FROM DISPLACEMENT TO ADMINISTRATIVE EXCLUSION: INDIGENEITY, DOCUMENTATION AND HUMAN INSECURITY IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Research Problem: *Internal displacement is usually assessed through physical danger and material loss, while the administrative consequences of lost or inaccessible records receive less attention.*
Methods/Theory: *This qualitative documentary study analyses legal instruments, institutional displacement assessments and published scholarship through citizenship, indigeneity, documentation and human-security perspectives.*
Results: *In June 2022, 14,882 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were recorded in Wukari and 3,113 in Takum. These figures establish different displacement counts, not comparative rates of documentary exclusion. The analysis identifies a plausible pathway from documentary disruption through verification difficulties to selective administrative exclusion.*
Conclusion: *Administrative barriers can prolong insecurity when institutions cannot retrieve records, accept reasonable alternative evidence or provide review.*
Key Contribution to Knowledge: *The article develops a Cascading Administrative Vulnerability Model and distinguishes Nigerian nationality from sub-national administrative recognition.*
Recommendation: *Displacement assessments should record documentation needs; replacement and verification should be portable; indigeneity certification should be transparent; nationality, residence and origin should be distinguished; records should be protected and correctable; and documentation should be integrated into durable solutions.*

1. Introduction

Internal displacement is commonly measured through movement away from homes and communities because of conflict, violence, disasters or other threats. Its consequences are usually discussed in terms of death, injury, shelter, food security, livelihoods, health care and the prospects for return or resettlement. These concerns are indispensable, but they do not exhaust the insecurity displacement can produce. People may reach relative physical safety while remaining unable to establish identity, prove residence,

retrieve civil records or satisfy administrative requirements associated with their former community.

This administrative dimension matters in contexts where citizenship is formally national but access to some public opportunities is shaped by subnational categories of belonging. In Nigeria, national citizenship coexists with practices distinguishing indigenes from non-indigenes. Certificates of indigeneity or origin can influence applications for scholarships, public employment and other opportunities, although their use and effects vary by institution and location (Fourchard, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2006). This distinction is not equivalent to a division between citizens and non-citizens under nationality law, but it can affect how citizens are recognised by public institutions.

Displacement may intensify these difficulties. Personal documents can be destroyed, lost, left behind or become difficult to retrieve. Record-holding institutions may be inaccessible, disrupted or unable to verify earlier entries. A displaced person may therefore experience both the material consequences of forced movement and the administrative consequences of being unable to demonstrate identity, family relationships, residence or origin in the form demanded by an institution. The latter can persist after immediate physical danger has diminished.

This article examines the relationship between displacement, documentation, indigeneity and human insecurity in Taraba State, focusing on Wukari and Takum local government areas (LGAs). An International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) assessment recorded 71,669 internally displaced persons across Taraba State in June 2022, including 14,882 in Wukari and 3,113 in Takum (IOM, 2022). These are time-specific figures, not current estimates or direct measures of documentary exclusion.

The study asks three questions: how can displacement disrupt the documentary relationships through which people establish identity, residence and local belonging; how might indigeneity certification and verification practices compound administrative vulnerability in Wukari and Takum; and what documentary and institutional reforms could reduce the risk that administrative barriers prolong displacement-related insecurity? The central argument is that displacement may acquire an administrative afterlife when disrupted records interact with systems of belonging that depend on locally validated origin. This interaction does not automatically produce exclusion, and available evidence does not establish how many displaced people in Taraba have experienced it. The article instead develops an institutional explanation of a plausible risk and identifies points at which policy can prevent it.

The distinction between nationality and indigeneity is central. A Nigerian citizen does not cease to be a citizen because an indigeneity certificate is missing or disputed; nor does a missing certificate alone prove that a service or right has been denied. The concern is narrower: where institutions attach practical consequences to proof of local origin, documentary disruption may place some citizens at a disadvantage. The article uses "sub-national de facto statelessness" cautiously as an analytical metaphor for severe administrative non-recognition, not as a legal status under international statelessness law.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Internal displacement and its consequences

Research and policy on internal displacement appropriately emphasise physical protection, shelter, livelihoods, access to services, return and resettlement. The Kampala Convention frames internal displacement as a protection and governance responsibility

rather than merely a temporary movement of population (African Union, 2009). Yet displacement assessments often count people and describe locations or needs without systematically recording whether civil documents have been lost, whether official records remain accessible, or whether administrative procedures obstruct recovery. These are related but distinct outcomes: the number of displaced people cannot be used as a proxy for the prevalence of documentary disruption.

The Taraba DTM figures provide a dated measure of displacement distribution. They are useful for establishing that Wukari and Takum were both affected, but they do not report the documentary experiences of the people counted. This limitation is not a defect in the figures when read for their intended purpose; it indicates that protection assessments and administrative records answer different questions and may need to be linked carefully.

2.2 Citizenship, indigeneity and local belonging in Nigeria

Citizenship concerns formal membership in a political community, whereas indigeneity generally refers to claims of ancestral or historical belonging within a state or LGA. Ekeh (1975) helps explain why public authority and communal belonging may operate through different logics, while Mamdani (1996) analyses how colonial governance institutionalised distinctions between forms of political membership and customary authority. Neither framework proves that contemporary Nigerian institutions simply reproduce colonial arrangements unchanged. They provide analytical tools for examining why local identities may remain consequential in administrative decisions.

Fourchard (2015) shows that certificates of origin are not merely neutral records of a pre-existing identity: they are produced, negotiated and sometimes bypassed through bureaucratic practices. Human Rights Watch (2006) documents discrimination against non-indigenes in Nigeria, including in public employment and education-related opportunities. These studies establish a national context for the administrative significance of local-origin classifications. They do not, however, provide direct evidence that every practice occurs in Wukari or Takum, or that displaced people there have been refused certificates because of lost documents. This article uses the literature to formulate a mechanism to investigate, not to substitute national findings for local evidence.

2.3 Documentation as administrative infrastructure

Documents make people and relationships legible to institutions. Birth records, national identity records, voter registration documents, educational certificates, marriage records, land documents and certificates of origin serve different purposes; none is a universal substitute for the others. Documentary insecurity may arise from physical loss, inability to reach the office holding a record, inconsistent entries, outdated information or refusal to accept alternative proof. The underlying fact—such as birth, nationality or residence—may remain unchanged even when its administrative verification becomes difficult.

The distinction between documentary possession and administrative recognition is especially important. A person may retain a document that an institution considers insufficient or inconsistent with its database. Conversely, an institution may verify identity from an existing record even when the person no longer holds the original. The consequences depend on document purpose, institutional rules, record retrieval, correction mechanisms and the acceptance of alternative evidence. The administrative problem is therefore not simply that a person lacks paper; it is the

relationship between the person, the record and the institution asked to recognise it.

2.4 Human security and administrative vulnerability

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994) identifies economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political dimensions of human security. This framework broadens analysis beyond territorial security to the conditions that enable people to live without persistent fear, deprivation and indignity. Documentation is not a separate dimension in the UNDP framework; it is an enabling condition that may influence access to institutions, opportunities and protections. A missing certificate does not automatically produce food insecurity or prevent health care, but inflexible registration or benefit procedures may compound existing vulnerability in specific circumstances.

The 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons defines a stateless person by reference to whether any state considers that person a national under its law. A Nigerian citizen whose local origin is disputed is not, for that reason alone, legally stateless. "Sub-national de facto statelessness" can draw attention to the gap between formal citizenship and effective local recognition, but it is an analytical metaphor, not a recognised legal category. Administrative vulnerability and non-recognition are usually more precise terms.

2.5 Research gap

Despite extensive scholarship on internal displacement and indigeneity in Nigeria, there is limited local evidence systematically connecting displacement, documentary disruption and administrative exclusion in Wukari and Takum. Existing work often examines physical displacement or indigeneity-related discrimination separately. Fourchard (2015) analyses the production and circumvention of origin certificates, while Human Rights Watch (2006) documents discrimination against non-indigenes; neither directly measures how displacement may interrupt documentary relationships and how certification or verification procedures might compound that interruption in the two Taraba LGAs. This article addresses the gap by integrating displacement data, legal principles and scholarship into a cautious institutional analysis. It does not claim to measure local prevalence where suitable records are unavailable.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research design and source selection

The study adopts a qualitative documentary design. It analyses legal instruments, institutional displacement assessments, published scholarship and publicly available policy materials concerning internal displacement, indigeneity, civil documentation and human security in Nigeria. This design is appropriate for developing and assessing an institutional explanation, but it cannot estimate the prevalence of documentary exclusion among displaced households.

Sources were selected for relevance to the study's questions, identifiable provenance, geographic or conceptual relevance to Nigeria and Taraba, and ability to support the type of claim made. The corpus includes legal and normative instruments; the IOM DTM Taraba State assessment for June 2022; published scholarship on citizenship, indigeneity, conflict and human security; and policy materials relevant to civil registration and identity management. National-level scholarship is used for broader context rather than as direct proof of local practice. The analysis uses dated displacement data as a snapshot, not as a current estimate.

The study does not use the previously reported total of 44 key informant interviews

or eight focus group discussions because those fieldwork records could not be verified. No interview quotations, participant accounts or focus-group findings are presented. The study therefore makes no claim that primary fieldwork was conducted for this version.

3.2 Data sources and analytical procedure

Documents were read thematically and comparatively. Analysis focused on five areas: the reported scale and distribution of displacement; the functions of personal and administrative records; the distinction between national citizenship and local indigeneity; the potential relationship between documentary disruption and access to institutions; and legal and policy responsibilities concerning internal displacement. The Wukari–Takum comparison uses the same dated DTM assessment as its quantitative point of reference and then considers each LGA within the broader context of southern Taraba.

The analysis distinguishes direct documentary observations from analytical inferences. A reported displacement count is treated as direct evidence of the count recorded by the source. A claim that displacement may increase demand for verification is identified as an inference. A claim that a local authority denied certificates or services would require local administrative records or verified case evidence and is not made here.

3.3 Limitations and evidentiary standards

The study has three principal limitations. First, public displacement assessments do not necessarily record document loss or difficulties obtaining certificates of origin. Second, much published indigeneity research addresses Nigeria nationally or other locations rather than measuring administrative practice in Wukari and Takum. Third, documentary analysis cannot establish the frequency of exclusion or estimate causal effects. The absence of local administrative data is treated as a research gap, not as proof that exclusion either occurs universally or does not occur.

4. Theoretical Framework

Four connected concepts guide the analysis: citizenship and indigeneity, documentation as administrative infrastructure, human security, and administrative non-recognition. They are used as an integrated framework rather than as separate labels mechanically applied to the evidence.

Ekeh's (1975) account of the relationship between public authority and communal belonging and Mamdani's (1996) analysis of political membership and customary authority help explain why formal nationality and local recognition may not always align. These perspectives are not taken to mean that local identity is inherently exclusionary or that every origin certificate is discriminatory. Their value is to direct attention to the institutional rules through which belonging is validated and to the consequences when a certificate becomes a gatekeeping device without clear criteria or review.

Documentation is conceptualised as infrastructure connecting individuals to institutions. The key distinction is between possession of a document and recognition of the fact that it is meant to establish. Displacement can disrupt possession, access to the issuing office or the ability to correct a record. Whether disruption becomes exclusion depends on institutional choices: whether a record can be retrieved remotely, whether alternative evidence is accepted, and whether applicants can appeal a refusal. This approach places responsibility on administrative systems as well as individuals.

Human security provides the evaluative lens. Its seven dimensions—economic, food,

health, environmental, personal, community and political security—help identify the kinds of insecurity that administrative barriers might compound. Documentation is an enabling condition, not an eighth dimension. Its effects must be demonstrated through the requirements of particular services or programmes rather than presumed from the absence of a document.

Finally, the study distinguishes national statelessness from local administrative non-recognition. The 1954 Convention concerns nationality under the law of states; a disputed indigeneity claim does not by itself meet that definition. The term "sub-national de facto statelessness" is therefore used sparingly as a metaphor for severe practical non-recognition, while administrative vulnerability remains the more precise analytical term.

The study's theoretical contribution is the Cascading Administrative Vulnerability Model (CAVM). It proposes that displacement may lead to documentary disruption, which may create verification difficulties and, where procedures are restrictive, selective exclusion from a particular opportunity. The cascade is conditional, not inevitable: accessible record retrieval, alternative evidence, correction and appeal can interrupt it. The model integrates citizenship, indigeneity and human security to explain the administrative afterlife of displacement, a relationship not directly measured in the available local data.

5. Results and Presentation of Data

5.1 Displacement and the administrative context of southern Taraba (Research Question 1)

IOM's June 2022 DTM assessment recorded 71,669 internally displaced persons across Taraba State, including 14,882 in Wukari and 3,113 in Takum (IOM, 2022). Both LGAs therefore appeared in the state's displacement profile, with Wukari recording a higher absolute count. These figures do not establish current displacement totals, the cause of each movement or the documentary circumstances of those recorded.

Southern Taraba has complex histories of community relations, customary authority, land use and political belonging. Wukari is associated with the historical and political significance of the Jukun and the Wukari traditional institution, while Tiv communities are also important to the wider social and political landscape. Takum has a distinct configuration that includes Kuteb, Chamba, Jukun and other communities. These descriptions are contextual, not exhaustive; neither LGA should be reduced to a single identity, and diversity alone does not explain a particular episode of violence. Research on Jukun–Tiv conflict highlights the importance of examining recurring tensions in relation to overlapping land, authority, settlement and identity questions (Odigbo, 2018). It does not establish that all displacement in either LGA has the same cause.

The central finding for Research Question 1 is that displacement and documentary disruption must be treated as separate processes. Conflict may cause movement; movement may separate people from records or record-holding institutions; and administrative rules may make replacement or verification difficult. Each link requires evidence of its own.

5.2 Wukari and Takum: a cautious documentary comparison (Research Questions 1 and 2)

Table 1 summarises the reported counts and the limits of the comparison.

Table 1. Recorded internally displaced persons in Wukari and Takum, June 2022

Indicator	Wukari LGA	Takum LGA
IDPs recorded in IOM DTM assessment	14,882	3,113
Difference between recorded totals	Wukari recorded 11,769 more	—
What figures support	Higher recorded displacement count in this assessment	Lower recorded displacement count in this assessment
What figures do not establish	Document-loss rates, certificate denial or service exclusion	Document-loss rates, certificate denial or service exclusion

Table 2. Analytical comparison of Wukari and Takum

Dimension	Wukari	Takum	Evidentiary status
Recorded displacement, June 2022	14,882 IDPs	3,113 IDPs	Directly reported by IOM
Wider context	Land, authority and belonging are important contextual issues	Distinct local configuration of communities, authority and belonging	Contextual, not a matched measure
Potential administrative demand	Higher absolute count may increase registration and verification demand	Lower absolute count may still require accessible verification and restoration	Analytical inference
Evidence on document loss	No comparable local rate established in sources used	No comparable local rate established in sources used	Evidence gap
Evidence on certificate denial or delay	No comparable rejection or delay data established	No comparable rejection or delay data established	Evidence gap
Comparative conclusion	Higher recorded displacement in the cited assessment	Lower recorded displacement in the cited assessment	No defensible ranking of administrative exclusion

Note. The table distinguishes reported counts from contextual interpretation and evidence gaps; it does not measure administrative performance.

Note. Figures are from IOM's June 2022 Taraba State DTM report. They are time-specific; the interpretive cautions are not additional DTM measurements.

5.3 From displacement to documentary disruption (Research Question 1)

Displacement can affect documents in several ways: people may leave records behind during rapid flight; documents may be damaged or destroyed; access to record-holding offices may be unsafe or costly; or records may remain intact but difficult to retrieve remotely. These possibilities affect documents differently. Birth records may establish age or family relationships; national identity records serve identification functions; voter registration records relate to electoral

registration; educational certificates document qualifications; and land or tenancy records may support property or residence claims. Certificates of indigeneity or origin serve a different function by recording an administrative claim about local belonging.

No single document proves every dimension of identity. A national identity number does not automatically establish indigeneity; a certificate of origin is not proof of Nigerian nationality; and the absence of a land document does not necessarily extinguish every legitimate property claim. Risk arises where an institution demands a particular form of evidence without a reasonable way to verify the underlying fact through other reliable records.

The article uses "administrative displacement gap" to describe the distance between a person's continuing legal or social identity and an institution's ability to recognise that identity through accessible records. The gap is not identical to document loss. A person may retain a certificate but be unable to obtain verification; another may lose a physical document while the issuing authority retains a usable record; a third may possess records that do not meet the receiving institution's requirements. These situations require different responses: replacement, remote verification, record correction or review of evidentiary rules.

Research on Nigerian indigeneity indicates that origin certificates can become bureaucratically significant (Fourchard, 2015). Displacement may complicate certification if an applicant cannot return to the issuing locality, retrieve family records or obtain support from people who would ordinarily verify a claim. This is a plausible mechanism, not evidence that every displaced person needs a certificate or that every local authority refuses replacement applications. Direct claims about practice in Wukari and Takum require local records.

5.4 Administrative exclusion and human insecurity (Research Question 2)

Administrative exclusion may affect security when a specific institution requires documents for recruitment, scholarships, programme eligibility, registration or other opportunities. Human Rights Watch (2006) and Fourchard (2015) establish that local-origin classifications can have material consequences in Nigeria, but they do not show that every displaced person in Taraba experiences those consequences. The risk for displaced households is cumulative: loss of land, income, livestock, tools or networks may already undermine recovery, and avoidable administrative barriers could add further obstacles.

Food and health security require particular care in interpretation. Food insecurity may follow from loss of income, land, markets or access to assistance; documentary barriers could compound these pressures where registration rules are inflexible. It would be inaccurate, however, to claim that indigeneity certificates are universally required for food assistance or emergency treatment. Requirements differ by programme and institution. The defensible policy concern is that essential services should not become inaccessible merely because a displaced person cannot retrieve a local certificate.

Political and community security may also be affected when local-origin classifications influence perceptions of legitimate membership or access to opportunities. The Constitution protects citizenship and contains provisions relevant to discrimination and political participation, but an indigeneity certificate should not automatically be equated with the legal basis for voting. The issue is the broader effect of administrative classification on recognition and trust. Transparent procedures that consider alternative evidence can reduce uncertainty, although

documentation reform cannot replace reconciliation or conflict resolution.

Children may depend on adults to retrieve birth records; women may face practical obstacles where family documentation is inaccessible; and young people may need identity or educational records for school, training and work. These are plausible differential vulnerabilities, not measured findings for Wukari and Takum. The available corpus contains no gender-disaggregated estimate of document loss or administrative exclusion in the two LGAs. Accessible outreach and safeguards are nevertheless appropriate so that people with limited resources or mobility are not disproportionately burdened.

5.5 Cascading Administrative Vulnerability Model

The documentary analysis can be synthesised through the CAVM. Table 3 sets out the stages and potential points of intervention. The model is explanatory rather than a claim that every displaced person follows the same sequence.

Table 3. Cascading Administrative Vulnerability Model

Stage	Possible mechanism	Evidence status / intervention point
1. Displacement	Rapid flight or relocation separates people from documents or record-holding institutions.	General mechanism; document status was not measured in the Taraba DTM figures.
2. Documentary disruption	Records are lost, damaged, inconsistent or inaccessible.	Requires individual or administrative evidence; provide replacement and secure retrieval.
3. Verification difficulty	Institutions cannot retrieve records or reject alternative evidence.	Requires local process data; publish criteria and accept reliable alternatives.
4. Selective exclusion	A failed verification blocks a specific opportunity or service.	Requires documented decision evidence; provide reasons, appeal and correction.
5. Compounded insecurity	Exclusion adds to livelihood, social or political vulnerability.	Assess the specific programme or right affected; do not infer from displacement counts.

6. Discussion of Findings

The findings support a distinction between the fact of displacement and the possibility of administrative exclusion. The IOM assessment establishes that displacement was recorded in both Wukari and Takum, with a higher absolute number in Wukari. Research on indigeneity establishes that origin certificates can carry administrative and political significance in Nigeria. Neither strand of evidence establishes the prevalence of document loss, verification failure or service denial in the two LGAs. This distinction is important: displacement counts cannot be used to rank local institutions by administrative performance.

The comparison also shows why context must not be mistaken for a matched local measure. Wukari's larger recorded population may imply greater demand for registration and verification, but not necessarily greater documentary insecurity. Takum's lower count

does not imply lower risk. Administrative vulnerability depends on the documents affected, the distance from record-holding institutions, local office capacity, the availability of replacement procedures and the rules applied to applicants. A valid comparison would require data on applications, processing times, refusals, appeals, replacement records and service-denial cases.

The CAVM integrates citizenship, indigeneity and human security by explaining the conditions under which documentary disruption could become a consequential barrier. The cascade has four stages: displacement; loss or inaccessibility of records; verification difficulty; and selective exclusion where institutions refuse reasonable alternatives or provide no effective review. The process is conditional. Existing records may be retrievable; alternative evidence may be accepted; and a refusal may be corrected on appeal. These are not minor administrative details but points at which institutions can prevent a documentary problem from becoming prolonged insecurity.

This analysis extends the literature without overstating what it proves. Fourchard (2015) explains how origin certificates are produced and negotiated, while Human Rights Watch (2006) documents discrimination against non-indigenes. Ekeh (1975) and Mamdani (1996) illuminate the relationship between public authority and local belonging. The present study connects these strands to displacement-related documentary disruption. Its novelty is the integrated explanation and the identification of a local evidence gap, not a claim that documentary exclusion has already been demonstrated at a measurable rate in Taraba.

The human-security implications are likewise conditional. A barrier may affect economic or political security if it blocks a specific opportunity, and it may compound food or health insecurity if a programme's procedures are inaccessible. But documentation is an enabling condition rather than an independent security dimension, and each claimed effect should be linked to the relevant institutional requirement. The analysis also avoids conflating local non-recognition with legal statelessness. Nationality, residence and indigeneity answer different questions and should be assessed separately.

Finally, the absence of verified data on certificate applications, document loss and administrative refusals is itself a governance and research concern. Without such information, authorities cannot reliably identify where applicants experience delay, which requirements are unnecessary, or whether replacement procedures work for displaced people. Better reporting must be accompanied by privacy safeguards: documentation data should be collected for defined purposes, access should be restricted, and records should be correctable. Future empirical research should test the model against local administrative records and verified case evidence.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

Displacement may continue to produce insecurity after people have reached relative physical safety if records are lost, inaccessible or rejected by institutions. In Nigeria, this risk warrants attention because national citizenship and local-origin recognition are distinct, and certificates of origin can carry practical consequences. The June 2022 IOM assessment recorded 14,882 displaced persons in Wukari and 3,113 in Takum, but these figures measure recorded displacement, not document loss or administrative exclusion.

The article's CAVM explains how displacement may lead to documentary disruption, verification difficulty and selective exclusion where accessible replacement

procedures, alternative evidence and review mechanisms are absent. These stages are not inevitable. The evidence reviewed does not establish the prevalence of administrative exclusion in either LGA; it identifies a credible institutional risk and a basis for prevention. Documentation should therefore be included in displacement protection and durable-solutions planning, while claims about local administrative outcomes should be tested with verifiable evidence.

7.2 Recommendations

1. Include documentation in displacement assessments. This responds to the finding that displacement assessments do not necessarily record document loss or administrative barriers. Assessments should ask whether birth, national identity, educational, land and origin records remain accessible, while collecting only data needed for protection and planning.

2. Establish portable and accessible replacement procedures. This addresses the possibility that displaced people cannot safely or affordably return to the place where a record was issued. Provide remote verification, secure inter-office retrieval and accessible application channels where feasible, with clear processing times and review procedures.

3. Reform indigeneity certification. This responds to the finding that certificates of origin can function as gatekeeping instruments. Authorities should publish criteria, specify acceptable evidence, provide written reasons for refusals and create an appeal mechanism. Displacement should prompt practical accommodation rather than automatic rejection.

4. Separate nationality, residence and indigeneity. These categories answer different questions and should not be treated as interchangeable. Institutions should state the precise eligibility requirement for each application and explain whether a refusal concerns nationality, residence, local origin, missing information or another criterion.

5. Strengthen data protection and record correction. This addresses the risk that digitisation may reproduce errors or exclude people whose records are incomplete. Data sharing should have a lawful, defined purpose; access should be restricted; and individuals should have a practical way to correct inaccurate records and challenge decisions.

6. Connect documentation to durable solutions. This responds to the finding that administrative restoration is one component of recovery, alongside safety, livelihoods, housing, services and voluntary choice. Local government authorities, civil-registration agencies, identity-management institutions and humanitarian actors should coordinate support without creating unnecessary parallel identity systems.

7.3 Limitations and future research

The study relies on documentary sources, does not use unverified interviews or focus groups, and cannot estimate the frequency or causal effect of documentary exclusion. Public displacement data and national studies of indigeneity do not provide matched local measures for Wukari and Takum. Future research should use verifiable administrative records and ethically collected case evidence to examine certificate applications, processing times, replacement requests, refusals, appeal outcomes and documented instances of service denial. Comparisons should disaggregate where appropriate by age, gender and displacement circumstances while protecting personal information.

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