

Internal Displacement and Cross Border Movement of Nigerian Nationals

Authors: Mary Boatemaa Setrana¹ and Justice Richard Kwabena Owusu Kyei²

Abstract: The paper examines internal displacement in Nigeria and the subsequent cross border movement of some of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) to neighbouring countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The paper makes use of data from secondary sources such as literature on forced migration, internal displacement and cross border migration in Nigeria derived from reports, books, academic journals and scholarly sites of the internet. The key findings show that there are still significant obstacles in the ECOWAS protocol against free mobility within the sub-region. The findings also show that some of the IDPs who move beyond the national borders lack basic legal and humanitarian support as they do not qualify as refugees neither are they protected under any international law. The authors argue that despite the involuntary nature that mask emigration of IDPs, security concerns have prevailed over the humanitarian obligations of destination countries that makes it difficult for genuine Nigerian migrants who need protection to receive it. The findings also show that gender is embedded in internal displacement and recommends that future research should not overlook the gender bias. The paper recommends that the national migration policies of both Nigeria and destination countries need to strike a balance between security and humanitarian concerns.

Keywords: Internal displacement, Nigeria, gender, ECOWAS, cross border movement

List of Abbreviations

ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NEMA	Nigeria Emergency Management Agency
UNCHR	United Nations Commission on Human Rights
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

¹ Lecturer, Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, mbsetrana@ug.edu.gh /mobkjowat@yahoo.com

² Ph.D in Sociology (Researcher), Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, Poland, rokyei@gmail.com

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Introduction

The problem of internal displacement received very little attention in the Sub-Saharan African literature (Oucho, 1997) until the last two decades (Mooney, 2005). Countries within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have experienced persistent increase in the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The phenomenon of forced migration is increasingly occurring around the globe under diverse circumstances, thereby attracting the attention of politicians, policy makers and researchers. It is not surprising that the United Nation's Secretary General appointed the Special Representative on Internal Displacement in 1992 to monitor and report on internal displacement around the globe. Oucho (2009) calls for a systematic study of the diversified and entrenched nature of IDPs within Sub-Saharan Africa. This study contributes to the literature by examining the multifaceted nature of internal displacement in Nigeria, one of the most populous countries within the ECOWAS sub-region which is experiencing tremendous increase in IDPs in recent times.

The less attention paid to forced migration in migration literature has its roots in the early writings of contemporary migration studies. Ernst Georg Ravenstein (1834-1913) wrote in the *Laws of Migration* (1885, 1889) that:

bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation and unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings, and even compulsion (slave trade, transportation) produce flows of migrants, but none of these flows can be compared in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in the most men to 'better' themselves in material aspects.

The voluntary form of migration motivated by economic reasons propagated by Ravenstein has dominated and influenced major migration theories (see: mobility transition by Zelinsky, 1971) throughout the twentieth century till now. The reduction of human mobility to economic determinants alone overlooks certain important immeasurable social factors like environmental and climate motivations (Terminski, 2013). We argue in this paper that inasmuch as some people migrate willingly and voluntarily, there are other forms of migration that occur under forced or coerced conditions as far as Nigeria is concerned. Some scholars refer to the voluntary-forced migration nexus as continuum (Koppenberg, 2012; Oucho, 2009). It is not in the limit of this work to delve into the voluntary and involuntary migration nexus rather it focuses on internal displacement as a form of forced migration (Mooney, 2005; Terminski, 2013).

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The paper examines internal displacement in Nigeria and the subsequent cross border movement of some of the Internally Displaced Persons to neighbouring countries. The study also investigates the gendered nature of IDPs in Nigeria. It also aims at investigating the institutional measures and policies put in place to protect and assist IDPs by the Nigerian government and ECOWAS. Findings show that IDPs in Nigeria find it difficult to obtain basic human rights due to inconsistency in the provision of humanitarian needs like housing, feeding and medical care as well as inadequate systematic programmes like training programmes, employment opportunities and vocational skills in dealing with the phenomenon. Moreover the situation of the IDPs worsens when they cross border to ECOWAS member states, despite the existence of the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and Establishment.

The paper makes use of data from secondary sources namely literature on forced migration, internal displacement and cross border migration in Nigeria derived from reports, books, academic journals and scholarly sites of the internet. Due to data limitations and issues of data credibility, this study compared and contrasted data from various sources. Statistical data on internal displaced persons (IDPs) were obtained from international and national organisations namely International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and Nigeria Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The paper also benefited from research work and publication of the authors on Human Mobility in Nigeria (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). The work proceeds with a brief discussion of forced migration in Nigeria then it continues with a discussion on forced mobility of IDPs in Nigeria. We continue with a discussion of gendered internal displacement in Nigeria followed by an examination on the linkage and assessment of internal displacement and the ECOWAS Protocols. The paper concludes with conclusion, key research gaps and recommendations.

Forced Migration in Nigeria

Nigeria has experienced human mobility in various forms for several decades. In the past, some of these movement emerged due to development and growth of empires, new trade centres, ethnic conflict, pastoralism, and search for fertile lands for agricultural purposes (Agyeman and Setrana. 2014: 74). Most of these movements were produced under the context of both voluntary

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and involuntary mobility. During the pre-colonial period, some of the empires and kingdoms that developed in modern day Nigeria generated several forms of forced mobility across the region (Afolayan, Ikwuyatum and Abejide, 2008). The Sokoto Caliphate that developed during the 19th century for example, led to slave raids that forcefully recruited labourers from other ethnic groups (Lovejoy, 1978). The colonial administration also displaced entire ethnic groups to feed the colonial economy (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). Particularly, ethnic groups around the Delta areas were displaced out of their places of settlement and sources of livelihood when extraction of minerals and oil started in the area (Osoba, 1969). Additionally, able bodied men were also forced to move from their rural farms to work for the colonial masters.

The hope of gaining independence from European domination brought joy to many ethnic groups. However, this did not happen for many Nigerians as more acute forms of forced mobility patterns developed in the post-independence period. Ethno-religious violence between groups in the Northern and Southern parts of the country distorted the existing patterns of human mobility within the country resulting in several forms of displacement (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014: 77). The main affected ethnic groups in all these ethnic struggles were the Igbos that were forced to move from their place of abode by the Fulani-Hausa group due to power struggles between the North and the South (Afolayan et al. 2008; Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). The largest post-independence war in Nigeria namely the Biafra War of 1967-1970 internally displaced and dislodged over one million Nigerians (Afolayan et al, 2008; Mberu & Pongou, 2010). Political persecution also led elites to flee from Nigeria to neighbouring countries or abroad to seek refuge.

Forced mobility during the post-independence period was also shaped by happenings within the West African sub-region. On two occasions, Ghana for instance initiated the evacuation of foreign nationals. The Kwame Nkrumah regime started such agitation while the Busia government also introduced the 1969 Alliance Compliance forcing the return of many Nigerian nationals who had long established in Ghana (Skinner 1963; Peil, 1974). However, Nigeria's economy significantly improved during the mid-1970s due to the oil price hikes and high demand for cheap labour and construction works after the civil war (Tonah, 2007). In 1982, Nigeria attracted about 2.5 million immigrants; most of them were from Ghana (Adepoju, 2005). Although the economic growth attracted labourers from the West African sub-region, it was short-lived as a result of mismanagement and corruption (Anarfi, Kwankye, Ababio & Tiemoko,

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2003). The economic down-turn and internal agitations by the citizenry once again led Nigerian authorities to enforce strict immigration laws that led the Nigerian government to expel about 2.2 million immigrants in 1983 and in 1985, more than 200,000 immigrants were still forced out of Nigeria (Adepoju, 2005; Brydon, 1992). Most of those expelled were ECOWAS citizens (Onwuka, 1982).

Up until now, Nigerians remain one of the largest emigrants within the West African sub-region. Most of these Nigerian emigrants fall under the category of voluntary migrants but there are still some who were forced out of the country because of insecurity emerging from ethno-religious conflicts and terrorist attacks (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014). As Nigerian citizens are forced to move from their homes, they become internally displaced and some subsequently migrate to neighbouring countries. IDPs do not seek for solution only within the confines of the nation-state, rather their quest for decent and stable living conditions force them to migrate to neighbouring countries. As the IDPs cross-border, they lose their status as IDPs and also fail to qualify as refugees. Hence they lose the right to legal or humanitarian protection. Some may even cross-border through the different porous borders and might not be able to have the possibility of receiving any form of assistance. About 200,000 IDPs were estimated to have crossed borders to neighbouring countries as at the end of 2014 (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2015). Recently, Cameroon alone registered 66,000 Nigerian IDPs as refugees while Chad recorded 27,000 (UNOCHA, 2015).

Forced Mobility: Internal Displacement

The concept of forced mobility has been defined in several ways. However, a unanimous understanding that runs through all of them is the fact that such movement is involuntary, coerced, and not planned by the victims. The diversification of current trends of human mobility is increasingly creating diverse circumstances under which forced mobility is occurring. IOM defines forced mobility as:

a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes (example movements of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects) (IOM, 2004:25).

From the definition, it is clear that forced mobility can be categorised into various forms, depending on the legal and political negotiation by states, regional and international community

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(Castles, 2004). Forms of forced migration include refugee movement, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers. However, in the literature, much attention is given to refugee movement and asylum seekers that have legal backing rather than internal displacement and internally displaced persons whenever there is a discourse on forced mobility (Mooney, 2005; Terminski, 2013). IDPs are likely to suffer systematic violation of their human rights within their own country without having any legal or institutional provision to claim international assistance (Benjamin & Fancy, 1998:13). This paper contributes to the discussion on the dynamics of internal displacement in Nigeria.

The definition of internal displacement has evolved in the last two decades since it gained international recognition (Mooney, 2005). Although Global statistics on IDPs continuously count only those persons evacuated by persecution or conflict, some scholars such as Ibeanu (1998) and Mooney (2005), argue that internal displacement should also include persons who are forced to migrate due to natural disasters, government developmental projects and poverty. The Guiding Principles of the United Nations on IDPs in 1998 defines IDPs as:

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (1998:5).

The African Union in 2009 was inspired by the Guiding Principles of 1998 and adapted the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, known as the Kampala Convention. The definition of the Guiding Principle moves the argument beyond the traditional notion of IDPs being restricted to only persecution or conflict through the emphasis on *particular* which means that the list provided in the definition is not exhaustive. The Guidelines do provide practical information to governments and non-governmental organisations on how to relate with IDPs but it lacks any form of legal backing which makes it difficult for IDPs to make legal claims. It depicts the descriptive nature of the Guidelines. Both definitions maintain that for a person or group of people to qualify as IDPs, they should not have crossed border. The problem which this paper raises is that some IDPs do not qualify as refugees when they cross-border and therefore risk being deprived of the basic humanitarian needs and rights. For this reason, Holbrooke (2000) suggests that policy makers

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should not let bureaucratic principles of sovereignty lead them to ignore IDPs who cross border to their territories.

Data on displacement is inadequately estimated due to conflicting numbers arising from different techniques of data collection in Nigeria. In February, 2015, both the United Nations office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Government of Nigeria and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported conflicting figures on the number of IDPs in the country. While the former put the figure of IDPs at 915,219, the latter even presents a higher estimate of about 1,235,300 IDPs (IDMC and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2015). Despite the inconsistency in figures, both reports confirm the alarming rate of IDPs in Nigeria that need urgent attention in a systematic and coordinated manner. According to IDMC (2014), Nigeria has the largest number of IDPs in Africa and ranks third in the world after Syria and Columbia. According to IOM report published by UNICEF Nigeria (2015), as at April 2015 there were 1,160,781 IDPs living in host communities and 140,982 IDPs live in camps in the northeast regions. Displacement of persons in Nigeria is a complex phenomenon explained by various determinants. Among the various factors causing high levels of internal displacement in the country include climate change; ethno-religious conflict; terrorist attacks and forced eviction by government. However, flood-induced disasters and conflicts are the largest displacement events in the country.

Climate Change

Climate change continues to displace people and in 2012, it caused 98 per cent of global displacements (IDMC and NRC, 2013). The forms of climate-induced displacements include desertification, flooding and soil erosion. The 2012 Global rankings positioned Nigeria as the second largest disaster country due to flood. Table 2 shows that as much as 6,112,000 persons were forced out of their places of residence due to flood-induced disasters. Nigeria experiences severe rainfalls each year between July and October. Consequently, many men, women and children are forced to flee their homes, especially settlement around the river plains of Benue and Niger and their tributaries that run through 33 out of the 36 states of the country (IDMC and NRC, 2013). While infrastructure, bridges and houses collapse, the overflows of dams that need to be drained are released, causing problems to many households. In 2014, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) data estimated that about 66,000 people were

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internally displaced due to flooding in Nigeria (The Nation, 2015). These people do not only find new places of abode within the country, but also cross borders to other countries where they can find better livelihoods. Consequently, some of these displaced persons bear the risk of using unapproved routes to get to their destination due to lack of proper documentation. Some of the IDPs also risk the hazard of human trafficking (Oucho, 2009).

Table 2: Internal Displacement caused by flood in Nigeria (2009-2012)

Year	Affected Population
2009	140,000
2010	560,000
2011	6,300
2012	6,112,000
Total	6,818,000

Source: IDMC & NRC, 2012.

Nigeria also suffers from desertification in the northern part of the country. This has caused thousands of people to flee their habitual place of residence. Eleven states in the Northern part of Nigeria including the states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara have been adversely affected by desertification which have displaced people and forced them to migrate to other areas in Nigeria (Ajiboye, 2014) as well as other parts of the West African sub-region. There are inadequate measures put in place by the Nigerian government in ensuring that such displaced persons have access to some basic humanitarian needs as well as sustainable programme that can yield self-sustaining income. The Nigerian government in February 2015 closed down IDPs' camp at Gombe that accommodated more than 25000 IDPs instead of the maximum capacity of 3000 (Malik, 2015). IDPs live in deplorable conditions and overpopulated living space which do not enable them to have access to basic amenities like toilet facilities, bed, water and hygienic food. The situation has led to further displacement because the government ordered the IDPs to return home but there are no homes for them to return to. Their situation needs structural and medium term solution like profit making ventures to empower them to be self-sufficient instead of the emergent solutions that the government provides. IDPs should not be treated only as an emergent problem because some do last long and the government needs to develop programmes that will empower IDPs to be economically and socially active citizens.

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Terrorist attacks and Ethno-religious Conflicts

Since 2000, different groups have been formed demanding different forms of rights that are mostly linked to political power. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) formed in 2005 had clashes with government forces in 2009 which internally displaced thousands of Nigerian citizens (Tajudeen & Adebayo, 2013). In recent times, one of the significant factors that influenced displacement in Nigeria was the brutal attacks and kidnappings by the armed Islamist group called Boko Haram. The attacks of Boko Haram are mainly concentrated in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. According to the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) set up by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there were about 1,188,018 IDPs in only six states in the northeast of Nigeria as at February 2015 (IOM/NEMA, 2015). The insurgency by the armed Islamist group, Boko Haram accounted for more than 70 per cent of IDPs in Nigeria. In 2013, between 250,000 and 470,500 IDPs were recorded due to Boko Haram's attack on civilians (IDMC and NRC, 2014). Most of the displaced persons in Nigeria were ill catered for due to ineffective government policies and lack of coordination among the various agencies in charge of IDPs.

Nigeria experiences a complex situation whereby religion is infused into ethnic relations. The return to democratic rule in Nigeria in 1999 has witnessed certain religious demands especially in the northern part of Nigeria which has heightened religious violence. The demand for sharia law in some northern states like Kaduna has led to clashes between Christians and Muslims which have displaced thousands of people (Agbibo, 2014). Inter-communal clashes also account for displacement in Nigeria but it forms less than 10 per cent of IDPs (IDMC, 2015).

IOM-OIM (2015) findings confirm that IDPs who are living outside allocated camps are not catered for and they are obliged to live under inhumane conditions coupled with human right abuses. Some of the displaced persons do cross border to neighbouring countries whereby some are granted refugee status while others are refused due to strict immigration policies that leave such persons in vulnerable conditions. Data from UN OCHA (2014:2) show that 12,000 displaced Nigerian citizens were forced to leave Cameroonian borders. This results from the fact that most IDPs who cross-borders do not have the prerequisite right to qualify as refugees and in order to avoid clandestine immigrants, destination countries force them to repatriate to their countries of origin. There is therefore a thin line between the contested notion of internal

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displacement and cross-border movement which revolve around legal terminologies that deprive persons of basic humanitarian rights.

Forced Eviction and Poor Economic Conditions

Internal displacement is not caused only by natural and human-made disasters, terrorist attacks, and ethno-religious conflicts. People are internally displaced due to extreme poverty caused by unequal distribution of socioeconomic resources and unbalanced development that result in famine (Ladan, 2013). Able bodied and frustrated youth are forced to move to the relatively developed urban areas due to extreme poverty and famine. They end up in slums and satellite towns around the large cities where they are not protected by any laws (Laden, 2013). Their problems are compounded by government's forced eviction exercises from the slums and satellite towns due to developmental projects that have to be carried out. Article 10 of the Kampala Convention entreats African Union (AU) member states to avoid 'development induced projects' that leads to eviction and in case it occurs, the victims have to be compensated. According to Amnesty International report in 2013 the Lagos government forcefully evicted residents of Badia East which displaced more than 2,237 households without compensation. The government's forced eviction programmes do not make provision for humanitarian needs of the evicted citizens which leaves them in a state of displacement. Most of these displaced persons stay within the nation state in poor conditions while some are forced to cross national borders to neighbouring ECOWAS countries.

Gendered Internal Displacement in Nigeria

Gender refers to the social construction of the role of women and men within a given cultural setting (Benjamin & Fancy, 1998). The discussion here does not focus only on men or women but on the interaction between men and women. Nigerian women construct and negotiate their roles within a particular cultural setting but when an unexpected and forced mobility occurs, they loss their bargaining power. Women are the most vulnerable group affected during forced mobility although most of the few IDPs data overlook the gender embedded nature of internal displacement in Nigeria. It is important to recognise that displacement is not free from gender bias. When displacement occurs not only do people lose properties and goods rather people's lives and the social fabric are left in tatters (Segura-Escobar and Meertens, 1997). Women, children and the aged are the most vulnerable groups that are hardly protected from the adverse effects of displacement and they make up majority of IDPs population (Cohen, 1999). According

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to OCHA Nigeria's report (2014) as many as 400,000 people most of whom were women and children had experienced multiple displacements from Gworza in Borno state, Michika, Madagali and Mubi in Adamawa state to Yola. The fieldwork of Dickson (2014) presents gender induced stories of female IDPs in IDPs camps who have gone through torture and maltreatment. Lami, 15, a female IDP recounts how a government official took her and some girls out of the camp with the promise of better life not knowing they were only taking advantage of their vulnerable situation to abuse them. Lami recounted that:

One day, some people came to the camp and said that they were taking us to a better place. That was how I got to Alhaji Aliyu's house and it was there, every day, his brother forcefully slept with me. After that, he would beat me and one of Alhaji's wives too would always beat me. One day she attacked me with a knife. That was how I got the wound in my skull.

Laraba, 16, also recounts how an official in the camp lured her with better living condition in his home with his family only to realise it was an excuse to rape and abuse her. Unfortunately she is afraid to report this official for fear of being expelled from the camp. Laraba recounted that:

I was happy leaving the camp, but when we got to his house, there was no wife. He raped me continuously for three nights, locked me inside his house for days and threatened me. I managed to escape and came back to the camp but I got pregnant. I am not the only one this has happened to and I know that many of the workers do likewise.

These recounts of Lami and Laraba demonstrate the gendered nature of internal displacement. In the first place Lam and Laraba got separated from their families which made them exposed to gender-based violence and sexual abuse that led to pregnancy. The perpetrators go unpunished after degrading and humiliating these female IDPs which could result in psychosocial consequences.

The Linkage and Assessment of Internal Displacement and the ECOWAS Protocols

In the previous sections we have argued that internal displacement in Nigeria is multifaceted and due to the non-existence of any legal binding principles on the Nigerian government, IDPs are not able to make any legal claims in spite of their ill and poor living conditions. We have also shown that some of the IDPs do cross border to neighbouring countries but they are not granted the right to stay and therefore live as irregular migrants without any legal protection. In this section we analyse the linkage between internal displacement and the

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Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Protocol on Free Movement, the right of Residence and Establishment.

The ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons, residence and establishment enacted in May 1979 by all member countries did set out a three phased approach over a period of 15 years to allow the right to entry and abolition of visas; free residence; and right to establishment (Adepoju, 2008). Despite the good intentions of these protocols in strengthening the integration among member states, it is only the first phase that has been fully implemented among member states whereas the second and third phases are still in the pipeline. Even Nigeria with the largest population and prominent in the establishment of ECOWAS, has also not fully implemented these protocols (Panapress, 2011).

The current state of the ECOWAS protocol enjoins Nigerian emigrants the right to enter member states without visa for a temporary period without fear of being expelled. However, the protocol requires the use of travel documents which migrants who are displaced hardly possess. Therefore IDPs who quietly cross the porous ECOWAS borders into other member countries do not have the right to the temporary stay in the member states because they cannot produce any valid identity card. IDPs who cross-border under such conditions are likely to live in poor conditions and are often subject to abuse. Their statuses are not defined, so once they enter the host country, they are not under any form of legal protection as they might not qualify as refugees especially those displaced through forced eviction by government developmental projects and climate change.

Moreover, as the second and third phases of the ECOWAS protocol have not been implemented, forced Nigerian emigrants who enter member states do not have the right of residence and establishment as such if they extend their stay beyond the 90 days they risk being expelled and lose the basic human rights they enjoy in the destination countries. In addition, experiences of Nigerian IDPs that cross border to ECOWAS member states do encounter numerous challenges that infringe on their human rights. Some of which include discrimination, ill-treatment, lack of access to legal support, and improper working conditions among others (Atsenuwa and Adepoju, 2010). With the securitisation of migration in contemporary times, irregular migrants are unwelcomed and are considered as posing security threats.

Apart from the absence of proper documentation, the national policy framework by the Nigerian government to regulate the emigration of its nationals has recently been approved and

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implemented by the Federal Cabinet so it is still premature to assess its effect on the humanitarian and legal protection of IDPs. Also, there is a laissez-faire attitude of the Nigerian government and its agencies towards the plight of its citizens overseas which consequently results in little effort done to defend the rights of its citizens outside the home country (Adepoju and van der Wiel, 2010). This is partly because the federal government has not addressed the important issue of protecting citizenship rights of Nigerians irrespective of being indigenes or settlers in any part of the country (IDMC and NRC, 2014:3).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The authors have argued that inasmuch as some Nigerians migrate voluntarily, there are others who are forced to migrate internally and/or internationally. One of the forms of forced migration is internal displacement which is caused by multiplicity of factors such as terrorist attacks, disasters, poverty, and forced eviction due to governmental developmental projects. This work has shown the complex phenomenon of internal displacement in Nigeria and the inadequate humanitarian and legal provisions available for IDPs who stay within the nation state or cross border to neighbouring countries. In times of forced mobility, most Nigerian IDPs find shelter within the nation state but a sizable amount cross-border. Some of those who cross-border fall in oblivion and are classified as irregular migrants as they may not qualify as refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention. These pose ethical and humanitarian challenges to Nigerian migration leading to security concerns for forced migrants. These concerns raise some questions that need further interrogation. For instance, how can the Nigerian authorities pursue migrants' rights in the face of high security concerns, increasing rates of forced migration and participation of Nigerian nationals in unauthorised cross-border movement? (Agyeman and Setrana, 2014:111). In order to strike a balance between human rights, ethics and security concerns, there is the need for research to detail relevant suggestions on the governance of Nigerian migration. Such research must take into consideration the cultural context and gendered impact of forced mobility. Some causes of forced mobility are embedded in the cultural and religious practices that characterise previous Nigerian migration. Therefore, it will be insightful to understand the meanings and symbols of these cultures in order to offer sustainable solutions.

The findings show that gender cannot be ignored in the study of internal displacement of Nigerians because the effect of the forced mobility does not generate the same effect between men and women. Moreover, female IDPs and children in their attempt to secure peaceful areas of

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abode, risk being trafficked and/or smuggled. The authors recommend that research on the differential impact of forced mobility on men and women must be investigated to help policy-makers identify and address the gendered nature of forced migration. We also recommend that government and non-governmental agencies that engage in data collection should distinguish gender features among IDPs.

The partial implementation of the ECOWAS protocols by Nigeria and the other member states is not enough to remove the barriers confronting forced mobility. The enforcement of the protocol on free movement has several challenges ranging from strict border controls, expulsion, and high fee charges. Lack of political will among ECOWAS governments to ratify and implement the ECOWAS protocol hinders integration within the ECOWAS sub-region (Ojo, 1999). This paper recommends that further research needs to be undertaken among member states in order to have necessary evidence that could facilitate the smooth implementation of the second and third phases of the 1979 ECOWAS Protocol. Furthermore, forced mobility under the circumstance of displacement has not yet been addressed by the ECOWAS protocols. Although many of the countries adhere to the international laws on refugee rights, the 1998 Guiding Principles on IDPs have hardly been implemented by member states. Even if the Guiding Principles on IDPs are implemented, it is not a binding legal instrument as it only provides practical information to guide governments and other institutions engaged with IDPs. Nigeria needs to take a leadership role in implementing sound policies, stronger institutions and demonstrate legality and professionalism in managing forced migration by enforcing the international legal provisions that are geared towards protecting the rights of IDPs. The approval and implementation of the National Policy on Migration in Nigerian Federal Cabinet in 2015 is a positive step towards the definition of roles and responsibilities in the execution of humanitarian and sustainable response to the perennial problem of management of internal displacement. It is however too early to assess the practical implementation of the National Policy on Migration. The paper recommends that the National Policy on Migration should ensure that the activities of the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) and the other key government institutions such as National Immigration Service (NIS), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), Ministry of Interior, Foreign Ministry, and Civil Society Groups are coordinated in order to achieve a common purpose. The

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presence of disaggregated figures and the reluctance of some actors to share information augment the problem of duplication of information and inconsistency.

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