

**Taraba IDPs enhance business through rice milling**

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Gassol, headquarters of Gassol Local Government Area of Taraba State, is fast becoming a hub for rice milling business with the establishment of several rice mills by internally displaced persons (IDPs) taking refuge in the area. Some of the IDPs who were into rice processing in their original places of abode and those that joined the business while living at the camps have, of course, brought to their host community new economic hope.

The rice milling factories with over 40 locally improvised rice milling machines have provided jobs to many IDPs and residents of Gassol town and its environs. Our correspondent observed that the market which is fast growing is attracting traders from Kano, Gombe, Katsina, Jigawa and other places on a daily basis to buy rice.

A trader in the market, Alhaji Habibu Abubakar, told our correspondent that, at least, three trailer loads of milled rice used to take rice out of the market on weekly basis.

According to him, those displaced from Wukari, Gindin Dorowa and Ibi moved their milling machines to establish the market, which has now engaged over 200 IDPs, especially women and youths.

Zubainat Umar, 37, who fled the crisis in Gindin Dorowa with her husband and children, told our correspondent that they moved their milling machine from Gindin Dorowa to Gassol which, she said, is now helping them to cater for their daily needs.

She added that in less than two months they were able to acquire two additional machines with six youths under their payroll, operating the machines.

Habibu Abubakar, vice chairman of the market association, explained that local farmers have been feeding the market with unprocessed rice, which they buy and mill for sale.

He explained that a 50kg bag of locally processed rice in the market is sold for N8, 700, while a tin is sold for N1, 200.

The booming rice milling market is attracting all sorts of businesses to the area, transforming the place into a beehive of economic activities.

The people said government has not done enough to assist them as IDPs, insisting that they did

not require relief materials like other IDPs but assistance to enhance their business.

They, however, called on the government to expedite action to end the crisis, so that they can return to their ancestral homes.

Habibu appealed to the government to provide boreholes for them and security in the market to ease some of the challenges they are facing.

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