

Trans-Sahara and Mediterranean Irregular Migration: A Cause of Global Security Threat and a Consequence of Human Insecurity

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ABSTRACT

Global security helps to promote durable peace and development in the world. It holds power accountable and protects the human rights of people as well as prevents violent and organised crimes. Today, the global community is faced with security threats such as terrorism, human and drug trafficking, small arms proliferation, spread of socio-cultural, religious and political extremism and dogmatism as well as other organised crimes associated with human migration. This paper, therefore, interrogated the trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration as a global security threat as well as a consequence of human insecurity. The main objective of the paper was to appraise the contemporary human migration across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea and its link with threats to global security. Specifically, the paper sought to determine the root-causes of irregular migration as well as the unwholesome activities of some migrants considered a threat to global security. Using conceptual analysis, the paper was anchored on a combination of dependency theory and human security perspective as its framework. The findings of the study revealed that poverty, underdevelopment, armed conflicts, repressive leadership, gross human rights abuses, and natural disasters are among the human security threats that constitute the push factors of irregular migration. Also, the unwholesome activities of some migrants such as terrorism, human and drug trafficking, small arms proliferation, and other transnational crimes constitute a threat to global security. The paper, therefore, recommended a strategic action plan by both the source and recipient regions of migrants to address the human security threat in the source region. Also, there should be global concerted efforts in combating terrorism, human and drug trafficking, arms proliferation, and other organised crimes which pose a threat to global security.

Keywords: Security threat, global security, human security, source and recipient regions, transnational crimes, irregular migration.

INTRODUCTION

The Trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration refers to the cross-border and undocumented human mobility along the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea by migrants, mostly of African descent, who ply the migration routes in their quest for survival or better living condition in some North African countries and Europe.

Generally speaking, a migrant according to the United Nations is an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year, voluntarily or involuntarily, and either by regular or irregular means (IOM, 2011). International migrants, therefore, “are the people moving between countries” (MacArthur & Newton, 2022). Migration, therefore, results in international flows of persons or refugees who are forced out by wars, natural disasters, political or civil unrest, as well as young adults moving from one region to another in search of opportunities or better standard of living.

Human migration is a natural phenomenon and a part of human evolution which is as old as human existence. Recorded history has shown that man by nature has the tendency to wander from one place to another in search of basic human needs such as food, shelter and better standard of living. Early human migrations had occurred in Africa, Americas (New world), Asia, Europe and Middle East. Lawler (2011), asserts that, about 125,000 years ago, modern humans migrated from Africa to the Middle East (Israel and United Arab Emirate) through the Nile valley and Bab-el-Mandeb strait on the Red Sea. Also, the great migrations occurred in the first millennium (37AD to 538AD) resulting in hostile influx of migrants into Europe, otherwise known as Barbarian Invasion, (Halsall, 2007), after the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire. Migration also flourished on both sides of the Sahara as a result of the historical slave trade, armed conquests and religious pilgrimages. This, no doubt, must have laid the foundation for the contemporary trans-Sahara-Mediterranean irregular migration.

The contemporary human migration, therefore, occurs in various patterns. It, also, has causes and effects that have made it a global concern. Since the early 1990s, there has been an increase in irregular migration to Southern European countries of Spain and Italy by thousands of nationals from North African countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia through the Mediterranean Sea. Also, migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa like Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Sierra-Leone, Senegal, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Niger, Chad, and the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea) move to North Africa, through the Sahara Desert, with a view to settling there or using those countries as transiting points to Europe.

Transnational migration is in two categories, namely: (1) Regular or legal migration, and (2) irregular, illegal or undocumented migration. According to International Organisation for Migration (IOM), regular or legal migration refers to border crossing or human mobility that “occurs through recognized, authorized channels” (IOM, 2011). This therefore, involves travelling with processed traveling documents as well as following legal routes. While irregular, illegal or undocumented migration connotes traveling across international borders by an individual without traveling documents such as a visa, as may be required by the laws of destination country. Irregular or undocumented migrants are, however, forced to leave their countries of origin due to human security threats, such as adverse effects of climate change, fear of persecution in country of origin, prolonged civil conflicts and the attendant socio-economic crises, like hunger, unemployment, lack of shelter, poor health care, and other push factors of migration which are prevalent in the source regions of migrants.

The widely discussed trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration by Africans has brought to focus the deplorable state of affairs as well as the despair in many African countries which force their nationals, especially the youths, to move in droves, in their quests to enter Europe, traversing the deadly Sahara Desert and the Mediterranean Sea as well as daring the many dangers, risks and high mortality and fatality rates associated with the journey. In fact, the high number of irregular migrants who lost their lives while crossing the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea is always underestimated due to the difficulty in documenting such category of migrants, who usually evade the border police, for fear of being deported back to the port of departure, if apprehended without travelling documents.

It is against this background that the trans-Sahara and Mediterranean migration is viewed as a consequence of human security threat, especially in the source region of migrants. In the same vein, the unwholesome activities of some migrants, no doubt, constitute a threat to global security. This paper, therefore, adopts conceptual analysis as a methodological guide in clarifying the meaning of concepts. It also evaluates relevant theoretical perspectives on poverty, underdevelopment and security. The paper, actually, is divided into five parts. The ongoing introduction constitute the first part. The second part is the conceptual analysis. The third part is the theoretical perspectives, while the fourth and fifth parts are the conclusion and recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The relationship between security and migration is not a recent development. The traditional security which usually focuses mainly on protection from external aggression and national interest of a state, has been broadened to include other “societal, personal, national, or more basic human security...” (Lahav, 2015:90). Lahav (2015) further posits that, Myron Weiner (1992; 1993) was the first scholar to address the link between immigration and security issues, while several other scholars like Teitelbaum, 1984 and Zolberg, 1995 captured the connection in their study on immigration and refugees in the United States foreign policy.

Human security in this context attempts to appraise the global vulnerabilities and threats most migrants are confronted with, which result in irregular migration across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea by Africans. Busumtwi-Sam (2008), expatiates human security nexus to include all the push factors responsible for human migration, such as political, socio-economic and environmental issues threatening the survival, dignity, well-being and livelihood of humans in the source region of migrants. Similarly, when human security is threatened or completely absent, human development definitely will be affected, resulting in personal and desperate efforts as well as indulgence in all kinds of activities for survival, safety, and improved quality of life.

Irregular migration from underdeveloped African countries to Europe involves the mass movement of people in despair, embarking on the lethal journey with the hope for a better life in Europe. The business of trafficking immigrants from Africa to Europe which usually occurs by rickety boats through the Mediterranean Sea, or by land via the Spanish Enclave of Ceuta and Melilla, became more lucrative than drug trafficking in some parts of Africa, notably Morocco, Mauritania, and Libya. According to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), the journeys across the Mediterranean to Europe are becoming more fatal, despite the fact that the numbers of refugees and migrants making the journeys have witnessed a downward trend since 2015. In a press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on June 10, 2022, the UNHCR Spokesman, Shabia Mantoo stated that there has been an increase in migratory deaths. For instance, in 2021, some 3,231 migrants were recorded dead or missing at the Mediterranean Sea and the northwest African routes, while in 2020: 1,881; 2019: 1,510; and 2018: more than 2, 277, noting that greater numbers may have died or gone missing along land routes through the Sahara Desert (UNHCR 2001-2022 Report).

Similarly, global security is threatened by the activities of some of these migrants, who indulge in unwholesome practices such as terrorism, human trafficking, small arms proliferation, drug offenses, socio-cultural, religious and political extremism and dogmatism as well as other cross-border crimes.

Irregular Migration as a Consequence of Human Security Threat

Human security, according to the United Nations Commission on Human Security (UN-CHS), was enunciated, among other objectives, to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. It means protecting people’s fundamental freedoms; protecting people from all sorts of threats; creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that would enable and enhance the survival, livelihood and dignity of people (CHS: 2003:4).

Human security, therefore, presents itself in a better living standard, good education and skill acquisition, access to adequate health care, availability of jobs and opportunities, good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights, freedom from threats of terrorism, civil wars, insurgencies, and other push factors of migration, including natural disasters and adverse effects of climate change. According to Mahbubul Haq, the Special Adviser to the UNDP Administrator:

Human security is not just security of land, it is security of people; is not just security through arms, it is

security through development; is not just security of nations, it is security of individuals in their homes and in their jobs; is not just defence against conflicts between nations, it is a defence against conflicts between people (Zhijun, 2005 cited in Dinshak and Danfulani, 2018:61).

The UNDP Human Development Report of 1994, therefore, describes human security as “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life- whether in homes, jobs or communities” (UNDP, 1994:23). The report further noted other dimensions of human security, as follows:

1. Economic Security – unemployment, job insecurity, income inequality, inflation, underdeveloped social security and homelessness;
2. Food Security – the problems of physical and economic access to food;
3. Health Security – threats to life and health and inadequate access to health services;
4. Environmental Security – the degradation of ecosystems, pollution of water, air and soil;
5. Personal Security – physical violence, war, discrimination, domestic violence, child abuse;
6. Community Security – ethnic tensions and violent conflicts;
7. Political Security – state repression and violation of human rights (UNDP, 1994: 23-24).

It suffices, therefore, to say that the absence of these dimensions of human security constitute the root-causes of migration. The root-causes of migration, as it were, are appraised on the push-pull factor paradigm. These push and pull factors are the major reasons people migrate from their countries of origin to recipient countries. The push factors, which also are part of the threat to human security, include the socio-economic, political, and environmental problems, such as underdevelopment, poverty, joblessness and lack of opportunities, bad governance and corruption, authoritarian leadership and gross human rights abuses, unending armed conflicts and civil wars, natural disasters that are prevalent in the migrants’ source region of Africa, which drive many Africans, especially the youths, out of their countries of origin, in seeking solutions or better living conditions in the recipient regions of migrants.

Poverty and underdevelopment which encapsulate the major reasons why people engage in undocumented human mobility, have been associated with trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration. According to Addae-Koranke (2014:148), “poverty is a lack of basic human needs...such as adequate and nutritious food, clothing, housing, clean water and health services.” Poverty has become a major challenge in the developing countries and source region of migrants. It results in hunger, epidemic of disease, high infant and maternal mortality rates, low standard of living, scarcity of employment opportunities, and poor infrastructure.

The World Development Report (WDR, 1999) considers as poor, people whose per capita income is lower than US\$370 on average. In the same vein, Human (2021) points out that the World Bank currently set the poverty line at US\$1.9 per day (estimated at US\$635 per annum) based on the average value of goods needed to sustain one adult in a day. It follows, therefore, that people whose income falls below that amount, considered adequate to sustain an individual adult, are considered as poor. Africa, being the poorest region in the world, falls under the ‘extreme poverty’ category, and is bedeviled with all threats to human security.

The pull factors of migration, on the other hand, are those attractive living conditions and opportunities such as highly improved standard of living, good infrastructure, good governance, democracy and rule of law, respect for human rights, enormous jobs and opportunities available and accessible in the developed and industrialised regions of Europe and North America.

Irregular Migration as a Cause of Global Security Threat

Global security, also known as international security, attempts to explain various efforts or measures put in

place by nation-states and international community as well as international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and other regional bodies, to ensure global peace, safety of human lives, mutual survival, and co-existence. Some of these measures include diplomatic agreements in the form of treaties and conventions, as well as military actions, when considered an option or inevitable. Global security and state security are invariably linked. In other words, a threat to state security could be viewed as a threat to international security in global perspective.

Irregular migration, which involves border-crossing by displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, socio-economic and environmental migrants, has increasingly been associated, especially in the recent past, with global security threat, such as terrorism, human trafficking, drug offences, propagation of religious, political and socio-cultural extremism and dogmatism, small arms proliferation and other organised crimes. This, therefore, has resulted in securitisation policies by recipient countries, who are actually the victims of these unwholesome practices.

Recent developments in the area of security threat has shown that international migration has become a topical issue in security discourses and agenda of many countries, especially in Europe and North America. As the number of migrants increase globally, so is the perception that migrants constitute a threat to the sovereignty and state security of recipient countries. The conventional perspective on state security usually focuses on the military sector. But in the post-Cold War era, security studies and security threats have been broadened to comprise threats to environmental security, human security, food security, and other socio-political and economic insecurity facing mankind. Following the broadening of the concept of security, many socio-political, economic and environmental issues, including transnational migration are considered as constituting global security threat.

It is against this background that Akinterinwa (2018) asserts that “migration is a security issue...and a major threat to national and international security.” In that same breath, Fauser (2006) opines that the global security is threatened by the activities of irregular migrants, when he states that:

Today, our nationally bound societies are increasingly being confronted with diffused threats associated with terrorism, drug and human trafficking or organized crimes, many of which are related to transnational movement to name but a few. In this context, the traditional concept of security is expanded through the securitisation of policy areas previously alien to it, including human trafficking and irregular migration (Fauser, 2006:1).

It suffices to say that, the western countries who are the major recipients of trans-Saharan and Mediterranean irregular migrants are caught up in the web of uncertainty occasioned by terrorism, organised crimes and other security threats perceived to have been stimulated by international migration or uncontrolled movement of migrants.

In his view, Koser (2005:2) submits that, “irregular migration poses very real dilemmas for states as well as exposing migrants themselves to insecurity and vulnerability.” This, therefore, gives credence to the incontrovertible and undeniable fact that, the concept of sovereignty gives states the right to protect or control their national borders, in line with the views of exponents of power theory. At the same time, migration policies of most recipient countries are propelled “by the perception (whether accurate or not) that countries risk being ‘overwhelmed’ by large numbers of irregular migrants who embody threat to states and society” (Koser, 2005:2).

To further buttress the threat posed by irregular migration on State Security, Koslowki (2004), in an article titled *Global Migration Perspective*, published by the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), emphatically submitted that irregular migration is a threat to state security due to the fact

that it could provide avenues or channels for criminals and potential terrorists to immigrate into other countries and carry out their nefarious plots and activities against the state, adding that, in addition to millions of international migrants, there are other millions of tourists, students and business people who are involved in international human mobility. Koslowki (2004), also draws attention to the fact that the nineteen (19) hijackers involved in the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks on the United States of America, entered the country “on the tourist and students visas under the false pretenses, and used the same modalities of travel document fraud and visa abuse characteristic of illegal migration to the United States” (Koslowski, 2004:3).

In as much as there exists a gap in scholarly work as well as contestable proof linking migration to security threat, the increased fear of terrorism since after the 9/11 has made international migration a major suspect as well as a much talked about topic in the global security discourse. According to Almansoori (2021:1), “Migration can lead to the proliferation of terrorist activities in a region that had no such events before”, adding that this situation occurs if migrants come from regions known for terrorist activities. For instance, “Migrants from the war-torn countries in Asia ... are perceived to be high risk as far as terrorism is concerned”.

Further analysis has shown that the western countries consider international terrorism critically when formulating and implementing migration policies as well as their international security agenda. In the opinion of Almansoori (2021), the security concerns expressed by the western countries are as a result of the perception that terrorist take advantage of migration flows to expand their terrorist activities and radical ideologies which, no doubt, pose a serious threat to the state security and sovereignty.

Similarly, the general perceptions among nationals of host countries are that irregular migrants constitute a threat to national security, heighten competition as well as pose a challenge to religious or traditional homogeneity of their people. Whether the above perceptions are based on reality or not, the simple fact remains that, migrants influence major policy reviews towards international human migration by these recipient countries. This, therefore, goes to prove that international migration has the capacity to impact significantly on state security and foreign policies of host regions.

Contrarily, Koser (2005), even while admitting that migration generally can pose a threat to economic stability, as well as undermine social stability of a host country, especially where there is a rise in xenophobic attacks and difficulty to integrate migrants, queried the general notion that migrants threaten the sovereignty or security of their host countries. In a well-articulated analysis, Koser (2005:10) argues that “the political significance of irregular migrants generally outweighs its numerical significance”.

In other words, the numerical strength of irregular migrants in most countries is rather too small to constitute a threat to state security and sovereignty. As strong as Koser’s argument appears, it is, however important to note that the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States were carried out by only nineteen (19) terrorist who disguised as tourists. It suffices, therefore, to say that numbers are immaterial in an era of advanced technology. To this end, migration, no doubt, is a cause of global security threat as much as it is a consequence of human insecurity. Migration threatens the sovereignty of a host country with uncontrolled influx of people, violating border control, threatening economies of host countries, using a recipient country as a safe haven for nefarious activities, as well as constituting a threat to cultural identity of a host country (Witteler-Stiepelmann, 2009).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The above conceptualisation and the complexities of trans-national irregular migration and global security threat have shown that using one particular theoretical framework cannot be sufficient in the analysis and

examination of the contemporary trans-Saharan and Mediterranean irregular migration and global security threat.

There are different perspectives as to the root-causes of trans-Saharan and Mediterranean migration as well as its implication on human and global security. While several studies purvey impressive analysis on the push factors or human security threat responsible for irregular migration, such as poverty and underdevelopment, wars and internal armed conflicts, repressive political leadership and gross abuse of human rights, high demography and joblessness, natural disasters and adverse effects of climate change which could be viewed from dependency theory perspective, many other scholars and security analysts view the global security threat from the Human Security Approach which challenges the realism and neo-realism traditional, state-centric and military approach to global security. Human security theorists, therefore, focus on how best to protect people or individuals who are affected by wars and other security threats.

This paper, therefore, is anchored on Human Security Theory as a framework for analysing the trans-Saharan and Mediterranean irregular migration and threat to global security. This, however, would be adopted when due consideration must have been given to dependency theory which is another relevant framework in appraising the root-cause of irregular migration.

Dependency Theory: As a field of study, International Relations (IR) is laden with contending theoretical perspectives about global inequalities, core-periphery or North-South divide. The Dependency Theory is among these competing theoretical approaches. Based on Marxist School of Thought which views globalisation in terms of the spread of market capitalism, and the exploitation of cheap labour and resources in return for obsolete technologies of the developed world, Dependency theorists hold strongly the view that the way the poor states are integrated into the world system impoverishes them while the developed region is enriched the more.

Farny (2016) posits that the theory emerged in the 1950s in reaction to Modernisation Theory, another earlier theory of development. Dependency theory, however became popular in the 1960s when the renowned Argentine economist and researcher with the United Nations Commission for Latin America, Paul Prebisch revealed in his scholarly work that increases in the wealth of the developed nations appeared to be at the expense of their poor counterparts.

The major perspective of dependency theorists, therefore, is the unflinching influence of the capitalist system which promotes a division of labour between the rich countries (core) and the poor countries (periphery) whereby, the 'core' exploits and get richer at the expense of the 'periphery'.

In other words, the Dependency theorists are of the notion that resources flow from the poor and underdeveloped countries to the rich and developed countries. The two major proponents of dependency theory, Hans Singer and Paul Prebisch, observed the deterioration of the terms of trade of underdeveloped countries, when compared to their developed counterparts. This state of economic affairs was traceable to the fact that the underdeveloped countries were purchasing fewer manufactured goods in exchange for large quantity of raw materials exported to the developed countries.

Rodney (1972), a Guyanese Marxist historian and a strong dependency theorist, in his classical book: *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, gave a detailed account of how conscious exploitation of Africa by the European imperialists led to the contemporary underdevelopment of the continent. Rodney's assertion is traceable to Dos-Santos' (1970) perspective that dependence is "a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected" (Don-Santos, 1970:231).

Given Rodney and Dos-Santos perspectives as well as the views of other dependency theorists, it suffices to say that the global inequalities are as a result of political colonisation, and economic subjugation and exploitation of Africans by the Europeans, resulting in what appears like perpetual poverty and underdevelopment which are among the major root-causes of irregular migration across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea.

Liking the theory to the root-causes of trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration reveals that the international system, colonialism and economic exploitation and dependence of the underdeveloped countries and source region of migrants have created global inequalities, resulting in extreme poverty and underdevelopment witnessed amongst most colonised countries of Africa, thereby contributing to the major reasons for international human migration to developed countries.

The dependency theory, however, has been subjected to some criticisms. Nevertheless, the theory has remain popular in sociology, history and international relations, but seems to have lost relevance in the mainstream of economics theory, since the disintegration of Soviet Union and Communism. The inefficacy of the theory has come to the fore in some countries that embraced its views but recorded very low economic growth due to state involvement and high rate of corruption in the management of their economies.

Moreover, dependency theory adopts encompassing approach in its analysis of global inequalities. Unfortunately, however, this has led to generalisation. Bulkwater (2012) expresses the view that dependency theory should not be generalised across countries due to the fact that individual countries have unique circumstances that govern the level and type of economic dependency affecting them as well as their specific histories and developments.

The Human Security Approach: The Human security theory is also considered to be strategically relevant to this study, which has made it the major theoretical framework of the paper. Human Security approach is a global security perspective that places priority on the welfare, survival and security of people above military and state security. As a relatively new school of thought in the security nexus, Human Security Theory opposes the realism and neo-realism state centric and military approach to security which tend to ignore people, who are mostly the victims of military conflicts and insecurity. Just as in the general concept of security, human security does not have a single definition. According to Tadjbaksh and Chenoy (2007), Human Security differentiates itself from ‘a narrow term of prevention of violence to a broad comprehensive view that proposes development, human rights and traditional security together’.

Since the end of the Cold War, the traditional practice, where discourse on security emphasised national interests and state protection against external threats and military action (Bajpai, 2000), has been expanded to include, among others, human security, transnational security, food security, national security, cultural security, economic security, and environmental security, all of which make up global security.

Advocates of human security are of the view that, states practices should referent people, rather than focusing majorly on military strength, considering the fact that the tradition approach to security seems to have lost its relevance in a globalised world, where poverty, irregular migration, terrorism, human trafficking, adverse effects of climate change and organised crimes have overtaken inter-state military attacks and warfare as the main global security threats.

Human Security, according to the United Nations Commission on Human Security (UN-CHS) was enunciated, among other objectives, to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms; protecting people from all sorts of threats; creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that would enable and enhance the survival, livelihood and dignity of people (UN-CHS: 2003:4).

The concept of human security was initiated by former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, when he called for a world “free from want” and “free from fear.” In response to this submission, the UN established the Commission on Human Security (CHS) in January 2001 (UN-TFHS: 2009). But Dinshak and Danfulani (2018) note, however, that the concept of human security was initially put forward in the 1994 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Human security, therefore, is under threat when poverty, underdevelopment, joblessness, unending armed conflicts, natural disasters repressive political leadership and gross abuses of human rights are prevalent.

Linking the theory to this study reveals that, when human security is under serious threat, the victims and desperate members of such society would embark on migration to other regions for survival or better living conditions. In the same breath, some of the migrants, out of desperation, would engage in some of the unwholesome activities in the recipient regions of migrants such as cross-border crimes, terrorism, human trafficking, drug offenses, small arms proliferation as well as conveyance of socio-cultural, political and religious extremism and dogmatism that constitute a threat to global security.

Critics of human security approach, however, are of the view that the concept is too broad and misleading. As it seems to virtually cover everything, human security renders the concept of security useless as a theoretical framework for research. Other opponents of the theory have criticised it for its stance which challenges the role and relevance of state and sovereignty (Tadbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007). Nevertheless, the proponents of human security maintain that the individual is the proper referent for security, rather than the traditional practice which is no longer relevant in the contemporary and globalised world, where warfare has reduced drastically.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing appraisal, the paper has been able to establish that the cotemporary trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration is an aspect of global security threat as much as it is a consequence of human insecurity in the source region of migrants. The unwholesome activities of some migrants such as terrorism, human and drug trafficking, arms proliferation, spreading of socio-cultural, religious and political extremism and dogmatism as well as other organised crimes constitute a threat to global security. In the same vein, human security threat, which presents itself in poverty, underdevelopment, joblessness and lack of opportunities, repressive leadership and gross abuse of human rights, unending armed conflicts and insurgencies as well as natural disasters and adverse effects of climate change are among the root-causes of trans-Sahara and Mediterranean irregular migration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this paper, irregular migration is a cause of global security threat as well as the consequence of human security threat in the source region of migrants. To address this global challenge, the paper recommends as follows:

- There should be a strategic action plan by both the source and recipient regions of migrants to address the human security threats prevalent in the source region of migrants.
- Implementation Strategy: The above recommendation could be achieved by tackling continuing growth rate of poverty and other push factors of migration in the source region, by investing in production sector, development of socio-economic infrastructure, attracting foreign direct investment, promoting and investing in education and skill acquisition, as well as creating employment and opportunities for the citizens, especially the youths, who should be meaningfully and skillfully engaged in productivity in their countries of origin. This would go a long way to dissuade them from irregular migration across the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea.

- Authorities in the source region of migrants should strengthen democratic governance, rule of law and respect for human rights.
- Implementation Strategy: To achieve this, free, fair, and credible election processes should be instituted, with a view to eliminating authoritarian leadership and repressive regimes which promote agitations, restiveness, violence, civil unrests, armed conflicts, and civil wars which are drivers of irregular migration.
- There should be a global concerted effort in combating terrorist activities, human and drug trafficking, arms proliferation, and other cross-border crimes constituting a threat to global security.
- Implementation Strategy: The above recommendation could be addressed when the source and recipient regions collaborate to domesticate and enforce the Year 2000 United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crimes (UNTOC) which targets specific areas and manifestations of organised crime, to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children; against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea, and air.

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