

PROTRACTED INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT AS A MORAL CHALLENGE TO AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

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Abstract

The African renaissance (rebirth) and the rise of Africans towards a more united, just, peaceful and dignified life raise great aspirations. To achieve these aspirations, guns must be silenced, and broken communities and relationships mended so that the forcibly displaced can safely return to their homes. However, the persistent internal displacements across the continent due largely to the resurgence of armed conflict and coup d'états notwithstanding climate-induced displacements pose a moral challenge to the desired goals of a new Africa. The search for solutions to these challenges require an interdisciplinary approach that draws from socio-pastoral and ethical humanitarian wisdom.

Key words: African renaissance, IDPs, unity, integral development, humanitarian intervention, socio-pastoral approach.

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Introduction

African renaissance¹ and “Africans Rising”² raise high hopes for a continent aspiring to achieve the integral development of its inhabitants. The hopes are steeped in the many efforts being made in making good use of proceeds from natural resources, improving infrastructure in the areas of cyber superhighways, railway systems, road networks, and small and large scale industries, curbing corruption and illicit financial transactions, and forging African states’ bilateral and intra-continental trade relations through the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA). Despite these hopeful gains there remains a paradox to the rising of Africans due to the increasing number of persons forced to leave their homes each year largely due to the resurgence of armed conflicts, coup d’états and other forms of human rights violations. These causes are compounded by increasing incidents of natural disasters in the forms of earthquakes, cyclones, droughts, floods, and landslides. While some forcibly displaced people due to armed conflict manage to cross international borders and fall under the category of refugees on grounds of a well-founded fear of persecution; others remain trapped in their own countries and become internally displaced (IDPs). While international refugee law makes a sharp distinction between refugees, migrants and IDPs, the Catholic Church guided by its “moral intuition,” to use Christopher Llanos’s expression, regards IDPs as internal refugees because the reasons for fleeing their homes remain the same as the ones that force others to cross international borders.³

¹ According to Rok Ajulu, “the African renaissance has come to be associated with the political ideas of President Thabo Mbeki...broadly interpreted as calling for African political renewal and economic regeneration,” within the larger context of a global political economy so as to unchain the African continent from trade imbalances, increasing debt crisis, supplier of raw material and consumer of finished products. See Rok Ajulu, “Thabo Mbeki’s African Renaissance in a Globalising World Economy: The Struggle for the Soul of the Continent,” *Review of African Political Economy* Vol. 28, no. 27 (March 2001): 27-28, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4006691>

² The Kilimanjaro Declaration 2.0, “Africans Rising: For Unity, Justice, Peace and Dignity,” <https://www.africansrising.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-Kilimanjaro-Declaration-2.0-Africans-Rising-English.pdf>

³ Pontifical Council “Cor Unum” and Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, no. 5, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/corunum/documents/rc_pc_corunum_doc_25061992_refugees_en.html. See also Christopher Llanos, “Refugees or Economic Migrants: Catholic Thought on the Moral Roots of the Distinction,” in *Driven from Home: Protecting the Rights of Forced Migrants*, ed. David Hollenbach (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press,

The 2023 IDMC reiterates this fact when it clearly states that IDPs are victims of conflict, violence and natural disasters, reasons similar to those that force thousands of people to cross international borders in search of safety.⁴ The causal and consequential similarities between refugees and IDPs were also acknowledged by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee meeting in New York in 1999, stating that

UNHCR has an interest in the protection and welfare of persons who have been displaced by persecution, situations of general violence, conflict or massive violations of human rights: in other words, in all those who, had they crossed an international frontier, would have had a claim to international protection. This interest arises from the similarity between such internally displaced persons and refugees, in terms of the causes and consequences of their displacement and their humanitarian needs. Like refugees, many internally displaced have been forced to leave their homes because of fear of persecution, war and violence. Again, like refugees, they are in need of protection and assistance, as well as a solution to their plight.⁵

A single article cannot unravel the challenges arising from the many faces of forced migration ranging from refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, smuggled and trafficked individuals, economic migrants and IDPs so as to propose a viable solution that each of these groups of the forcibly displaced requires. I will therefore narrow the article to IDPs, with special attention to those within the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ethiopia given the number of people who are internally displaced in these countries, as we will demonstrate in subsequent sections.

Divided into four sections, the article will first articulate Africa's concern for IDPs. It will then give the rationale for addressing the plight of IDPs in light of the Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (hereafter referred to as the Kampala Convention). Then it will turn to the implementation challenges of the Kampala Convention in a bid to seek

2010), 260. See also Emmanuel Jada, "Special Attention to the Tragedy of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: A Canon Law Perspective," in *A Theological Response to the Tragedy of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Proceedings of the Ninth Interdisciplinary Session of the Faculty of Theology, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa*, ed. Sewe-K'Ahenda (Nairobi: CUEA Publications, 2007), 94.

⁴ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 15-25, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023/>

⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper, "Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, 17.

durable solutions to the plight of IDPs. In conclusion, the article will draw from Pope Francis's envisioned socio-pastoral orientations and humanitarian wisdom in response to the needs of the internally displaced.

Africa's Concern for IDPs

Africa's concern for the protection of IDPs was palpably raised on 16 October 1995 by Salim Ahmed Salim as Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). He stated that the OAU was "concerned about the silent millions of displaced persons whose suffering is no different from those of the refugees and who seem to have attracted the least attention of the international community."⁶ More than two decades later, the African Union's (AU's) 3rd Ordinary Session of its Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) gathered in Addis Ababa to consider several issues related to forced displacement in Africa and make policy and operational recommendations to the AU Executive Council. Having chosen the theme for 2019 as a "Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa,"⁷ the session decided, among other matters, to validate the report on the implementation of the year's theme. During the same year a high level conversation took place in Kampala between the 4th and the 8th of December to discuss six major areas of concern with regards to the theme of the year, namely: "Forced Displacement in Africa: Dimensions, Causes and Policy Directions...Implementation of Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa: Challenges and Prospects...Securing the Rights of Refugees, IDPs and Returnees...Addressing the Needs for Justice by Displaced Persons...Management of Returns Policy: Balancing Returns and other Durable Solutions...[and] Burden Sharing and the Role of International Actors."⁸

⁶ Quoted in Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng, *Masses in Flight: The Global Crisis of Internal Displacement* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institutional Press, 1998), 213. (Italics in the original)

⁷ African Union, Press Release - "The 3rd Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Opens," November 4, 2019,

<https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20191104/3rd-ordinary-session-specialised-technical-committee-stc-migration-refugees>.

⁸ African Union, "8th High Level Dialogue on the AU Theme of the Year 2019," December 04, 2019 to December 06, 2019, <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20191204/8th-high-level-dialogue-au-theme-year-2019>

These high level discussions and policy formulations demonstrate that it is not for lack of policies or knowledge of the root causes of forced displacement that people continue to leave their homes and countries of origin in search of safety and dignified lives. Africa has come to terms with the fact that her leaders need to work in concert with everyone concerned with the plight of IDPs to address the root causes. At the continental level the AU has recently revised its Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) to reflect the changing dynamics and complexity of migratory trends within and outside the continent. The revised policy serves as a guideline and strategic framework for the management of migration within the AU member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).⁹ The continental leaders and policy makers also have a dream for the centenary celebrations of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which morphed into the AU in 2002. Termed Agenda 2063 the dream seeks to address the many challenges that beset the continent by aspiring to “An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law; A Peaceful and Secure Africa; [and an] Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Values and Ethics.”¹⁰ If these aspirations are attained, the 2063 centenary celebration of the OAU/AU will be worth looking forward to.

While the aspirations Agenda 2063 are noble I argue that without clear strategies for their realisation, 2063 will come and pass, another slogan will be formulated, and no real change will have happened to transform the lives of IDPs. Silencing the Gun which was the AU slogan for 2020 can serve as an example following which we experienced more coup d'états in northern and western Africa with less AU diplomatic and humanitarian interventions aimed at creating a peaceful and just continent.

Why Focus on IDPs rather than Refugees and Migrants?

The 2022 International Organisation for Migration's World Migration Report states that, although, “those who have been displaced, such as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), comprise a relatively small percentage of all migrants, they are often

⁹ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030),” Addis Ababa: Migration for Development in Africa, May 2018, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35956-doc-au-mpfa_2018-eng.pdf (accessed on 11 May 2019). It is a revision of the African Union “Migration Policy Framework (MPF)” adopted in Banjul in 2006.

¹⁰ African Union, “Goals & Priority Areas of Agenda 2063,” <https://au.int/agenda2063/goals> (accessed on 3 February 2022.)

the most in need of assistance and support.”¹¹ While the report puts the international migration numbers at close to 281 million compared to the 55 million IDPs and 26 million refugees, the global and continental trends clearly indicate that IDPs by far outnumber refugees.¹² According to the 2023 IDMC report, in a span of ten years (2013 to 2022), the number of IDPs in Africa has risen from 12.4 million to 31.7 million.¹³

Furthermore, the 2023 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) report indicates that there are more internally displaced persons within Africa due to armed conflict and violence than those who flee their homes due to natural disasters. While the global total number of IDPs stood at 71.1 million, Africa accounted for 31.7 (45%) of the global number of IDPs as at the end of 2022.¹⁴ Moreover, the report shows that 62.5 million out of the global total of 71.1 million IDPs were displaced due to conflict and violence and 8.7 million fled their homes due to natural disasters.¹⁵ However, in Sub-Saharan Africa the number of IDPs who escaped conflict and violence in 2022 alone stood at 9,027,000 while those who abandoned their homes due to natural calamities were 7,449,000.¹⁶ These figures (read displaced persons) demonstrate that, as at the end of 2022, more than a third of IDPs fleeing conflict and violence in Africa came from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia totaling 6,036,000 followed by Somalia (621,000), Burkina Faso (438,000), South Sudan (337,000), Sudan (314,000), Central African Republic (290,000), and Mozambique (282,000).¹⁷ It is significant to note that these statistics do not fully capture the number of IDPs because the escalating conflict in Sudan is estimated to have displaced close to 5 million people internally as at the end of October 2023.¹⁸ Five African countries account for the largest

¹¹M. McAuliffe and A. Triandafyllidou, eds., *World Migration Report 2022* International Organization

for Migration (IOM), (Geneva 2021), 21. United Nations High Commission for Refugees, “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018,” <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7/unhcr-global-trends-2018.html> (accessed on 26 October 2019). See also IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 13.

¹² McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, eds., *IOM World Migration Report 2022*, 21.

¹³ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 15.

¹⁴ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 15.

¹⁵ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 7.

¹⁶ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, II.

¹⁷ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, II.

¹⁸ International Organization for Migration (IOM), Displacement Tracking Matrix, Sudan Crisis: Displacement in Sudan and Mixed Cross-Border Movement Overview, <https://dtm.iom.int/node/24896>

number of IDPs. They are DRC with 5,686,000; Ethiopia with 3,852,000; Nigeria with 3,646,000; Somalia with 3,864,000; and Sudan with 3,553,000.¹⁹

Moreover, according to the October 2023 IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) with a specific focus on DRC,

DTM identified 6,947,295 individual internally displaced persons (IDPs), primarily concentrated in the four eastern provinces of North Kivu (2,300,163 individuals), Ituri (1,630,535), South Kivu (1,356,376), and Tanganyika (350,462) as well as the province/city of Kinshasa in the west of the country (392,281). These five provinces alone account for the considerable majority (87%) of current displacement in the DRC. The remaining 21 provinces account for 13 percent of the total number of IDPs in the country (917,478 individuals).²⁰

Although armed conflict and violence seem to displace more people internally in Sub-Saharan Africa, the increasing number of climate-induced displacements as we have recently witnessed in Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Libya, Rwanda, Somalia and DRC, calls for more attention to this reality. IDMC reports that in 2022 alone there has been "a near three-fold increase in the number of disaster displacements [in Sub-Saharan Africa]."²¹ The ongoing environmental turbulence points to more displacement as a result of natural disasters in the years to come, as is the case in South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific.²²

The above figures indicate that IDPs outnumber refugees and since the former have no specific agency to attend to their needs and advocate for their rights, they require more attention and assistance.²³ The IDPs' vulnerability arises from the fact that the very states whose primary role is to provide them with the needed assistance and protection are often reasons for their displacement with the exception of those displaced by environmental and other natural disasters who are less than those displaced by conflict and violence in quite a number

¹⁹ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 15.

²⁰ See IOM, *Displacement Tracking Matrix, DRC-Countrywide Displacement Overview, October 2023*, <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/drc-countrywide-displacement-overview-october-2023>

²¹ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 16-20.

²² IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, III.

²³ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, "Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)," 60. See also Thomas G. Weiss and David A. Korn, *Internal Displacement: Conceptualization and its Consequences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 115.

of African countries. Evidently, most internal displacements in the DRC and Ethiopia are more conflict-instigated than natural disaster-induced. In the case of the DRC, “politically-induced internal displacement”²⁴ to use Mumo Nzau’s expression, involves armed resource conflicts, political instability and uncertainty leading to the number of IDPs standing at close to half of the rest of the IDPs in Sub-Saharan African countries.²⁵ In the Ethiopian context, land grabbing, misallocation of resources, massive inter-communal violence, regionalism and tribalism account for internal conflict and displacement. In 2018 alone more than 1.5 million people were internally displaced making Ethiopia the fifth country with the largest number of IDPs worldwide. As at the end of 2022 the total number of conflict-induced IDPs in Ethiopia according to the IDMC database, stood at 2,032,000.²⁶

Having indicated the number of IDPs in general with specific reference to the 2023 IDMC report and having briefly accounted for the reasons for displacement which the two countries of DRC and Ethiopia exemplify, I will now appraise the Kampala Convention and its implementation challenges.

Kampala Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention)

Among the proposed solutions to the plight of IDPs by the Church in 1992 was the establishment of legal frameworks that would allow for international protection and assistance without being seen as interfering in the sovereignty of states.²⁷ The Kampala Convention provides a framework to address the challenges faced by IDPs on the African continent and as seen earlier African countries with the majority of IDPs have ratified the convention with the exception of Sudan. Adopted in Kampala on 23 October 2009, the Kampala Convention entered into force on 6 December 2012, and was registered with the United Nations on 1 December 2014.²⁸ Fully aware that it is incumbent upon each sovereign state “to prevent internal

²⁴ Mumo Nzau, *Transitional Justice and After: Kenya’s Experience with IDP Resettlement and Peacebuilding Since the 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence* (Nairobi: CUEA Press-The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2016), 175-186.

²⁵ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, II.

²⁶ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, II.

²⁷ Pontifical Council, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, no. 29.

²⁸ African Union, “OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols & Charters,” <https://au.int/en/treaties/1162>.

displacement, as well as protect and assist IDPs,”²⁹ MPFA recommends that where internal displacement is evident, states parties to the Kampala Convention should safeguard “humanitarian access to IDPs” and promote “livelihood and resilience activities as well as alternatives to encampment through integration into host communities.”³⁰

Article 3(d) of the Kampala Convention stipulates that “States Parties shall [...] respect and ensure respect and protection of the human rights of internally displaced persons, including humane treatment, non-discrimination, equality and equal protection of law.” This implies that the primary obligation for the assistance and protection of IDPs rests with each state and this remains imperative because a sovereign state merits its sovereignty by taking care of its citizens. The dilemma comes when the would be protectors of the rights of IDPs become perpetrators or when the state’s ability and responsibility to protect them is overwhelmed by hundreds of insurgent groups as is the case in DRC. Yet, according to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, human rights law entitles IDPs “to enjoy, in full equality, the same rights and freedoms under domestic and international law as the rest of a country’s citizens.”³¹

In DRC, the March 23 Movement (M23) along with more than 120 other Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) operate in the eastern part of the country.³² In such fragile states even regional and international interventions become compromised due to competing and conflicting economic interests or what Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng consider as “[p]olitical rivalries within regional organizations...”³³ This happens despite the Kampala Convention’s provision that NSAGs and other non-state actors must respect human rights and international humanitarian law as these pertain to the protection of IDPs.³⁴ Though different from the DRC’s scenario, the Ethiopian

²⁹ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030),” 13.

³⁰ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030),” 13.

³¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper, “Protection of Internally Displaced Persons,” (New York: December 1999), 4.

³² IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 27.

³³ Cohen and Deng, *Masses in Flight*, 214.

³⁴ See Kampala Convention, article 1(e).

situation equally demonstrates competing interests between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Federal government forces.³⁵

These conflicting interests partly account for the challenges behind the implementation of the Kampala Convention. Although state parties to the convention with large numbers of conflict-driven IDPs with the exception of Sudan as seen earlier have signed and ratified the Kampala Convention thereby acceding to its binding force,³⁶ they still demonstrate ineffectiveness in protecting the rights of IDPs. One of the challenges to the implementation of the Kampala Convention remains lack of political will. Indeed as Ileana Nicolau and Anais Pagot observe, "states require political will, capacity and resources to adopt and implement their laws and policies relating to IDPs and to prevent or respond to internal displacement. Some policy-making processes have come almost to a standstill, such as in the Central African Republic and in the Democratic Republic of Congo."³⁷ However, while lack of political will may remain an obstacle, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee observed that at times "National authorities may be willing to respond to the needs of internally displaced persons and possess the necessary resources, or they may be willing to respond but lack the required resources. In other cases, national authorities may be either passively unwilling to respond to the needs of the displaced, or even be obstructive of international efforts to address those needs."³⁸

Another challenge stems from one of the principles stipulated during the founding of the OAU; namely, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Even though this principle has been challenged by regarding sovereignty as states' responsibility to protect their citizens, nevertheless the tendency to regard IDPs as an internal affair of affected countries prevails in quite a number of African

³⁵ For details see Michelle Gavin, "The Conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray Region: What to Know," Council on Foreign Relations (2021), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31163> (accessed on 25 November 2023).

³⁶ African Union, "List of Countries Which Have Signed, Ratified/Acceded to the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)", https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-sl-AFRICAN_UNION_CONVENTION_FOR_THE_PROTECTION_AND_ASSISTANCE_OF_INTERNALLY_DISPLACED_PERSONS_IN_AFRICA_KAMPALA_CONVENTION_1.pdf

³⁷ Ileana Nicolau and Anais Pagot, "A New Global Database on IDP Laws and Policies Reveals the Areas - both Geographical and Topical - in which Provision Remains Insufficient," in *Forced Migration Review*, no 59, (October 2018).

³⁸ Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper, "Protection of Internally Displaced Persons," 3.

countries.³⁹ The tendency to regard sovereignty as unfettered is not unique to African states. As Thomas G. Weiss and David A. Korn have exemplified, India used the argument to criticize the sixth principle of the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (GPID) which prohibits large scale government development projects from arbitrarily displacing citizens, even though it allows for “compelling circumstances for project-induced displacement in favour of the common good.”⁴⁰ Other Third world countries that regarded the GPID as a western ploy to interfere in the internal affairs of independent third world countries included Egypt, Algeria, China, and Sudan.⁴¹ This may account for the Kampala Convention’s silence on the arbitrary displacement of citizens by large scale government development projects.

Additionally, besides lack of political will, challenges that accompany conflict and natural disaster-induced internal displacement often trigger a cycle of violence. For instance the prolonged drought spanning more than five years in the Horn of Africa has not only displaced thousands; it has also generated inter-communal conflicts between pastoralists and farmers.⁴² This has generated what David Hollenbach describes as the poverty-conflict-migration nexus.⁴³ This nexus leads to internal as well as cross border displacement. In the case of DRC for instance, when IDPs are compelled “to leave their homes, lands and livelihoods behind when they flee, they become less able to produce food for themselves and their communities, rendering staple items increasingly rare and expensive. The fact that 93 per cent of IDPs shelter with host families also adds pressure on the latter, who themselves face growing food insecurity, increasing the needs of the population as a whole.”⁴⁴

This challenge calls for proper management of internal displacement lack of which can lead to “serious negative consequences for States’ and the [displaced persons’] well-being, including potential

³⁹ Roberta and Deng, *Masses in Flight*, 214.

⁴⁰ Weiss and Korn, *Internal Displacement*, 112. See especially UNOCHA, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, principle 6 (2c), <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/199808-training-OCHA-guiding-principles-Eng2.pdf> See also article III, 1 (a), and article IV, 4 of the Kampala Convention.

⁴¹ Weiss and Korn, *Internal Displacement*, 112, 113.

⁴² IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 18.

⁴³ David Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 2019), 143-144.

⁴⁴ IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2023*, 27.

destabilising effects on national and regional security.”⁴⁵ Indeed, mismanagement of forced displacement “can also lead to tensions between host communities and [IDPs] and can give rise to xenophobia, discrimination, and other social pathologies.”⁴⁶ The most serious and increasing risk arises when IDPs fall prey to smugglers and traffickers since “trafficking within countries is also prevalent, sometimes as a result of internal displacement triggered by crises.”⁴⁷ Lured by false promises, IDPs may fall victims of unscrupulous smugglers and traffickers who often go unnoticed. In effect, as Pope Francis eloquently maintains,

the line between migrant smuggling and [human trafficking] is growing thinner. A situation of migrant smuggling can easily become [human trafficking]. In recent years, in massive mixed flows of migrants and refugees, many desperate people, compelled by the lack of accessible and legal alternatives - also due to increasingly restrictive migration policies, have begun as clients of smugglers only to become victims of traffickers.⁴⁸

The Holy See acknowledges the increasing incidents of IDPs falling victims of smuggling and trafficking in persons.⁴⁹

On account of the rising number of IDPs and the projected persistent increase in the numbers largely due to the climate crisis, there is a need for state parties to the Kampala Convention to work together for proper management of internal displacement through a “whole of government approach” which has been suggested as one of the durable solutions in dealing with migration.⁵⁰ But since displacements of increasing magnitude as statistics have shown cannot solely be shouldered by state actors alone, “[a]ll agencies providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons have a responsibility to consider how the design and implementation of their assistance activities might best contribute to promoting protection of

⁴⁵ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)”, 23.

⁴⁶ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)”, 23.

⁴⁷ McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, eds. *IOM World Migration Report 2022*, 256.

⁴⁸ Migrant and Refugee Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, *Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking*, no. 35. <https://migrants-refugees.va/documents/en/email/pastoral-orientations-on-human-trafficking.pdf>

⁴⁹ Migrant and Refugee Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development, *Pastoral Orientations on Internally Displaced Persons*, no. 47. <https://icmc.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/1.-Read-On-Screen-A5-EN-.pdf>

⁵⁰ African Union Commission: AU Department for Social Affairs, “Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)”, 23.

the internally displaced,"⁵¹ by ensuring that human rights permeate all their activities.

A Persistent Search for Durable Solutions

Since forced displacement arises largely from human rights violations, at times escalating into armed conflicts, an effective implementation of the Kampala Convention will require a coordinated approach and a link with the African Charter for Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) lack of which will create serious implementation gaps.⁵² Cohen and Deng proposed humanitarian intervention at all cost when human rights are violated by states whose primary role is to protect their citizens. In effect, states' failure to protect has in some cases necessitated creating safe zones, safe corridors, and negotiations with NSAGs so as to have access to the forcibly displaced and offer them protection and assistance. Failure to protect is also a critique of states which cling to sovereignty without responsibility.⁵³ However, as Musifiky Mwanasali observes, with the African Union's launch of "the Peace and Security Council (PSC)" which replaced the OAU's "Central Organ of the 1993 Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution," a "new era of non-indifference" replaced the OAU's "non-interference policy."⁵⁴ The era of non-indifference calls upon regional African bodies to intervene in the affairs of sovereign states when human rights are grossly violated.⁵⁵

Consequently, despite challenges posed by competing interests and political rivalry, successful interventions by the Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Mozambique and

⁵¹ Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy Paper, "Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, 3.

⁵² Allehone Mulugeta Abebe, "The African Union Convention on Internally Displaced Persons: Its Codification Background, Scope, and Enforcement Challenges," *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, (Vol. 29, no. 3): 56, accessed on 24 October 2023, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45054461>

⁵³ Cohen and Deng, *Masses in Flight*, 275-280. See also Francis Deng, "The Limits of Sovereignty," in *History and Hope: The International Humanitarian Reader*, ed. Kevin M. Cahill (New York: Fordham University Press and The Center for International Humanitarian Cooperation, 2013), 124-139.

⁵⁴ Mwanasali Musifiky, "From Non-Interference to Non-Indifference: The Emerging Doctrine of Conflict Prevention in Africa," in *The African Union and its Institutions*, ed. John Akokpari, et al. (Auckland Park, South Africa: Fanele, 2008), 41.

⁵⁵ David Hollenbach, "Internally Displaced People, Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect," in *Refugee Rights: Ethics Advocacy and Africa*, ed. David Hollenbach (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 177.

Lesotho, and the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Sudan in the 1990s should serve as lessons for what regional cooperation can do to avert conflicts and prevent massive displacement of persons on the continent.⁵⁶ Perceiving sovereignty as the responsibility to protect and committing human and material resources to prevent human rights abuses at national and regional levels beyond humanitarian aid must be a way forward in ensuring that Africans enjoy unity, peace, justice, and dignity which is a dream of the champions of the rising of Africans and African renaissance.

Rok Ajulu cautions that though

the idea of an African rebirth is not new, the context in which this debate is taking place is new and does indeed pose new questions. With regard to the key features of this context - the end of cold war, the emergence of the 'market' as the central organising principle of the global economy and an accelerated process of globalisation - the African continent remains in a precarious position, its various nation states caught in conjunctural crises of economic marginalisation, internal conflict and political decay. These conditions confront Mbeki's renaissance with a daunting challenge and call for more creative engagement with forces of globalisation.⁵⁷

However, while the intervention approach is commendable and there are clear cases in which it has worked to avert humanitarian catastrophes as cited earlier, it also raises questions when in the name of humanitarian assistance, some agencies including the UN have betrayed the trust invested in them and abused those they are meant to protect.⁵⁸ Such betrayal, in the words of Jane Boulden, means that "Non-intervention can have just as significant an influence as intervention [and thus] the UN can sometimes be a contributor to the very type of situation it is designed to prevent."⁵⁹ In such cases an ethical question arises as to who should ensure that humanitarian assistance and human rights obligations go hand in hand. Doesn't

⁵⁶ Cohen and Deng, *Masses in Flight*, 220-223. See also Jane Boulden, "United Nations Security Council Policy in Africa," in *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, ed. Jane Boulden, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15-18; and Hollenbach, "Internally Displaced People, Sovereignty and the Responsibility to Protect," 183.

⁵⁷ Rok Ajulu, "Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance in a Globalising World Economy," 27-28.

⁵⁸ United Nations, *Year Book of the United Nations* Vol. 69, 2015, (New York: United Nations Department of Global Communications, 2022), 56.

⁵⁹ Jane Boulden, "Conclusions," in *Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, edited by Jane Boulden, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 305.

assistance cease to be protection when humanitarian agencies commit atrocities in the name of humanitarian intervention?

Humanitarian assistance and protection of IDPs must always go hand in glove with other human rights instruments for proper accountability so that the rights of the vulnerable do not cease to matter. As Alain Destexhe rightly cautions, if humanitarian action “is not coupled with political action and justice, it is doomed to failure: it can work as a palliative, not as a panacea.”⁶⁰ I concur with him that morality, political action and justice must work hand in hand to justify humanitarian intervention. In other words humanitarian assistance should in no way be used in a condescending manner to debase the lives of the forcibly displaced even when their choices become limited by the circumstances in which they find themselves. In effect, their very positions of vulnerability should provide a yardstick upon which humanitarian assistance, deserving of the designation, should be ethically evaluated guided by the basic principle to inflict no harm. This paves way to briefly suggest a socio-pastoral approach that can better incorporate efforts being made at various levels to address the challenges that beset IDPs in general and those in DRC and Ethiopia in particular.

Pope Francis on the Socio-Pastoral Care of IDPs

Pope Francis through the Migrant and Refugee Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development under his direction has issued pastoral orientations on IDPs which echo virtues integral to African hospitality and solidarity.⁶¹ He has invited the Church to integrate the IDPs in its pastoral ministry by being hospitable to them, protecting their rights, and thereby promoting their dignity. This pastoral and theological perspective grounded in the ethics of care and hospitality finds its deeper root in the person of Christ, who totally identifies himself with the estranged. Equally applicable to refugees and migrants, this pastoral approach embodies “the Church’s mission to all those living in the existential peripheries and in concrete peril,

⁶⁰ Alain Destexhe, “Neutrality or Impartiality,” in *History and Hope: The International Humanitarian Reader*, ed. Kevin M. Cahill (New York: Fordham University Press and The Center for International Humanitarian Cooperation, 2013), 64.

⁶¹ I have expounded on these virtues in the context of forced migration in a book chapter entitled “Hospitality and Solidarity: Virtues Integral to a Humane Refugee Policy,” in *Living with(out) Borders: Catholic Theological Ethics on the Migrations of Peoples*, ed. Agnes M. Brazal and María Teresa Dávila (New York: Orbis Books, 2016), 154-161.

who need to be welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated.”⁶² A theological method informed by listening to the cry of the marginalized is what Pope Francis calls a theology from the “existential peripheries.” A theology informed by those who live on the fringes of society does not simply repeat theological research questions and reflections of the past without taking seriously questions that the poor, and for the purpose of our study, IDPs are asking. It challenges us, in the words of Toussaint Kafarhire, to let go of our pre-formulated theological answers and pay attention to the stories of those at the margins whose voices are often muted. This methodology of listening allows the cry of the IDPs to inform our perception of God at work in their lives.⁶³ Without this approach, the assistance and protection of IDPs will remain incomplete and condescending.

From the perspective of the social thought of the Church “victims of armed conflict, erroneous economic policy and natural disasters” fall under the humanitarian rubric of *de facto refugees*.⁶⁴ As seen in the introduction the Church regards IDPs as internal refugees but this perspective is not unique to the Catholic Church’s teaching. Given similarities of thought among various agencies and institutions that are at the service of and are concerned with the plight of IDPs, the Church has a network of humanitarian partners to work with in promoting and defending the rights of the forcibly displaced who are trapped within their own countries.

Despite this confluence of thought and practice, there remains a gap between available solutions and their actualization in service to IDPs. For instance, the paradox between the abundance of human and material resources for living dignified lives and the exploitative, systemic, and unjust structures was succinctly articulated by the Synod of Bishops gathered in Rome in 1971 to consider the social question of justice in the world. The bishops identified a paradoxical world in which “the forces working for bringing about a unified world society appeared so powerful and dynamic; ...rooted in the awareness of the full basic equality as well as of the human dignity of all.”⁶⁵ Yet, the

⁶² See “Preface,” Migrant and Refugee Section, *Pastoral Orientations on Internally Displaced Persons*, 7.

⁶³ Toussaint Kafarhire, *Doing Theology from the Existential Peripheries Report*, 1, <https://migrants-refugees.va/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Africa-Final-Report-FORMATTED.pdf> (accessed on 20 November 2023).

⁶⁴ Pontifical Council, *Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity*, no. 4.

⁶⁵ World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justice in the World*, no. 7, <https://cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Justicia-in-Mundo.pdf>.

divisions and tensions within the human family appear to be increasing. One might say that this crisis is attributable to what the synod delegates identified as “a network of domination, oppression, and abuses that stifle freedom and keep the greater part of humanity from sharing in the building up and enjoyment of a more just and more fraternal world.”⁶⁶

A theology grounded in “universal fraternity”⁶⁷ opens the door to enable us to see in the IDPs a brother, a sister, a son, a daughter, a friend, and an extended family crying out for tender care, hospitality and inclusion at the table of what God has destined for all humanity to flourish in dignity. These extended arms that offer hospitality to IDPs require an attitude that transcends narcissistic tendencies in order to welcome everyone especially the socially excluded.⁶⁸ The persistent and rising numbers of IDPs pose a great challenge to the African renaissance because underlying their forced displacement are systemic deprivations of their right to integral development. As Kenneth Himes rightly states in his commentary on *Justice in the World*, the right to development “can be understood as an overarching category that includes many of the particular human rights endorsed by the Church ...[it is] a group of fundamental rights that, taken together, constitute the framework and substance of a just social order. Satisfaction of these basic rights can serve as an objective criterion for measuring development.”⁶⁹

Conclusion

Since the very existence of IDPs in Africa, as elsewhere, points to violations of human rights, to speak of the African renaissance in a continent beset by annual increases in people rendered homeless is to turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the suffering of the majority of Africans in situations of hopelessness and marginalisation as depicted

⁶⁶ World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justice in the World*, no. 3.

⁶⁷ Idara Otu, MSP, “Pope Francis and Theological Foundations for Migration,” in *Envisioning a World Without Borders: Africa’s Commentary on Fratelli Tutti*, ed. Ikenna U. Okafor and Mũmbi Kigũtha, CPPs (Nairobi Paulines Publications Africa, 2023), 100.

⁶⁸ Francis, Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 48, 3 October 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

⁶⁹ Kenneth R. Himes, “Commentary on *Justitia in mundo (Justice in the World)*” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* ed. Kenneth R. Himes, et al. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 343. See also Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) and African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), *Protection of the African Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons* (Harare and Banjul, 1995), 1.

by the situations of IDPs in DRC and Ethiopia. In other words, can one speak of African renaissance in a continent faced with an ever increasing number of IDPs largely due to conflict and violence as I have demonstrated in this article? Certainly not.

I have maintained that in order to establish a peaceful and just continent that God has endowed with human and material resources, state and non-state actors including the Church must work together with victims of human rights violations such as IDPs. This cooperation must be informed by ethical humanitarian standards and socio-pastoral approaches that put the IDPs at the centre at all times. This way Pope Francis's clarion call to welcome, promote, protect and integrate IDPs will afford moral legitimacy and credibility to the African states and the Church.