
IDPS AND REFUGEES' MARGINALISATION IN THE ELECTORAL CYCLE

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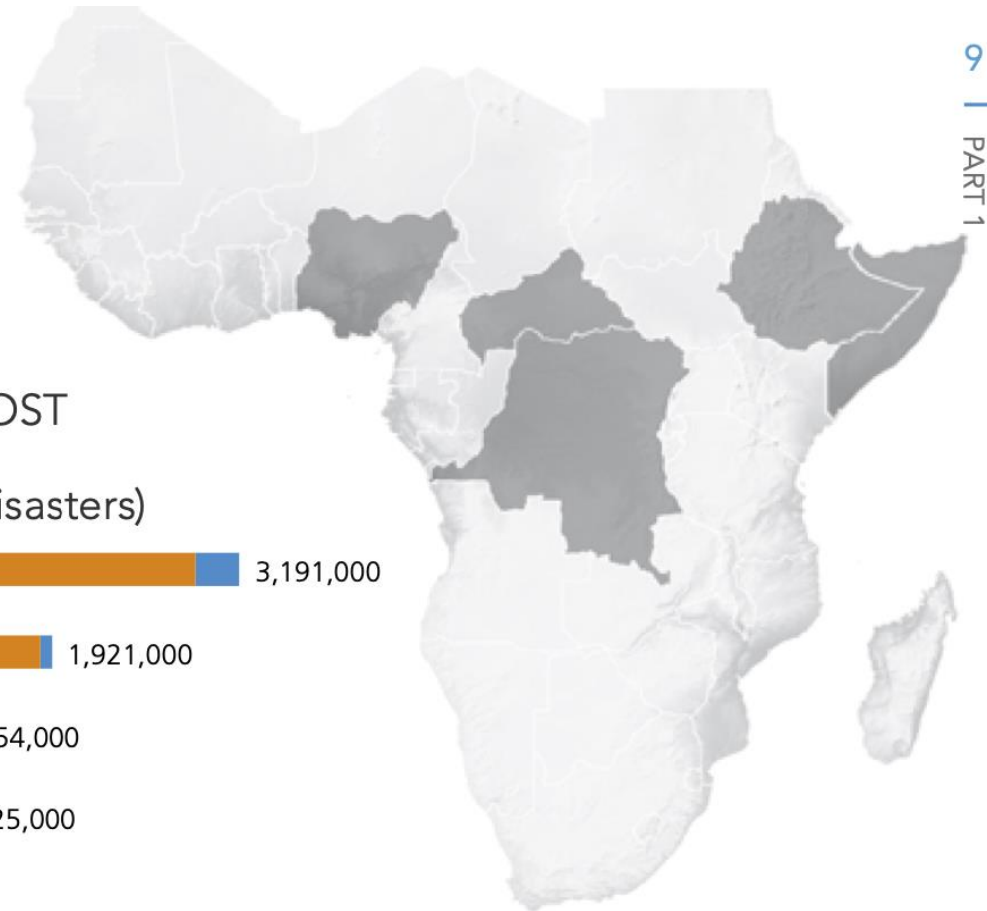
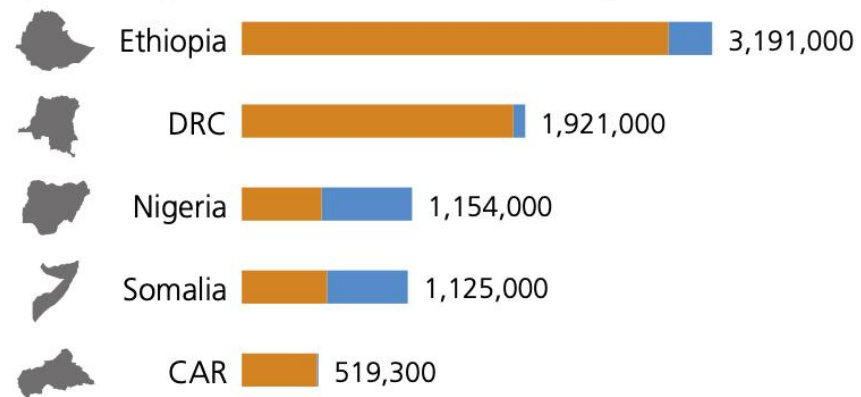
DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



Conflict 7,446,000
Disasters 2,611,000
36% of the global total

5 COUNTRIES WITH MOST NEW DISPLACEMENT (conflict, violence and disasters)



- Electoral participation by IDPs promotes engagement, reintegration, and prevents marginalisation
- Post-conflict, **elections** are frequently used as ways of facilitating the repatriation of refugees and their reintegration into the country of conflict



THE POLITICS OF DISPLACED VOTERS



- Change in voting location being seen as accepting displacement and/or territorial loss
- Change in constituency allocations altering electorates, and therefore potentially affecting electoral outcomes
- IDPs seen as belonging predominantly to one party, thereby creating an incentive for other parties not to address enfranchisement issues
- Uncertainty over when IDPs may or may not be able to return to their constituencies of origin
- Violence against women, youth, people with disabilities within the IDP community

OPERATIONAL PRACTICES AND ISSUES

- Electoral Integrity Issues
- Residency Requirements
- Documentation Requirements
- Voter Information
- Security Issues
- IDPs as Candidates



LAWS, POLICIES AND PLANS

- Domestic Legislation
- Operational Planning



ROLE OF STAKEHOLDERS

EMB

- Mapping of IDPs in terms of location, numbers and needs for registration and voting
- Establish special polling units
- Engage on security needs of IDPs pre-voting and during voting
- Amendments to the electoral law to enable IDP voting
- Voter awareness and education
- Assess gaps in the law in consultation with affected groups and political actors
- Engage in inter-agency co-operation to ensure

Civil Society

- Advocacy to pressure government to create the rights
- Advocate for rights of IDPs to participate in elections
- Engage IDPs on voter education and awareness
- Encourage cultural acceptance amongst citizens of IDP non-discrimination and tolerance
- Observation to counter fraud, malpractice

Government

- Increase efforts to end reason for displacement
- Provide for humanitarian needs
- Create enabling security environment for registration and voting
- Enable legislation of participation in elections

International Community

- Complementary actions to the Kampala Convention
- Comparative research on IDP participation, practices and costs
- Observation of IDP Voting to counter fraud and malpractice
- Assist states with legislative drafting
- Advocacy around norms and policies and countering unreasonable restrictions

Source: Between Refuge and Rights, Professor Ibeanu

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Decisions on provisions for IDP participation are worked out well in advance of an election or referendum, with time allowed for consideration of the typically sensitive and complex political, legal and technical matters. Time is allowed for operational implementation;



Cross-party consensus based on parliamentary agreement is sought, with provisions for IDP electoral participation secured in law and/or political agreement where possible;



The legislature and the election management body consults with groups broadly representative of IDPs, as well as other stakeholders, and actively involves them in developing legislation, regulations, policies and practical implementation;



Research and data on IDP numbers and electoral participation are recorded and made publicly and promptly available in order to identify any problems and good practices;



Special measures are undertaken as required to facilitate equality of opportunity and representation. Special measures may include different residency requirements, alternative documentation provisions, additional opportunities for registration, absentee voting, availability of materials in additional languages, etc.; and,



IDPs are individually given the choice of whether to vote for constituencies of origin, or current constituencies, without any consequence for their IDP status or access to humanitarian assistance.

**Internally Displaced Persons
and Electoral Participation:
A Brief Overview**

IFES White Paper



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