

A Migration Policy Gone Wrong: A Study on How the Encampment Policy Undermines Refugees' Potentials and Fails Local Economy: A Case of East Africa

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Abstract : The key question this paper asks is, 'how does the refugee encampment policy undermine refugees' potentials and fail local economy in East African countries?' It is important to develop a full understanding of the legacies of the encampment policy for refugees' performances economically, socially, and politically. The negative impacts of the encampment policy include the lack of participation or access to opportunities outside the refugee camps such as employment, education, and local integration, unfair imprisonments and constant alienation of refugees, mental and physical health issues, just to name a few. Evidence suggests that refugee camps in East Africa have progressively become open detention centres due to their designs, their locations, and movement restrictions imposed on refugees. Such restrictions in a region that hosts millions of refugees do not only undermine refugees' potentials, but it also hurts the local economy- host countries miss out in many ways. Outlining the negative impacts of the encampment policy will enable governments and relevant non-governmental actors, including policymakers, to re-consider this policy with the aim to improve refugees' participation and contributions in the broader society, promote socially cohesive practices, and help millions of refugees gain independence and reach their potentials financially, socially and politically, finally and truly giving the voice to the voiceless. The encampment policy undermines the general human security in East Africa, and it is one of the migration practices showcasing East African governments' lack of will to protect human rights, especially within the most vulnerable population groups such as refugees.

Keywords : migration policy, immigration, refugees, encampment, migration, integration, social cohesion

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