

EXTERNAL INFLUENCE AND POLITICS OF REFUGEE MANAGEMENT IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This seminar work is on the external influences and politics of refugee management in Africa. Let it be said that there is actually no universally accepted definition of the term nationality, it will be a sort of out of place to establish that we can be discussing the issue of refugee without making mention of nationality. This is because the two terms are inter-twined, and dove-tail into each other. One cannot be referred to as a refugee without the person or citizen coming from a given state. There is a general agreement that nationality constitutes, a legal bond creating reciprocal right and obligations between an individual and a state (Alina Kazorowka 2008:297). This work aims at x-raying the roles played by African leaders and the superpowers, which pre-exposes their states or nations for the exploitation of the space by the white lords. Worthy of mention is the fact that a lot of factors forces people in a given state to migrate and take refuge in other states other than theirs. This researcher will seize this study opportunity to bring to light certain things that needs to be done in order to a bridge the gap created for the whiteman to come in and exploit.

Introduction

The term or concept of refugee was expanded by regional conventions in Africa and Latin America to include persons who had fled war or other violence in their home country. Mention must be made that European union's minimum standards definition of refugee, underlined of Art 2 of directive No 2004/83/EC essentially reproduces the narrow definition of refugee offered by the UB 1951 convention. Nonetheless the reason of articles 2 (e) and 15 of the same directive, persons who have fled a war caused generalized violence are, at a certain conditions, eligible for a complementary form of protection, called subsidiary protection.

The same form of protection is foreseen for people who, without being, are nevertheless exposed, if returned to their countries of origin to death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatments.

The term refugee is often used in order to include displaced persons who may fall outside the legal definition in the convention, either because they have left their home countries because of war and not because of a fear of prosecution, or because they have been forced to migrate within their home countries.

Background of the Study

May it be sounded and in clear terms too that there is hardly a state (nation) in the world today devoid or not having something to do with refugee or refugees. Since the emphasis have been that a refugee or refugees is/are people who fled their countries of origin or both due to war, or suffering of one problem or the other. Our study holistically studies/cover Africa while pour study will focus more attention on Nigeria.

Problem of the Study

The reason for this seminar work or research enterprise is to discover or uncover the reasons or motives behind people's movement from one place or their countries of birth to other places. Does this movement affect negatively or positively the nations or countries of movement. Actually this has always been an issue of worry.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Does cultural background or differences contribute to peoples movement from place to place?
- Does the absence of peace and fear attack lead people to migrate?
- Does white man have hand in the sparking off of crisis in the less developed countries in the world?

Objectives of the Study

This study has a general objective the analysis of external influence and politics of refugee management in Africa.

In its specifics the study aims;

- To ascertain the root cause of the movement of people from their countries
- To investigate the impact of African leaders in the refugee politics today
- To examine those acts by individuals capable of forcing them to leave their countries and be exiled.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are formulated and will guide in the collection of data

Hypotheses 1

Ho- Crisis, war and violence does not encourage people to migrate and become refugees.

HA- Crisis, war and violence encourages people to migrate and become refugees.

Hypotheses li

Ho- Offences against the state does not force people to migrate and likewise become refugees

HA- Offences against the state forces people to migrate and likewise become refugees.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research work or study is divided into two:

Academic significance: in this regard, efforts will be made to bring to light the rudimentary and basic causes of people exiting or taking refuge in another country and from there be regarded as refugees. Academicians and practitioners through this exposition will get to know the reasons why this can also be regarded as a problem.

Practical significance: Uncovering and bringing to bare the reasons why many people flee their nations or countries of origin in search of protection.

Operationalization of Concepts

Certain terms would be explained for the purpose of clarity of this work. Such terms or concepts are:

External- Belonging to or forming the outer surface or structures of something.

Influence- The capacity to have an effect on the character, development or behavior of someone or something or the effect itself.

Politics- The practice and theory of influencing.

Refugee- A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, prosecution or national disaster or a person who is outside their home country because they have suffered (or feared) prosecution on account of one thing or the other.

Methodology

This is basically the process through which academic work is brought to a conclusion. This is through the broad scientific and usually qualitative methods (numerical & statistical method) or even through the humanistic and qualitative methods.

Be the above as it may, it is necessary to establish that it is not all the researchers that fall into the above broad lines, some still are divided into the quantitative and qualitative approached and also between (Haralambos and Holborn, 2007). Though this study will make use of the qualitative method, it employed the use of textbooks, internet, and journals among a host of others.

Historical Origin of Refugees

The idea for instance that a person who sought sanctuary in a holy place conduct be harmed without writing retribution was familiar to the ancient Greeks and ancient Egyptians. However, the right to seek asylum in a church or other holy places was first codified in law by King Ethelbert of Kent in about 600AD. It is imperative to add that similar laws were implemented through Europe in the middle ages. The related concept of political exile also has a long history. Ovid was sent to tomes, Voltaire was sent to England. Through the 1648 peace of Westphalia, nations recognized each other's sovereignty. However, it was not until the advent of nomadic nationalism in the late 18th century Europe that nationalism gained sufficient prevalence for the phrase "country of nationality" to become practically meaningful, and for people crossing border to be required to provide

identification. The term "refugee" is sometimes applied to become who may have fit the definition outlined by the 1951 convention were it is to be applied retroactively. There are many candidates for example, after the edict of Fontainebleau in 1685 outlawed Protestantism in France hundreds of thousands of Huguenots fled to England, the Netherlands, Switzerland, South Africa, Germany and Prussia.

The repeated waves of pogroms that swept Eastern Europe in the 19th and early 20th century prompted mass Jewish emigration (more than 2 million Russian Jews emigrate in the period (1881-1920). Beginning of the 19th century, Muslim people emigrated to Turkey from Europe. The Balkan wars of (1912-1913) caused 800 numbers of people to leave their homes, of paramount importance is the fact that various groups of people were officially designated refugee beginning in World War.

May it be stated that much of the facts are not documented or kept in details in order to provide handy information or facts as regards this exercise. But it is necessary to mention that most Nigerian citizens have at one given time of the other fled their homes or countries of origin in search of protection.

A known case is that of Chief Chukwuemeka Odumegwu, Ojukwu who sought asylum cum protection from the attack of Nigerian government owing to his hand and contribution in the struggle for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra, which made him to flee to Cote d'Ivoire the Ivory Coast. He was later granted pardon.

The Causes of Refugee (Migration) or Migration of People on Africa.

No one on earth will under normal condition or circumstance like to be regarded taken for or known as a refugee, but certain conditional factors make people prefer to be seen as refugees.

What are those predisposing factors?

It is true to say that during the sixties, it was generally assumed that colonization had spread the problem of African refugees, as many came from colonized countries or one that were under white rule.

With progressive independence, however the number of refugees has not diminished, but increasing rapidly. Refugees who today generally flee local ethnic drought and famine have always produced refugees in Africa, during the sixties and seventies with the end of the colonialism, minorities in newly-formed states found themselves under the control of other ethnic groups in states whose boundaries bore no resemblance of the lines of ethnic differentiation. Members of dominant ethnic groups, whether actually more numerous or whether simply having been empowered by the departing colonial power, often place their own personal or group interests first.

In responses, tribal minorities or groups out of power pressed for self-determination, ranging from liberation movements to dissident, ethnic-based political parties. Independence for African nations occurred sporadically over a fairly long period of time. Even if all colonial powers had withdrawn simultaneously, it would have been impossible to redraw a myriad of boundaries base on single tribal affiliation, for the whole of the African continent.

Plural societies were unavoidable as would be conflicts as group adjusted to the departure of colonial powers. Infact, many of the larger ethnic groups had a vested

interest in keeping minority group with single states.

While the OAU has agreed to retain the borders left by departing colonialists, Africans have left yet to stop, fighting over these boundaries. For various reasons, it was deemed politically expedient to cede specific regions to fledging countries. Yet there are or have been secessionist conflicts in Biafra, Katanga, Eritrea and Ogaden to name these few. May it be said that the situation in the ogaden, western, Saharan, and Namibian reflect the failure of colonial powers and later national governments to recognize tribal lines. Another factor is this; all of Africans refugee problem is not the result of political conflicts within these countries border or between countries. Natural disasters, pollution pressure and economic recession have contributed to the total number of refugees.

Drought is again over Africa. The New York Times estimated that "150 million Africans are facing food shortages" and in the karamojo area of Uganda alone, 30,000 nomads are believed to have starved to death in the last 18 months. Another point of note is that the more irksome aspects of current food shortages is the growing dependency on south Africa for corn supplies. Kenya imported 128,000 tons of corn from South Africa last year, while Zambia and Mozambique ordered 250,000 and 150,000 tons respectively. It is imperative to mention that the problems resulting from drought are exacerbated by tribal, ethnic and religious feuds. The 30,000 nomads of uganda's karamojo who recently starved to death were clearly victims of tribal conflicts who lost most of their cattle in raids staged among themselves and by starving.

Ethopians, Kenyans Sudanese and the remains of field marshals amins army.

Group fleeing such conflict become refugees in the process. Once they cross natural boundaries they face additional problems. They often than not arrive in the poorest countries in otherworld during times of drought, rising energy costs food deficits and world recession prohibits the host countries from countries from providing even their own citizens with a minimum standard of living. In countries of asylum, pogroms can at best, provide for emergency needs. Even then, Kurt Waldheim apathy observed "the pressures created by the influx felt throughout the economy in the employment, in housing, in transportation and in basic health and education services.

May it be re-emphasized over again that refugees in Africa today including Nigeria are also victims of human rights violations. Oppressive regimes have tortured, massacred, expropriated property, and deprived individuals of civil liberties in order to silence real and imagined opponents. Human rights violations have occurred in response to conflicts between states as well as Bokassa (Central African Republic) Njuma (Equatorial Guinea) among others created hundreds of thousands of refugees. Struggles between national leaders often terrorize local population.

Another cause of increased violence contributing to the number of refugees is the availability of sophisticated arms, which take many more lives in tribal conflicts. Religious conflicts also contribute to the swelling numbers of refugees in Africa.

How African Leaders Are Perpetuating The Refugee Problem.

A lot have been carried out in recent years by our African leaders in order to give way for the whites to troop in under the guise of peace-keeping and peace making.

It is necessary to outline the most policies carried out or implemented in the so called developing countries or economies are imported, foreign and brought from outside the continent.

Most of the African leaders lack enough courage at times and cannot do or take steps that come from inside them, they prefer to play the role of second fiddle to the whites who capitalize on their ignorance to make their own states or countries ungovernable and put to question their integrity.

Another fact is that due to difference in interests among the African leaders, some sponsor and stage manage different forms of crisis situations and still come in under false presence to fight or help the victimized heads or presidents to restore peace. Who is fooling who? Which way Nigeria? One other point of note is that citizens or individuals must always fight for their rights. In a bid by government to subdue or suppress such individuals, the people or such individuals in a bid to save their heads and lives resort to taking refuge or asylum in other countries or nations instead of staying back home and answering citizens and finally lose their lives in the process.

Politics and the International Politics of Refugee Management in Africa.

Let it be stated that the economists claim that "conflicting east, west interest in Africa, defended by the superpowers or by surrogates such as France or Cuba, have influenced events. But the refugee upswing in Africa appears to eat least as much a product of black power struggles as of ideological conflict Africa affairs indicates that "As long as local and regional problems are not solved politically, these problems

are bound to cause the super powers to take sides in the issues.

Actually the involvement of superpowers complicates already difficult situations for example when said of Somalia broke with the soviets in 1997, the Somalian socialist system was not transformed into a democratic or pluralist society, yet the aid given by the US, English, Saudi Arabia and the shah of Iran prolonged conflict in the Ogaden area and Ethiopia too rely on the soviets. This in turn allowed the soviet to consolidate their position in Ethiopia. For the soviets, Ethiopia clearly the most important country, politically in the Horn of Africa ethopia offers an entry into the north and east Africa. For the US, Somalia offers costal bases from which a presence can be established both in Middle East and the Indian ocean. Before gaining the confidence of the ethopian government, the soviets supplied arms to the extremes, a seccionist group in ethopia occupying laws along red sea.

Soviet allies shell supply arms to the Eritreans. The conflict "locks the Ethiopian revolutionary leadership into dependence on Russian arms". In such cases, tribal groups and ethnic minorities are little more than pawns in national and international power struggles, and while it is unclear how much the national governments will gain from these conflicts, ethnic minorities will undoubtedly be forgotten once they have served a special strategic purpose.

The Possible Ways Out

The question has always been what must be done, when, how and with what intensity in order to solve the problem. Among the points to be mentioned is that refugee action is a leading UK charity helping refugees and asylum seekers to build new lives. People from time to time

seek protection from time to time and from place to place, such refugees need to be rehabilitated and taken good care of other than having them to themselves.

Setting up refugee council is another point of note.

This council in my personal opinion will go a long way in counseling people on individual's levels who are displaced, this is to inculcate in them the idea that being displaced does not mean the end of their lives. Encouraging them to pick their pieces from where they left them, striving to survive and succeed. The united nations organization have always caught in this act, this only because under the guise of international aid or the other, they try to subtly lure the African leaders into accepting whatever they have in stock to offer. Occasionally, we see or countries or less developed worlds.

African leaders must recognize among other things that they need not to play second fiddle act or behavior to their white counterparts. They must be courageous enough to know that under whatever guise and or practice, the whites cannot give and refuse to ask for something in exchange. Seeking advice from the whites spells doom including asking for whatever form of aid or alm such as economic or materials.

Summary

May it be categorically stated that politics and a lot of underground activities keep going on in the international scene. One other thing that the whites keep doing is the fact that they keep painting the Blackman as devil while they claim to be gods. Little wonder they try from time to time to spark off crisis situations in the African countries in order to come in as

peace makers and alms givers, only seeking their selfish interest, fulfillment and praise.

Conclusion

It has been said over and over again in the course of this research study that a refugee is a person or one owing to a well-founded fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, owing to such fear is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

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