

Repercussions of the Ukrainian Crisis:

The Position of European Countries on Forced Migration in Africa



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in Africa**

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Introduction

Forced migration is one of the most visible and profound consequences of conflict and persecution. The scope of migration remains enormous and there are no signs of abating. The emergence of migration is increasingly reinforced by several factors such as conflicts and wars, natural disasters, desertification, population growth, rapid urbanization, and insecurity. Food, water scarcity, and violence related to organized crime, and climate change often exacerbate these other drivers of migration. The experience of migration and having to live forcibly in exile as a result of these factors is a distinguishing feature in human history, and the stages of the emergence of monotheistic religions witnessed cases of migration and forced migration that formed part of the common history of mankind.

Before the Russian-Ukrainian war, it was expected that the rates of forced migration would weaken globally between 2014 and 2023, with a negative impact on developing and poor countries, as expectations indicated that the total number of displaced people (internally displaced persons, asylum seekers and refugees) would increase by 3.9 million people. While the projected migration of people living in sub-Saharan Africa will increase by more than 5 million by the end of 2023, while in the same period the number of displaced people in Europe is expected to increase by less than 50,000.

Since the war in Ukraine was launched last February, many Ukrainian citizens have panicked to the borders of neighboring countries including Russia, and more than 11 million people, more than a quarter of the population, have been forced to leave their homes either by crossing the border to seek refuge in neighboring countries or for another safe haven in Ukraine. Until the beginning of April, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that the number of refugees who fled outside the borders exceeded four million people, of whom more than two million and 300 thousand went west to Europe through Poland, which contained 1.2 million displaced Ukrainians. About 90% of the people who have fled are women and children, because men between the ages of 18 and 60 can be called up for military service and cannot travel outside Ukraine.



This report discusses forced migration in Africa, its forms, and the reasons for its spread in some countries of the continent, and deals with migration and problems around migration from Africa to Europe, and finally forms of discrimination against Africans at the Ukrainian-European borders. In Pakistan, Kenya and eastern Sudan, for example, there are tens of thousands of Afghan, Somali and Eritrean refugee children whose grandparents were the last family members to see their homelands. Just a decade ago, nearly a million refugees returned home each year with the help of UNHCR. This number has decreased by 80% due to persistent insecurity or lack of livelihoods which discourage refugees' desire to return.

First: Forced migration: its forms and causes of its spread in Africa

When examining forced (involuntary) migration caused by conflict and migration caused by disasters, the distinction is usually indicated because it is useful, but the lines may be blurred in practice because conflicts may arise due to conflicts over natural resources and human activity may cause Natural disasters such as landslides.

According to the International Organization for Migration, forced migration is “a migratory movement with many motives, yet involving an element of force or coercion”.

According to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, refugees “are people who flee their country because of a “justified fear” of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and who are outside the country of their nationality or their permanent residence and because of this fear are unable or unwilling to return to it”.

Forced migration is caused by persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events that seriously disturb public order. According to UNHCR, the number of people forcibly displaced within countries and across borders as



a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order has nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

By the end of 2020, the number of refugees reached 78.5 million, compared to the end of 2010, when it was 41 million forcibly displaced people around the world. Conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations, or events that seriously disturb public order, however, there were 48 million internally displaced people, representing 61%.

These figures show that it is important to bear in mind that forcibly displaced persons consist not only of refugees and asylum seekers seeking protection in other countries, but also of individuals who have been displaced within their own borders. The dramatic increase in total forced migration within countries and across borders from the end of 2020 compared to the end of 2010 is due to several crises, some already existing, some new, and some re-emerging years later. These include crises in regions of Syria, Bolivarian Venezuela, the Sahel region of Africa, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, and hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

According to UNHCR statistics, by the end of 2020, nearly 56 percent of all refugees were from the five largest countries of origin: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where war, crises and conflict all take place. It exacerbated human rights violations, persecution, violence and living conditions in 2021 – the main factors contributing to increased migration in the current year 2022.

By the end of 2020, 55 million people were internally displaced as a result of conflict and violence in addition to natural disasters, including 48 million people in 59 countries due to conflict and violence, and 7 million people in 104 countries were internally displaced due to natural disasters. It is important to note that it is not always possible to reliably distinguish between conflict migration and disaster migration because many people can be displaced for one reason, and then be displaced a second or even third time for a different reason.



Causes of Forced Migration in Africa

Conflict is one of the main reasons for people to leave their homes in search of a better life, and the year 2021 saw a great deal of violence forcing people to flee, particularly in Africa, where large numbers of people were displaced internally and at borders or sought refuge in neighboring countries. Several African countries have been affected by waves of violence: in the Central African Republic, fighting broke out in the aftermath of the presidential elections, while the Sudanese region of Darfur witnessed inter communal violence; In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed groups committed atrocities; Burkina Faso has seen a rise in violent jihadist attacks. All this resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

Most of the IDPs live in Africa's low- and middle-income countries that suffer from the effects of global inequality, the sharp rise in extreme weather events, and unsustainable development practices that do not contribute to finding long-term radical solutions to the problem of forced migration, both internally and externally. But the difficulty is that the features that characterize the migration of populations in Africa have implications for both the proposed solutions to the displacement crisis as well as to the overall development of the continent, because internally displaced persons, whether within their own countries or those displaced to another country within the African continent affect the possibility of development and finding sustainable solutions because of what Displacement causes a great burden on developing countries in particular.

Although the countries of the African continent are among the most exporting countries of refugees and asylum seekers, they themselves also host asylum seekers from other countries in Africa, where South Sudan hosts one of the most important countries for displacement, for example, 291,263 Sudanese (from its northern neighbor), while it hosts Sudan Since November 2020, more than 61,000 people have fled violence in Tigray.

By 2021, the majority of new forced migration cases caused by conflict and violence (about 91%) were recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa and the five countries with the highest number of new internal displacement due to conflict and violence were the Democratic Republic of the



Congo (2.2 million), Ethiopia (1.7 million), Mozambique (592,000), and Burkina Faso (515,000).

The Sahel region - which includes Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger - is home to some of the world's least developed countries and its communities hosting forced migrants are at breaking point, with needs growing across a region where multiple crises converge, including armed conflict, extreme poverty and insecurity. Food, climate change and the coronavirus pandemic. The extreme vulnerability of the Sahel region has been exposed by the impact of forced migration caused by the horrific and widespread violence perpetrated by armed rebel groups and criminal gangs.

Internal displacement in the region has quadrupled in just two years, with 490,000 internally displaced people at the beginning of 2019, more than half of the displaced in the region are from Burkina Faso+ and the Sahel region hosts more than 850,000 refugees, mostly from Mali. Violence so far this year in Niger and Burkina Faso has forced more than 21,000 people to flee their homes and seek refuge within their own countries.

Chad

Thousands of years ago, Lake Chad was an area of one million square kilometers and was larger than the Caspian Sea today. Now, Lake Chad has become the center of waves of violence and suffering that extend to the four countries that surround it, and spread in the lands near its banks, refugee camps managed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees where people who left their homes due to violence in the region live.

Since late 2015, a new phenomenon has also emerged. As many Chadians, Cameroonians and citizens of the Republic of Niger lost their homes due to the attacks by the fighters that came out of Nigeria and because of the response to these attacks by the armies of the four countries surrounding Lake Chad. The number of internally displaced people in Chad reached 68,434 people, as militias are intimidating residents on the islands and on the banks of the lake and the



army is asking residents to leave some sites for their own safety to be able to confront the fighters away from the civilians.

Chad witnessed the latest wave of displaced people who arrived in an area located on the northeastern bank of the lake between the village of Baga Sola and the regional capital Bol, two hours away from the lake.

Their situation is difficult and most of them have nothing - neither food, nor shelter, nor access to medical care, sitting in strong sunshine and heavy rain in weak shelters made of twigs, leaves and pieces of cloth.

Mali

Persistent insecurity in Mali, coupled with limited economic opportunities and lack of access to basic services in parts of the north and center of the country, prevents the voluntary return of large numbers of Malian internally displaced persons and refugees.

The Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed in Algeria in June 2015, but it did not achieve the stability and security needed to ensure true peace in northern Mali. The volatile security situation along the cross-border areas with Burkina Faso and Niger caused by ongoing violence between armed groups, inter communal tensions and a growing threat of terrorism continues to impede humanitarian access to the north.

The United Nations announced that tens of thousands of civilians were displaced from their homes after the outbreak of the latest wave of fighting in Mali, which included the launch of French air strikes on the strongholds of Islamist militants in the northern sector of the country. However, the Islamists, on the other hand, were able to launch an attack in the west of the country and took control of the city of Diabaly, located 400 km north of Bamako, after battles with the Malian army. In 2021, more than 400,000 people have been displaced within the country, an increase of 30% over the previous year.



Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is one of the countries with the highest rates of forced migration internally, as the worsening crisis since the escalation of violence in the country has led to more than 35 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, and the conflict and violations faced by the population have caused the displacement of large numbers of people in the country. Since late 2019, a series of armed attacks on the town of Cumbre and neighboring villages in the north of the country has displaced more than 11,000 people, mostly women and children, who fled at night after the shooting began on their homes. They have been displaced to the local communities of Waigoya and Barg, about 35 km away.

The IDPs in Burkina Faso have faced dire conditions in the host communities, exposed to the conflict and violence plaguing the country, but more than 75% of IDPs also live without adequate shelter. Only 35% of IDPs and host community members believe they are receiving assistance that covers their basic needs, and many IDPs are currently hosted in smaller towns, but many of the newly displaced are expected to start moving to larger cities as they feel increasingly insecure.

In 2021, an increasing number of IDPs from Burkina Faso sought asylum in neighboring countries, where more than a third of IDPs have now fled to for more than two years and an increasing number now want to integrate into existing host sites rather than return to their places of origin, despite the government is seeking their return.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has one of the highest rates of internal displacement in the world and more than five million people have been displaced from their homes due to insecurity within the country's borders, while nearly one million citizens of the Congo have been forced to flee to seek safety in neighboring countries as refugees.



The United Nations has received reports of killings, maiming, sexual violence and looting of property as a result of armed attacks against displaced civilians in retaliation against the army forces working to clear the area, believing that the displaced people were assisting the army forces in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and carried out brutal operations against the displaced civilians and set fire to the areas of displacement.

UNHCR has documented multiple attacks by armed groups on displacement sites and villages in Djogo County, Ituri, Fizi and Muyinga provinces in South Kivu province, and Masisi and Rutshuru provinces in North Kivu province. The violence has led to the displacement of more than a million people in these areas, while some attacks by armed groups have brutally killed two children, two men and a woman after they were beheaded with machetes, while an armed group set fire to more than 150 houses in two different villages hosting the displaced.

Some 15,000 people have fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo into southwestern Uganda as fighting continues between Congolese forces and rebel groups. UNHCR staff reported that more than 7,000 of those displaced resided in the town of Bunagana, and that the majority of the refugees came from villages in North Kivu province.

Armed violence is exacerbating an already complex problem of displacement, especially in eastern DRC, and new migration movements are increasing pressure on areas hosting IDPs that lack basic needs such as food, water and health care services.

South Sudan

South Sudan has become a fragile state since the outbreak of civil war in 2013, and displacement continues to affect stability as a result of conflict, insecurity and climate shocks. There are three different but related conflicts in South Sudan; All-out struggle for political power, conflict over migration and access to land in the tropics, and local conflict and violence due to climate change and environmental hazards. What binds the conflicts together is the lack of a



legitimate and centralized monopoly on power, which drives political, ethnic, and regional communities to create their own security arrangements. 8.4 million people still require humanitarian assistance in the current year 2022, and by 2023 South Sudan is expected to witness an increase of 600,000 displaced people (14% increase) compared to 2021.

Ethiopia

The suffering of the displaced stems mainly from the conflict in the country, in addition to the environmental risks that cause migration and high humanitarian needs. The humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia emerged in 2020, when armed conflict erupted in the Tigray region, resulting in more than 25.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, the second highest proportion in the world.

In 2021, the escalating conflict in Tigray caused widespread anxiety and mass exodus, with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reporting desperate people crossing into Sudan with only clothes and little baggage. Meanwhile, Eritreans, who had sought refuge in Ethiopia to escape the violence in their country, soon found themselves caught up in the fighting in the Tigray region, and the camps that housed thousands of Eritrean refugees were burnt down. For six months, UN humanitarian workers have been unable to reach the refugees and deliver relief supplies.

Since September 2021 more than 4.2 million people have been internally displaced, including nearly 500,000 due to repeated droughts and floods. People displaced by recent factors have limited access to food, adequate shelter and basic services. Displaced Ethiopians face significant risks including sexual and gender-based violence, housing, land and property issues, and loss of civil documentation. Children's access to school is cut off, which will have dire consequences in the short and long term.

The conflict in Ethiopia led to the migration of many internally and the forced migration of some to some neighboring countries or asylum to European countries. It is expected that by 2023, Ethiopia will witness a significant increase



in immigration rates at a rate of (23%) as the country faces a violent conflict in Tigray characterized by serious violations of human rights.

Somalia

Somalia has long been one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, and in the current year 2022 more than 7.7 million people in Somalia will need humanitarian assistance, up from 5.9 million in 2021, due to the complex and multi-layered conflict situation with poor management, economic performance and severe environmental risks in light of the spread of terrorist groups. These crises have caused the exodus of more than 550 thousand people since the beginning of the current year 2022, compared to 2021, which witnessed the emigration of 2.9 million people due to the conflict between the National Army and the Youth Movement and the factors of climate change.

Second: The European Union's discrimination of forced migration from Africa to Europe

Many Africans are forced to migrate forcibly from their countries to seek refuge in European countries in search of safe shelter and a better life, but the reality is otherwise, as despite the European Union's keenness to provide assistance and assistance, especially providing financial resources to face various humanitarian crises in African countries and being a donor The largest relief organizations operating in African countries, but we find that the European Union countries on the ground do not bear the burden of forcibly receiving immigrants from African countries and leave them at the borders without shelter.

Not only that, but we find that European countries do not follow the policy of "integration" of refugees with the forcibly displaced people of African origin, as there are no success stories for people of African origin in Europe, except for very few because of the forcibly displaced persons of African origin being left at the European borders until their resettlement In a third host country or work for



their return to their country regardless of the risk associated with that decision, which raises the responsibility of Europe, which, through these procedures, violates the principles of “non-refoulement” and violates Article (33) of the United Nations Refugee Convention and Article (3) of the International Convention against Torture.

The fact is that even the numbers that are forcibly received from immigrants are not commensurate with the size and capabilities of European countries that are able to receive large numbers of them. This was evident during the Libyan crisis, as the European Union’s policies of not receiving forcibly displaced Libyans and the European Union’s rejection of this burden with Italy, which has geographical borders with Libya, led to the Libyans being exposed to the risk of human trafficking and illegal smuggling, and the matter ended with the death of many of them at the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the displaced Libyans says that the European policies of refusing to receive African refugees have pushed the refugees to risk getting on the "death boats", calling for facilitating the procedures for reaching Europe if the countries concerned want to prevent the flow of illegal refugees through the sea, and considers that the European efforts are not enough.

And Matteo Salvini, the Italian Minister of the Interior, announced the closure of Italian ports in the face of ships or boats that rescue illegal immigrants, and at the same time, Malta has refused for years to receive only emergency medical cases and on an exceptional basis. Italy also called on the European Union to find other ports to receive migrants and asylum seekers across the Mediterranean, while Greece's route to refugees has been significantly dried up since the European-Turkish agreement in 2016.

Speaking about the rates of drowning in the Mediterranean due to the migration of refugees and their displacement through the sea, the European Union never recognized that the reason for the drowning of migrants was closing the borders in their face. Rather, it held responsibility for people smugglers, and carried out extensive security campaigns against them, but in the end, they only produced the high number of missing persons in the Mediterranean coasts. The priority of



the European Union is to protect its borders and not to protect people trying to reach Europe or contribute to their rescue. The European Union must guarantee the rights of African migrants and allow legal entry to its territory and facilitate the necessary procedures for this.

Many cases were observed in which European countries refused to receive asylum seekers and followed the so-called “closure policy” with asylum seekers of African origin. In 2018, the Libyan refugee crisis unfolded, in which the Danish government refused to accept refugees through the quota system (distribution of quotas) of The UNHCR has made it a priority to work on the integration of refugees who have already been received, with the result that the lives of many asylum seekers are at risk by staying in refugee tents at the border or (forcibly) returning to their country.

Since most - if not all - countries exporting migrants from Africa have no interest in receiving those deported by European countries, the European Union has resorted to providing compensation to these countries to ensure their cooperation, in return for material that is reflected in aid money, as well as in concluding diplomatic agreements. The procedures for obtaining European visas in these countries are facilitated for some groups, but it is clear that the aim behind the European Union’s responsibility for the countries of the South is to prevent immigrants and receive deportees, is that the countries of the Union do not bear the consequences of violating the rights of immigrants.

However, the most dangerous thing in this policy is “blackmailing the countries of the South with development aid.” No African country can benefit from this aid except by accepting the conditions of the European Union in the field of immigration, as this aid has turned into a means of pressure, especially with the Union exploiting its strength. Economic, political and security talks with fragile countries. An example of this is the emergency support fund that the Union announced a while ago for the benefit of African countries, with a value of 1.8 billion euros. Its cover is the fight against poverty, while deep within it is a means of pressure. All cooperation between the two sides remains a facade to impose the choices of the European Union in the field of migration and internal displacement. An example of this is also the policy of the Union financing Niger



to combat forced migration. The policies of this poor country, supported by the European Union, have created obstacles in the freedom of Africans who move between West African countries under the “Cidiao” agreement, in addition to the accumulation of migrants in the city. Agdz", which is the largest immigration point, and the high number of deaths among them due to the smugglers' failure to take the necessary measures while trying to smuggle these migrants for fear of arrest.

On the other hand, xenophobia is widespread in Europe, however, since the outbreak of the refugee wave in 2015, there is evidence of increased xenophobia, and between 2016 and 2019 in many European countries there was a decrease in the Gallup Immigration Acceptance Index, based on whether people think immigrants who live in their country, become their neighbors, and marry into their families are good or bad. Discrimination against African migrants or displaced persons did not stop from the crisis of 2015 and 2018, but it persisted and resurfaced with clarity during the Russian-Ukrainian war that began on the twenty-fourth of February 2022.

Third: Discrimination against Africans during the Russo-Ukrainian War

A 2018 Eurobarometer survey of the European Union found that 17% of respondents had a negative perception of the impact of migrants on society as migration became a prominent issue after the increase in refugee flows. EuroPameter's Fall 2019 report showed that more than a third of European people (36%) considered migration the most important issue facing the EU, vastly outpacing the second most important issue, climate change (24%), but down from a peak (58%) in 2015. Until the summer of 2020, due to the pandemic economic situation, Europeans considered immigration to be by far the most important issue facing the European Union.

Since the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian war, xenophobic acts against people who are neither Ukrainians nor Europeans have been observed, particularly against people of African and Arab descent during migration to



neighboring European countries. According to the witnesses of many Arab and African students who were stuck at the Ukrainian border, racism is practiced against them on many different levels. During the crisis between Russia and Ukraine in the period of 2021-2022, and in the military escalation that occurred in February 2022, reports emerged of African and Indian students trying to escape as they were prevented from boarding trains and crossing the border of Poland. Officials in South Africa and Nigeria commented on these reports and condemned racist practices against African and Arab students.

A report by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor stated that the Ukrainian and Polish border guards follow a discriminatory policy against non-Europeans by impeding the crossing of Africans while allowing Ukrainians to cross and providing them with food and first aid. At the same time that European countries welcome Ukrainian refugees and provide them with official and safe transit routes, seven asylum seekers of non-European origin have died after their boat sank in the Mediterranean off the coast of Greece, without their pleas being heeded.

Xenophobia is widely practiced on the borders of Ukraine against people of Arab, African and Indian descent. Eyewitnesses, including Arab and African students, said that they were forced to sit for long hours at the Polish border without any assistance, especially blacks, were prevented from crossing without reasons and were stuck at the border. At the same time, great facilities were provided to white Ukrainians, who were allowed to cross without visas and travel by train without tickets. As for the Arabs and the Indians with the Africans, they faced great difficulties when fleeing the country, as they were not allowed to board the trains and their crossing was delayed, while the Ukrainians were allowed to cross first.

The discrimination also extended to the statements of official political levels, with Kirill Petkov, the Bulgarian prime minister saying: "These people are smart, they are educated people...This is not the wave of refugees we are used to, people we were not sure of who they were, people with an obscure past, who could They are even terrorists." Major European countries have shown flexibility, welcomed Ukrainian refugees, and issued decisions to facilitate their



reception and residence, in stark contrast to the policy of expulsion and retaliation that they followed when dealing with asylum seekers from the Middle East and North Africa, and regions that are also witnessing violent conflicts more intense than the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in sometimes.

Although Arab and African officials called on the Ukrainian authorities to work to stop such racist practices, the situation of Arab or African refugees has not improved. On Monday, March 7, 2022, it was reported that Ukraine had halted the evacuation of Jordanian students from Sumy.

Historically, it is a given in human rights that the peoples of Eastern Europe are racist and discriminate against minorities. According to Western human rights organizations, asylum seekers, refugees, students and migrant workers are among the victims of bias-motivated violence in Ukraine, which also included diplomats, expatriate employees of foreign companies, members of visible minorities in Ukraine, and Ukrainians who helped victims of hate crimes. Foreign students, numbering about forty thousand, were among the main victims of hate crimes.

Small groups of citizens and migrants of African descent are visible targets and are particularly vulnerable to racism and xenophobia. Although relatively few people of African descent reside in Ukraine, the rate of violence against this group has been extraordinary, and refugees, students, visitors, and a number of citizens and permanent residents of African descent live under constant threat of harassment and violence.



Conclusion

European countries believe that they have the right to maintain their national security, and no one denies that, but this matter is not at the expense of the weak African peoples and the violation of their humanitarian obligations in the light of the European Convention on Human Rights. Although the European Union is one of the largest international funders of the migration crises in the African continent, these funds are not the only effort to end human suffering in Africa.

The rights of the forcibly displaced Africans to Europe, and in particular the recent crisis of the displaced from Ukraine, revealed European racism and discrimination on the basis of color. And not only that, the Ukrainian crisis may, if it continues for years later, reduce the volume of aid and donations distributed by European countries to African peoples in favor of supporting Ukraine against the Russian invasion.

Perhaps the European countries, if they want peace and stability in Africa, should abandon their policies that contribute to fueling conflicts in some African countries, and work to develop final solutions to the roots of the problems that cause forced migration on the continent.