

Supporting Sustainable Return and Reintegration of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

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Abstract: In recent years, the refugee issue has a great influence on the international arena. In 2019 there will be 1741 thousands of refugees going back to their homes, accounting for 9.1% of the total, while 20.5% of IDPs are going to return.[1] Meanwhile, 150,000 refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Africa from 2014 to 2017.[2] Additionally, economic refugees are also a difficult problem to solve in the refugee return problem. From January 2019, an increasing number of refugees from Zimbabwe have fled to South Africa because of the worsening economic crisis. South Africa's African National Congress reaffirms its commitment to bilateral cooperation for the safe and sustainable return of the refugees.[3] Firstly, this paper summarizes the existing refugee issue globally, and the measures taken by each country, region or organization are analyzed and compared secondly. Thirdly, in view of the current problems and policies, this paper puts forward further suggestions on all aspects.

1. Problems

Unfortunately, there are a variety of reasons and unsolved problems hindering return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons. With research and sorting the data, main limitations include lack essential preconditions of return and reintegration, involuntary return or stay, discrimination on returnees, secondary displacement, vulnerable groups and others.

1.1 Lack essential preconditions of return and reintegration

The essential works for the countries supported return and reintegration of refugees are involved a restoration of safety and security for all citizens, clear progress on rights and citizenship for all and inclusive development for all the displaced people.

1.2 Involuntary return or stay

The refugees are not able to own legal protection. On 16 January, 267 Nigerian refugees, who had crossed into Cameroon in 2014, were forcibly returned. [4]

Voluntariness means not only the absence of measures which push the refugee to repatriate, but also means that he or she should not be prevented from returning, for example by dissemination of wrong information or false promises of continued assistance. In certain situations, economic interests in the country of asylum may lead to interest groups trying to prevent refugees from repatriating.

1.3 Discrimination on returnees

The discrimination for returnees appears in life and work such as, inequalities in social, political, economic and legal affairs and lack equal access to services, productive asset and opportunities.

1.4 Other limitations

weak national capacity in the early stages of transition, the sequential phasing of humanitarian and development activities, and uneven donor interest

2. Measures have been taken

Several countries, regions and organizations concerned have taken relevant measures to address the refugee issue.

2.1 The UN

The United Nations has said that the Brookings Process, initiated in cooperation with the World Bank, which sought to overcome shortcomings that had affected earlier recovery and reintegration efforts, and World Bank-supported projects in post-conflict in the 2030 Agenda (implemented with UDHR, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and World Bank).

2.2 UNHCR

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has implemented numerous effective measures to help refugees like leading Inter-Agency Standing Committee, providing returnees with Cash-Based Interventions, raise funds from the donor community in order to assist governments by providing active support to repatriation and reintegration programmes, providing shelter, basic needs, medical care and transportation services, and even facilitating well-informed return when conditions are favorable (more detailed measures are shown as follow).

Awareness-raising activities, such as UNHCR's information campaign, will aim to help people make informed decisions about the risks of onward movement and their options, including voluntary return and access to protection services

Providing information of both mechanisms and procedures to follow.

Widely distributing information on flyers and bulletins and in information centers.

Creating Voluntary Repatriation Centers.

Community-based meetings, called Shuras, being held.

Organize, in cooperation with NGOs and other agencies, the transportation and reception of returnees, provided that such arrangements are necessary to protect their interests and well-being.

In addition, UNHCR has created tripartite commission, and then signed tripartite agreements between UNHCR and the governments of both the country of origin and the host country/ the country of origin, UNHCR and another UN agency. Besides, the global compact on refugees, a significant measure, aims to strengthen the international response to large movements of refugees and protracted refugee situations. Its four key objectives are to:

Ease the pressures on host countries,

Enhance refugee self-reliance

Expand access to third-country solutions,

Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity. (After 18 months of extensive consultations with UN Member States, experts, civil society and refugees, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees presented the global compact on refugees as part of his 2018 annual report to the General Assembly.) [5]

2.3 International Organization for Migration (IOM)

IOM in South Africa works to coordinate responses at national, regional and international level with respect to supporting reconstruction efforts, demobilization of former combatants, and reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the repatriation of refugees. One of the projects they promulgated named Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP)

2.4 the African Union (AU)

Similarly, AU has made a series of recommendations and implemented measures.

What AU endorses the principles are *non-refoulement* and voluntariness, and AU also advocates the principle of *non-penalization*. What's more, AU decision of 2019 made in Assembly/AU /Dec.707(XXXI) to declare 2019 as 'the Year of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa'.

And on AU Kampala Convention of 2009, AU called upon State Parties to ensure the right of refugees to be protected against forcible resettlement. For the overall structure, the African Union's "Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development" (AU PCRDP) provided a continent-wide framework for the formulation of more effective reintegration initiatives. Furthermore, in terms of education, the newly launched 'Africa - Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and

Jobs' will increase the support for scholarships and exchange programmes with the goal of over 100,000 students benefitting from Erasmus+ in the next ten years. Moreover, the African Continental Free Trade Area [AFCFTA], which the parliament of South Africa has signed onto in December, 2018, will promote intra-Africa trade and offer an opportunity to create larger economies of scale and improve the prospects of the continent to attract investment, thus driving economic recovery across the African region. And in 2019 the theme of African was 'The Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa'. Eventually, South Africa has actively participated in the Permanent Representatives' Sub-committee on refugees of the African Union. This commission has ensured multi-level cooperation by engaging international and national stakeholders to support and facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified return of stranded African refugees.

2.5 Governments

Returnees and IDPs are included in the microfinance investment support facility of Afghanistan's graduation programme in Afghanistan.

3. Suggestions

3.1 What the States, regional or organizations are supposed to abide by

- a) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (5, 8, 10, and 11) [6]
- b) New York Declaration
- c) The 4Rs (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction), provides returnees with the opportunity to recover not only their economic, social, and political rights, but also their land, wells, and other properties.
- d) The strategic goal of this collective effort would be national recovery that could contribute to the consolidation of peace and stability and lay the foundation for longer-term development.
- e) Office ought to continue facilitating cross-border and cross-community information sharing. That includes reports on return areas, visits to areas of return and areas of displacement, and support to local media outlets to provide information about return programmes

3.2 Reconstruction process

(1) Refugees have to gain sustaining return through basic needs, livelihood activities, and needed protection interventions. So, what the measures refugees expect are as below.

With the establishment of partnerships with United Nations organizations such as UNDP, UNHabitat, UNICEF, the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Food Programme, as well as specialized NGOs, implement cooperation on investments in shelter, potable water, schools, primary health care, agricultural activities, income generation opportunities, micro-credit schemes, and skills training.

Member States are recommended with refugee reintegration initiatives and utilize the joint UNHCR-OECD's Plan for Engaging with Employers in the Hiring of Refugees, as a guideline for establishing national policies for providing livelihoods for returning refugees.

Recognizing the need of returning refugees for proper documentation to create bank accounts, according to UNHCR's 2016 Cash Delivery Mechanism Assessment Tool, Egypt highlights technologies such as EyeCloud, iris scanners used in Jordan to identify CBI recipients among returning refugees

(2) Specific measures of government

In contexts where government counterparts have not been involved in a voluntary repatriation operation before, consider organizing workshops to familiarize them with the principles of voluntary repatriation and UNHCR's role, in particular as it relates to protection, as well as the role of the government and government responsibilities (consult: Voluntary Repatriation. Training Module. 2nd edition. UNHCR Geneva, December 1993)

Request countries of origin incorporating reintegration needs into national development planning, as well as through amnesties, human rights guarantee and measures to enable the restitution of property.

Assist host country governments to ensure the introduction into refugee education programmes of elements of education for peace and human rights in cognizance of the role refugee community education can play in national reconciliation.

(3) The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme

UN Volunteers are supposed to participate actively in a wide range of activities - setting up camps (often on inhospitable and sometimes remote tracts of land), transporting refugees and displaced persons to sites, distributing tents and basic household items. Moreover, UN Volunteers also help register refugees upon arrival, assist returnees to reintegrate into their places of origin or in host communities. Importantly, UN Volunteers also help with legal advisory and protection services. UN Volunteers as part of their assignments build on traditional and/or local forms of volunteerism in the host country.

3.3 Reduce discrimination and restore rights

(1) Legal & Right

Training of national authorities and other key players, such as police and the military, is a key protection activity, as is support to nascent protection structures, including Human Rights Commissions and NGOs that offer legal advice.

Refugees and IDPs can also be supported to participate in peace processes which define the terms of their return and reintegration and which enable them to access and negotiate legal frameworks covering issues such as land, property and minority rights.

Finalize and roll out a legal mapping tool, which will help identify obstacles to the enjoyment of rights of people of concern in countries of asylum.[7]

(2) Awareness-raising sessions on refugee and human rights.

(3) Vulnerable groups

Protection interventions for IDPs and returnees will be strengthened, particularly through community-based protection (see Glossary) networks, with a focus on providing legal assistance, and psychological and social support, particularly for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV, see Glossary). [GA18-19.]

What's more, woman's perspectives may differ from those of men. Therefore, pay particular attention and reflect these differences distinctly in the profile of the refugee population.

Use the knowledge available through the profile of the refugee population to ensure that refugee women participate actively from the outset in the planning and implementation of a repatriation programme.

Use the People-Oriented Planning (POP) Framework to identify adequate ways and means to ensure consultation with and participation of refugee women from the planning stages of a repatriation operation.

3.4 Reintegration

Member States are suggested with returnees implement programs like the Peace Fund, established by ECOWAS, which provides microloans to expand employment opportunities for returning displaced people. (By Djibouti) At the same time, Egypt recommends Member States model programs after UNIDO's Entrepreneurial Development Project in Liberia, which provides business training to returning refugees.

3.5 Information-related programmes

On both sides of the border, strive towards having a complete and up-to-date profile of both the refugee population and the country of origin with a focus on areas of return by regular information-sharing and consultations with colleague's cross-border.

A "Repatriation Liaison Officer" (agreed upon in the context of repatriation negotiations) at the country-of-origin embassy in the country of asylum and vice versa may provide the UNHCR Branch Offices with a counterpart and contact person on the spot for day-to-day coordination concerning pressing operational issues

Hold coordination meetings between UNHCR offices on both sides of the border regularly, involving government counterparts and NGOs as required, to ensure that the operation focuses adequately on the needs of the repatriates and the absorption capacity of the country of origin and that it is adjusted properly to the determining factors on both sides of the border. Besides, it is better that undertaking a comprehensive information campaign to enable the refugees to make their decisions in full knowledge of the facts. Additionally, it is important to consider interviewing, counselling and registering potential repatriates, organizing safe and orderly return movements and adequate reception arrangements.

Establish a network for information sharing with NGOs. Consult NGOs on information required for the profile of the refugee community and the profile of the country of origin.

Finally, adopt the suggestions from Djibouti who stresses the importance of sharing information on the risks of return with potential returnees, as stated by the 2018 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, endorses services such as IOM's MigApp, which provides information on migration risks and access to post-return services.

3.6 The resolutions of the AU summit should be implemented (32nd ordinary session of the assembly of the African union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

States are committed to take bold and effective political leadership to resolve conflicts in Africa through adopting policies and strategies that strengthen national systems and structures that prevent conflict and displacement on the continent.

Africa is going to support efforts towards the creation of condition conducive to return, rehabilitation and reintegration as part of durable solutions to forced displacement.

States are committed to develop a clear policy framework to address the challenge of the 712,000 stateless persons hosted in the continent and who that lack any form of legal protection and are often more vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and violations, with their displacement lasting sometimes for several decades without solutions

The AUC requested to work with Member States and relevant partners to ensure access to education for refugee children, returnee children, IDP children and stateless children in Africa;

The African Union Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (AU/CIEFFA) are requested to:

a) Spearhead the development of a mechanism for regular reporting on the situation of girls and women's education in Member States taking into account their teaching and learning environments, the safety and security of schools and the education systems, and the extent to which refugees are mainstreamed into local education systems;

b) work with relevant partners to develop national gender sensitive comprehensive policies and operational plans that integrate peace education and protection of girls and young women in the education programmes for the displaced populations in Africa.

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