

United Nations High Commission on Refugee and Management of Refugees in the West African Sub-Region

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Abstract

The West African sub-region became a hotbed for conflict escalation following the departure of the colonial masters, who distorted the social cohesion among the Africans. The conflict in the Sub-region necessitated the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons across the sub-region. The influx of refugee presented the problems and challenges of management of refugees and internally displaced persons to the African governments and heads of state. This burden overwhelmed the African government and necessitated the intervention of United Nations High Commission on Refugees to take over the management of refugees in the West African Sub-region. The methodology adopted by this study is *ex post facto* design. Its data presentation and analysis is by content analysis. Social production and reproduction akin to Marxian theoretical assumptions were adopted in the study. The finding by the study is that parlous political and economic conditions were responsible for failure of management of refugee in the West African Sub-region; hence the whole burden of management of refugee became the sole duty of United Nations High Commission on Refugees in the Sub-region. The study recommends that joint and concerted efforts of the West African governments and the UNHCR are needed to provide lasting solution to the problems of refugees and its management in the Sub-region.

INTRODUCTION

The African continent particularly the West African Sub-region emerging from colonialism was beset with a number of political and social problems starting with Ghana in 1957. Due to disarticulation and lumping of various ethnic nations created by colonialism, it was logical that conflict ensued in the continent. The colonial state was arbitrary and totality in nature, which was detrimental to African economic and political independence. Although, political independence brought some changes to the composition of the state managers, the character of the state remained as much it was in the colonial era. It continued to be holistic in scope, constituting statist economy. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority (Ake, 1996). The post colonial states in Africa were involved in armed conflict necessitating the problems of swath refugee movement in the continent. In fact, about 50% of African countries have experienced one form of armed hostility and another, orchestrated by political and economic factors such as sit-tight mechanism, administrative imbalance, disequilibrium in sharing national resources and politics of prebendalism to mention but a few (Tajudeen, 2010). The effects of this socio-economic and political misnomer, among other ones are usually outbreaks of armed hostilities, leading to refugeeism and internally displaced persons (Nwanolue, 2012).

The analysis of the nature of conflict in Africa shows that several explanations have been made about the phenomenon of conflict in Africa. Recent studies and leading schools of thought have highlighted conflict of varied significance and consequences both within and across a range of proximate African states (Omeje, 2008). Prominent among the explanations are the primordialist school, the instrumentalist approach and ecology theories. These theories in one way or the other attempted to explain the causes of conflict in Africa, which has unprecedented manner caused refugee problems in the continent. Nweke (2014) noted that intra and international conflict in Africa are caused by the following factors: quest for political independence; quest for sovereignty; military intervention in politics; religious differences; boundary factors and political power dominance. With these problems unresolved, conflict became inevitable and inexorable across the continent of Africa.

The plethora of conflict in Africa created the problems of refugees, its management and sustainability to emerging post colonial states in the continent. The plight of refugee is among the Social and economic problems whose solution has so far eluded African government and states, and international aid agencies like United Nation Commission on Human Refugee came to the aid of Africa. In spite of the contribution of United Nations Commission on Refugee, the problems of refugees have continued to impose burden on the post colonial states of Africa particularly the poor hosting countries. A number of factors have made the attainment of durable solutions for the African refugee problems extremely difficult. Some these problems include economic and social crisis,

rapid population growth that has put pressures on the resources that refugees and host societies depend upon. Other problems include economic deprivation, drought, famine, and desertification. These problems have been afflicting the African continent since the 1960s.

In the same vein, it is obvious that refugee influxes have serious consequences and implications on the refugee flight, and adjustment in the host community on the refugees, employment for the refugees and members of the host community, refugee integration in destination communities and consequences of the presence of refugee for utilizations of sparse and underdeveloped rural economic and social infrastructure and facilities. The African refugee is characterized as urban and rural refugees, but rural refugee is predominantly in the continent. Given, the problems above, refugee management in Africa became an unenviable task facing African governments.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Scholars of diverse intellectual persuasions have contributed on refugee problems in Africa. The sordid of refugeeism in Africa has gained unprecedented sophistication and momentum to the point those scholars have concluded that refugee problems remain irresolvable. While the African heads of states are in attempt to see whether the continent would come out of the political and economic imbroglio, the attendant problems of failed governance continue to reproduce violent it and armed conflict. The study will attempt a review of the following prior studies to ascertain whether the questions on the causes of refugee migrations have been satisfactorily dealt with in the existing literatures.

It is highlighted the point that in Africa, a graphic feature of the phenomenon (ethnicity) is the extreme vacillation from one block of ethnic support to another with the change of rulers and their regimes (Basse, 2007). It is evident that it is a common ground of articulation between social classes and ethnicity. He further went on to explain that countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the catastrophic balance is needed between ethnic forces shape the structures of politics, the substantial violence required to suppress an ethnic revolt leads to the phenomenon of a violence trap where identity and violence reinforced. He argues further that in these instances conflict becomes intractable and protracted and development programme are inevitable hampered. The point of emphasis here is the question of ethnicity, identity crisis and class awareness. In Nigeria, Despite the presence of uninterrupted democracy the questions of ethnicity have been responsible for multiple spate of ethnic violence. The wave of militancy in Niger Delta has not been curtailed, and currently the menace of the Boko Haram is threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria. Even though, that it has not constituted a migration of refugee to the neighbouring countries, but has caused wanton destructions of properties, internally displaced persons and loss of lives. Today, the very government of Nigeria is entering into agreement on cease fire with the Boko Haram Sect; but is remarkable and explainable that in this situation Nigeria has demonstrated character of fragile and failing state. Agreeably, these factors are significant in understanding the dynamics of conflict in Nigeria. However, it must be noted that the degree to which each of or combination of these factors functions as the causes of conflict varies from one conflict to the other (Dodeye, 2012).

In the same vein, Nweke (2014) noted that the cause of intra and interstate conflict in Africa are: the quest for political independence, quest for sovereignty, military intervention in politics, religious differences, boundary factors and political power dominance as responsible for conflict escalations. The quest for political independence has been a major factor responsible for conflict in Africa. When this occurs, it engenders refugee movement in Africa. Since, military in politics, religious differences, and boundary factor are endemic features of African political life. Nweke cited how these factors in different times have caused political crisis and conflict leading to refugee migrations. He noted that externally, the activities of the colonial masters were said to be the cause of conflict in Africa. He went further to aver that the struggle of European powers in the scramble for and partition of Africa to themselves did not recognize the culture of many African societies. Thus, in a country like Nigeria both intra and international conflicts exist since giant tribes (Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba) who would have stood as nations of their own were amalgamated as one and indivisible entity. It has been a difficult tasks on the side of the federal government of Nigeria to unit these disparate entities together. And the inabilities of the present African leaders to deal and obliterate these factors make refugee questions inevitable in the continent.

For the past two decades, violent conflicts in Africa have intensified and produced both refugees and internally displaced persons in great numbers. It has been one of the main impediments to political and economic development. The present situation in Ethiopia, Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Burundi, Angola, Congo Dr, Saharawi (Western Sharan), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chad, and Nigeria, to mention but a few shows the extent of underdevelopment caused mainly by violent conflicts (Tangana 2009). The first

quarter of 2011 has been among the most turbulent in Africa's socio-economic and political history as a result of over lingered global economic crises. Indeed, African is the worst hit in all aspect of human endeavour. Politically, Egypt, and Tunisia ousted their president. Political protest took place in several other North African countries, which necessitated the intervention of the western capitalist countries. Such affected countries were Libya, Algeria, etc. North African suffers the biggest shock (Nwanolue, 2012). Nwanolue observed that economic crisis bedevilling the caused the violent protest in North Africa in 2011, and it created refugee problems. One will not find it impossible to aver that countries with this untold problem would not manage properly the additional of refugee management.

With political independence mainly in the 1960s, the new African government legalized the inherited boundaries and instituted rules and regulations governing the movement of non-nationals into their countries, where in many cases, during the colonial period and before, free movement were previously allowed. The recent influxes beginning from the mid 1970s have been partly related to the fact that Africa's peripheral nation states emerged from the colonial experienced balkanised, with weak social, economic and political institution (Mazur, 1988). Sequel to the balkanisation of the continent by the European powers, the emergence authoritarian and undemocratic regimes as well as dangerous inter group struggle for economic and political powers have engendered tremendous friction in a number of fragile new states, leading, in some cases to exoduses.

The Arusha Conference on Refugees classified the causes of the movement into two groups. The first set of causes, which we label as the underlying causes, include the manipulation and exploitation of political, religious, ethnic, social and economic differences. The second set of causes, pie proximate causes, includes the failure of political institutions or system to solve the conflicts, peacefully, leading to the refugee situations (Rogge, 1982). He went further to enumerate the following as causes of African refugeeism: anti-colonial warfare, secessionism, irredentism, political persecution and repression, political factionalism, ethnic confrontation, religious Intolerance, ecological disasters and economic repression. It is worthy of note to say that these causes as identified by Rogge and other scholars of repute are not being addressed by the present African states. These entire problems are the major challenges confronting the states of Africa, and engender refugee management problems beyond the capacity of the hosting states in African.

Examples of refugee movements as a result of the aforementioned causes in African countries include the Biafra War, the conflict in thec 1960s between the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi, the disagreements of the Southern Sudanese with the central government, and recently the Senegal-Mauritania border confrontations, and the Liberian conflict (Kibread G, 1987). Refugee movements in African countries (as well as internal population displacements) have also taken place as a result of events such as famine, drought, and desertification. In addition, environmental related factors e.g. population pressures on resources especially land as a result of population growth along with economic deprivation connected with adverse government policies have also featured as determinants of refugee movements (Timberlake, 1985). As the causes of refugeeism in Africa continue to endure without immediate remedy by the political leadership; issues of refugee will continue to be apparent. Rights of the refugees are equally not protected in Africa since the questions of refugee take unprecedented dimension in the continent, and while the efforts of the African leaders are not sufficient in addressing and managing refugees. Local and international agencies were formed to contribute in managing and eliminating the root causes of refugeeism in the entire continent of Africa.

According to Olusola (2010), the principal aim of the African Refugee Foundation (AREF) is to attack the root causes of refugeeism, and the same time manages the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa. In spite of the effort of African Refugee Foundation and that of the African leaders, since 1989, Africa has been experiencing more armed conflicts than any other continent across the globe. Conflicts, and especially violent conflicts, are factors creating economic and political instability and poverty in Africa. The violent conflicts, whether high or low in their intensity, have continued in all the regions of the continent (Nwanolue, 2012). Although, refugees have been a constant and accepted part of human migration for centuries, the development of the nation and fixed borders in the 19th century caused countries to shun refugees and turn them into international pariahs (Paschal, 2006).

The literatures above have made attempt and tried to appraise the root causes of African refugeeism and failure of the African leaders to rise up to the challenges of managing the dire problems of refugees in the continent. It appears cosmetic and meretricious to focus only physical causes of African refugees without a radical and fundamental restructure of the African body politics. The phantom bourgeoisie that took power from the erstwhile colonial masters in the post colonial states appropriated power to their own benefit without looking at the nature and character of the states, they inherited. The post colonial states given its character and composition were destined for conflicts and crisis; there is no common culture and ideology that bind the

people. The disparate people soon began to see themselves as strangers in the socially contracted political order, and immediately resorted to paying loyalty to their primordial ethnic nations. This is the provenance of African conflict that necessitated the wanton and unprecedented refugees in the continent of Africa. Paschal noted that the nature and character of nation states predisposed caring less about refugee migrations; some African states due to the porosity of their borders do not even know when emigrants come into their let alone identifying them as refugees. The influxes of emigrants from Chad and Niger into Nigeria have made it extremely difficult to curtail and contain the insurgent groups popularly known as Boko Haram.

This paper differs in polemic by averring that there is need for the African to look inward, into the compositions of their various states, and start to make constitutional provisions through their parliaments to give ethnic nations the opportunity for self-determinations to evolve nation states akin to their autochthonous background. This will reposition the states in Africa on the path of economic and political development, which in turn address the problems of refugee in the continent.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of this genre is better anchored on theoretical framework that explains the entirety problem under investigation. On this note, the study is anchored on Marxian theoretical perspective of socio-economic system. In studying the conflicts that necessitate refugee problems and its management, we adopt social production and reproduction a variant of Marxian theoretical prediction (see Ogbin, 2005). The primacy of material condition in explanation of social life particularly economic factor is essential (see Ake, 1981). The socio-economic condition in Africa predisposes the continent to armed conflicts, which give rise to mammoth and unprecedented refugee migrations. The parlous economic condition in Africa also makes it difficult for the African states to manage and sustain refugees in the continent.

In order to add verve and fillip to the explanations above, the study further adopted the theory of frustration aggression to reasons for armed conflict that inform refugee migration in the continent of Africa. The proponents of theory include: John Dollard (1939), Aubrey Yates (1962), and Leonard Berkowitz (1962). The basic assumption of this perspective is that frustration leads to aggression, which stems from the inability of the political system, state or society to provide and fulfill the expected needs of the people. This is common in the fragile states in Africa. Most of the conflicts results from aggression unleashed by the citizenry.

REFUGEE MANAGEMENT IN THE WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION

In refugee management, durable solution is individual writ large, essential and confronting to the host states. It involves the integration of refugees into destinations or origin of communities as a result of either reintegration into their homeland after voluntary repatriation, resettlement in the first country of asylum, and resettlement in the third countries. The entire prongs of durable solutions confront and present a difficult scenario to the weak African states given prevalent poor economic conditions. The global economic difficulties contribute in worsening economic conditions in Africa (Nwanolue, 2012). The abysmal failure of African attracted the attention of UNHCR to involve in refugee management in Africa. Although, the operations of United Nations Higher Commissioner on Refugee cut across all members of the United Nations, but its activities are more in Africa, due to rife armed conflict giving rise to unwarranted refugee problems.

The three settlement options also inform the integral elements of the mandate of UNHCR:

The United Nations Higher Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the functions of providing international protection, under the auspices of the United Nations to refugees who fall within the scope of the present statute and of seeking permanent solutions of refugee by assisting Government and subject to the approval of the government concerned, private organisation to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation within new communities (Statute UNHCR). As the problems of refugees continued to take toll in the international community particularly in the war conflict torn Africa; its management remains albatross on the neck of African government. After extensive discussions in its third Committee, the General Assembly moved to replace the International Refugee Organization (IRO) with a subsidiary organ (under Article 22 of the Charter of the United Nations), and by resolution of 428 (v) of December 1950, it decided to set up the office United Nations High Commission for Refugees with effect from January 1951. Initially set up for three years, the High Commissioner's mandate was regularly renewed thereafter for five years periods until 2003, when the General Assembly, decided to continue the office until the refugee problem is solved (resolution 58/53 of 22 December 2003, paragraph 9). With this, it became imperative that UNHCR launched its operation since its establishment in Africa to help solve the refugee problem bedeviling the continent.

The durable solutions questions of the African refugee problems and crisis have to be evaluated on the following factors. The first argument is concerned on the large influxes that occurred in the recent years, another is the hosting disproportionate number of these refugees by poor "post colonial states in Africa. Thirdly, it has to do with the dynamic character of the remote and immediate causes of the refugee movements in the continent. The bulk of refugee in Africa involve mainly rural than urban refugees. During emergency, they (refugees) may flood into a country in hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands. In these circumstances, the host government and UNHCR are unlikely to have the time, the administrative resources or even the practical needs to count one by one (Jeff, 1989). It is also difficult to ascertain refugee statistics due to the fact that some refugees spontaneously live with ethnic and linguistic groups in the host communities. This constitutes problems in managing refugees in the host countries.

STATISTICAL PRESENTATION OF REFUGEEISM IN AFRICA

The prevalent of armed conflict in Africa compounds refugee phenomenon upon the lean resources of the states of Africa. The protracted refugee problem undermines management efforts of poor states of Africa. Refugeeism in Africa is more compounded with the 21st century global economic crisis. Africa is the worst hit with the attendant characteristic factors of periodic outbreak of International and non international armed conflicts, which often result in refugeeism, abject poverty, diseases of all kinds, unplanned population growth, limping economics, political quagmire, cultural decay and general systemic breakdown in affected countries (Ojo, 2010). Indeed, African situation fits into the analyses presented by Ojo above, making virtually difficult for effective refugee management in the continent. Although, some other countries in Europe, Asia and Latin America equally experience refugeeism, but what differs between their s and Africa's lies on the mechanism of management, gains its strength on economic stability and profound suitability (Okolo, 2009).

The following statistical data x-rays refugee's experiences of some continents, in which Africa is till battling to wriggle out of viz a viz intense global economic challenge that faced the continent. At the end of 2000, Asia hosted the largest refugee population (45%), followed by Africa (30%), Europe (19%), North America (5%) and the Caribbean (0.3%) (Ogunjobi, 2011). This aptly defines those elements of Grand National strategy are poor in Africa attesting to reasons of the plethora of armed conflict and poor refugee management in Africa. In Europe, North America, and Caribbean, where elements of national power are fully developed and managed, conflicts are less with minimal refugee problems.

According to the: United Nations Refugee Report, (2010), countries that are classified as least developed, host some 80% of African refugees, most countries having over-stretched their inadequate resources. Women comprise about half of the population of concern to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR). Refugee children under the age of 18 constitute 56% of all refugees in Africa. In the following countries of asylum, refugee children constitute over (60%) of refugees: Angola, Togo, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, and the DRC (Abdullahi, 2011).

Furthermore, internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), now outnumber around the world, and although their humanitarian needs are often just as compelling, providing protection is complicated by issues such as sovereignty. Countries with most Internally Displaced Persons between November 2000 and May 2011 are: Sudan 4,000,000, Angola 3,800,000, Congo Democratic Republic 1,800,000, Sierra Leone 1,300,000, Uganda 610,000, Rwanda 600,000, Somalia 350,000, Burundi 1580,000, Ethiopia 350,000, Eritrea 208,000, Cote d'ivoire 319, Liberia 596,000, and Nigeria 89,315 (African Refugee Report, 2011). The figure above indexes as problem continent with high humanitarian crises towering beyond the capacity of African states to manage along the management of refugees. The current onslaught of the dreaded Boko Haram has equally given rise to Internally Displaced Persons in Nigeria. The first of its kind was the mass movement of easterners from the northern to eastern parts prior to the outbreak of the civil war between Nigeria and the defunct republic of Biafra. In 2002, the International Court of Justice ceded Bakasi peninsula thereby throwing up issues of managing internally displaced persons in Nigeria. The Bakasi people whose livelihood was affected by this judgement have not been reintegrated and resettled following the judgement.

The wave of refugeeism remains on the increase in Africa. In the same vein, between 2000 and 2010, the following Africa countries hosted refugees as a result of magnified armed conflicts that befell the continent, they include: Tanzania 900,000, Guinea 502,000, Sudan 415,000, Congo Democratic Republic 330,000, Burundi Zambia 260,000, Kenya 220,000, Nigeria 319,000 and Sierra Leone 141,000. Also the following are the main refugee population with countries of origin between January 2001 and March, 2011 Burundi 577,000, Sierra Leone 500,000, Sudan 468,000, Angola 430, Somalia 425,000, Ethiopia 206,000, Eritrea 177,000, Liberia 417,000, and Cote d'ivoire 296,000 (Afrique, 2011).

At the beginning of 200, the East and Horn of Africa, which is a region of seven countries hosting over 1.5million refugees and 4.2million Internally Displaced Persons the main causes were fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea, continuing violence in southern Somalia and Sudan, and severe drought in parts of Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan and Somalia. During the first half of 200, the situation in Sudan deteriorated significantly because of continued insecurity. The situation in Somalia remains precarious. The December 2000 ceasefire between Ethiopia and Eritrea had resulted in the return of many refugees and Internally Displaced Persons affected by the war (Mabojun and Handala, 2010). This issue of refugee problems cut across the entire social fabric of Africa without adequate resources to manage them.

As regards west Africa and Central Africa, comprises 21 countries, reports have it that about ten years ago, West Africa was host to some 20,000 refugees, and negligible number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPc). Today, there are more than 500,000 refugees and 670,000 IDPs, mostly victims of th6 conflict in the sub-region, most especially Mano Rive Union Countries- Guinea, Liberia, conflicts in Africa remains endemic, the factor of refugeeism and internally displaced persons will keep risings astronomically in the continent. The recent insurgency in mail, Nigeria and forcibly change of government in Tunisia and Libya in 2011 gave credence that the problems of refugee in Africa is pervasive and lasting. It requires the concerted efforts of government and people of Africa to work assiduously with a view to eradicating conflict triggers. Unless, this is done, conflict resistance will continue to feature giving rise to armed conflicts in the continents

ASSESSING THE MANAGEMENT OF REFUGEES' RIGHTS IN THE WEST AFRICAN SUB-REGION

Although South Africa is praised to have progressive constitution as well as refugee regime, the political attitude of the government agents does not allow the implementation of refugee regime. It has been so difficult for refugees and asylum-seekers to turn their basic rights into entitlements. The right to education is just enjoyed by refugees and asylum-seekers, who are capable to do so at their own expenses. Poor and vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers' education dream cannot be turned into reality. The government of South Africa is reluctant to distribute its resources to refugees and asylum-seekers as the most influential government agents are against such distribution of national resources. The UNHCR is not substantially intervening, too. While in the western Cape Province alone, there are more than 500 tertiary refugee students, UNHCR financially assist less than 100 refugee students countrywide through DAFI programme (Lanzi, 2008). Both the African states and UNHCR are not dealing squarely in terms protecting the rights of refugees. This is manifested in the attitudes of the South African Government In many refugee camps in , Africa life is characterised by overcrowded environment, where epidemics such as measles, dysentery, meningitis, and cholera have been found to major killers- Kakuma Refugee Camp stands as example. There are also incidences of nutrition related disease such as night blindness, beriberi, pellagra, and scurvy caused by lack of vitamins in the ration supplied, lack of security and safely leading to incidences of rape and sexual violence particularly against women. Also domestic violence characterise refugee camps (see UNHCR Report, 2014).

The policy of self reliance as a strategy in maintaining and protecting the rights of the refugee had success in Zambia and Uganda there was attempt to integrate the potential of refugee into national development planning. This is only possible because both countries had expanse of land, while in Kenya refugees are not given rights to participate in the economic life of the country. Kenyan government adopted the UNHCR policy of Development Assistance to Refugee which restricted refugees to camp life. Some refugees have lived in the camp for over twenty-five years without access to work and movement.

Kenya, Congo-Kinshasa and South Africa each got a failing grade on United States Committee on Refugee and Immigrants (USCRI) refugee report card for not adequately protecting refugees from violence and forcing refugees back across the border. Both Sudan and South Africa scored F for arbitrarily detaining more than 200 refugees and denying them access to court. Tanzania even made USCRI's Worst Country for Refugee list for not letting refugee leave the camp and not allowing them to seek work. Refugees across the continent continue to suffer because government are living up to their commitment. Also in Namibia, a group of 41 refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo received death threats after complaining to Namibians government officials about the unsafe and unliveable conditions at the Osire refugee camp outside of Namibians capital. For fear of their lives, they fled the refugee camp and were trapped for weeks in the no man's land between Botswana and Namibia, with nowhere; to go and no one to help them. Over 460,300 Somalia refugees are warehoused in refugee' camps in Kenya and Ethiopia (see too many African nations fail refugee.html)

There is a tension between social and economic transformation system and observing international obligation to effectively protect refugees and asylum-seekers. Both refugees and historically South African disadvantaged are poor and vulnerable. The obligation to assist them is imposed by South African

Constitution, UN Refugee Convention of 1951, African Refugee Convention of 1969 and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966. Due to a high number of refugees and asylum-seekers, South Africa claims that it has no sufficient resources to assist them and fear that the distribution of its resources to non-citizens will drain it and may create social tension between citizens and non-citizens.

This political understanding resulted in socio-economic rights denial. Most of social transformation programmes do not consider the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers and the government of South Africa do not sensitize refugees' plight among private and public service providers. Some service providers discriminate against refugees and asylum-seekers in some social services they are entitled to simply because they view them as undeserving or illegal foreigners.. As a result, poor and vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers are unable to favourably access tertiary education. The South African state is not employing its resources to improve their refugee and lamentable conditions.

In contrast, welcoming refugees in the country implies that the state has acknowledged the responsibility to protect. Instead, South Africa is seeking the manner in which refugees and asylum-seekers can be reduced within its borders. In so doing, national resources will be secured. Since 2011, South Africa has taken measures to close the borders and to review all refugee cases to determine bona fide refugees. Though the state argues that both asylum application review and 2011 amendments will make more efficient the application of asylum, it has been illustrated throughout this article that the government of South Africa no longer need to extend its hospitality to refugee and asylum-seekers. It cannot carry a refugee burden alone. It cannot make available funds to educate refugees and asylum-seekers or to improve their conditions. Due to global recession and European austerity, the international cooperation and solidarity in the form of financial and material support to lighten the burden on a hosting state has significantly diminished (see Addis Ababa Document). With this scenario that is common, refugee's right are not adequately protected by various African states! Refugees and asylum-seekers are left to integrate themselves socially and economically in African refugee management process. The UNHCR report of 2014, below showed that much are expected from the African states in terms of plans and strategies for future refugee management.

2014 UNHCR REGIONAL OPERATIONS PROFILE IN WEST AFRICA

UNHCR's operations in West Africa have been characterized by: the evolving situation in Mali, including its impact on internal and external displacement of populations (into Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania); the continuation of voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees; and the invocation of the "cessation clauses" for Liberian and Rwandan refugees. Recent military and political developments inside Mali will have an impact on the initial assumptions on which the Office's 2014 planning was based.

Prevailing insecurity in this part of Africa has had an impact on humanitarian operations. Most countries in the subregion are affected or threatened by insurgency activities, including instances of kidnapping in the Sahel region and attacks in Nigeria and Niger. The security threats compound the challenges for the populations in the Sahel region, which include pervasive poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to basic services, inadequate education and social infrastructures, high population growth, Weak economies and porous borders.

Mali has remained at the centre of the humanitarian crisis which has affected more than 350,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and 175,000 refugees in neighbouring countries in the past three years. With the deployment of the United Nations Multi-dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as of mid-2013, the security situation has been slowly improving and more humanitarian agencies are now able to deploy staff and operations in the north of Mali. Although the presidential elections present hope for the nation, the situation remains fragile. A process of national reconciliation, dialogue and reunification has been set up, to ensure national participation and encourage the sustainable return of refugees and IDPs.

Nigeria currently faces security challenges front religious extremist activities in the north of the country. The impact of the ongoing militant activities has spilled over into neighbouring countries, particularly Niger and Cameroon, where over 10,000 Nigerian refugees have sought asylum to date.

The Sahel region has long been affected by drought and cyclical food insecurity which in recent years have affected some 17 million people. This has inevitably had an impact on 'UNHCR's refugee operations, particularly the Niger and Burkina Faso, which are characterized by persistent malnutrition. The countries in the region, in partnership with the UN country teams, are working to increase the resilience of their populations to these cyclical droughts.

RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES

In 2014, UNHCR's priority in West Africa will be to reinforce the capacity of national authorities to manage asylum issues and identify and implement durable solutions for refugees. Where local integration is the most appropriate option, UNHCR will focus on documentation and helping refugees gain access to national services. Of equal importance will be the development of sustainable livelihoods for people of concern and the strengthening of partnerships. Positive lessons learned from the local integration programme currently being implemented in Benin will be applied to other protracted refugee situations.

Resettlement will be one of UNHCR's main priorities in the sub-region, as it remains the only durable solution for a sizeable number of refugees. UNHCR's Regional Office in Dakar has been helping resettlement countries identify and process submissions and will continue to do so throughout 2014. Efforts to build the capacity of national authorities to handle asylum issues and allow UNHCR to reduce its presence in the region are also underway.

Harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, sexual mutilation, forced marriage and early marriage, are of serious concern in the various refugee communities in the sub-region. In 2014, access to information, counselling, legal assistance and referral mechanisms will be key components of UNHCR's SGBV-prevention work. Workshops to roll out the organization's strategy on SGBV will be organized in the countries of the sub-region. UNHCR will ensure the continuity of its SGBV programming and monitoring by developing a multi-year framework that includes capacity-building and knowledge management.

The underlying problem facing urban refugees is the lack of employment and livelihood opportunities. In 2014, UNHCR will strengthen the implementation of its urban refugee policy to promote self-reliance and will provide assistance in health, vocational training, education and support to people of concern with special needs, including those living with HIV and AIDS. Efforts to identify those urban refugees for whom resettlement is the only possible durable solution will be a priority.

With the entry into force in mid-2012 of the cessation clauses for Liberian refugees, in 2014 UNHCR offices in the region will focus on managing exemption applications and conducting local integration and voluntary repatriation programmes. More than 29,300 Liberian refugees have returned home, mainly from Ghana, the Gambia and Sierra Leone. The exemption process is managed by the national eligibility commissions in each of the countries of asylum. Passports are being issued by the Liberian authorities to Liberian nationals wishing to integrate locally in the countries of asylum. The processing of exemption cases is proceeding smoothly in seven countries, with the major groups being in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

The experience of the Liberian cessation process has allowed UNHCR to take a similar approach with respect to the cessation clauses for Rwandan refugees. The latter came into effect on 30 June 2013. The figures are smaller, however. Only some 750 Rwandan refugees are affected by the cessation of their refugee status in West Africa. The majority of the former Rwandan refugees have opted for local integration, mainly in Benin and Burkina Faso, either through naturalization or as Rwandan nationals with work and residence permits. Almost 190 refugees in the region have applied for exemption (the largest number from Togo), and their claims are currently being assessed by national eligibility commissions.

The improving security situation in the north of Mali has allowed UNHCR to expand its presence in the region, particularly in the city of Gao. With the help of its implementing and cluster partners in the north, both in areas of internal displacement and refugee return, UNHCR has begun protection monitoring, advocacy and SGBV-prevention activities. The training of national actors and NGOs in protection work will be intensified. In addition, the shelter, livelihood and materials needs of IDPs will be met in collaboration with other cluster partners.

Given the recent political developments in Mali, UNHCR anticipates that returns of IDPs and Malian refugees from neighbouring countries will increase in the coming months. Returnees will require assistance to meet their needs for water, health, education and shelter. However, these needs have not been included in the present Global Appeal, as a needs assessment of patterns of return, villages of destination, etc. was pending at the time UNHCR's programme budget for 2014-2015 was finalized.)

In Nigeria, internal displacement is endemic. Recurrent ethno-religious conflicts and natural disasters have prompted people to flee their homes and seek safety elsewhere. If the general security situation remains unresolved, displacement and the need for a humanitarian response in the north of the country are likely to persist in 2014. Owing to the lack of security and limited access to affected populations, it is difficult to assess IDP numbers and needs.

CHALLENGES

It has been difficult to find lasting solutions for refugees in protracted troubled situations in the sub-region.

This has been the case for Mauritanian refugees in Mali, as well as a residual group in Senegal. Opportunities for local integration and self-sufficiency are sparse, particularly in the Sahel area. At the same time, national, legal and policy environments in host countries place varying restrictions on self-reliance opportunities. In some cases, refugees are formally excluded from the labour market and denied access to education.

Access to employment is extremely difficult to obtain when asylum countries are struggling with high unemployment. Benin is one country which is open to local integration; however, the process for acquiring legal documentation is extremely slow. Refugees in protracted situations often do not meet resettlement criteria.

The socio-cultural background of some groups of refugees from the Sahel region may be characterized by ethnic segregation and servitude, bringing considerable protection challenges in relation to access to services and participation in decisions. In order to respond to these challenges, measures will be taken to try to address inequality among refugee groups. Assistance responses tailored to nomadic refugee populations have been developed, including the setting up of zones d'accueil (reception areas). These differ from traditional refugee camps as they allow refugees to move freely with their grazing livestock.

IMPLEMENTATIONS AND OPERATIONS

In Benin, the disengagement strategy conducted with the participation of the authorities will bring closure to the protracted situation of some 5,000 Togolese refugees in the country. UNHCR will repatriate some 70 refugees, mainly from Cote d'Ivoire, in 2013. It is expected that by the end of the year another 180 will be granted naturalization and some 30 Togolese refugees will be integrated locally.

The Gambia hosts some 9,000 Senegalese refugees from the Casamance region, 8,300 of whom live in rural areas. UNHCR will provide 1,000 households with agricultural tools to help sustain their livelihoods. It will also support some 220 households from the host communities with similar assistance.

In 2014, UNHCR will assist some 17,500 people in Ghana, including refugees and asylum-seekers. Ivorians make up the largest group of refugees in the country. UNHCR is planning for the voluntary repatriation of some 500 Ivorians in 2014 and another 800 in 2015. It is also estimated that some 230 Liberian refugees will be exempted from the cessation clauses. The Office plans to conclude its involvement in local integration activities for 2,000 people, including some 1,000 Togolese, in 2014.

In Guinea, UNHCR will continue to assist some 3,500 Liberians affected by the cessation clauses. It will also provide some 6,500 Ivorians in Kouankan II Camp with essential services, such as education and vocational training.

In Guinea-Bissau, UNHCR is assisting more than 6,700 Senegalese refugees in rural villages. Activities in 2014 will aim to strengthen local integration and basic services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, and education. Training in health care and disease prevention will be provided for refugees. UNHCR will also support agriculture and fisheries, mainly through the granting of loans designed to improve the self-sufficiency of the refugee community.

In Nigeria, UNHCR will support the Government's capacity to undertake refugee status determination. UNHCR is also engaged with the Government in establishing a national legal framework in line with the Kampala Convention. Military operations against insurgents continue to force people to flee their homes, with the north-eastern states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa most affected. Insurgents have also targeted civilians. As national and international organizations have not been able to reach the affected areas and populations, the actual number of IDPS impacted is unclear.

Senegal still hosts some 13,700 Mauritanian refugees. UNHCR and the Governments of Mauritania and Senegal will complete the repatriation of some 7,500 Mauritians returning in 2014. For the remaining population, the office will assist individual voluntary repatriation requests, while those not ready to return will continue to benefit from assistance with crop production, livestock herding and fisheries. UNHCR will also help refugees acquire residence permits and access legal services.

UNHCR's Regional Office in Senegal will oversee and support operations in West Africa through joint strategic planning and coordination with United Nations country teams, NGOs and government counterparts. The Regional Office will also focus on collaboration with other UN agencies throughout the region. Operations affected by the Mali situation, especially with regard to returns to Mali and the process of national reconciliation in coordination with MINUSMA, will receive special support.

In Sierra Leone, UNHCR will protect the 4,100 refugees remaining in the country, most of whom are Liberians. Some 2,700 of these refugees are locally integrated Liberians who will continue to benefit from activities to help strengthen their livelihoods. It is anticipated that the overall political and security

situation in Sierra Leone will remain stable and economic growth will benefit the Liberians who have opted to integrate locally.

Togo hosts some 123,700 refugees of various nationalities, including more than 17,000 Ghanaians. The country also hosts some 5,600 Ivorian refugees who fled the post-election violence in their country in 2011. UNHCR will repatriate those willing to return while providing support to the remaining populations in need of international protection. However, UNHCR's efforts will be challenged by high unemployment and a weak economy, especially affecting refugees in urban areas.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR supports and protects over a million people in the West Africa sub region. In 2014, the volatile security situation is likely to increase this number as internal displacements and movements across borders (from Mali and Nigeria) have increased financial requirements substantially in recent years. While the revised 2013 financial requirements for the sub region are USD 280.3 million, the 2014 requirements are set at USD 254.7 million. This decrease mainly results from a reduction in UNHCR's people of concern in Cote d'Ivoire and in Liberia, following the return of Ivorian IDPs and refugees since 2011, as well as the expected return of some 10,000 Malian refugees from Burkina Faso and Nigeria in 2014. UNHCR budgets for West Africa (USD)

CONCLUSIONS

The history of refugee management in Africa started when the erstwhile colonial masters granted political independence to African States. The background created by the effects of colonialism predisposed Africa to perpetual and revolving conflicts. The enduring nature of conflicts in Africa makes Africa a haven for unprecedented refugee movement. The study discovered that factors responsible for conflict escalation leading to refugee problems are not being addressed fundamentally by the African government and states. So the conditions of refugees are unsafe, freedom of movement, and some other human rights are denied to the refugees. The paper argues that in as much as the problems of colonialism are not dealt with, alongside the questions of state fragility, and failure of governance are rife in Africa, conflicts and refugee problems remain part and parcel of the continent. Efficient management of refugee becomes difficult in fragile and weak economic conditions in Africa. So it became incumbent on United Nations High Commission on Refugees to take over and undertake practical steps in managing refugee problems in the West African sub-regions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Self determination should be encouraged among competing ethnic groups in order to evolve autochthonous states. The African parliament should legislate on issues that will support ethnic nations to live independently so as to avoid conflicts, which is the source of refugee problems.

African leaders should be held responsible for failure of governance, hence their inability to tackle national building challenges.

Refugee management should be the hub and priority in budgeting and planning in Africa.

AU should also look at the refugee problems as emergency, and pull funds together in case of eruption of conflicts.

these durable solutions should be undertaken with serious commitments by all African states and the UNHCR towards refugee management.

The applications of these recommendations will help to address the problems of refugee, and its management in Africa

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