



Displacement in Sahel countries

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African Studies Unit of FDHRD



Introduction:

The Sahel region includes countries "Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya."

The Sahel region is an important international transit route for illegal immigrants and has become a safe refuge for illegal immigrants. An estimated 55,000 migrants from Africa to Europe crossed the Sahel in 2007, from whom smugglers earned \$150 million.

The indiscriminate border planning carried out by the colonial states has led to the spread of wars and conflicts in the Sahel as a result of weak national integration and the identity crisis, which has become one of the biggest dilemmas facing national legislators in the Sahel region, where each country continues to suffer a crisis of integration and inability to deal ethnically and multiculturally, we find that the colonial states have established the States of the African Coast within artificial political and administrative boundaries that have led to the cutting off of societies, cultures and languages as part of a strategy One in all the coastal strip from Mauritania to Sudan.

If we look at what happened, we find the armed conflict in Somalia that has exhausted this country since 1991 and is still there. There are also rebel groups in Sudan, which eventually led to the secession of the south from the mother state in 2011. 7% of its population, and other civil wars, conflicts and political strikes.

As a result of these wars, internal conflicts and violations, recent years have been characterized by large movements of refugees, whether individual or collective, and the Sahel countries have become one of the most important exporters of refugees, with Africa the second largest source of refugees in the world with 26%, numbering 6.5 million, and Sudan was the largest source, due to the civil war in the north and south and the Darfur crisis.



Africa has experienced both voluntary and coercive migration movements, reaching unprecedented levels that have contributed to the contemporary demographic landscape and to many parts of the continent.

An important root cause of mass migration and forced displacement in Africa is the deterioration of political, social and economic conditions, as well as armed conflicts, insecurity, environmental degradation and poverty, and globalization has facilitated the movement of people across various African regions to other regions outside the continent. In the 21st century, migration is a major issue and poses economic and social challenges to policy makers working in the Department of Migration to improve the continent.

According to statistics, by the end of 2019, the total number of displaced persons was 65 million worldwide, 48 percent of whom were displaced by conflict, and Africa hosts the largest proportion of them with 17.8 million internally displaced persons, 5.7 million refugees and asylum seekers, i.e. the continent of Africa hosts about one third of the world's forcibly displaced persons.

The population of the border region of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger is now at the centre of conflict, poverty and climate change, and the central Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) are at the centre of the forced displacement crisis. More than 1.5 million internally displaced persons and 365,000 refugees have fled violence in the Central Coast region, including more than 600,000 this year alone."

The Corona pandemic "Covid 19" began alongside the dry season, which is expected to be one of the most dangerous in decades, and is likely to lead to further large-scale displacement of people within and outside the region, including countries in the south of the Sahel region such



as Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo, as well as north to North Africa and Europe. It also comes to be more severe for areas of internally displaced persons. Although the number of tests and cases detected to date has decreased, the continued increase in infection rates indicates a future emergency that exceeds the capacity of the national health sectors.

The report, issued by the African Studies Unit of the FDHRD, discusses the crisis of displacement and forced displacement in Sahel countries in terms of the causes and motives leading to this, the impacts and results, and the efforts of the organizations concerned to address the crisis.

Immigration in the Sahel countries.

A well-known type of migration is voluntary migration, which is carried out by the free will of the person, and refers to immigrants who leave their place of residence and reside elsewhere in search of economic opportunities such as employment, trade and education.

Forced migration means the movement of people due to armed conflicts, human rights violations, social and political problems, as well as natural disasters.

Forced migrants "refugees" flee their places of residence to maintain their personal security and to protect themselves and their physical integrity from any imminent threat.

There is also a category of forced refugees called environmental refugees, who leave their places of origin for environmental reasons such as earthquakes, droughts, environmental degradation caused by armed conflicts, wars, etc.



Most of the environmental refugees are the Sahel-Saharan region, home to some 17 African countries, from West Africa to northern Eritrea in East Africa, whose population suffers from threats associated with climate change and political instability caused by civil wars as well as the conflicts it is experiencing.

As for the internally displaced, they are people or groups of people who have been forced to leave and flee their homes or places of residence to avoid the effects of armed conflict, violence and natural or man-made disasters and have not crossed the borders of the internationally recognized state.

1. Refugee-hosting countries and communities

Uganda is one of the largest refugee host countries in Africa, hosting more than 1 million refugees from countries in the region, and the World Bank has facilitated the provision of basic social services and economic opportunities to refugees and host communities as part of the Development Response project to the effects of forced displacement.

Ethiopia is Africa's second largest refugee host country, hosting some 730,000 refugees from Eritrea, Somalia and South Sudan.

During 2019, Ethiopia issued the revised Refugee Declaration, which allowed work in the formal sector and access to national health care and education services, and provided refugees with ways to live outside the camps.



Key destinations for refugees

82% of all refugees are hosted by developing countries, three quarters of refugees are still displaced, and refugees often settle in host communities, which include some of the poorest classes or segments of their countries, or in remote or border areas where people find it difficult to obtain appropriate and appropriate jobs and public services.

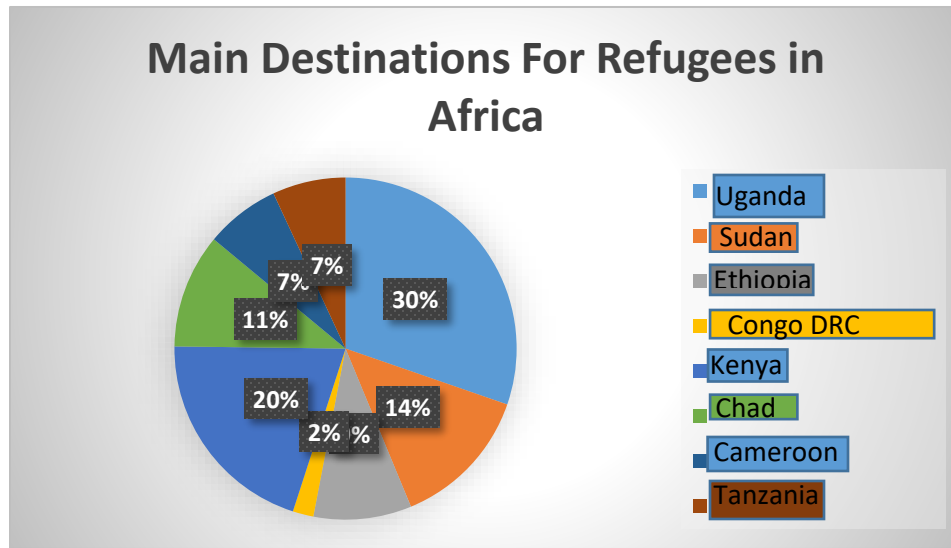
The responsibility of these host communities is enormous and increasing -- and this responsibility intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic and social repercussions are likely to affect refugees and host communities in developing countries, exacerbating their previous vulnerabilities and increasing their dependence on exhausted humanitarian assistance.

According to the UNHCR statistics, there are eight refugee destinations in Africa as follows:

No.	State	Number
1	Uganda	1,350,504
2	Sudan	599,906
3	Ethiopia	412,889
4	Democratic Republic of congo	087,537



5	Kenya	901,431
6	Chad	482,411
7	Cameroon	314,406
8	Tanzania	308,528



Forced displacement in Sahel countries.

The recent wave of displacement in the Sahel region -- which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger -- has brought the total number of people forced to flee within their countries in the region to more than 2 million for the first time.



The Sahel countries are some of the least developed countries in the world and is now at the epicenter of the world's fastest-growing displacement crisis, driven by years of violent attacks by armed rebel groups and criminal gangs.

Some 11,400 people (mostly women and children) fled their homes during the first few weeks of January 2021, following ongoing attacks by armed groups on the town of Cumbrie, Burkina Faso, and more than 1 million displaced people are from Burkina Faso, where the number of people forced to flee to other parts of the country in search of safety nearly doubled in 2020 alone.

In January 2020, nearly 7,000 people from the Tilaberry region of western Niger were displaced by terrorist attacks, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The IDMC 2020 report also noted that the number of internally displaced persons in Burkina Faso increased from 560,000 in 2019 to 838,548 in 2020.

(a) Internal displacement

The number of internally displaced persons in Africa is largely higher than the refugee population, creating the need for comprehensive and concerted efforts to address the problem of internal displacement, through early warning systems, to implement timely measures to prevent displacement, and the tendency in a country to occur as a result of terrorism, conflict, natural disasters or climatic conditions, and may require cross-border cooperation to prevent it or address the 2009 Kampala Convention. To protect and assist internally displaced persons in Africa in order to comprehensively address the plight of internally displaced persons, it recognizes that the primary responsibility for preventing internal displacement as well as protecting and assisting internally displaced persons rests with the national authorities.



Internal displacement in the region, which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger, "has increased fourfold in just two years," with 490,000 internally displaced persons at the beginning of 2019. More than half of the displaced people in the region are from Burkina Faso.

Since the beginning of the year, violence in Niger and Burkina Faso has prompted more than 21,000 people to leave their homes and seek refuge in their own countries, according to UNHCR. In Burkina Faso, a series of armed attacks since December 31st in the Kombri region and nearby villages in the north of the country have displaced more than 11,000 people.

The majority of these displaced women and children fled overnight after the attackers started shooting at their homes. The displaced have moved to safeplaces. They are currently being housed among the local population in Wahigua and Barga, 35 km from Cumbria.

(b) Prolonged displacement

Prolonged displacements pose particular challenges for African countries, which host large numbers of refugees and other displaced persons who have not been able to return to their countries for long periods of time. Displacements become prolonged when the causes of displacement are not addressed, for example, in conflicts where persistent insecurity of refugees and IDPs are at risk of physical, social and cultural deprivation in camps for extended periods of time.

The prolonged presence of a large number of displaced people can lead to tensions with local host communities, competition for scarce resources, environmental degradation and xenophobia.



(c) Motives and causes of forced displacement and displacement in Sahel countries:

There are many reasons for the forced displacement and displacement of the people of the Sahel countries, including human causes, non-human causes, including human causes (armed conflicts between countries that began from the post-colonial era until our time leaving hundreds of people behind without shelter. Tribal conflicts, and the sense of absolute right of ownership by each group, some residents of countries whose neighbors face conflicts and are influenced to begin looking for independence from the rest of their own state. Some countries provide arms or support conflicts or coups in the countries where these conflicts occur, as well as strengthening militias, the weakness of these states has led to the lack of control, and thus the spread of conflicts in different areas, and increased violence and attacks by groups against different groups of society.

The Niger Delta has been subjected to drought and pollution due to the exploitation of oil fields there by multinational companies and the government, and this has led to the contamination of the fisheries there, which were the source of food and livelihood for the inhabitants of this region, the fall of "northern Nigeria" into the grip of the terrorist group Boko Haram, resulting in the displacement of the population inside the state, and nearby villagers.

There are non-human causes, which are only the result of human causes over time, including decrease in food resources in the Sahel countries, where many countries have experienced severe food crises, leading to forced displacement out of or within the country. Natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes that pose a threat that may decimate many human populations, the spread of epidemics, the most important of which is "Covid-19", which posed another threat to the citizens of the Western African Sahel countries. The challenges resulting from the neglect



of the rulers of developing the state, which resulted in poor infrastructure, where environmental pollution, sanitation and the scarcity of water, are also natural phenomena that led to this forced displacement, the scarcity of water, as the Countries of the African Coast are suffering from drought.

People from Sahel countries leave their homes and villages as a result of a number of causes, including armed conflicts, violence, local land and resource conflicts, and the effects of climate change from floods, droughts and desertification.

- 1- **Terrorist attacks:** Armed groups are increasing in number and influence in all countries of the Sahel, targeting, abducting or killing civilians, forcibly recruiting individuals, looting property sieging villages, burning houses and depriving entire communities of their livelihoods.
- 2- **Implications of climate change:** The Sahel region is suffering from recurrent droughts, desertification and other effects of climate change, and these effects are reflected in agriculture and fishing activities, heavy losses in food production, food insecurity associated with degraded agricultural land, shrinking pastures for livestock, decreased water reserves, fuel debris and other natural resources. All of these factors contributed to the increase in displacement, which is known as “climate displacement”.
- 3- **Internal conflicts:** The Sahel region is experiencing many violent ethnic and tribal conflicts, all of which are a major cause of widespread displacement. For example, local conflict between pastoralists and farmers on the borders between Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad has led to a large wave of displacement. These conflicts indirectly complicate the crisis of the displaced peoples, as they put pressure on government budgets by



increasing defense spending to respond to the increasing security threats, as governments in the Sahel region have been forced to significantly increase the expenditures of the security sector at the expense of addressing the economic and social problems of the displaced people.

(d) Challenges of internal displacement:

Displaced people in the Sahel face several challenges, including: insecurity and widespread violence, clear humanitarian challenges to displacement, food insecurity, inability to accommodate displaced persons in host communities with poor infrastructure, as well as logistical challenges to the work of organizations involved in providing assistance to displaced persons:

- 1- Insecurity has spread from northern Mali to the Sego and Mopti regions in the centre of the country and from there to Burkina Faso and Niger, where hostilities are mainly directed towards the civilian population and national security forces.
- 2- Resource challenges: The high number of internally displaced persons poses a particular challenge to Sahel countries in the absence of capacity to accommodate the needs of displaced persons, and the development of grievances between both displaced persons and host communities, which can lead to conflicts and the disintegration of social cohesion by increasing pressures on infrastructure, health and education systems, and the depletion of services. In addition to the various political and security obstacles.
- 3- The rate of displacement in the Sahel region continues to rise: the rates of displaced persons continue to rise as a result of the continuing conflict, which means an inevitable worsening of their various problems. It is worth noting that newly displaced people have



joined the displaced from the Sahel region in the northern regions of Togo, Benin, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Consequences of forced displacement and displacement of Sahel residents

1. Joining terrorist groups, some residents of the Sahel see what they are doing with brainwashing and promises of a decent life from their eyes, all of which is a hearty substance for the population and a strong temptation for them to organize.
2. The host countries have been blamed for displaced people in their neighbouring countries as refugees, with UN reports of refugee workers proving that nearly 2.7 million people have been forced to leave the region.
3. Children are forced to leave school because of the lack of financial resources and thus strip them of their child rights and force them to take up arms, fight, and commit violence.
4. The mixing of nationalities and their abandonment as a result of their displacement to countries that do not know about their language, as such they are left with two choices, one of which is worse than the other, but living like this body moves waiting for the inevitable death, or joining terrorist groups.
5. Many displaced people are subjected to killing and violence, such as in Burkina Faso in 2020, when 25 people were killed and others were seriously injured.
6. During displacement, kidnappings for ransoms by various groups are carried out in unmonitored institutions in the country, especially in rural and remote areas.



7. One result of forced displacement, international peacekeepers were at risk of getting killed, and on February 10, 2021, about 30 people were injured in an attack in Mali, and in mid-January 2021, five civilian peacekeeping forces were killed in a violent attack in Mali.
8. One of its disastrous and certainly inevitable consequences is death: in 2020, many died as a result of migration across the ocean, fleeing for their lives only to die at sea off the coast of West Africa.

U.N. Global Ratios on Forced Displacement of Sahel Population

The United Nations has issued reports on forced displacement and its proportions. These countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger) have been at the forefront of displacement, and the report has described them as the focus of forced displacement throughout the region.

Reports for 2020/2021 have shown that:

- More than 1.5 million internally displaced persons and 365,000 refugees in 2020/21.
- The World Food Program (WFP) reports showed that 7.4 million people were food insecure as a result of these forced displacements.
- The number of children need humanitarian assistance has reached 7.2million, in addition to the closure of more than 4,000 schools against the right to educate these children.
- On February 17, 2021, about 27 students, three staff members and 12 colleges in Niger were kidnapped and released 10 days later.
- Nigeria is the country with the most kidnappings and attacks.



- More than 7,660 Nigerian refugees have arrived in Maradi, Niger, bringing the total number to nearly 100,000 displaced, as well as displaced Nigeriens inside their country.
- Reports revealed that about 2 million people have been displaced by natural disasters
- UN refugee reports show that there are more than 100,000 internal displacements annually.
- In 2021, in just two months, 200,000 people were displaced according to the UNHCR.

Addressing the displacement crisis in Sahel countries

The importance of addressing displacement in the Sahel region is to alleviate poverty and achieving stability, and it is important to create conditions for humanitarian and development actors to help find solutions for displaced populations, and immediate assistance must be accompanied by significant investments in livelihoods and social services in order to promote social cohesion and provide the foundations for peace in the region:

1. National response: The Sahel countries' responses to the problem of displaced persons have multiplied, including the adoption of new housing systems that provide more stable conditions for displaced persons and reduce the chances of friction between them and the host indigenous population.
2. Regional response Efforts to overcome policy coordination challenges, monitor and know the locations and needs of displaced persons and their host communities, ensure the



return of displaced persons, and ensure that displaced persons benefit from the services and development investments taking place in the region. Displacement control can help improve analysis and forecasting of other relevant phenomena, such as food crises, production and food insecurity, in what is known as "protection control" operations in the region in cooperation with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), (UNHCR) and 20 actors through 12 protection monitoring projects tested in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in mid-April 2020.

3. International response: By strengthening the involvement of international donors specializing in displacement issues, such as the (UNHCR), which has declared a need for \$185.7 million to provide life-saving protection and assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities in the region African Coast, including \$96.7 million in initial needs for 2020, \$29.3 million for the implementation of new Corona virus prevention and treatment measures in displacement areas, and \$59.7 million. To increase emergency response with a focus on shelter and basic relief items, prevention and response to sexual violence, education and the environment.

With regard to the efforts of human rights organizations (The United Nations and international organizations) to reduce the disaster of forced displacement and displacement of Sahel countries, they are as follows:

1. On November 11, 2020, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohamed paid a visit to brief the situation of refugees forcibly displaced in northern Nigeria, as well as addressing the girls on the need to arm themselves with faith, determination and perseverance to accomplish anything.



2. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center launched a report on the scale of the displacement crisis on February 22, 2021 and discussed to resolve the disaster and restore stability to the country.
3. The ongoing discussion by UNHCR and their preparation and non-temporary solution, with the organization appealing in early 2021 to humanitarian organizations to provide assistance despite low funding and pressure from armed groups and road closures.
4. United Nations warnings of the increased risks and consequences of the spread of the Covid-19 virus exacerbate the disaster and thus exacerbate the food insecurity crisis, as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Food Programme (WFP) have taken action to protect displaced persons and their host countries, ensure access to humanitarian services and assistance, and improve data showing the scale of the forced displacement disaster.
5. The Efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to release abductees in The Sahel countries, particularly Nigeria, which has the lion's share of the number and attempted kidnappings at the Sahel level, in partnership with international organizations to address armed groups to stop violence against children.
6. UNHCR provided refugees with assistance in border control, as well as contributed to the transfer of 11,000 refugees away from the border to villages with clean water, health services and sanitation in the first months of 2021.
7. The Human Rights Council in Geneva called for helping released victims by rehabilitating them to restore their health and spirit to life and to provide them with educational and health services. UNICEF, in cooperation with experts, has called for the care and reintegration of girls into society through psychological and social support programmes,



taking all precautions in order not to have these operations again and opening the necessary investigations in order to reduce their abductions.

8. The Humanitarian Community is required to provide \$2.4 billion in 2020 to help some 15.3 million people in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.
9. An urgent appeal from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR to intensify efforts to eradicate human trafficking that leads to attacks and deaths of Sahel residents.

The work of the African Union and its organizations:

1. At the Meetings of the Executive Council of the African Union on February 5, 2021, he announced the renewal of emergency assistance resources to cope with drought and famine affecting Africa in general, and Sahel countries in particular.
2. The Council also called on the African Export and Import Bank to develop strategic financing plans to vaccinate 60% of the continent's population against the Covid-19 virus.
3. The African Union Peace and Security Council called on the United Nations to hold a meeting to discuss solutions for the Sahel region, denounced the arrival of foreign fighters on the African continent and called for decisive action on the states supporting this resolution because it supports terrorism.
4. Efforts by the African Union Security and Peace Council to prevent genocide and support protection for Sahel countries from natural disasters, as well as support for peace.

Recommendations



1. Strengthening the efforts of the African Union and its organizations to better support the Sahel in facing its issues, where attention is now focused on the Middle East and North African countries.
2. Providing camps with some humanitarian resources and services that provide displaced people with a humane youthful life, and providing them with the necessary funds to provide them with education.
3. Bringing together the efforts of international and local organizations for a monthly discussion of a number of affected neighbouring countries, where they had forced displacement or host for displaced persons.
4. Forming global committees to closely monitor countries to assist displaced persons and their countries in order to ensure that there is no hidden supply that could exacerbate the disaster.
5. Provide more peacekeeping elements in the region, in order to protect people who are attacked every day.
6. Establishing community groups to keep them safe and provided by the monitoring committees with aid and weapons, as a kind of follow-up and strengthening the feeling of protecting themselves against the aggressors, as well as fortifying the impregnable schools in the Sahel countries, especially "Nigeria" to reduce the cases of abductions that occur to girls.