
The Effects of Forced Migrations on Regional Security in Uganda. A case of West Nile Sub-region.

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to discover the prevalence of forced migration on regional security in West Nile. The study was based on the results from 2018-2020 respondents who presented to the researcher accurate data out of the sample size of 250 respondents. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of forced migrations on regional security in West Nile. Data was collected from the officials from the office of the prime minister, local people in West Nile, refugees, police men and from the ministry of internal affairs. The results of the study in this report indicate that over 79% of the respondents asserted that forced migration is responsible for the insecurity in the region however the other percentage of the respondents say that force migration also came with positive benefits in the region. This research report also indicates that majority of the refugees with a percentage of 60 informed the researcher that amongst them there are criminals that have tarnished the name of refugee in West Nile. And finally, this research results also show that there are many un-withstandable factors that have forced them to leave their areas to other places.

Key words: Forced Migrations, Regional Security, West Nile Sub-region, and Uganda.

Introduction

Forced migration refers to movements made by refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. These may be either within their country or between countries after being displaced from their homeland. As of 2020, 1 person is uprooted every 2 seconds (often with nothing but the clothes on their back). Currently, the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide is more than 68.5 million (Ninsiima et al., 2023). There are a number of different factors that lead hundreds of millions of people around the world to leave their homes. However, all these factors lead to one common goal. Forced migration (also known as forced displacement) has uprooted millions of people worldwide, including refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants (Faridah et al., 2023). 1 person is uprooted every 2 seconds and the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide currently stands at over 68.5 million. Forced migration is defined as “the permanent or temporary removal of individuals, families and/or communities against their will from the homes and/or lands they occupy, without providing appropriate forms of legal or other protection and access to them (Hoshour, 2012). The practice of forced eviction involves the involuntary removal of persons from their homes or land, for which they may be directly or indirectly responsible (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2016). It involves the effective removal of an individual or group from being able to live in a particular house, residence or place and the assisted (in case of resettlement) or unassisted (without resettlement) movement of evicted persons or groups to other areas (Coomaraswamy, 2015). Forced migration (also known as forced displacement) has uprooted millions of people worldwide, including refugees, internally displaced persons

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and migrants. 1 person is uprooted every 2 seconds and the total number of forcibly displaced people worldwide currently stands at over 68.5 million. There are technical differences between refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. By definition, they all fall into the category of forced migration (and of course they are all human). Forced migration refers to the movement of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. These may be either within their country or between countries after being displaced from their homeland. Every year since the early 18th century, millions of people around the world have been forcibly evicted from their homes and their land, often leaving them to live in extreme poverty and destitution (Agbola and Jinadu, 2013). Forced migration can be severely traumatizing and can further slow down the lives of those who are already marginalized or vulnerable in society. Forced migration is a worldwide phenomenon that occurs in both developing and developed countries. Many evictions count not in the thousands but in the hundreds of thousands of people. While forced migration has a detrimental impact on everyone, women are often disproportionately affected and bear the brunt of abuse during forced evictions (Fernandes, 2012). By the end of 2017, more than 68.5 million people – one in every 110 people on the planet – had been forcibly displaced from their homes due to violent conflict, persecution, famine or natural disasters (UNHCR: UNHCR, 2018a). The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has increased rapidly over the past decade to the point today where more than two-thirds of all displaced persons remain in their home country. The remaining third of displaced persons are refugees; of which more than two thirds come from five conflict countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia. The number of refugees and depopulation are now at record levels for the post-World War II period. The previous record for refugees came shortly after the end of the Cold War (Salehyan, 2019). This movement of internally displaced persons within conflict countries and the flow of refugees from conflict countries is clearly a humanitarian disaster. It is also a major issue in contemporary world politics with economic, demographic, political and security implications for host states (Milton, Spencer & Findley, 2013; Miller & Ritter, 2014; Miller & Peters, 2018). The Syrian refugee crisis, in particular, grabbed the headlines as countries in the region and across Europe struggled to craft an appropriate response. Mass migration has directly entered political debates in many countries, with some advocating greater openness and others wanting to close their state's borders. Indeed, the rightward turn toward populist parties and politicians in the United States and Europe is partly explained by concerns about global migration (Norris & Inglehart, 2018).

Statement of problem

Despite the government's security efforts, there are still problems with gaps brought about by forced migration to West Nile in particular. Countries are dealing with global forced migration that has affected nations and continues to affect the security of countries, especially host countries. African countries provide rich insights related to various aspects of human security, such as those caused by forced migration. In West Nile/Northern Uganda, there have been security threats, particularly threats from the LRA rebels, which have ended. The influx of forced migration into West Nile north of South Sudan has increased the region's security threats as many of them come from different

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walks of life, forced migrants move from different backgrounds, many come from war zones that pose a threat to nations and people. even those from non-war zones present food insecurity to host countries (Krause, 2016). But given the growing context of forced migration in Uganda, especially in West Nile, where migrants from South Sudan, Sudan and Ethiopia are rampant, migrant status is seen as a security threat to people, nationals and food in the country (Sharpe and Namusobya, 2016). Migrant status represents a situation where an investigation is urgently needed to change the status quo in the country. It is imperative that a study be conducted on the impact of forced migration on regional security to mitigate the status quo in West Nile.

Specific Objectives

To determine the effect of forced migrations on regional security in West Nile

Research question

What is the effect of refugee migrations on the regional security in West Nile?

Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive survey research design based on quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The reason of choosing this design was that, the researcher focused on the links among a smaller number of attributers across a sample of cases depending on the resources available and the size of the target population. The researcher did quantify social phenomena particularly issues conducted and problems that were prevalent in the society. The researcher collected the information that described and helped the researcher in understanding social life. The design was based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches were data collection was done based on questionnaires and interview guides. This was intended to explore more detailed information and the aspects which remain unrevealed during quantitative analysis, qualitative data was collected. This data/information was collected through key informant interviews technique. It was a useful technique which provided more useful and in-depth knowledge in less time and limited cost. The target population for this study involved all staff from the refugee camps selected; it also included the Government official (ministry of refugee officials, office of the prime minister), UNHCR officials and local leaders in the camps area. The study populations included a total of 381 that was selected for data collection. The study population involved the population of the people involved in the refugee camps of Rhino-camp and Bidi-Bidi forced migrants' camps. Therefore, a sample of 195 respondents was selected to participate in the study.

Category	Population	Sample
UNHCR and connected officials	50	10
Ministry of Internal affairs and OPM	95	49
Local leaders	164	79
NGOs	72	37
Total	381	195

Source: Human resource Manual, 2023

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The questionnaire survey method was adopted based on the structured questionnaire as the instrument for collecting data. The questionnaire was suitable for non-observable form of data such as perceptions and feelings of the respondents and appropriate for quantitative assessment (Artino, La Rochelle, Kent and Hunter, 2014). Closed ended questionnaires were the main data collection instruments because they allowed the collection of information from a large number of respondents without much effort. These were intended to collect quantitative sample that was aimed at collecting quantitative samples for the study since the questionnaires were self-administered, they served the respondents' convenience in addition to relieving the researcher of the need to sit with the respondents until they finish answering the questions therein. The study employed closed ended questionnaires. These type of questionnaires were composed of structured questions that compelled the respondents to select from a list of options the one that best described their sentiments. Sections of the questionnaire were composed of questions that required the respondent to select from five options which were: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree 3=Not sure, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. Data was analyzed in form of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

Results

Respondents were asked to determine the effect of forced migrations on regional security in West Nile regional. The responses are provided in the table below and ranked as follows:

RANK: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Not sure, 4=Agree, 5= strongly Agree.

Table 1: Effect of forced migrations on regional security

Effect of forced migrations on regional security	Response											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There are conflicts between the communities and the refugees in this area	98	50	39	20	29	15	29	15	-	-	195	100
Some refugees are key crime makers and cause trouble to this area	121	62	65	33	10	5	-	-	-	-	195	100
There is increased security risks to the security organs to ensure to avert criminality	146	75	39	20	-	-	10	5	-	-	195	100
There are some of the refugees who migrate with small arms that are a danger to the area (State)	136	70	39	20	-	-	20	10	-	-	195	100

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There is a danger in the area by migrants (some have military backgrounds)	97	50	78	40	-	-	20	10	-	-	195	100
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Source: Primary data 2023

From the table 6 above, it can be observed that 98 (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the fact that there are conflicts between the communities and the refugees in this area, 39 (20%) agreed, 29 (15%) were not sure and 8 (15%) disagreed. It therefore implies that indeed there are conflicts between the communities and the refugees in this area since the majority of the participants responded to the affirmative.

121 (62%) strongly agreed to the assertion that traditional and cultural practices such as female genital cutting (FGC) contribute to the early marriage of girls, 65 (33%) agreed; while 10 (5%) were not sure. This therefore implies that indeed some refugees are key crime makers and cause trouble to this area thus affecting the security of the region

It can also be observed that 146 (75%) of the sample strongly agreed that there is increased security risks to the security organs to ensure to avert criminality, 39 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 10 (5%) disagreed. This implies that indeed there are increased security risks to the security organs to ensure to avert criminality since the majority agreed to the assertion.

136 (70%) of the sample strongly agreed that there are some of the refugees who migrate with small arms that are a danger to the area (State), 39 (20%) agreed to the assertion and 20 (10%) disagreed to the assertion. It can conclusively be stated that there are some of the refugees who migrate with small arms that are a danger to the area (State).

97 (50%) strongly agreed that there is a danger in the area by migrants (some have military backgrounds) 78 (40%), 20 (10%) were not sure and 4 (8%) disagreed. It can therefore imply that there is a danger in the area by migrants (some have military backgrounds). This indeed is a threat to the security of the region.

Discussions of findings

The security in the region and the welfare after refugee settlement from the research it was found out that there was raised level of insecurity since most of the migrants had military backgrounds from the rebel groups in both Uganda and South Sudan. However, there was insecurity in the region also evidenced by some positive out-comes the commoners have benefited from the wide market provided due to population increase.

Conclusion

The study of impact of forced migration on regional security was impressive and very encouraging for policy makers and migrants themselves. It is not surprising that influx of refugees keeps as seen from the research findings, which were: to question1). Forced migration indicated factors that were associated with mostly negative changes in the region, during the settlement period of refugees It was rather a sympathetic talk to give them a special privilege among the host communities however these turned to be a burden to the locals as insecurity issues and competition for resources increased. The phobic stunt was a shared emotion that strangers would encounter on their very first day

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of meeting, where integrating and building a mutually rewarding relationship with the host community gave rise to new emotions of happiness and prosperity in their endeavors alongside their hosts, and even felt one and homely.

Recommendations

Firstly, the ministry of internal affairs should debrief refugees from the effects of war and sensitize them about the cultures and laws in Uganda and how best to integrate in order to feel at home and at peace.

Secondly, there is need to sensitize the public about the code of conduct by Sudan's in order to not poorly confront them since it was evidenced that Sudan's more so the young one's likes fighting. This is because most of the migrant in West Nile are from South Sudan.

Thirdly, there should be rehabilitation centers to rehabilitate and show a human spirit to Refugees and support them as they can to recover from the losses from past violence, there is need to be patient as they integrate and be understood better by their hosts

Furthermore, the findings from this study ought to be shared by key policy makers whom the refugees are part of their planning process in order to keep track of their economic impact in Uganda.

Additionally, Government should continue providing an enabling business environment for the refugees in order for this group to keep contributing to the economic development in Uganda due to their immense investments in the West Nile.

Next to that, the government of Uganda should aim at strengthening security in area of refugee settlement in-order to create sanity of safety in the region and the country at all.

Finally, this study can be used as a benchmark by all actors to strengthen the relationship between the forced migration on regional security and the host nation's development plans to realize greater acceptance of the refugees as a community that can cause change.

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