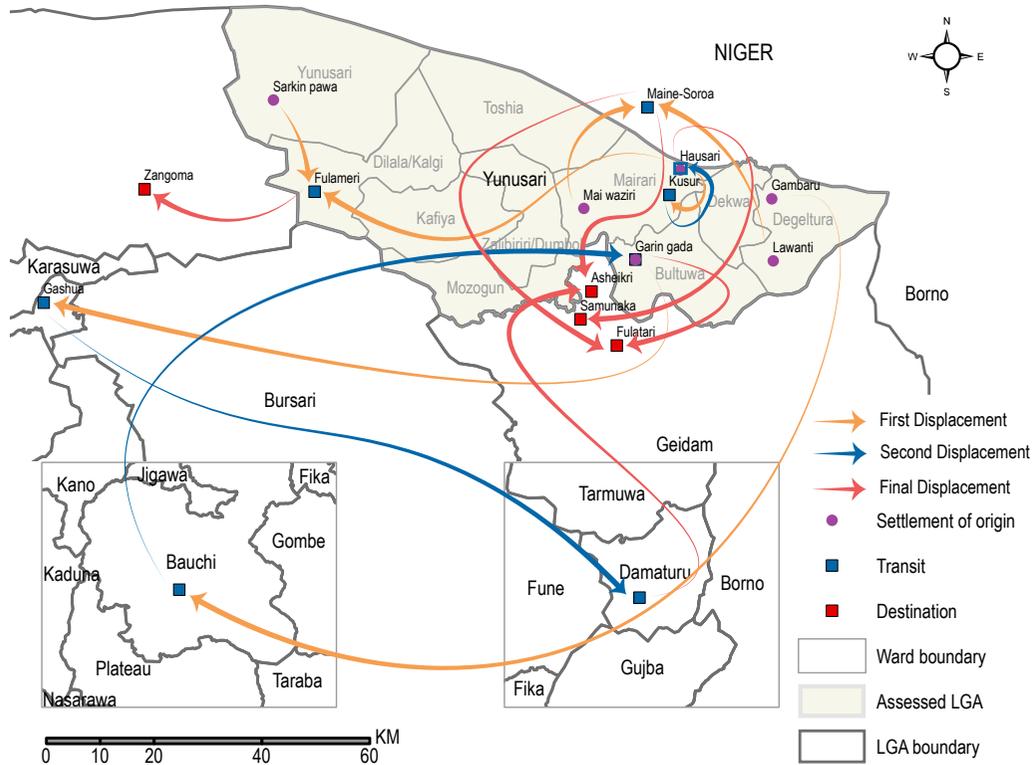
Additionally, two of the seven interviewed IDPs had reportedly been re-displaced after an initial return, and three out of seven IDPs had displaced multiple times; one IDP among them reported never having returned to their AoO.

**Table 3: Interviewed IDPs' displacement journeys**

AoO	Transit	AoD
Hausari settlement, Kanama ward, Yunusari LGA	Kargi ward, Fulameri settlement	Zangoma settlement, Yusufari town
Sarkin pawa settlement, Ngirabo ward, Yunusari LGA	Kargi ward, Fulameri settlement	Zangoma settlement, Yusufari town
Mai Waziri settlement, Jigage ward, Yunusari LGA	Niger (country)	Asheikri ward, Geidam town, Yobe state
Garin gada settlement, Bultuwa ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Gashua 2. Gremadi 3. Damaturu	Asheikri ward, Geidam town, Yobe state
Gambaru settlement / Degetura Ngamzia ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Bauchi 2. Garin Gada, Yunusari 3. Bulabodia 4. Return to hometown in Yunusari 5. (re-displaced to) Gashu	Fulatari settlement, Kolori Ward, Geidam LGA
Lawanti settlement, Degetura Ngamzia ward, Yunusari LGA	Niger (country)	Fulatari settlement, Kolori Ward, Geidam LGA
Hausari settlement, Kanama ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Kusr village, Mairari ward 2. Return to hometown in Yunusari 3. (re-displaced to) Geidam town	Samunaka settlement, Hausari ward, Geidam LGA

<sup>16</sup>This has not been triangulated or investigated further.

### Map 1: Interviewed IDPs' displacement journeys

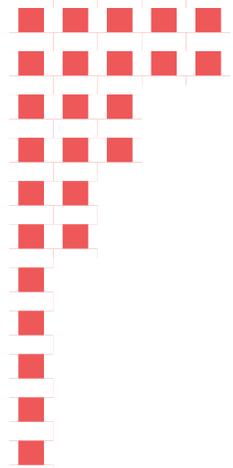


### Why are IDPs not returning?

Two concerns seem to reportedly affect almost all IDP KIs' decision to remain in the AoD: security concerns and the presence of work or income opportunities. All seven IDP KIs reported that the absence of peace in their AoO or the relative safety in their AoD was an important factor keeping them away from their AoO. IDP KIs further elaborated this concern in terms of having to live in fear of AOG attacks and constantly hearing rumours about attacks. Furthermore, three of seven IDP KIs specifically mentioned that they do not want to be displaced again. Indeed, for one IDP originating from Jigage ward and one IDP originating from Kanama town, security in their AoO was reportedly the predominant and only reason for staying in displacement. The latter individual further reported not intending to return to Kanama town.

### Figure 1: Reasons for not returning to AoO, reported by seven IDPs

- Presence of security in AoD compared to AoO
- Presence of work or source of income in AoD
- Access to farming in AoD
- Absence of security/peace remains a concern in AoO
- Access to water in AoD
- Presence of business in AoD
- Lack of sufficient resources to finance return
- Fear of being displaced again
- Availability of INGO assistance in AoD
- Access to assistance from friends and family in AoD
- Access to shelter in AoD



Regarding the presence of work or source of income in the AoD as a factor keeping IDPs in their place of refuge, five IDP respondents reported reasons related to income sources as driving their decision to remain, with some specifically noting the presence of farmlands and business opportunities in AoD.

Access to basic services like water, shelter and food were also brought up by some KIs as determining their decision to remain in the AoD. In these terms, their calculations were mainly based on the presence of these services in their AoD, with the implication that these services may not be available in their AoO. This provides insight into the decision-making of displaced persons, who may exhibit risk averse behaviour and choose to remain in displacement for longer in the absence of credible and trustworthy communication on the conditions in the AoO.

Further to the primacy of security considerations determining IDPs decisions to remain in their AoD, all IDP KIs unanimously reported that an improvement in security situation was an important factor informing return decisions. This is similar when it comes to considerations of livelihood weighing heavily on movement intentions, with four out of seven interviewed IDPs reporting that they may consider returning if a source of livelihood or employment became available to them in their AoO. Moreover, three IDPs reported that access to water (which may be used for farming) is a vital component to return and one

IDP KI specifically mentioned that the provision of farm tools would also help them in making a decision to return. Lastly, the perceived absence of functional, restored and well-maintained basic services like schools, hospitals, shelters, markets, and electricity also deters KIs from returning, reportedly; three IDP KIs specifically mentioned that the reopening of community markets would factor in their decision to return.

Overall, according to KIs, a definite intention to return exists for most IDPs. Additionally, three of seven IDP KIs expressed a perception that most IDPs in Yunusari LGA had already returned to their respective AoOs. Half of the interviewed IDPs felt that most IDPs in general had at least attempted to return but had been unable to do so for a number of factors. Only one IDP KI, recently displaced from Kanama town, reported that they personally do not intend to return.

In addition to push and pull factors of the AoD and AoO, some KIs also reflected on barriers related more directly to the nature of the return journeys; the main reported barrier in this regard was the high cost of undertaking the journey, with no reported barriers associated with the road itself.

According to KIs, information about AoOs was most commonly received through phone calls with family and friends living there. Other sources of information commonly cited by IDP KIs were others who visited the AoO and relatives and friends from Yunusari visiting the place of refuge. Reportedly, IDPs most commonly received, and sought out information about, the security situation in their AoOs, followed by information on the functioning of markets and the wellbeing of relatives and family members living there. Moreover, IDPs sought out information about others in similar situations, which reportedly informed their own decisions regarding returning or remaining in displacement.

### Returnee journeys and experiences

Returnee KIs reported on their own and their communities' experiences of displacement and return during several waves of insecurity ranging from 2014 to 2021. The most recent incidences of displacement from Yunusari town were reported in response to an AOG attack in May 2021. Typically, displacement periods have been reported by returnee KIs to be under a year. However, no consensus on specific incidents or times when most displacements took place was found. For instance, while one returnee reported having been displaced in

2018, another reported having returned that same year. While KIs originated from different settlements, they all originated from Yunusari town in Yunusari ward, which could indicate that the diversity in displacement timelines may be reflective of the capacity of individual KIs to move or not.

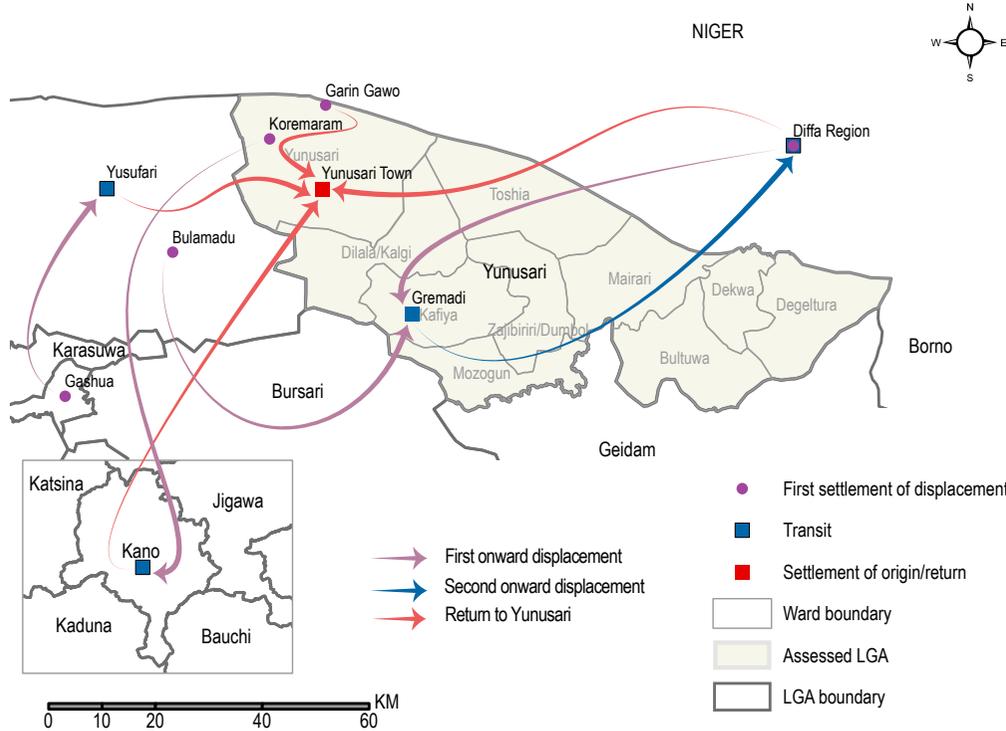
Two of five KIs reported that they returned to their AoO at least once, only to be displaced again. Leaving an insecure area has its costs, as it requires both resources and information to travel away from home. For those who have been displaced once and then returned to a region that remained insecure, it may be difficult to gather resources to leave again. This may be the reason three of five respondents were not re-displaced during AOG attacks that were reported in their region after their return, as vulnerability and inability to move likely increases with each successive attack as well as with each instance of displacement and return.

The lack of consensus in places of refuge is also an important marker of the unpredictability of the crisis.

**Table 4: Interviewed returnees' displacement journeys**

AoO	Transit	Return
Zannari settlement (Yunusari Town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA	Niger (country)	Zannari settlement, Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA
Zannari settlement (Yunusari Town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Koremaran village near Yunusari ward 2. Kano	Zannari settlement, Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA
Ariwadima settlement (Yunusari Town), Yunusari Ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Garin Gawo ward, Yunusari LGA 2. Return to hometown in Yunusari (re-displaced to) Geredi	Ariwadima settlement (Yunusari Town), Yunusari Ward, Yunusari LGA
Bukar Mai Angwa settlement (Yunusari town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Niger (country) 2. Gremadi 3. Niger (country)	Bukar Mai Angwa settlement (Yunusari town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA
Bukar Mai Angwa settlement (Yunusari town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA	1. Bulamadu 2. Geremadi 3. Niger (country) 4. Return to hometown in Yunusari (re-displaced to) Gashua	Bukar Mai Angwa settlement (Yunusari town), Yunusari ward, Yunusari LGA

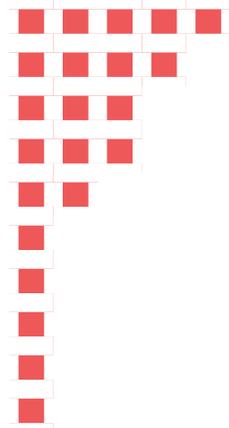
### Map 2: Interviewed returnees' displacement journeys



seem to be the biggest driver of returns, which may suggest a lack of capacity or opportunities to establish income sources and livelihoods in the AoDs. Factors such as the presence of livestock in AoO, including of abandoned animals in need of care, as well as of farmlands to farm reportedly also drove returns. While the perceived stability of the security situation reportedly influenced three of five returnee KIs' movement intentions, one KI of these three alluded to not having had complete and accurate information when they were told that peace had returned in their AoO. Two KIs also reported that the high cost of living and other problems in their AoDs drove them to return.

**Figure 2: Reasons for returning to AoO, reported by five returnees**

- Presence of work or source of income in AoO
- Return to livestock that was left behind
- Return to land and belongings in AoO
- Presence/return of security in AoO
- Return to farmland
- Life in AoD was difficult, prompting return
- Received information that peace was restored in AoO
- News of other IDPs returning motivated return
- Cost of living in AoO significantly lower than in AoD
- Preference of living in own homes



Most returnee KIs reported not having encountered any difficulty on their way back to Yunusari. One of five KI returnees reported a strenuous journey on the way back where they experienced hunger and thirst and had no place to sleep. The lack of medical attention in addition to this strain made it an especially difficult journey for pregnant women, they reported.

Return journeys were undertaken by four of five KIs using public transport and took up to a day. One KI came by car and another KI reported that some returnees also undertook the journey by foot. The estimated costs borne by returnees during this journey ranged from 12,000 Nigerian naira to 60,000 naira.

### Why are returnees returning?

Considerations about work and the presence of sources of income in the AoO

The perceived stabilisation of the security situation and the resumption of day-to-day activities were reportedly the two biggest changes in the situation in the AoO that drove returns. Returnee KIs further cited the reinstatement of basic services, as well as the opening of markets and farms, as a sign of the return to normalcy incentivising returns. The restoration of peace, one KI noted, may not have been the main driver in their case; this KI reported having been primarily motivated by the desire to protect their property.

According to the returnee KIs, the most common method of receiving information about the situation in their AoOs was by contacting relatives and friends and community leaders already living in Yunusari, primarily through phones and social media. This was followed by those still in displacement calling those who had already returned to Yunusari to gather information. Additionally, returnee

KIs also reported seeking information from people returning from visits to AoO, who had travelled there to either check on the security situation, to check on their farms, or to access markets in the AoO.

The KI recently displaced from Kanama town reported perceiving that, while there were returnees living in the town by the time the KI left, most of them had felt the need to return to their AoO since they had not been able to find a source of livelihoods in their AoD, with some having returned to cultivate their agricultural land.

## PROTECTION

### Access to legal recourse

The existence of cases requiring legal protection, KIs reported, was prevalent in their respective communities. Two of five interviewed returnees estimated that almost half the population had lost possession of their property due to the crisis, whereas three KIs estimated that almost everyone in Yunusari town had lost some property, including cattle, buildings, money, and farmland. In either case, the estimate is that many people suffered the loss of property due to the crisis. Specifically, two returnee KIs reported that a majority of those who had to evacuate returned to their property having been destroyed in some way, with houses vandalised and farmlands razed. While some building materials were reportedly provided, assistance does not seem to have reached everyone, as two interviewed returnees reported that community members had to rebuild their properties themselves without external support. One returnee KI reported that many who suffered such damages were helped by NGOs and the government. Only one KI mentioned that no properties had been damaged or looted.

Furthermore, SMEs estimated that about 30% to 65% of residents had their property looted or destroyed when they were displaced. The protection expert also confirmed returnee KIs reports that people who suffered such damages were assisted by the government.

In addition to stolen property, KIs commonly estimated that a high number of people lost their legal documents during the crisis, with one returnee KI estimating this to be about 40% of the people in the community. In most cases, the chosen recourse reportedly was to apply for affidavits or certificates of

occupancy. That said, according to KIs, many people still do not have their legal documents. According to reports by the protection SME, while it is possible to renew some documents, such as the national identity document (ID) and the voters ID, some documents, like school certificates and birth certificates, are not issued more than twice, for this, people seek out the concerned schools and hospitals for a copy of the original.

The existence of formal mechanisms, such as courts, and informal mechanisms, such as mediation by community leaders and religious leaders in Yunusari town, were cited by all KIs; SMEs as well as returnees. Additionally, KIs reported the existence of police and district heads who are also approached for the purpose of resolving conflicts.

According to the protection SME, there are two functional courts in Yunusari town, namely an upper and lower sharia court. The community representative, additionally, reported that most lawyers are not based in Yunusari, but instead travel to Yunusari town from Damaturu for cases or when the need arises.

In addition to these courts, the protection SME mentioned multiple methods of informal conflict resolution, including independent arbitrators that settle matters outside court, traditional rulers, and religious leaders.

It reportedly takes an average of three to six months for disputes to be resolved in court. Findings suggest that, while residents use formal mechanisms to resolve conflicts and seek justice, the reliance on informal mechanisms is much higher due to a perception that informal mechanisms are less likely to further entrench interpersonal conflicts. The protection SME and community representative report that for this reason residents of Yunusari town tend to use formal courts only when matters remain unresolved after going through informal arbitration mechanisms.

Four out of five returnee KIs and both the protection SME as well as the community representative reported perceiving that, compared to pre-crisis times, the utilisation of formal services for conflict resolution has increased. One KI felt that the state of legal services available now is better than it used to be, since people now know who to approach to resolve what kind of conflict. The SME also reported a belief that members of the town are now more conscious of the law and how it applies to them, as well as about the formal conflict resolution mechanisms available to them.

The protection SME, community representative and returnee KIs reported that residents of the community have no unresolved conflicts or unaddressed grievances. Nevertheless, according to the protection SME and community representative, the following steps would help in extending use and functionality of courts and formal conflict resolution mechanisms - having more courts so that they can be accessed without travelling long distances, more awareness about interpersonal and family matters in which arbitration by courts may be possible, and relatedly, sensitisation about the role of courts as well as about the laws on protection and safeguarding of human rights.

According to the IDP KI reporting on the state of grievance redressal services in Kanama town, the community has an informal system in place to provide its members with legal help, mainly through community leaders.<sup>17</sup> They also reported that, to their knowledge, many people in the town lost their property and most have still not recovered their damages. The few who have, have reportedly done so with the help of community members.

### Perceptions of safety and security

All returnee KIs reported feeling safe in their AoO at the time of the interview. These feelings were attributed to the return of “normalcy” and the perceived stabilisation of the security situation, with a reported cessation of violent incidents or attacks by AOGs. The SMEs elaborated that, in the past, people in Yunusari town lived in fear of AOG attacks, but since no attacks have reportedly occurred in the last five or six months, people seem to generally feel safe.

All SME and returnee KIs reported not having any restrictions on movement within or outside Yunusari town. People also reportedly freely commuted to their farms. While there are reportedly no restrictions on movement, two returnee KIs noted that curfews are in place, which can restrict movement at certain times of the day.

Most returnee KIs felt that Yunusari town was safer before the crisis than it is now. Only one returnee respondent said they feel safer in Yunusari town now than they did before displacement, attributing their feeling of safety to the regular

visits conducted by authorities in charge of security. On the other hand, all those who felt that the security situation was better before the crisis cited the loss of family members and the general fear they reported still feeling while living in Yunusari town as the main reasons. Even though, as noted previously all returnee KIs reported feeling safe in their AoO at the time of the interview.

The IDP who had recently displaced from Kanama town reported perceiving that the security situation in Kanama had been relatively stable for almost a year, up to an attack in May 2022. According to the KI, many attacks had occurred in the past, but the most recent one that significantly affected the community happened in May 2021. Despite the reported presence of a military and civilian joint task force (JTF) in the community, the KI reported having never felt safe in their community due to an ever-present fear of AOG attacks, citing the recent attack that occurred shortly before the interview, which had caused them to re-displace after having returned only recently.

### LIVELIHOODS

Farming and handiwork, such as carpentry, are the most common livelihood activities reported by returnee KIs, followed by trading, small businesses, livestock rearing, driving, and laundry. It reportedly is quite common for a household to have multiple sources of income supplementing each other. The livelihoods SME substantiated returnees’ reports of farming being a popular source of livelihood in the community, adding that trading, working as a government employee or as a labourer are other prevalent livelihood activities practised by residents of the community. In addition, herding and rearing animals, poultry farming, shoemaking and acquiring skills through an NGO were also noted as other sources of income by the SME.

Furthermore, while farming was reported to be a popular livelihoods activity, the SME reported perceiving that it is no longer sufficient to earn an income, and that cultivation and livestock rearing are now only practiced for subsistence. According to the SME, one of the drivers of this change is the fact that that farms had been damaged or destroyed and cattle had been killed during various violent incidents, leading to relatively small yields and produce. Reflective of this,

<sup>17</sup> Within the customary dispute resolution structure in many Nigerian states, the ward head presiding over matters of conflict resolution is known as Bulama, and similarly the village head is known as Lawan. Typically, in locations where both are present, the Bulama is lower in hierarchy than the Lawan and a dispute would often go through a structure starting from the Bulama, progressing through the Lawan until it reaches the head Emir. The names of these customary leaders vary according to region, in the location of assessment they are referred to by this name.

the existence of multiple sources of income has reportedly become imperative for the community members, with three returnee KIs reporting perceiving that price increases and rising inflation have further exacerbated this situation.

The rate of unemployment, the livelihood SME reported, is high in Yunusari town, with the community representative also estimating that about 60% of the population has no source of income. The slow development of the town, SMEs reported, has discouraged bigger employers from reinvesting, leaving many residents unemployed.

While the livelihood SME reported that no new sources of income have become available, the community representative asserted that, owing to a reported increase in population due to IDPs coming from other states and LGAs, new sources of income have arisen. These include point of sale (POS) centres, charging and credit stations for phones, and trading livestock.

All interviewed returnees and the livelihood SME reported feeling that households in their area were generally not earning a sufficient income. While two returnees reported that income levels of residents were generally insufficient to meet the basic needs of their family, three returnee KIs and the livelihood SME reported that people's incomes fell short due to rising prices of goods and services. That said, the community representative added that some people in the community do have a sufficient income, and that those people sometimes lend their money to community members to support those who are in need.

Reflective of this, returnee and SME KIs reported many coping mechanisms that were practiced in their communities, the most reported ones being begging for food, reducing meal portions, and relying on help from family and friends. Besides this, households reportedly supplemented their income by selling personal resources, such as clothing, jewellery, or the produce they may have harvested. People also reportedly rely on the community more generally for support during difficult times, seeking help from community leaders or eating with neighbours. Others reportedly explore alternate methods to earn money, sweeping floors or participating in other forms of physical labour. Lastly, some returnee KIs report that people within their community may patronise politicians or engage in stealing as coping mechanisms for a lack of income.

The provision of farming tools and fertiliser, as well as of cattle and cattle feed, was cited by four of five returnee KIs as interventions that could improve their livelihood situation. This derives from the popularity of farming and livestock rearing as a livelihood activity. One returnee KI specifically mentioned the need for machines for dry season farming. Many other returnee KIs reported that interventions that provide capital or technological support, or training and skill set building support in various areas of interest would be useful in elevating the livelihood situation of people in Yunusari town. This sentiment was also echoed by the livelihood SME, who recommended the creation of skill acquisition centres for adults and the establishment of more schools for children, as well as providing professionals with the tools and equipment to support their businesses.

According to SME reports, vocational training opportunities available within the town are tailoring centres, car mechanic workshops, shoe making, soap making, wall painting classes, and poultry farming classes. These opportunities have reportedly been provided either by NGOs or people working within the community.

The IDP KI providing insight on the status of community members in Kanama town reported perceiving that most young people are unemployed and rely solely on farming to survive, with farming and fishing being the two main activities that members of the community participate in. Many members of the town's community also reportedly cut trees in the bushland to sell in the community, which can reportedly expose them to protection risks. Some members also participate in petty trading within the community.

Most people in Kamana town who have a source of income are reportedly still struggling to feed their families. Moreover, those who do not have any sources of income or livelihood seek other ways to feed their families, such as selling their properties and begging neighbours for food. However, the KI from Kanama town ultimately estimated that the percentage of people who participate in livelihood activity is higher than those who do not.

According to the IDP KI from Kanama town, the best way to improve the livelihood situation is to find a way to gainfully employ the educated youth of the town, to set up skill acquisition programmes, and to provide capital to those with small businesses.

## ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

### Health

All returnee KIs, the health SME, and the community representative reported the existence some type of functional healthcare facility, and a majority reported that all residents have access to these facilities. That said, findings suggest the available healthcare primarily comprises primary care, with all returnee KIs confirming they have two primary healthcare centres (PHCs) or clinics in the town.

The health SME corroborated returnee KIs reports that there are two PHCs in the town, while the community representative reported the presence of one PHC and two clinics. Three out of five returnee KIs also reported the existence of one functioning hospital, but these claims were not confirmed by the Health SME and community representative interviewed.

This lack of consensus on the number of healthcare facilities suggests a lack of complete awareness about the number of healthcare establishments present in Yunusari town. The health SME specifically mentioned a lack of systematic outreach in terms of notifying Yunusari residents about the existence of services and healthcare centres, and noted that there is a need to increase outreach activities.

The national human resources for health (HRH) policy recommends that there should be one medical doctor per 10,000 people and one nurse/midwife per 1000 people. The health SME, as well as the community representative, reported that the healthcare system in the town lacks a sufficient number of doctors. According to the health SME, they only have one doctor who is hired on a contractual basis and only comes on weekdays. This means if a case requiring a doctor's attention is brought to the PHCs during the weekends, the patient is reportedly referred to another facility. This report was corroborated by one other returnee KI.

Relatedly, both the health SME and the community representative reporting on health facilities informed that Yunusari town does not have any healthcare facility that offers emergency services. If emergency cases are brought to the available healthcare centres, they are referred to the general hospitals in Gashua or Damaturu. The same is the case for surgeries; healthcare facilities in the town

reportedly only perform minor surgeries, while people requiring other surgical procedures are referred to the Gashua or Damaturu General Hospitals. However, the health SME reported that they do not have any ambulances or transport vehicles in the PHCs to facilitate transfers of patients to nearby hospitals. Lastly, according to the health SME, psychological services are also not available.

According to the health SME, there are no female doctors in the healthcare facilities, but the healthcare facilities do offer maternity services, with nurses and midwives reportedly trained in maternal care and midwifery. Moreover, the health SME reported that, while there is a pharmacy that sells medicine, the medicine is in short supply. The health SME reported that additional government support might enable them to restock medical necessities.

According to the health SME, there are reportedly no costs associated with consultation and other healthcare services; people are reportedly only charged for the medicine they buy. However, the community representative reported perceiving that consultation can cost up to 200 naira for a consultation. All the while, the cost of medicines has recently increased, according to returnee and SME KIs. Two returnee KIs reported perceiving that the rising costs associated with buying medicine drives people to rely on traditional medicine.

Despite the rising costs and the unavailability of emergency services, four interviewed returnees reported perceiving that the state of the healthcare system in Yunusari town is better than it had been before the crisis, with improved services, more staff, and longer opening hours of PHCs. On the other hand, both the health SME and the community representative interviewed, felt that the state of healthcare services had been much better before the crisis started compared to now, reportedly because there had been sufficient medicine and staff, who had appropriate technical training to use equipment, all of which has become harder to secure due to the crisis. Additionally, the cost of medicine and consultations is also reportedly higher than pre-crisis prices.

SME KIs suggested several steps that can help improve the state of healthcare services in Yunusari town. Priorities identified by both returnee and SME KIs included recruiting doctors, training staff, and restocking essential medicine. Additionally, the healthcare providers reportedly need an ambulance to help transport emergency cases to nearby hospitals; more beds and mattresses; additional pharmacies and pharmacists; laboratory technicians; training on

the use of specialised equipment; as well as community outreach to encourage visits to the PHCs.

The IDP KI displaced from Kanama town reported that a significant part of one of the primary healthcare centres had been burnt during the crisis. Most of the health staff had reportedly left the facility during the attack and only a few continued to attend to patients from the functional section of the centre. There are two primary healthcare centres in total within Kanama town, with one reportedly functioning while the other has become inaccessible.

The IDP KI reported that, to make the healthcare centres functional for residents of Kanama town, healthcare facilities would need to be well equipped, medication would need to be procured and made available to the public, and staff would need to resume work.

## Water

All returnee KIs, as well as both the community leader and WASH SME, reported that community members typically have access to drinking water, however, according to KIs water was not always available. For instance, all returnee KIs reported that boreholes were run on electricity and that electricity cuts sometimes hampered water availability. Moreover, one returnee KI said the water source was located far away, increasing the time and cost of accessing water. Related to the limited availability of water, all returnee KIs reported a common reliance on water vendors, with the estimated cost of a jerrycan being between 10-15 naira.

Notably, four out of five returnees reported that violent incidents that occurred during times of heightened insecurity have left some water points in a state of damage and disrepair. This, in addition to a reported population increase, two returnee KIs reported, has resulted in a shortage of water in the community. According to the WASH SME and community representative, the main barriers to accessing water are long queueing times at the water point, the distance from water points to residents' houses, insufficient numbers of water points and lack of maintenance, which has caused some points to become unusable.

While four out of five returnee KIs reported that motorised and non-motorised boreholes were their primary source of water, one KI reported that some community members rely on river water as well, which they said is treated with

chlorine prior to consumption at the household level. One other KI reported that some community members also rely on well water, which they reportedly drink untreated. These findings are indicative of limited access to water from improved sources.

The WASH SME reported that all water points were open to everyone in the community at all times of the day. That said, the SME recognised that, while the water available in boreholes appears to be clean for drinking, it is not sufficient to meet the needs of the community. This is corroborated by the community representative, who also added that the queueing times to access water are very long.

Four out of five returnee KIs felt that the water supply was better before the crisis, contributing this to damage to water infrastructure due to the crisis, a reduction in support for the provision of water, and generally fewer water points. A lack of maintenance and repair was another reason given for there being fewer water points than needed, according to KIs. Lastly, one KI elaborated perceiving that a recent rise in the population size had led to the water supply being insufficient to meet everyone's needs. Only one KI reported believing that the water supply was better than before the crisis.

The WASH SME and community representative reported that the creation of new boreholes and water points, especially those that can be powered by solar power, the maintenance and repair of existing water points, and the creation of new pipelines for distributing water, would improve the water supply in Yunusari town. Additionally, recruiting more workers and operators to work on water supply needs would also reportedly improve access to water.

The IDP KI reporting on the state of services in Kanama town noted that access to water has always been a problem in Kanama. According to the KI, the town has a borehole that is powered by a solar panel due to a lack of electricity in the community, a hand pump that works reliably, as well as a river source used by some individuals to collect water from. The KI reported that water points are not sufficient for the population of the town, leading to long queues. Since water from the hand pump and borehole is perceived to be safe to drink, community members reportedly do not treat it. Furthermore, the KI reported that, to the best of their knowledge, no water source in Kanama has been damaged.

## Education

According to returnee KIs, informal education is more readily available to children than formal education. Estimates of school attendance vary, with one returnee KI asserting that most children attend formal schools, while another expressed the view that most parents prefer to send their children to informal schools. Returnee KIs also identified schools run by INGOs as a third model of education that some children in Yunusari town attend. In total, according to KIs, Yunusari town has three operating primary schools and one secondary school.

The education SME reported that formal education facilities were functional and that none of the schools operated in shifts. However, despite the reported presence of formal education facilities, the SME elaborated that almost all children attended informal schools instead. Several factors reportedly deter children from accessing formal education. KIs reported that a lack of teachers in formal schools reduces attendance, with reports of a decline in teachers regularly being present in schools since the crisis intensified. In addition, three returnee KIs reported that financial constraints deter children from attending formal schools, including the PTA dues levied on every child that attends school, tuition costs, the cost of buying uniforms and other materials for schools.

Additionally, two returnee KIs explained that there is an opportunity cost to attending formal schooling; in search of food, children reportedly go hawking in the markets or are involved in household production activities, during school hours. According to the SME KI and all returnee KIs, the cessation of the schools' feeding programme has only increased the incentive for students to drop out of school to support their households. In light of this, findings thus suggest that education is accessible only to the subsection of children whose households can afford these costs.

Lastly, one returnee KI and the community leader both reported that schools are located far away from some people's place of residence. However, the education SME reported believing that, to their knowledge, no child has had trouble travelling to school.

The education SME reported that the number of teachers is not sufficient to teach the children who attend formal schooling in Yunusari town. This has led schools to group classes together, to be able to provide supervision to each class. The community representative also reported that, due to a lack of classrooms,

children from different classes are grouped together. The SME, community representative, as well as returnee KIs reported feeling that the schools lacked classrooms and supplies, including blackboards and benches, and were unable to provide educational supplies such as textbooks and uniforms to students. According to the education SME, the majority of educational materials are unusable but continue to be used nonetheless. Some primary schools also do not have drinking water, according to the community representative.

SMEs reported that education in Yunusari town could be improved through recruiting and retaining high quality teachers by reviewing teacher salaries to encourage them to stay in the profession and recruiting teachers with higher qualifications. Additionally, encouraging children to attend school by reinstating the free meal programme for primary school children, and providing free education and school materials to children, would also be helpful.

The IDP KI informing on the status of basic services in Kanama town reported that Kanama has one formal and one informal school, both of which appeared to have remained functional. The KI reported that most people in Kanama do not subscribe to the formal educational system, with community members generally preferring the informal system instead.

The KI reported that the formal school system in Kanama can be improved by building more schools and recruiting more teachers.