

Africa, the expelling continent. Issues of illegal migration and terrorism, and influence on international security

Ali Madouni

It is widely acknowledged in historical discourse that individuals and groups often resort to illegal migration for two primary reasons: firstly, to flee from wars and internal conflicts, and secondly, to seek improved living conditions in the absence or scarcity of such amenities in their native lands. Numerous African nations have experienced political instability, frequently resulting from military coups, unemployment, and ethnic tensions. Displacement has been observed in certain regions of the African continent, specifically in the Sahel countries and the Horn of Africa. The emergence of transnational terrorist organizations has heightened the threat of extremism and terrorism, posing a significant challenge to global security. Migrants who exhibit extremist tendencies may have developed inclinations due to inadequate integration within their host countries or to experiences of security-related harassment. Alternatively, such individuals may have possessed a pre-existing susceptibility to extremism. The presence of such migrants has contributed to the proliferation of extremist ideologies within host countries, particularly in Europe. The present circumstances have resulted in security challenges for the host nations, which persist in needing to be more adequately managed and vulnerable, despite the implementation of European policies and protocols aimed at mitigating unlawful migration. This implies a shortcoming or incapacity at the level of international relations.

Introduction

The imbalance in some African countries has led to the revival of opportunities for extremist organizations. This state created a new reali-

ty after it suffered successive defeats at all security and political levels, which caused the transmission of the phenomenon of terrorism toward countries of a societal, security, or political nature. Fragile regions in Africa, such as the Sahel countries, are the closest to the plans of extremist groups to create new alliances that seek to exploit the political, security, and economic crises experienced by some countries in this region; by finding rules that are compatible to their ideologies and strategies of expansion as organizations, or building geopolitical blocs as alliances to serve their objectives.

Political instability and repression in many regions of Africa over the years have prompted many individuals and groups to seek alternatives and better places. Authoritarian regimes and violence also facilitated the admission of illegal migrants to Europe. Moreover, the absence of democracy and freedom in most countries still pushes individuals and groups to migrate in any way possible. More recently, the lack of international border control has significantly increased illegal migration from the Middle East and Africa to several ports to access Europe. The expelling countries bear a great responsibility because of their political and social systems, where the lack of equal opportunities, the failure to provide work, and the minimum level of a free and dignified life are the motives for illegal migration as the easiest way, concerning the conditions and constraints on the legal migration. Due to these conditions, people and groups were compelled to migrate until the phenomena became a massive exodus.

In context, the phenomenon of illegal migration has recently increased; it has become one of the phenomena that threaten international security and stability, which prompted the international community to search for ways to confront it. This illegal or irregular migration started to have linkages to the issues of terrorism, so it began to take a new direction in all meetings and security debates with the concerned governments and host countries to discuss the mechanisms.

Within these changes, this contribution addresses the issue of illegal migration and terrorism and their ramifications and consequences linked to the internal and international space. We questioned: what are the primary reasons behind the growth of these phenomena in Africa and outside? What are the eventual ramifications of the phenomena

above on the international level? Moreover, to what extent could the globally set procedures and conventions mitigate their risks?

Methodology

The issue of security in Africa is considered one of the most polarizing topics in international relations, which includes the state of insecurity and instability due to military coups and ethnic and civil conflicts. It has tended to include current issues with regional and international repercussions in the short and long term. It gives particular importance to the Sahel region and the Horn of Africa due to the nature of their composition and their geopolitical impact, which necessitated an investigation of the two cases of the growth of illegal immigration and terrorism and the extent of their interrelationship in influencing international security.

Investigating the Phenomenon of Terrorism and Illegal Migration

Terrorism, as a global phenomenon, became a black point for the international community. In the context of the critical global changes that have occurred, most notably globalization, with all its adverse effects on economies and societies of the Third World, after the Soviet Union's demise and the conclusion of the Cold War did not bring forth the "End of History" or new dawn of world peace and harmony. Instead, this change brought into sharper focus severe global problems and threats.¹

Security has become so complex and multidimensional that the traditional national border-setting type of security perception cannot recognize new threats that transcend the national borders. Thus, international terrorism became one of the main concerns with its highly complicated characteristics.² However, although globalization is

¹ Philip Wilcox, Jr., *Terrorism remains a global issue. State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism*. United States Information Agency. 1997.

² Shreyasi Ghosh. «Understanding Terrorism in the Context of Global Security», *Socrates*, Vol.2, no 2. ISSN 2347-6869 (E) ISSN 2347-2146 Issue 2. June 2014.

among the factors that led to the explosion of violence and the emergence of terrorism, authoritarian political systems are primarily responsible for the emergence of this phenomenon; because of their political oppression of the masses, which blocked the privilege and rights of democratic dialogue and participation.

During the past decades, several African countries have experienced various types of civil wars and large-scale armed conflicts, which in some cases have led to the absence of the state, creating instability and chaos and leading to forced migration. It has only lately become clear that civil war and global terrorism are related. Territories created by civil strife provide a refuge for terrorists. The illegal products of conflict, notably diamonds, are used as a source of revenue and a store of value.³

Civil wars are usually the reasons for the decline in many African countries, leading some parties to exploit the situation against other parties. Therefore, since most African nations attained independence in the 1960s, weak governance, historical animosities, exclusionary politics, contested legitimacy, resource competition, external factors, globalized conflicts, and extremist ideologies have produced various violent episodes throughout the continent.⁴ Wars and conflicts spread in several regions of Africa and caused migration, which witnessed a tremendous human movement affected by conflicts and wars run by regional and international parties, causing millions of groups who escape from war crises towards Europe and America in search of a safer place.

The wars tearing the African continent led to migration, especially civil wars due to political instability, the absence of an authority capable of running, and cases of dependence that link these countries to the center.

³ Paul Collier V. L. Elliott Håvard Hegre et al. (2003), *Breaking the Conflict Trap Civil War and Development Policy. A World Bank Policy Research Report*, Washington.

⁴ Raymond Gilpin. (2016). *Understanding the Nature and Origins of Violent Conflict in Africa*, in P. All and Ch. A. Crocker (eds.), *Minding the Gap: African Conflict Management in a Time of Change*, CIGI Publications.

Globalization Aspects Relationship to Illegal Migration

Globalization has emerged because of the social and economic reality of global capitalism. Therefore all other factors can be linked to globalization and its direct relationship to the existing gap between the developed northern and the backward southern worlds. The rapidly advancing information, communication, and transportation technologies driving economic globalization and propelling international migration also foster transnational crime.⁵ Through the generalization of globalization systems, hegemonic forces were embodied in the global economy, significant monopolies of technology and markets emerged, and competition was established in global markets. This situation led to damaging repercussions for the South, which initially suffered from a sensitive economic and social status, especially as it became an open market for the northern product. Thus, it led to the collapse of their economies in the face of the currents of globalization, and with it, the cost of living in the developing countries of the South rose. They should have ensured the population's necessities, especially the youth group.

Globalization has created miserable conditions, especially in developing countries, including Africa, where all forms of underdevelopment gather. Poverty has spread, and unemployment has become a remnant of the globalized system.

The proximity of North Africa to southern Europe, the transportation policies of most European countries, primarily via sea passages, and the historical links between the countries of the north and South of the Mediterranean are all significant factors that encourage people to migrate to Europe. Many groups are forced to take smuggling routes to reach European countries as a destination.

The Reasons Behind the Phenomenon

The political factor contributes to the increase of illegal migration scales, provoking it from the side of the host country and the side of

⁵ Rey Koslowski (2012), *Immigration, Crime, and Terrorism*, in *Oxford Handbook of the Politics of International Migration*.

the country leaving.⁶, adding that political and security reasons are considered among the most critical factors leading to the acceleration of illegal migration. However, the political reasons are only related to the conditions experienced by the exporting countries. However, they go beyond the policies of the receiving countries that led directly and indirectly to encouraging migration.

Political factors are one of the most prominent factors that led to many migrations throughout history. It is noticeable that international migration has taken more influence over time, with political factors as a reason for migration. One of the particular political reasons that drive migration is the pressure of force, threat, and seizure, i.e., the external military intervention of any country leads to external migration. In addition to local political pressure, it also leads to migration.

In most developing countries, where democracy is non-existent, and dictatorship regimes prevail, military coups and wars lead to emigration abroad. The political developments in Africa have repercussions on the trends of terrorism and extremism, as Africa is witnessing several political and security developments interlinked with military coups and have greatly affected the general trends of the movement of terrorism and extremism.

The increasing number of irregular migrants to Europe is likely to increase the rates of terrorism and crime in Europe. Explaining that climate change dramatically affects the trends of terrorist activity, as terrorist groups exploit environmental issues and international policies related to climate change as a pretext for recruitment.

The collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011 marked the opening of the Central Mediterranean Route for an irregular border-crossing between Libya and Italy. It resulted in the immediate expansion of the global smuggling network, which produced an asymmetric reduction in the bilateral distance between country pairs across the Mediterranean Sea.⁷

⁶ Ivan A. Aleshkovski (2013), «Illegal Immigration as a Structural Factor of Global Development», *Globalistics and Globalization Studies*, pp. 243-256.

⁷ Guido Friebel, Miriam Manchin et al. (2018), «International Migration Intentions and Illegal Costs: Evidence from Africa-to Europe Smuggling Route», *IZA – Institute of Labor Economics*, No. 11978.

A setback for international, regional, and local efforts in the path of the Libyan political settlement to achieve stability and rebuild the state in Libya has an impact on the continuation of the state of internal and external insecurity. For instance, the postponement of the elections will further complicate the political crisis, which is already aggravating in Libya and foreshadows renewed armed conflict between them. Wars, contests, and security interference in many African countries caused political instability, which led to the deterioration of the situation in all aspects of life in Africa. Therefore, group individuals began to risk their lives illegally to search for stability, security, and peace.

The reasons for the growth of illegal migration lie in life's difficulties. Groups find themselves victims of the schemes of policies of poverty and ignorance, the spread of bribery, and the dominance of corruption. In addition to the insecurity and absence of individual and collective security, this poses a significant threat to international security. Such states offer a haven for illicit trade, drugs-production, and weapons smuggling. Corruption presents an endemic problem, and the global result is likely to be a regional spillover of the effects of conflict, terrorism, and a failure to manage epidemic diseases.⁸

Recently, the overlapping effects of the Corona pandemic impacted terrorist activity, especially in light of the closure procedures and the consequent isolation. It provided an opportunity for terrorist groups in various directions to recruit new elements from among those affected by these policies, and tensions and conflicts in the international arena affect terrorist activity. While there is an emerging consensus that Covid-19 is not directly triggering new conflicts or radically altering the levels of pre-pandemic conflicts, there is no doubt its disruptive impacts exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities and provoke social tensions/unrest, feeding drivers of conflict and insecurity.⁹ As tensions between Ukraine and Russia continue escalating, a renewed

⁸ Maxim Worcester (2015), *Combating Terrorism in Africa. The Institute for Strategic, political, security, and economic consultancy*, Berlin.

⁹ Cyril Obi and Abigail Kabandula (2021), «Special issue on "Covid-19, Peace, and Security in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities"», *African Security*, 14:4, 307-317, DOI: 10.1080/19392206.2021.2028116.

Russian-Ukrainian conflict may result in an influx and increase in the movement of right-wing extremists to the region.

The geography of terrorism and its trends expand according to recent international developments. Sometimes these terrorist activities have an active role in drawing international changes, as there are a set of developments and factors on the global scene that would increase terrorist threats, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequences of the war. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the Sino-American conflict, climate change, increased illegal immigrants in Europe, and others.

Strategies and Mechanisms for Addressing Illegal Migration and Terrorism

Due to the inability of European countries to formulate a unified strategy to deal with the phenomenon of migration in all its forms, their efforts in this field have focused on security and procedural agreements approved by the joint committees of the officials.

These treatments are centered on the security aspect of the problem and the need to stop migration through coast guards and intensify periodicals to reduce these two phenomena.

International Conventions and Protocols

A new type of criminal pattern emerged, represented by the movement of individuals across international borders without following legal procedures, prompting the international community to conclude the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish terrorism.¹⁰

¹⁰ UNITED NATIONS (2004), *Convention against Transnational organized crime and the Protocols to it*, UNITED NATIONS Office on Drugs and Crime. Vienna.

As it is also called “The Palermo Convention”, and its three protocols (Palermo Protocols) are the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children Protocol to Combat the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air Protocol to Combat Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms.¹¹

The Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air contains many guarantees for illegal migrants, the most important of which is that they will not be subjected to criminal prosecution because they are the target of smuggling behavior.

The international protocol also requires each state party to take, consistent with its obligations under international law, all appropriate measures, including the enactment of legislation when necessary to safeguard and protect the rights of migrants, in particular, the right to life and the right not to be subjected to torture or other forms of inhuman treatment or punishment or degrading treatment, and to provide appropriate assistance to migrants whose life or safety is endangered by smuggling,

Among the factors that push people to leave their homelands, there are cases related to political instability and the outbreak of wars and armed conflicts. Among the continents that have suffered and are still suffering from a state of war and instability. As a matter of fact, in many of African regions the state of war has become an inherent feature of the continent.

International Mechanisms

The issue of migration is one of the most critical concerns of the international space today, in light of the growing global crises in many states, their various repercussions on the sending and host countries, and the policies of European countries towards migrants. EU countries have strengthened controls on migrants according to legal and institutional frameworks, in light of the complex procedures to preserve the nation-state and the fears of terrorism.

¹¹ *Ibidem.*

This has caused division and divergent attitudes across the continent. It created a real test of the triad of security, identity, and human value, as the bias towards Western democracies and human rights contested them in light of similar concerns calling for preserving the social and economic security of countries and the integrity of their borders, and keeping the religious and cultural identity of the continent.

The priority of security solutions is evident in the series of agreements and measures taken by the European Union so far to reduce some of the repercussions of migration without dealing with its causes. These measures stem from considering migration a threat to Europe's security and stability and not a symptom of the imbalance of power in our world. Its consequences are represented in inequality and the continuation of the patterns of exploitation launched by European colonialism. The priority of security solutions is also reflected in the European Union's decision to establish the Frontex agency to monitor borders and become, in practice, a tool for criminalizing all types of "illegal" migration. The main task of this organization is border management, which it coordinates and promotes.

Moreover, it helps authorities from different countries in the EU work together. Frontex has some operational areas which help it achieve its primary aim. These areas are defined in the founding Frontex Regulation and a subsequent amendment.¹²

Implementing these procedures requires cooperation with the security services in the countries of origin and the countries of the crossing. This cooperation contributes directly and indirectly to strengthening the capabilities of the security services in those countries. Although the cooperation agreements concluded for this purpose contain eloquent statements about the importance of development and respect for human rights, they need to include reference to the mechanisms necessary to implement them, activate development projects, eliminate the causes of poverty, and combat human rights violations.

These legal procedures had counterproductive effects as illegal migration worsened. Those countries became a destination of unlaw-

¹² Marta Pawelczy (2015), «FRONTEX- The only Organization that fights for Europe against Illegal Immigrants», *Security and Defence*, 3. 69-80. 10.5604/23008741.1189411.

ful migration from different parts of the world, such as Central and South America, Asian countries, and African countries. Thus, it became clear that in light of the tightening of migration laws in the countries of the European Union, the phenomenon of illegal migration has increased, and new ways and methods of sophistication have emerged to enter Europe.

The phenomenon of migration represents an intersecting issue that includes the three political, economic, and social fields. The Barcelona Process framework, launched in that city in 1995, contains a multilateral and bilateral dimension and currently comprises 39 member states. It pursues the goals of making the Mediterranean an area of peace and stability committed to democracy and human rights, shared prosperity, and a space for cultural dialogue and human exchange.¹³ The European Union conducted regional negotiations and agreements with the countries of the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East to mitigate the impact of illegal migration. Hence, the European Union worked to provide subsidies to achieve their development to improve their social, economic, and political conditions.

The Security Approach

Given the problems that the issue of illegal migration raises, most countries focus on security to end this dangerous dilemma. Tunisia has sought to secure its maritime borders by tightening the monitoring and deploying naval forces on the entire coast and providing them with ships and equipment prepared to combat the phenomenon of illegal migration. Consequently, it is asserted that security is necessary for sustainable development. The factors that contribute to insecurity or instability, namely poverty, corruption, inadequate institutions, absence of the rule of law, management of natural resources, and conflicts, frequently coincide with the factors that motivate mi-

¹³ Eduard Soler i Lecha (2008), *Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. Genesis, evolution and implications for Spain's Mediterranean Policy*. Opex – Observatorio de Política Exterior Española, Fundación Alternativas y Fundación CIDOB, Madrid.

gration and the challenges migrants encounter during their journey. Migrants, particularly those with irregular migration status and limited social support, are highly susceptible to security risks.¹⁴

However, there are better solutions than the security approach to eliminate irregular migration, as Africa partners with it in a global crisis faced by all countries. The phenomenon of illegal migration is not a circumstantial issue. On the contrary, it has become a structural component that the mechanisms used so far have been unable to combat, whether in the exporting or receiving countries. Also, the security framework in which migration policies have been envisioned has shown how cooperation can strengthen rather than dissolve a state's resiliency. Regarding its connection to security, migration management has been upgraded to the utmost strategic importance, impacting EU external relations and mingling with other core policy fields.¹⁵

The traditional approaches in international relations were unable to deal with these issues efficiently, which prompted the existence of the constructivist theory in international relations to current systems that pushed these issues to the fore, making them the focus of attention at the research and political levels.

Additionally, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) mechanism could pave the way for more progressive policy in the future. Assessing the history of multilateral diplomacy, activists and governments can now point to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration when pressing for a more humane response in favor of migrants. Migration is perceived as a complex phenomenon that encompasses various dimensions and cannot be effectively tackled by a single governmental policy sector. To ensure the coherence of policies across all levels and sectors of government, a comprehensive approach involving all branches of government is necessary for developing and implementing effective migration policies and practices.

¹⁴ Integrating migration into security interventions. Toolkit for integrating migration into security interventions. 2021.

¹⁵ Michela Ceccorulli (2009), *Migration as a security threat: internal and external dynamics in the European Union*, Forum on the Problems of Peace and War, Florence GARNET Working Paper No: 65/09, April 2009.

Despite all the understandings reached, the Global Compact for Migration maintains the sanctity of primary human rights considerations for migrants who, unlike refugees, are not protected under international law. For example, the European members have been persuading the countries that produce the most significant number of migrants to readmit their deported nationals. This request sparked a more extensive debate about whether the non-refoulement rule should apply to migrants.

Reflections on the International Security

Illegal or irregular migration is a global phenomenon in developed countries such as the United States and the European Union or in developing countries in Asia and other regions.

The terrorist attacks of 11th September have undeniably had a lasting effect in many areas. One significant consequence was that migration became more strongly linked to national security issues. Before 9/11, many states struggled with irregular migration flows and cross-border criminal activity such as smuggling and human trafficking. Since 2001, the mobility of international terrorists has been one of the main concerns of the international community. It has recently driven many developments in border and entry controls, focusing on border security and complementary initiatives.¹⁶

In the last few years, there has been a notable increase in unauthorized migration through multiple ports along the Mediterranean region. The complex and varied nature of illegal migration poses a challenge in accurately assessing its scope and categorizing the diverse range of individuals who engage in such migration. There exist divergent assessments about unregulated migration.

There are interactions between terrorist organizations and the ideological, organizational, and dynamic developments that have occurred in them. The contemporary world is witnessing the return of terrorist organizations to the political and military scenes in many countries.

¹⁶ International Organization for Migration. International terrorism and migration, 2010.

Illegal migration to Europe has something to do with the growth of the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism, as it has created a fertile ground for terrorist activities because international law does not criminalize irregular migration, and this is what requires countries to receive immigrants within the framework of human rights agreements, and this is incompatible with security considerations, national interests, and interests of many countries. When not properly handled, the arrival of large refugee populations increases the risk of attacks by domestic and transnational terrorists in the recipient country. For countries receiving large numbers of refugees, the risk of terrorist attacks by refugee warriors and, on the opposite side, by native xenophobic vigilantes targeting refugee populations increased.¹⁷

It is found in the security level of illegal migration in sending and receiving countries. It is represented in the expulsion factors from the country of origin described in human rights violations, the absence of freedoms, the spread of internal conflicts, and the outbreak of wars.

There are attractive factors for the countries of destination represented in need of these countries for workforce and wage discrepancies to compensate for the population deficit in the European continent, in addition to the facilities provided by the migration regulation offices.

In addition, illegal migration has many effects on various security, economic and social aspects, and it is considered a contributing factor to the emergence of organized crime and human trafficking. The danger of crimes increases when the perpetrator is not identified with extremist ideas.

In the last decade, Africa has witnessed a remarkable development in the issue of terrorism, represented by the increase in movements and groups and the high rate of terrorist operations from the far African coast in the west to the far African coast in the east, where most of these groups spread. However, this terrifying spread of terrorism is not limited to the continent in a specific region; not a region is without a terrorist threat. However, it can be said that the strength and effectiveness of terrorist groups on the continent differ from one region

¹⁷ Alex P. Schmid (2016), «Links between Terrorism and Migration. An Exploration», *ICCT – International Centre for Counter-Terrorism*, The Hague, DOI 10.19165.1.04 ISSN: 2468-0656.

to another and that their repercussions also differ from one country to another.

Terrorism has repercussions on the countries of East Africa because of the close link between terrorism and the performance of the political system. The security repercussions considered the most dangerous of terrorist operations come due to the insecurity they cause and the inability of the security authority in the targeted countries to confront terrorist operations, which, in turn, dramatically embarrasses the governments of those countries. Some associated threats are when immigrants and refugees are armed and become involved in activities related to the trafficking of weapons or drugs, ally with opposition and oppose the receiving country's regime or oppose the regime of their home country from the receiving one. Thus, the foreign population risks internal stability and security and is an international security threat among states.¹⁸

All these are matters and transformations that give extremist groups and ideas more significant opportunities to spread, penetrate, and feed them with tools capable of pushing them to higher levels, continuity and spread. The exploitation has taken advantage of the region's prevalent social and economic fragility. The area is one of the poorest in the world, and the lack of strict local borders has turned it into an open smuggling zone where a significant part of the trade happens outside formal structures. This creates a conducive environment for financial corruption, exacerbating the situation. The complexity of the tasks of combating terrorism, given that the latter finds it easier to finance its operations, as well as to get out of the grip of the law, which does not seem to have strict and decisive powers in the region, which encouraged the terrorists to present themselves as an alternative to the countries themselves.

Conclusion

The issue of illegal migration, with its various nomenclature, has taken on its vast importance in recent times and constitutes an obsession for

¹⁸ Ruf Bermejo (2009), «Migration and Security in the EU: Back to Fortress Europe?», *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 5 (2), pp. 207-224. Available at: <http://www.jcer.net/ojs/index.php/jcer/article/view/168/147/>.

the European Union, as it proves its existence at all levels, especially after meeting the definitions of terrorism that have been linked in large parts with these groups.

The security aspect dominates the presented solution, rendering it nonviable to solve the problem. Undoubtedly, the governments of the countries where the migrants originate bear responsibility for their tragedy. Despite all the imminent risks, it is one of the primary causes that needs effective solutions before others. However, these countries bear the burden together.

To discover effective solutions, it is necessary to diligently and attentively monitor the phenomenon, establish and enhance development programs in the nations from which migrants originate, and facilitate their access to employment prospects. From stability to secure sources of decent living for the individual in them, and not to market this problem from time to time for more support or pressure on some parties,

The phenomenon of terrorism in Africa evolves according to the evolution of the movement of significant political and economic interactions on the continent, as the development of the phenomenon of terrorism has been dramatically affected by the colonial legacy and the artificial emergence of the state in Africa, as terrorism overlaps with other phenomena and developments, such as revolutionary wars, civil wars, proxy wars, and others. So terrorism was one of the forms of violence used as part of those significant developments in Africa.