

The Security Impact of Sudanese Refugees in Eastern Chad

Hissein Araby Nour
Mohd Fitri Bin Abdul Rahman

Universiti Utara Malaysia

*Corresponding author: hisseinaraby1981@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

The current refugee's crises across Africa, Middle East and Asia have captured the world's attention. Much of the existing discourse has stemmed from developed nations and focused on the economic and humanitarian impacts that these lingering crises had on the developed countries. This study being a deviation from the previous studies, investigate the security impact of Sudanese refugees in the Eastern Chad. This study used literature sourced materials and internet resources to examine the security challenges of Sudanese refugees in Eastern Chad by exploring the existing academic and popular literature around historical and contemporary case studies. This is undertaken with a view to overcome the negative effect of refugees on social and environmental implications, economic implications and violent conflict implications of refugees on the host nation. The study recommends that for peace and stability to be ensure efficient and purposive governance leadership that will protect lives and property should be provided, provision of sufficient infrastructure to ease the discomfort of the refugees, and provision of vocations to provide the refugees with gainful employment that will guarantees provision of sustainable livelihood for the displaced victims. The recommendations issued in the paper is of immense importance to the policy maker and the various stakeholders involved in the management of refugee's crises in Eastern Chad and beyond.

Keywords: *Eastern Chad, Host community, Security impact, Sudanese refugees*

Received: January 2017

Published: July 2017

INTRODUCTION

Refugee is one of the most used labels that constitute a great concern for all strata of the global community in the recent time. The word 'refugee' has increasingly been used to describe millions of people who are uprooted from their communities and have been displaced or forced into exile as a result of lack of tolerance, war or other human insurgencies (Zetter, 2011).

Generally, more than 60 million people are escaping their homes globally today. A large number of these people often flee as a result of war, insurgencies, conflicts, lack of resources and other environmental disasters. Recently, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) positioned that 16 million of these fleeing people are regarded as refugees while many of them required urgent assistance. This therefore points to the fact that, number of refugees globally is on the increase in the recent past years especially as a result of conflicts in Syria, Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan etc. (UNHCR, 2015). This importantly puts serious pressure on the home countries while the neighboring communities are strongly affected because of enormous influx of refugees. Today, more than 86 % of these global refugees are hosted by developing countries (UNHCR, 2016).

Chad being a developing country hosts over 299,800 refugees in 2015 making it to be one of the largest host countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNHCR, 2015). Of great concern is that this figure also includes a smaller quantity of stateless people and asylum seekers. The flood of refugees in Chad has been incessant since early 1990s. A large number of these refugees are from Sudan Darfur region and also people from about 15 other countries around Africa (UNHCR, 2016). For a country like Chad that is developing, the impact of refugees might be grave on the society, in terms of development and for the co-existence of the people.

While previous studies focus on different aspects of refugee's effects on the host communities such as the interdependencies of refugee camps and their social and political environments (Braun, Lang & Hochschild, 2016; Nail, 2015; Juma & Suhrke, 2002), the economic effect of refugee crises on host countries (Shellito, 2016), cultural adaptation of refugees (Qin et al, 2015), their security impacts on the host community are quite unexplored yet especially in the context of Eastern Chad. Although a large number of studies have been carried out in other contexts in this regard, a clear evidence of their potential security effects is urgently required.

The aim of this study is twofold. First, the paper seeks to synthesize current academic and general literature in order to present a general picture of the security impact that refugee crises can have on the host country such as Chad. While this paper is not claiming to cover all facets of this issue, it however, provides broad and most important perspective on the topic. Second, the paper in brief also proposes policy guides and recommendation that can serve as a guide to mitigate the negative security consequences. In this manner, the whole of the paper intends to present a conceptual thought based on contemporary and historical literature through which academics and policymakers can analyze the current crisis in Chad and other similar developing countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The contemporary world is witnessing serious of changes and upheavals. For many developed nations, the change is in the form of remarkable developments in progressive formulations of policies and discovery of new technology. But for many other developing countries, the story centers on survival. Today, the world is confronting its worst refugee crisis since World War II (Sengupta, 2015). Witnessing political chaos, war, and violence, more 60 million people have left their homes for the purpose of safety and in search of a better future (Graham, 2015). Importantly, as these refugees troop several borders of Syria and Iraq, struggle through Libya and Burma, and escape to neighboring communities from Somalia and Yemen, they have captured the world's attention.

At present, most of the academic and other popular discourses have addressed the humanitarian and moral aspects of refugee crises (Huysmans 2002; Isquith 2015; Nawyn 2012; Sazak 2015). These components are well addressed perhaps because of mounting international humanitarian compassion or pressure and awareness which made many of the developed regions, such as the United States and European Union to boost their capacities of receiving and hosting refugees (Barakat & Zyck 2015). Despite of these general discourses, though, the security impact of refugees to the host communities remains serious problem that needs to be addressed urgently especially that refugees are often seen as a security threat to the host community.

For instance, in the refugee camp of Kakuma, Turkana blamed the Dinka (Sudanese ethnic group) of cutting their trees while their women are being raped (Aukot, 2014). In Ghana, Liberian refugees are widely accused of stealing married women and perpetuating armed robberies while they also

engaged in other acts of drugs pushing, gambling and prostitution (Porter et al, 2008). Equally, the refugee crisis of Great Lakes makes the host states to blame refugees for staring violence in their communities, while governments retaliated by chasing armed refugees who are taking cover in their borders. The situation is similar in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as Hutu refugee emigration caused renewed cultural violence, while cross-border ethnic violence lingered in Congolese locals as a result of fight that ensued between Rwandan government and Rwandan refugee groups (Prunier & Gérard, 2009). Given the magnitude of these impacts, Eastern Chad is equally not exempted but faces more of political and human security risk than most of other host countries/communities.

Human Security

Commission on Human Security (CHS) defines human security as a means “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment.” Specifically, the CHS asserts that: “Human security means keeping fundamental freedoms that are the principle of life. Also, it means protecting people from serious and widespread threats and situations. It is processes that build on hopes of peoples and strengths. It means establishing political, environmental, economic, cultural, social and military systems that together give people the building blocks of dignity, survival and livelihood” (Ogata, 2003).

However, the nature of refugees’ crisis and its security impact on the host communities are at different gravities. In most cases, evidences have revealed that the presence of refugees do cause some pockets of negative security crises in many of the host communities world development report (WDR, 2011) as noted earlier. The situation in Chad is however worrisome as the presence of these refugees is linked to the serious conflict in the country among other countries that host 100s of refugees (WDR, 2011).

Notably, some of the political and security refugees’ crises that are militating against the development of Eastern Chad just like any other hosting countries include but not limited to the following:

A) “Rebel social networks expansion and dispersion of violence: Rebel organizations use opportunities of camps which are located near to the boundary of country of origin to unleash their terrorism as such camps also provide sanctuary to their other nefarious activities like recruitment of other members (WDR, 2011). For instance, in the 80s, Afghan refugees

took a serious resistance against the reigning communist authority and its Soviet supporters with direct support of Pakistani government. This incident led to the radicalization of some parts of Pakistani population while arms proliferation was the order of day- these events eventually weakened the state authority (Rashid, 2008). In another instance, a rebellious group that composed of mostly 'Uganda-based Tutsi refugees from Rwanda' attacked northern Rwanda having formed themselves into a Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) (Lomo et al, 2001). Similar situation is being witnessed in the Eastern Chad, for instance, children are being recruited forcibly by Sudanese armed groups among other things" (UNCHR, 2012) in various refugee's camps.

B) Facilitation of international spreading of combatants, arms, and ideologies conducive to conflict (WDR, 2011). The role being played by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a rebel organization being formed by Palestinian refugees, in the civil wars of Lebanon (1975) and Jordan (1970) are some the scenarios where refugees become combatants in the countries hosting them, cases also abound of situations where Liberian refugees are recruited by Sierra Leone insurgent movements and which brought about violence and destabilization in the middle of 90s (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). Aside, experience has equally revealed that in the host country, with adequate possession of resources and other materials, refugees can be domestic opposition groups that wage armed battles and wars as in the case of Somali refugees that worked strongly with ethnic Somali separatists in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Likewise, the Sudanese Rebel incursions into Chad were troublesome events that led to importations of arms and ammunitions which made Chadian governments to blame the aggression on the government of Sudan (Maio, 2010).

C) Creation of bilateral tensions. In certain instances, political and security threat can be posed by the refugees to the host community; and in turn creating tensions in the bilateral relations among neighboring communities (WDR, 2011). Good cases are that of the assassination of Indian Prime Minister by Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in 1991 over his perceived rapport with Sri Lankan government, and the overthrown of Obote administration in Uganda by Rwandan Tutsi refugees (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). Likewise, the genocide in Darfur is frequently cited as the cause of tensions in neighboring Chad. The United Nations admonished that the violence in Darfur could escalate into genocide similar to that in Rwanda in 1994 (Maio, 2010).

D) In some extreme instances, a number of refugees are suspected to organize themselves into terrorist group and unleash terror on the host communities. These instances have resulted in a new dimension in many of the host countries attitude and response to refugees, particularly since the unprecedented attack of terrorist of 9/11 on the USA (Omeokachie, 2013).

Indeed, it has been argued that term such as ‘‘refugee terrorist’’ is being employed increasingly to justify preemptive actions taken against group being suspected of designing terrorism that could be exploited to circumvent the refugee protection system (Juma, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

This study is literature based in nature. The study harnesses its information through secondary data such as textbooks, published journals, internet resources, reports, articles and executive summary related to refugees.

Implications of the Refugee Security Crises in Chad

The recent war in the Sudan, and host of other crises in other regions of Africa, indicates that sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly becoming ‘hot and unstabilized region’. This development has severe implications with respect to political and human security, and at large the flows of refugees which has other debilitating impacts on the host communities. Importantly, interstate wars are now being witnessed incessantly due to struggle for power among the African states and the fact that leaders in Africa are looking for ways of internationalizing and to legitimizing their incursions while they domesticate their control. Therefore, the implications of the refugee security crises can be considered from the perspectives of social and environment, economic and violent dimensions.

Social and Environmental Implications

The social and environmental implications of refugees in Eastern Chad are quite enormous, especially as such large population increasingly mounting pressure on social services such as health, education, housing, welfare provision and others which are provided by the government for the purpose of assisting the Chadians.

Considering the environmental implications, in order for the refugees to survive, they mount pressure on the environment by dwelling on the slums as a result of insufficient housing, dearth of access to essential social services, while they equally face other forms of deprivation. It has been posited that the deprivation and high rate of poverty among refugees has serious implications on both the refugees and their host communities. Since the refugees are often moved and reside in large numbers, they often create

a number of environmental-related issues in the towns and cities where they reside (Tibaijuka, 2009).

Economic Implications

The economic implications of the presence of refugees in Eastern Chad are very pervasive and enormous. These implications cannot be measured by financial indices only but as well as with other factors are paramount. For instance, there has been a rising rate of employment among Chadians and which created tension, poor labour market condition, a fall in employment generation and lower levels of absorption of labour capacity both in the formal and informal sector of Eastern Chadian economy (Dadush & Niebuhr, 2016).

Importantly, the impact of high number of refugees is largely felt in the area of employment of unskilled labour, low skilled and working class who dwell, work and strive for jobs, struggle for small businesses and hawking with refugees in the informal communities and settlements (Omeokachie, 2013). This has created and generated tensions as the locals often accused the refugees of taking up their little available jobs. This is most obvious as the intense participation of refugees in the sectors of the economy has actually hurt local businesses and subsequently brought about negative reactions among the locals.

Violent Conflict Implications

There are ample cases of violent attacks on the Sudanese refugees by some Chadians who either raped the women and sometimes they took possessions of the properties of the refugees. Even though these attacks especially by the Janjaweed militia have reduced having transferred the refugees to camps in further inland, there are still odd instances of the local Chadians still attacking refugees outside of the camps (Eastave, 2004). The major cause of the violent attack has been traced to the claims by local that the foreigners are stealing their resources, especially the environment sector and taking over of their jobs which projected that there has been a serious struggle or competition for resources by the Eastern Chadians and Sudanese refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The current refugee crisis in Chad is catastrophic in nature as it is affecting millions of the families, destabilizing Chad as a nation that is hosting the large numbers of the migrants. It is unlikely that at moment that the huge numbers

of refugees will sojourn back to their countries. Management of the crisis and mitigation of its worst consequences requires courageous leadership and political will. A thorough assessment as attempted in this paper is one of the important steps that can be taken to clarify available choices confronting political action, not substitute for the willingness to undertake it.

Therefore, for peace and stability to be accomplished over a long period of time Chad, a developing nation must give meaningful leadership through adequate provision of protection of lives and property, and purposive governance. Importantly, serious attention must be paid to early warning signals, while mechanisms must be put in place to nip any conflicts in the bud while the refugee influx into countries must equally be monitored by adhering to and upholding local principles, as well as international laws. Additionally, the influx of refugees into Chad from neighboring countries can be checked, using regular custom and immigration posts at the border. The host nation (Chad) can as well create military barricades at strategic locations for the purpose of checking the flood of refugees. This would prevent spillover effects on the host nation.

Provision of extra infrastructures and other ventures that could assist the refugees being hosted in Chad Republic to be gainfully employed would help to cushion the effect psychological trauma on the refugees and asylum seekers. Purposively, gathering and sharing information intelligently among neighboring countries would also go a long way to prevent internal conflict from escalating into the neighboring states. The extent of abiding with law and order in refugee camps would also be enhanced by informing the refugees about their duties under local and international law. In this regard, it is important to recall the UN Refugee Convention which specifies that “all refugee has responsibilities to the state in which he finds himself, which need in specific that he follows to its laws and regulations as well as to actions taken for maintenance of public order”. (UN 1995). Educative programs can be organized intermittently to pass this message and to warn of the consequences of non-compliance.

Extra efforts could also be made to reduce the degree of tensions and conflicts that are inevitably common in the refugee camps. Agencies that would be responsible for the resolutions of conflicts between individuals and groups could be established. This will go a long way especially when agencies work with the legal and social traditions of the refugee population. Some sporting, cultural, and educational activities could be encouraged, especially among adolescents would could cause violence and likely engage in other destabilizing political, military, and criminal activities.

Income-generating and other vocational training programs that would help to improve the quality of lives of the refugees in Chad Republic should also be established. The establishment of such would rekindle their hope for the future. Perhaps they could also be given access to land which can be

used for agricultural purpose as used to be in the 1960s and 1970s instead of being restricted to camps for years without any hope of becoming self-sufficient. Aligning with the above enlisted recommendations, future study should explore the challenges and prospects of humanitarian services for refugees in c

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper to establish the security impact of Sudanese refugees on to the host community in Eastern Chad. Evidences shown that refugees create both security problems and humanitarian disasters on to hosting communities and neighboring. Also, refugees can create conflicts in their host communities while they similarly unleash economic problem on the communities that welcoming them since they require humanitarian assistance. This paper equally argues that the refugees also create negative social and environmental impact with unfavorable costs for the host country. In essence, refugees in most cases pose a security threat to the host country while they are meted with counter attacks from the locals who may for one reason or the other want to protect their territories, in case of Eastern Chad.

REFERENCES

- Aukot, E. (2014). It is Better to be a Refugee than a Turkana in Kakuma: The Relationship between Hosts and Refugees in Kenya. *Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 21(3), 73-83.
- Barakat, Sultan, and Steven A. Zyck (2015). The Syrian refugee crisis and the erosion of Europe's moral authority. *The Brookings Institution*. N.p.,
- Braun, A., Lang, S., & Hochschild, V. (2016). Impact of Refugee Camps on Their Environment. A Case Study Using Multi-Temporal SAR Data. *Journal of Geography, Environment and Earth Science International*, 4(2), 1-17.
- Dadush, U., & Niebuhr, M. (2016). *The Economic Impact of Forced Migration*. OCP Policy Center.
- De Maio, J. L. (2010). Is war contagious? The trans nationalization of conflict in Darfur. *African Studies Quarterly*, 11(4), 25-44.
- Eastave (2004). One year in the Chad desert - the Sudanese refugees. Retrieved from <http://www.msf.org/en/article/one-year-chad-desert-sudanese-refugees>.
- Graham, David A (2015). Violence has forced 60 million people from their homes. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/06/refugees-global/396122>.

- Huysmans, Jef (2002). Shape-shifting NATO: Humanitarian action and the Kosovo refugee crisis. *Review of International Studies*, 28(3), 37-66.
- Isquith, Elias (2015). Syria's refugees are human beings: Why the U.S. has a moral duty to help them, *Unpublished doctoral thesis submitted to Wharton school at University of Pennsylvania*.
- Juma, M. (2007). The role of the inter-governmental authority on development in preventing and combating terrorism. *African counterterrorism cooperation: Assessing Regional and Sub Regional Initiatives*, Potomac Books Inc, Dulles, 57-76.
- Juma, M. K., & Suhrke, A. (Eds.). (2002). *Eroding local capacity: international humanitarian action in Africa*. Nordic Africa Institute.
- Lomo Zachary, Angela Naggaga and Lucy Hovil (2001). The phenomenon of forced migration in Uganda. An overview of policy and practice in an historical context. *Working Paper No. 1. Refugee Law Project. Uganda*.
- Nail, T. (2015). *The figure of the migrant*. 1st ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Nawyn, S.J. (2012). Managing the undesirables: refugee camps and humanitarian government. *Contemporary Sociology*, 41(1), 57-58.
- Omeokachie, I.V. (2013). The security implication of the refugee's situation in South Africa. *Unpublished Master Thesis. University of Pretoria*.
- Ogata, S. (2003). Outline of the report of the commission on human security. *United Nations Commission on Human Security, CHS Report*.
- Porter, G., Hampshire, K., Kyei, P., Adjaloo, M., Rapoo, G., & Kilpatrick, K. (2008). Linkages between livelihood opportunities and refugee-host relations: learning from the experiences of Liberian camp-based refugees in Ghana. *Journal of refugee studies*, 21(2), 230-252.
- Prunier, Gérard (2009). *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Qin, D. B., Saltarelli, A., Rana, M., Bates, L., Lee, J. A., & Johnson, D. J. (2015). My culture helps me make good decisions. Cultural adaptation of Sudanese refugee emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 30(2), 213-243.
- Rashid, Ahmed. (2008). Descent into chaos: The United States and the failure of nation building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, Penguin Group. USA. *Foreign Affairs*, 87-30.
- Salehyan, I., & Gleditsch, K. S. (2006). Refugees and the spread of civil war. *International Organization*, 60(2), 335-366.

- Salehyan, I. (2007). Transnational rebels: Neighboring states as sanctuary for rebel groups. *World Politics*, 59(2), 217-242.
- Sazak, S. C. (2015). an argument for using frozen assets for humanitarian assistance in refugee situations. *Journal of International Affairs*, 68(2), 305-319.
- Sengupta, S. (2015). Refugee crisis in Europe prompts Western engagement in Syria. *New York Times*. September 30.
- Shaver, A., & Zhou, Y.Y. (2015). Questioning refugee camps as sources of conflict. Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved from https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/shaver/files/refugees_conflict.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/shaver/files/refugees_conflict.
- Shellito, K. (2016). The economic effect of refugee crises on host countries and implications for the Lebanese case. *Joseph Wharton Research Scholars*. Available at http://repository.upenn.edu/joseph_wharton_scholars.
- Tibaijuka, A. (2009). Sustainable urbanization, climate change and the global financial crisis: The role of the United Nations Human Settlements Program. *Sydney Ideas Lecture Series*, 18.
- UNCHR (2010). UNHCR condemns endemic rape in DRC, helps survivors. Briefing Notes. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4bd18e7e9.html>.
- UNHCR, (2015). *UNHCR Global trends forced displacement in 2014.*, UNHCR Lebanon. UNHCR Web. 10 Nov. 2016.
- World Development Report (2011). The impacts of refugees on neighboring countries. A development challenges.
- World Bank. (2011). *World development report conflict security and development*. World Bank.
- Zetter, R. (2011). Unlocking the protracted displacement of refugees and internationally displaced persons an overview. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 30(4),1-13.