

THE KAMPALA CONVENTION AND CHALLENGES TO GEOPOLITICAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The AU Kampala Convention aims to ensure that the states that have signed the treaty protect and assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their regions to establish geopolitical security, which is threatened by the inevitability, volume, and heterogeneity of forced displacement. This article interrogates the link between the Kampala Convention and the minimisation of interstate conflict through a political will to tackle the challenge of forced displacement amongst member states, the cooperation and integration of which would contribute to geopolitical security. Thus, using secondary data, the author determines how addressing large-scale forced displacement in the region can improve geopolitical security. Thus, based on an extensive review of relevant IDP issues in Africa, attention is paid to displacement trends on the continent, factors precipitating displacement and the flow of IDPs across the region, a current analysis of the AU Kampala Convention framework, the challenges to African geopolitical security, and responsibility sharing amongst African states. The authors concludes that there should be synergy between host and displaced communities for integration and the provision of opportunities for IDPs to regain their livelihoods. Therefore, African states need to adapt and implement, as a matter of urgency, national, regional, and international policies to solve the challenges of internal displacement in Africa and



ensure geopolitical security.

Keywords: internally displaced persons, Africa, conflict, governance, African Union

1. Introduction

The AU Kampala Convention was formulated to ensure that African nations protect and assist their internally displaced persons (IDPs). Moreover, by signing the treaty the member states are encouraged to cooperate and integrate into solving an issue, thereby contributing to geopolitical security by minimising the risk of interstate conflict and enhancing each nation's territorial security.

In this exploration of the link between the Kampala convention and the challenges to geopolitical security in Africa, the article explores the forced internal displacement trends in Africa; the AU Kampala Convention framework for protecting and aiding IDPs; the effect of displacement on African geopolitical security; and displacement and responsibility sharing in Africa.

Despite the AU's treaty to manage displacement—the Kampala Convention Policy Framework for Africa (KCPFA)—the continent is still being affected by various streams of population distribution and redistribution arising from the aforementioned factors. Therefore, the question is not only what the peculiarities associated with the drivers of displacement in the African region are, but also what the efforts of national governments to address them entail. Other questions are:

- How well-equipped is the AU's KCPFA to address and regulate displacement in the region?
- Through what innovative ways can African countries demonstrate regional and sub-regional solidarity and responsibility sharing in response to protracted situations of displacement?
- Are there legal instruments or mechanisms to hold African states accountable for their failure to deliver according to the displacement governance framework?

This article attempts to answer these questions.

2. Forced internal displacement trends and patterns in Africa

Existing studies on IDPs in Africa paint a picture of frustrated and desperate people in overcrowded tents and camps in many communities in several countries. This situation has been exacerbated by the continued rise in the number of IDP people during the last two decades (UNHCR, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021). Suffice it to say that the variety of drivers of displacement and the range of destinations have also expanded. In addition, the sub-Saharan African region hosts the world's largest population and concentration of IDPs (Adepoju, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021; Orendain & Djalante, 2021). This reality has placed IDPs at the forefront of development and humanitarian discussions, especially in Africa where large numbers of people have been displaced internally and across national borders through conflict, violence, and natural disasters. However, over the years, deteriorating political, socioeconomic, and environmental conditions have also become drivers of displacement in Africa (Owain & Maslin, 2018; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

As the year 2020 ended, 40.5 million people were forcibly internally displaced across 149 countries globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021). Disasters triggered more than 30.7 million newly registered displacements, which comprise 75% of the total number; the remainder, around 9.8 million, were displaced by conflict and violence (IDMC-GRID, 2021). Forced displacement is a global phenomenon, which affects host communities and countries mostly negatively. Furthermore, forced displacement according to the World Bank (2021), is not only a humanitarian concern but also a development challenge.

The term “forced displacement” is appropriate in the context of this article because IDPs are mostly displaced due to persecution, conflict, generalised violence, and human rights violations (D’Orsi, 2012; UNHCR, 2015; Adeola, 2021). In other words, forced displacement refers to the involuntary, coerced movement of people away from their homes and home regions.

Although forced displacement policy is determined by many host communities or countries, displacement governance at the national and regional levels in response to tackling the continental issue of IDPs is not always effective (Global Protection Cluster, 2010; Abebe, 2010; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). Thus, the majority of IDPs who are hosted in communities in African countries often find themselves in poorer areas, which themselves may also be vulnerable. Moreover, forced internal displacement is generally less costly and therefore more accessible to the relatively poor than intercontinental

displacement.

Africa is characterised by a long history of diverse forced displacement patterns across many states (Crisp, 2010; Kidane, 2011), and campsites are often not limited by national boundaries. Conflicts, violence, and disasters have a larger role in shaping postcolonial forced displacement in much of Africa compared with other drivers such as socio-economic conditions. Moreover, Africa's IDPs stretched from the Lake Chad Basin through the Great Lakes region to the Horn of Africa (Guistiniani, 2011; IDMC-GRID, 2021; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). The Horn of Africa (comprising Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan) which has been known for decades as a geographical space of internal dissidence and intrastate conflicts, offers an advantageous landscape for terrorist groups and networks to flourish (Mulat, 2020; Adeola, 2021). Repeated political conflicts and ethnoreligious insurgency have displaced thousands of people from the region.

In 2019, East Africa and the Horn of Africa region were home to 8.1 million IDPs. This figure later dropped to 6.3 million, representing a 22% decrease in just two years, compared to the Eastern, Southern, and Western African regions monitored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) respectively (IOM-News-Global, 2019; Cantor & Maple, 2021). Nevertheless, despite the decrease, large numbers of forcibly displaced people continue to pose a challenge in Africa. Moreover, a large increase of forcibly displaced people is recorded in sub-Saharan Africa, which reached a new high of 6.8 million from conflicts and violence, and 4.3 million from disasters in 2021. This increased sharply from 2019, representing 27.4% of forcibly displaced people globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Disaster-induced forced displacement took place in many African countries because of floods destroying thousands of buildings and homes, damaging roads and bridges, upsetting food and irrigation systems, and disrupting education and health services (IDMC-GRID, 2021; Jacobs & Almeida, 2021). Moreover, in the ECOWAS region, more than 11.1 million people were internally displaced between 2018 and 2021 because of the violent Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, and herdsman-farmers conflict. This was more than in any other region in Africa, outpacing the world's worst conflict zones (Adeola, 2021). In South Sudan, which has one of the youngest populations in the world, 271,000 people have been forcibly displaced because of conflict and violence.

The IDMC-GRID recognizes five countries as experiencing the most forcibly displaced individuals in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(DRC) with 2.2 million displaced people due to conflict and violence and 279,000 due to disasters; Ethiopia with 1.7 million due to conflict and violence and 664,000 due to disasters; Somalia with 293,000 due to conflict and violence and one million due to disasters; South Sudan with 271,000 due to conflict and violence and 443,000 due to disasters; and Mozambique with 592,000 due to conflict and violence and 25,000 due to disasters. By the end of 2020, nearly 2.3 million people had been forcibly displaced in the DRC (IDMC-GRID, 2021). In addition, Somalia, a small country in East Africa, had over one million of its citizens living in IDP camps over 10 years (2011–2020) most of which camp residents were young men and women who had been forced to endure the unsatisfactory conditions of camp life (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Apart from forced displacement occasioned by conflicts, violence, and disaster, poor socioeconomic conditions such as low wages, high levels of unemployment, rural underdevelopment, poverty, and the lack of opportunity have also fuelled forced displacement in sub-Saharan Africa. However, nearly four in five displaced persons (79%) living in IDP camps in sub-Saharan Africa come from communities ravaged by conflicts and violence in different forms or environmental crises due to climate change. The majority of these come from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, the DRC, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, and the Central African Republic (Cazabat, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021).

As far back as the 1980s and 1990s, countries such as Kenya, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, and even Namibia were already hosts of IDPs, with different camps located in different communities. Several million Mozambicans, fleeing a civil war that devastated their country, were hosted by virtually every available community in the country. Tanzania has also hosted successive waves of externally displaced persons who were refugees from countries such as Burundi, the DRC, Mozambique, and Rwanda with large numbers of camps in different locations. In the Great Lakes region, large numbers of displaced people from Uganda, Burundi, the DRC, and Rwanda have been accommodated in a highly complex pattern of camp life for two decades (Adeola, 2019; Cazabat, 2020).

Several decades after independence, Africa is still one of the main continents generating and hosting displaced persons in the world, with the highest numbers of IDPs (24.1 million) in the world and 11.1 million forcibly displaced people in the sub-Saharan African region in 2020 alone (IDMC-GRID, 2021), has established thousands of IDP camps (Beyani, 2006; Wile'n & Williams, 2018). Thus, forced displacement has assumed unprecedented proportions, posing socio-politico-economic challenges

for policymakers wanting to address the situation. Moreover, long-term forced displacement has geopolitical consequences for a country (Wile'n & Williams, 2018).

3. The AU Kampala Convention framework for protecting and aiding IDPs

Over the years there have been national and regional responses to the growing challenges of forced displacement and IDPs. In addition, the management of forced displacement is systematically incorporated into the development agenda of various regional and national actors. Regionally forced displacement regimes, as an object of both academic enquiry and development discussions, have received increasing attention in the last two decades. The management of displaced persons is one of the most critical challenges for African states: it requires well-planned government policies that are implemented through cooperation with host communities and states (AU PAP, 2019; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

The legal basis for regional displacement protection varies, depending on the region and the circumstances. Nevertheless, in many countries in Africa forced displacement is an integral part of the agenda for tackling regional economic crises in the past decade. There are various displacement policy frameworks and regimes in the African region, which include policies developed by the AU and various sub-regional communities. The AU Kampala Convention, however, is a coordinated framework for dealing with forced displacement comprehensively.

Regional displacement governance can be defined as the norms and organisational structures that regulate and facilitate the responses of states and other actors to forced displacement. Its primary purpose is to ensure that member states work collectively in ways that would enable them to fulfil their objectives better than they would be acting alone (Cantor & Maple, 2021). The AU is one of the first continental organisations to develop a comprehensive instrument binding many African nations to agree to protect and assist IDPs (AU, 2009; 2019).

The current AU overarching approach to forced displacement is articulated in two policy documents: *the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (AU Kampala Convention)* (African Union, 2009), and *the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (UNHCR, 2004). The compilation of these policy documents was necessitated by increasing forced displacement within and from Africa, owing to deteriorating political,

socioeconomic, and environmental conditions on the continent (UNHCR, 1998). The Kampala framework recognises that forced displacement is one of the major concerns of the 21st century, and as articulated by the framework the AU's position on forced displacement is that well-managed displacement has the potential to yield significant benefits to host communities and states.

The 2009 initial AU Kampala Convention primarily addressed the emergency of sub-Saharan African forced displacement (AU, 2009; AU, 2017; AU, 2019). It adopted the regional approach to displacement proposed by the UNHCR Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement which addresses all aspects of displacement and IDPs: the organisation of legal displacement, the fight against irregular displacement, and the relationship between displacement and development.

The thematic pillars of the AU Kampala Convention are: (1) improving protection management (2) combating irregular displacement, (3) organising mobility and legal travel, (4) promoting international protection, and (5) strengthening the link between displacement and development. The Convention explicitly exhorts member states to commit to a partnership between communities or countries of origin and host displaced people in a comprehensive, holistic, and balanced manner in a spirit of shared responsibility and cooperation (AU 2017; AU 2019).

To protect and assist IDPs, the AU adopted the Kampala Convention on 23 October 2009 as a normative framework. The Convention which was ratified in 2012 by 15 states (thereafter, other states signed and ratified the treaty), was the first continental instrument to bind governments to commit to the protection and assistance of people displaced by conflict, violence, and disasters (IDMC-GRID, 2021 Adeola, 2019). Like the Convention, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) (2018–2030) provides comprehensive policy guidelines to AU member states (AU, 2019; Adeola, 2021). These frameworks address member states' regulation of the access of displaced persons to their communities and territories, and the treatment of these people.

The Kampala Convention aims to facilitate the protection and assistance of IDPs in Africa and thus tackle issues such as brain drain, brain waste, and the security risks attendant on forced displacement. It also aims to criminalise and prosecute those involved in arms and drug trafficking in Africa. Moreover, the AU Kampala Convention calls on member states to harmonise national legislation with the regional conventions to ensure assistance to and the protection of the rights of displaced persons, including rehabilitation in host communities, thereby fostering mutual cultural acceptance and respect (AU, 2009). Thus, regional institutions and displacement platforms are gradually

becoming acknowledged political players on the continent.

Several other regional initiatives are of relevance to the issue of displaced populations. The Kampala Convention was established with the support of all Western, Eastern, Northern, and Southern African member states. Moreover, regional communities such as the ECOWAS, the East African Community (EAC), and the SADC have pursued displacement policies, albeit with varied impetus and impact (Regasa & Lietaert, 2022). ECOWAS can be considered a forerunner in sub-Saharan Africa in the introduction of norms for the free movement of persons. However, it is the 2009 AU Kampala Convention that was the turning point in the management of forced displacements in sub-Saharan Africa with its adoption of a common approach to displacement for member states, which symbolised a willingness to start a dialogue of equals with host communities and states.

All the member states of the AU have by now signed and ratified the Kampala Convention, thereby indicating acceptance of its additional protocols. These protocols include the 2008 Great Lakes Protocol on Internally Displaced Persons; the Protocol on the Property Rights of Returning Persons; the Protocol on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity; the Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children; the 2010 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons; and the 2005 document titled “Addressing Internal Displacement: A framework for National Responsibility”. There is also the AU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Displacement Problems in Africa (2009), which provides for specific measures for IDPs in the continent (AU 2019; Regasa & Lietaert, 2022).

Similarly, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the East African sub-region has established several initiatives to address forced displacement. It aims to maximise protection and save lives while working towards sustainability and increasing government ownership/capacity to respond to people’s needs by reinforcing the displacement management abilities of domestic governments’ (African Development Bank, 2018). The IGAD comprises Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda, which cover one of the world’s largest areas known for producing and hosting forcibly displaced people—up to 11.1 million (Cazabat, 2020; IDMC-GRID, 2021).

The countries that are signatories to all the above-mentioned protocols and agreements experience the common challenges of displaced populations either in

search of economic opportunities or refuge from civil strife, war, and disasters such as floods and drought. Moreover, the Kampala Conventions and their attendant protocols not only seek to enhance the protection/assistance of displaced persons in Africa but also their governance.

Despite these initiatives, there are still major limitations to their application to the displacement realities on the ground, and although progress has been made in protecting and assisting displaced persons in Africa, especially among host communities and states, an alarming gap remains between policy making and policy implementation. In addition, there is a dearth of national policies and strategic plans on diaspora engagement, with existing policies rarely harmonised within regional and continental frameworks. There should be a concrete mechanism for responsibility sharing whereby the duty of receiving, protecting, and assisting the displaced is assigned to host countries and any new responsibilities to the many countries with much greater capacity. Lastly, the AU should work with sub-regional institutions to address managing forced displacement and displaced people.

4. The effect of displacement on African geopolitical security

Large, spontaneous, and unregulated displacements can have a significant impact on national and regional stability and security. This hinders the ability of African states to exercise effective control within their territories and creates tension within host countries and local host communities (Abegaz, 2020). In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, porous host communities sharing the same border are prone to violent conflicts. Consequently, security has become an issue that requires the concerted efforts of all the states found in this region (Masresha, 2020; Gameda, 2020).

The regional geopolitical significance of displacement has greatly increased in recent times, as Africa has continued to spawn larger numbers of displaced persons than at any other time in history (Cardona-Fox, 2019). Every nation in Africa currently faces the difficulties of balancing the increasing national and regional displacement of people and socio-economic development/rehabilitation aspirations (Orchard, 2019). As identified in the previous section, the root causes of displacement in West Africa and other countries like Rwanda, Mozambique, Somalia, and the DRC are conflicts: violence, religious and ethnic insurgency, climate change, natural and man-made disasters, and struggles for scarce resources (Dieng, 2017).

The growing imbalance between the levels of socioeconomic development on

the one hand, and political and social inclusion on the other, remains a key threat to stability. Thus, in addressing the challenge of displaced persons, a coordinated national and regional approach is needed, which would contribute to geopolitical security, and which is critical for Africa's future growth and development. Unmanaged displacement may pose geopolitical security threats because most displaced persons move to areas in close geographical proximity to those already experiencing conflicts, violence, disaster, or other drivers of forced displacement (Terminski, 2013; Sackey, 2020). Moreover, displacement caused by conflicts and violence has destabilising effects on national and regional security, with adverse consequences for the ability of host communities to protect displaced persons and the security of their nationals (Yigzaw & Abitew, 2019).

The impact of large influxes of displaced persons in neighbouring host communities in Africa can be both negative and positive, and the dynamic between positive and negative factors is complex and varied, depending on the context. It is generally recognised that humanitarian, political, security, and development challenges during the time of displacement and the period after durable solutions have been identified, either in the home community, neighbouring host communities, or elsewhere (Wanninayake, 2019).

A noticeable negative aspect of displacement is that when displaced persons arrive in large numbers in poor host communities, they place an enormous strain on public services, infrastructure, and the public purse. There is, thus, always a persistent climate of suspicion and tension, resulting in intimidation, extortion, and harassment of the displaced persons by the host communities (Brauch, 2011; Chakroorty & Narayan, 2014). The displaced people are thus confronted with material hardship, psychosocial stress, and gender-based violence, amongst other sources of suffering. Crisp, (2012) observes the following:

[T]hese conditions lead them to engage in negative coping mechanisms and survival strategies, such as prostitution, exploitative labour, illegal farming, manipulation of assistance programmes, sundry crimes and substance abuse. (page)

Protracted displacement can thus result in direct security concerns including the presence of armed elements within the displaced population, and the spillover of violent conflict across host communities. In the same vein, there are indirect security concerns, as tensions rise between local populations and displaced persons over the allocation of scarce resources (Hafner, Tagliapietra & Strasser, 2018). While today's

displaced persons are mostly victims of internal conflict and violence, for some host communities displacement has become a survival strategy of exploitation (Hampton, 2014) which also leads to feelings of insecurity in the host community. Thus, in much of the continent, geopolitical stability is directly and indirectly affected by violence and conflict, poverty and social inequities, political and economic restructuring, human rights abuses, population pressure, disasters, and environmental degradation. According to the IDMC-GRID, the DRC, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Mozambique experience this insecurity the most (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

The roots of insecurity in Africa's displaced persons' camps and settlement areas are varied and numerous. For example, internal security is threatened because many displaced persons come from situations of civil war and take their weapons with them. These are then used by some for crimes like armed robbery and poaching (Crisp, 2012). Moreover, displaced persons' camps located within and outside the boundary of the country of origin can provide sanctuary to rebel organisations, a base from which to carry out operations and fertile grounds for recruitment (Falobi, 2014).

Limited resources, weak public institutions, and long land borders severely impede the control of displacement in many African host communities and countries, resulting in large numbers of undocumented displaced persons (Ladan, 2013). Moreover, even the official figures from the IDMC-GRID on displacement in Africa are alarming and indicate that the continent is at the top of the list of the world's top ten countries with forcibly displaced people (IDMC-GRID, 2021). According to the IDMC-GRID (2021), an unprecedented 40.5 million people around the world have been displaced from their homes, of whom 30.5 million are under the age of 24. There are also an estimated five million stateless people who have been denied nationality and access to basic rights such as livelihood, health care, housing, education, and security. In addition, over 27.4% of the world's displaced persons come from sub-Saharan Africa, which makes it the second largest region in the world after East Asia experiencing this challenge (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Internal conflict and insecurity in Somalia, South Sudan, the DRC, Rwanda, and Mozambique have caused millions to flee their home areas, thereby causing the displaced population in Africa to increase by 2.1 million in 2021. Therefore, the sub-Saharan African region hosted the largest displaced population in the world with 6.7 million (69.4%) (IDMC-GRID, 2021). In addition, by 2021, Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda hosted the largest number of displaced persons globally (IDMC-GRID, 2021).

Although most of Africa's displaced persons do not directly engage in conflicts and violence, this should not lead scholars to neglect the possible security consequences that often follow the flows of displaced persons. It should be noted that protracted displacements, as can be seen in some African countries, are the result of political actions, both in the home and in the host communities. In addition, displaced persons from home communities can increase the risk of subsequent conflict in host communities, although this is neither a natural nor an inevitable consequence of involuntary population displacement (Olagunju, 2006).

Displaced persons' camp management systems in conflict-prone African countries are under increasing pressure because of the large, constant displacement of persons. Moreover, building the capacity to distinguish between persons with legitimate reasons for entering and staying at the camps and those who do not and therefore pose a security threat, is a challenge to camp management mechanisms and personnel (Omole, 2012). Furthermore, the lines of violent conflict frequently run across state boundaries, owing to the various ethnic and cultural ties between affected communities as most vividly seen in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa. Therefore, the issue of camp and host-community security needs the implementation of the principles of the Kampala Convention whereby collaboration between member states could provide solutions. In addition, the threat faced by humanitarian actors attempting to protect and help vulnerable persons is another indicator of the security issue, which needs a solution.

5. Displacement crisis and responsibility sharing

The Kampala Convention's call for collaboration between member states in addressing the displacement crisis reflects the justice in sharing responsibility for regional issues (Lomo, 2000). Thus, in protecting and assisting displaced persons in African host communities, member states could also address security concerns in displacement camps stemming from violent regional insurgency (UNHCR, 2019). Moreover, past experiences show that regional bodies can play an effective role in establishing harmonised systems and policies as well as collaboration mechanisms to address displacement challenges and can address the gap between regional policies and implementation (Omole, 2012).

Security and protecting/assisting displaced people are thus not mutually exclusive. What is needed is an integrated response to the displacement crisis to enable host communities to identify persons entering their territory and thus not only respond to protection and assistance needs but also security concerns in line with the Kampala

Convention (Sullivan & Stevens, 2017). The Kampala Convention imposes a range of obligations on its member states, most importantly the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits them from returning displaced persons to a situation of risk (AU 2009) and implies ensuring security where they are hosted.

Responsibility sharing includes the equal bearing of costs associated with protecting and assisting displaced persons (Okon, 2018) by national governments, regional bodies, displacement organisations and international agencies, which should also ensure their integration, return, and rehabilitation in African states. Thus, in responding collectively with a financial and political commitment to large-scale movements of displaced persons on the continent, solutions to the displacement crisis across Africa can be found. Moreover, as indicated by constant development-oriented displacement programme failure without national and regional cooperation and commitment to protecting and helping IDPs, is the crux of the protracted displacement in the region and resultant geopolitical insecurity. As Robinson (2003) explains, protecting and assisting displaced persons is not only a legal obligation but also a moral responsibility.

On many occasions, particularly at moments of acute displacement crisis in Africa, compliance with regional displacement policy has proven to be costly for national governments, making their response reactive rather than proactive. Moreover, the leaders of these governments argue that the responsibility to host displaced people is disproportionate to their resources (Crisp, 2012; Mikulak, 2018). Thus, while low- and middle-income countries host most of the displaced people, protection and assistance are ultimately paid for by the governments of high-income countries, and only a few countries make financial commitments. For responsibility sharing to be meaningful, Mikulak (2018) contends that states must commit to contributions they can deliver with the backing of relevant institutions in fulfilling their commitments.

Sharing of responsibility includes ensuring the voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration of displaced persons equally (Mikulak, 2018; Adeola, 2019) by providing safe, legal pathways for them to reach the host state or community and restart their lives (Maduka, 2012; Mikulak, 2018). Therefore, states bordering conflict and crisis zones should not be left to be the only ones taking responsibility for the displaced as has been the case in Uganda, the DRC, South Sudan, and Mozambique. Moreover, collective action requires a range of complementary analytical, political, legal, and operational mechanisms rather than a centralised allocation of responsibility (Mikulak, 2018; Cantor & Maple, 2021).

Although shared responsibility for protecting and assisting displaced persons,

finding and promoting predictable, comprehensive, long-term, and durable solutions to the problem—as indicated by the AU Kampala Convention, which provides a framework for cooperation—it appears that the needed regional approaches for joint camp management and information gathering and sharing are not deeply rooted in practice. However, the DRC, Uganda, South Sudan, and Mozambique along with some other African countries are leading the way with progressive policies embracing approaches that enable displaced persons to become self-reliant and support host communities (Cantor & Maple, 2021; Mikulak, 2018).

6. African governments and the management of displacement, insecurity, poverty, exploitation, and conflict

According to United Nations 2019 statistics, 25 million Africans have been forcibly displaced due to catastrophic events like conflicts and natural disasters, amongst other calamities.¹ These call for action because many people end up being displaced for a long time before they eventually resettle in their homelands. Therefore, governments must find a way to salvage the situation. Moreover, the provision of necessities, such as food, clothing, and hygiene products is not sustainable in the long term. Thus, the African government need to embrace models that will provide long-term solutions not only to poverty but also insecurity and displacement itself.

A cue can be taken from the Government of Uganda, which manages displacement by creating opportunities to enhance refugee integration and moving past the mere provision of basic needs to offer refugees freedom of mobility and access to education and employment. In addition, over time, displaced people are eligible to access plots of land (Katende, 2019), which has reintegrated and empowered them with sources of income, thereby combating poverty and making refugees productive. Furthermore, adopting these strategies increases safety in IDP camps and the country in general. The Tanzanian government has also moved beyond protecting and assisting refugees by giving them the chance to become naturalised citizens if they opt not to return to their country of origin.

African governments should strengthen the frameworks and mechanisms in place by learning from previous shortcomings and addressing present challenges and loopholes in line with the landmark Kampala Convention (Diop, 2020). However, only

1 <https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/05/how-address-africas-staggering-displacement-crisis>

33 African Union member countries have ratified the convention since its formation over a decade ago (AU, 2022) because some states are not yet willing or capable to take up the responsibilities attached to managing the problem of displacement (Guistinian, 2011). Therefore, African governments are called to adopt and implement the Convention, which is linked to the international legal obligation to protect and assist displaced people and contribute to geopolitical security in host communities with limited spaces, amenities, and resources that might be marginalised because they are in rural areas. Moreover, more local governments need to assist in settling and integrating IFPs and refugees (Diop, 2020) to increase tolerance and cooperation between the host and displaced communities. More government funding should therefore be directed towards supporting host communities in fulfilling the mandate of the Kampala Convention.

There is a need to strengthen government institutions in tackling the crisis that arises from displacement. In addition, it is necessary to ensure the adaptation and implementation of national, regional, and international policies in line with the Kampala Convention and provide guidance to states that are not in a position to formulate policies on displacement due to a lack of capacity for implementation, internal conflicts within decision-making bodies, or conflict between the host and displaced community.² In the same vein, regional integration is vital and should be encouraged, because when neighbouring countries have good relations despite internal conflicts, there will be peaceful coexistence, and security in the event of forced displacement will be ensured.

7. Conclusion

This article focused on how the Kampala Convention indicates how collaboration between national and regional actors can effectively tackle the displacement crisis in Africa and ensure geopolitical security by sharing the responsibility for adopting and implementing the framework provided by the treaty. Thus, governments and societies might demonstrate a shift in mentality whereby people from other cultures are accepted through a cooperative and collaborative approach to increasing, large-scale, internal displacement.

2 <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2022/03/24/displacement-diplomacy-five-ways-to-improve-policy-and-practice-on-internal-displacement-in-africa/>

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