

Review

Why South-North Restrictive Migration Policies are Bound to Fail: Perspectives from Nigeria

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Abstract

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The authors of this article are worried about the spate of deaths en route to Europe by migrants. Several discussions are ongoing and migration policies are churned out in Europe to control the upsurge of migrants to Europe. However, the policies to check traffic, the higher the risk and the more the resilience by the migrants. The worry of these paper is why the beneficiaries of the deaths (Africa) seem not to worry about the control of migration? Why is the world keeping silence on the 'conflict axis'? We argue that the reasons why African countries in particular, Nigeria is indifferent is because they don't have value for human lives and again, due to the 'equi-marginal' benefits of both the North and South.

Keywords: International migration, migration policies, remittances, Development

INTRODUCTION

The most commonly cited reasons for people migrating from Africa to Europe revolve around the search for economic opportunities and jobs (Danziger, 2017). For decades after the slave trade, developing countries have traded blames with Europe as to who should be held responsible for migration surge and human trafficking across borders. Sometimes the Western press chooses to call it Europe's migrant crisis, but we think it should be called Africa's migrant crisis. The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly over the past fifteen years reaching 244 million in 2015, up from 222 million in 2010, 191 million in 2005 and 173 million in 2000 (UN reports, 2015). However, what is strange is that Europe is bordered about migration problems (perhaps, because they are on the receiving end) rather than Countries that its people are openly dehumanized and enslaved. A continent like Africa should or ought to be in fore front in the drive to fight migration after suffering decades of slavery. Contrariwise, by implication, African countries seem to be the least perturbed. No doubt, economies of developing world

(Africa, Asia and South America) cannot keep pace with the increase in population surge, meaning that millions of people from Africa will likely migrate to Europe, that may result to rapid population growth for Europe and perhaps lead to migration crisis (Tomlinson Chris, 2017).

If rapid growth of Europe is the only reason for migration challenges, perhaps the problem may be contained with time, but the issue of migration has a far more potential problem that goes beyond population growth. For example, Doug Saunders (2017) reports how he met Marlon, a Sudanese who has already saved \$2000 he was ready to part with, to join an overcrowded unseaworthy boat to Italy. He knew many have died on that route but he was ready to take the risk. Another case was of a Liberian- Kamra, well-educated who is on his way to Spain. He admitted that when he lives in Spain, he will one day be deported but before that happens he would have earned enough money to transform his family at home. And there are thousands of people who would rather prefer to be eaten by wide animals in the desert or drowned in Atlantic Ocean than to stay at home. There is

therefore, an increasing realization that migration often involves a mixture of motivations and that the term “economic migrant” does an injustice to the individual, who may have taken to the road because of a number of different factors (Danziger Richard 2017). What are these factors that cause the desperation to move to Europe?

Europe on its part has shown considerable interest in the matter of migration, though as should be expected (being at the receiving end) the best of their contributions are mere palliatives. But the question is why is African countries reluctant to make meaningful policies to tackle migration? Each time reports are given as to the number of people drowned in the sea or died in the desert, African leaders raise their heads to point fingers at the West. We want to argue here that two major factors account for Africa’s passive involvement (1) African countries do not attach values to life (of its citizens) as most other nations of the world do;(2) The continent is not worse off in the event of migration of half of its citizens. This is the position we intend to highlight in this paper, not from the Western view point, but from an insider’s perspective.

The Value of Life is Worthless in Africa.

It is difficult to oppose conventional wisdom, yet that is one of our posers in this article. Africa has been described as “a continent on drift”. The truth is Africans don’t value lives. The hues and cries about slave trade is a deceit; Africans attach less value to human lives than cattle. For example, the Minister of Agriculture in Nigeria in 2016, was recently quoted to have said that government should subsidize cattle feeding with \$6 a day, meanwhile the minimum wage in Nigeria is \$2.5 per day. While the nation was passing through its worst recession in history, government spent about \$240m to buy grass from Brazil to feed cattle. Records show that tens of thousands of Nigerian women who have been trafficked into Europe for sexual exploitation die daily. “It’s our young boys and girls who are trafficked. Many are not making it back alive and the ones that do are battered and bruised.” (Damon et al, 2017). This vividly shows how Nigerian government values cows more than human beings.

When one man dies in Europe, Europe is made less; when one American man is trapped or imprisoned or dies, United State is made less: But when one million men die in Africa or the middle East (Nigeria) we have lost nothing. John Donne said, “Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee”.

To draw this point further, here is an example: first week of January 2017 about 73 men and women and children were butchered by suspected herdsmen in Benue State in Nigeria. The people of the State went mourning and the world was perplexed to such heinous

and gruesome deaths. The cattle herdsmen who admitted the killing said the restriction laws by the State, was against their movement which was unacceptable, and what they did was just a warning. For about two weeks, the ‘horror movie’ was in the social media. For two weeks the President of the Country did not make any comment. As if that was not damning enough, while the mass burial (that was widely televised) was going on, the President was down South of the country at Abia State of Nigeria campaigning for a second term in office? Whatever CNN would want the world to believe of Donald Trump, no American President can do that? When one American is held hostage in Iraqi or Afghanistan or North Korea, the world bleeds for them. We can buttress this further with the killing that took place in only few local government areas of Benue State between 2013 and 2017, unhindered without any single arrest or prosecution after 34 occurrences; coupled with thousands of Nigerian that has been drowned in the high sea on route to migrate. Many are molested, abused or repatriated from foreign countries without recourse to international laws. But who cares? This in a nutshell goes to buttress the point that most African leaders attach little importance to the death of its citizens. Other reasons are as follows: (Table 1, Figure 1)

Diaspora Remittances

Another reason for the lackadaisical attitude of Africa to migration problems is that the gains or rather the rate of returns from migration process is very high for Africa; migration settles the overpopulation problem, and Diaspora returns and its impact on economic growth is enormous (Buch and Kuckulenz, 2010; Rao and Hassan, 2012). These and more are the reasons policies to end migration will be likened to the ‘Sisyphus odyssey’. While migration has economic, social, and cultural implications for the sending and host societies, migrants remittances are perhaps the most tangible and least controversial link between migration and development (Ratha *et al.* 2010; Ratha et al., 2008).

In 2003, remittances totaled \$462 million and constituted about 70 percent of Eritrea’s GDP. Eritreans in the United States alone remit \$100 to \$150 million annually as gifts and investments. Ethiopia’s Prime Minister told Parliament in 2000 that remittances from the Ethiopian diaspora almost equaled the country’s export earnings from coffee, its major foreign exchange earner. The Ethiopian Central Bank reported that formal remittances reached \$500 million in 2006. Including informal remittances, the total is probably about \$1 billion. With a Diaspora of more than 1 million persons, remittances have become crucial for the operation of the economy in both Somalia and Somali land. The UN Development Program estimated remittances to Somalia at \$500 million. The estimated total for much less

Table 1. 34 occurrence of death not worth attention In Nigeria.

Year	Death toll in Benue	No of Occurrence
2013	187	8
2014	206	11
2015	264	6
2016	25	5
2017	104	4
Occurrence	786	34

Source: (see below) 34 occurrence of death not worth attention In Nigeria.

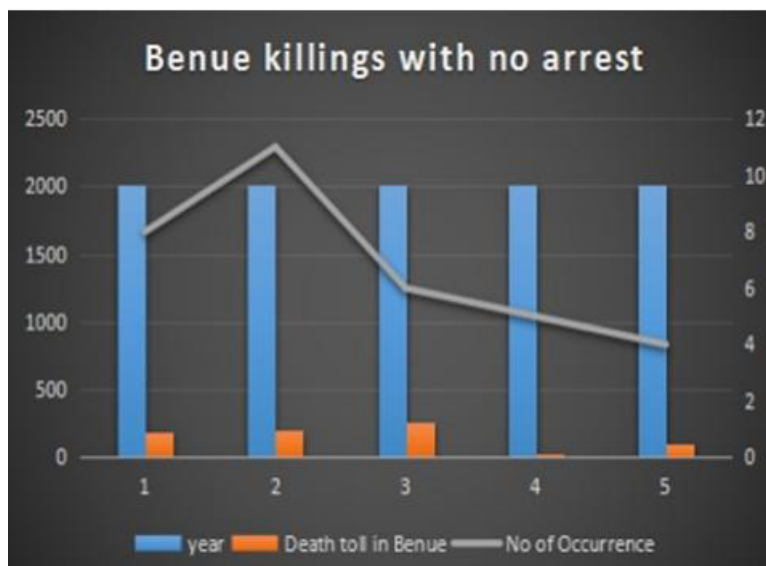


Figure 1. Source: <http://ipnnews.info/timeline-attack-benue-state-2013-2016/>Source:<https://punchng.com/herdsmen-kill-20-burn-houses-in-fresh-benue-attacks/>Source: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2017/06/herdsmen-attacks-another-boko-haram-senate/>

populous Somali land is also an astounding \$500 million annually. (Slovenia, Ljubljana (2008).

The World Bank estimated that remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007 reached \$20 billion, more than the total foreign direct investment flow and nearly equal to foreign aid. Remittances to North Africa were even higher—about \$35 billion with Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria the leading recipients. The primary recipient in Sub-Saharan Africa was Nigeria at about \$2.5 billion annually. Cape Verde relies heavily on remittances, especially from the United States. After many generations, persons from Cape Verde maintain close ties to their homeland, often retaining rights to land on which they eventually retire. Remittances amount to between 10-50 percent of GNP in Lesotho and 25-50 percent of the value of exports in Malawi. One study indicates that the Ghanaian diaspora remits about \$400

million each year. Ghanaian remittances are the fourth largest source of foreign exchange after cocoa, gold, and tourism.

According to the official estimates, migrants from developing countries remitted over \$315 billion to their countries of origin in 2009, three times the size of official development assistance (Ratha *et al.* 2008, 2010). When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development in both home and host communities. In 2014, migrants from developing countries sent home an estimated US \$436 billion in remittances; a 4.4 percent increase over the 2013 level (World Bank 2015), far exceeding official development assistance and, excluding China, foreign direct investment

After instrumenting for endogenous remittances dummy variable and controlling for demographic and

households' characteristics, George Agwu et al, (2017), find positive and statistically significant effects of remittances on all quantiles of the income distribution in Senegal, a result that is largely similar to the results obtained by Bang et al. (2016).

The World Bank report stated: "Buoyed by improved economic activity in high-income OECD countries, remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa are projected to grow by a robust 10 percent to \$38 billion this year. The region's major remittance receiving countries, Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana, are all set for growth. In a number of countries in Africa remittances account for a significant share of GDP, for example Liberia (26 percent), Comoros (21 percent), and the Gambia (20 percent). Diaspora Remittance is money sent by a person in a foreign land to his or her home country (World Bank, 2015). The question is how would one expect African nations to sincerely block the existence of migration when the 'proceed' leads in advancement of foreign capital to the country of origin in the form of remittances? This another major reason Africa pay lip service to migration issue.

Poor Governance as a Driver of Migration

Poor governance, weak rule of law, a culture of impunity, political repression, economic underdevelopment, and violence has made most African countries unattractive for investment and an engine that drives migration. There is no way to stem the tide without addressing the issue of employment in Africa. African leaders are so greedy that they are ready to sell whole their country and keep the money outside and come back to seek for international donors to help that same country have milked dry.

It is inclusive institutions that shape economic incentives. And it is the political process that determines what economic institutions people live under (Acemoglu, 2012). They are the rules that govern incentives in politics. They determine how the government is chosen and which part of the government has the right to do what (Engerman et al 1997; Acemoglu et al., 2002, 2005a, 2005b). Political institutions determine who has power in society and to what ends that power can be used. It is poor political institutions that create "monsters" (the type we have in Nigeria) who will become dictators and rubbish the constitution, will not observe rule of law, imprison the people at will, expropriate people's land to build grazing farms. If the distribution of power is narrow and unconstrained, then the political institutions are absolutist, as exemplified by the absolutist monarchies reigning throughout the world during much of history. "Economies based on repression of labour and systems such as slavery and serfdom are notoriously non innovative". As most African nations are saddled with poor leadership, the urge to migrate will not abate.

Fluid Route and Technology

It would seem that little attention is paid to the "enabling" factors that facilitate movements of people in the modern age. Enabling factors are critically important in how they shape migration, and one of the most significant factors is telecommunications and online communications technology (McAuliffe, 2013; Dekker and Engbersen, 2014) and the porous routes. Advances in technology have brought about a global transformation in connectivity.

Secondly, the Schengen Area, which includes 26 European countries in the European Economic Area (EEA) was established in 1995 and aimed to remove obstacles to trade and the free movement of people by abolishing border controls and visa regimes between contiguous countries, also for people arriving from a third country outside the zone. This policy to a large extent liberalized the free traffic of humans, in particular EU member states. Some non Euro members are also accessing this leeway, though illegally, to migrate to Europe.

Thirdly, European Union has in the past several years committed a number of political blunders that have aggravated the crisis and created instability on its borders. The mistakes include the mindless overthrow of Ghaddafi whose regime was replaced by feuding tribes leading to the absence of any control over Libyan borders, both in the south and the north. It will be recalled that Libyan route is a gate way of most migrants from West Africa. Depending on where West and Central African migrants start their journeys, they take different routes that lead them across either Mali or Niger. From there they continue directly to Libya and pass through Algeria to reach Libya (Altai Consulting/UNHCR, 2013, IOM, 2013). The Eastern Africa route is primarily comprised of migrants from the Horn of Africa who depart from Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia and usually pass through Sudan, Egypt and Libya before reaching the shores of the Mediterranean (UNODC, 2010; RMMS, 2014).

Europe for example, encourages irregular immigration, smuggling, marginalization and exploitation of migrants on different levels and stages of their journey to Europe is increasing per day.

Globalization and the Hypocrisy of the West

Globalization is first and foremost a result of the expansion in industrialized world, and the diversification and deepening of trade and financial links between these countries, especially over the last two decades. The movement of labor across national boundaries has in many cases lessened production bottlenecks (as experienced in advanced economies), raising the supply response of recipient economies; in other words

increasing the traffic on migration routes and perhaps increasing income in the supplying countries through worker remittances (Ouattara, 1997).

Globalization has become one of the key drivers of migration. While globalization has contributed to unprecedented levels of global prosperity, its benefits have not been evenly distributed, and evidence suggests that inequality has risen across most countries and regions over the past two decades, including within middle to high-income countries because of it (Horwood and Reitano, 2016). While inequality and wealth disparities may constitute an important factor in people's migratory decisions, people also migrate for other often interconnected reasons, including the inability to achieve a future at home that offers freedom, choice, health, safety, security, and educational and career opportunities. As Hein de Haas writes, "Rather than absolute poverty, a certain level of socioeconomic development, combined with relative deprivation in the form of global inequality of development opportunities, seems to be the most important cause of migration." (De Haas, 2005; De Haas, 2011; De Haas and Czaika, 2013).

Africa is at a comparative disadvantage with virtually all productive commodities even the acclaimed agricultural exports, relative not only to the developed world with its protected "green pastures", heavy subsidies and industrial farming, but also too much of Asia and Latin America as well. A basic presumption of the Berg Report was that Africa's comparative advantage lay in agriculture. If only the State would stop "squeezing" agriculture through marketing boards and price distortions, the supply-side response by agricultural producers would drive export-led growth. Subsequent changes in Africa's exports show no significant increase in activities in which African countries ostensibly had comparative advantage. Indeed, after two decades of reforms, Africa's share of global non-oil exports fell to less than half of what it had been in the early 1980s (Ng and Yeats, 2000; Mkandawire, 2005). The implication of all this is Africa is marginalized and worse off in globalization. Therefore the surge and desperation to seek for greener pasture outside the shore becomes imperative and inevitable.

Insecurity and Conflict, War

Insecurity allows violence to flourish at the individual level in the form of vigilantism, machismo culture, and violence against women; the local level with gangs controlling entire neighborhoods by the threat of violence and extortion rackets; and the national level via drug trafficking and organized crime (AzpuruDinorah and Elizabeth Zechmeister (2014). This is one of the factors that drive persistent migration.

The trouble in what we may call the 'axis of conflict' has not helped matter. In 2014, the total number of

refugees in the world was estimated at 19.5 million. Turkey became the largest refugee-hosting country worldwide, with 1.6 million refugees, followed by Pakistan (1.5 million), Lebanon (1.2 million), and the Islamic Republic of Iran (1.0 million). More than half (53 per cent) of all refugees worldwide came from just three countries: the Syrian Arab Republic (3.9 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million), and Somalia (1.1 million) (UNO report, 2015). The question to ask is this, what has these countries in common? Geography, climate, population, type of government, custom, culture, religion etc. These factors are important to consider. Economist has often taken time to study why the Asian miracle came about. They should be interested also to study the 'conflict cluster' zones and convergences that exist in the middle East and ask why. For over five decades this zone tops the list of suppliers of refugees and asylum seekers. Incidentally, they do not suffer population problem.

So, for many, the impetus to migrate may arise as a result of generalized conditions of violence, conflict and insecurity in one's country of citizenship, even in the absence of direct and individual persecution. Available records show that conflicts has remained part of the culture in middle East, some conflicts are induced from outside (perhaps to create market for sale of arms) like the matter of Libya, others are internally generated. The truth of the matter is so long as the conflict axis or conflict zone / conflict convergence exist, curbing migration crisis will remain an illusion.

Population Explosion in Third World Countries

Apart from push factors, like violent conflicts, gross human rights violations, degradation of natural resources, and poverty, the major part of current migration challenges are due to working age populations in emerging and low-income economies that are rapidly growing. In North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, India and China, for example, working age populations have been soaring and are expected to continue to rise rapidly between now and 2050, creating important demographic push factors, as people move to where there are believed to be greater opportunities (Horwood, 2016).

Rapid population growth ultimately results in an intensified competition for resources, jobs, and even such basics as food and water. In 2014, war-torn Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia accounted for nearly 20 million of the refugees knocking at the doors of other nations. These areas saw their populations increase between 66% and 160% since 1990, compared to the world average of 27 (Hadly and Anthony, 2015). Why must the IMF and World Bank play the Ostrich not to advise these nations to reduce or minimize the population growth. It is on record that much of the growth burden in third world countries are attributed to culture and religion, because of inadequate education and sensitization.

Gaining Countries/ Pull Factors

Gaining countries in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the Gulf States have done little to stem the inflow of migrants. Some have even designed visa programs to attract highly skilled persons from Africa and elsewhere while others actively recruit in Africa for skills in short supply such as nurses and doctors. International migration contributes significantly to population growth in many parts of the advanced world, and reverses negative growth in some countries or areas. With the acceptance of gay marriages in most parts of Europe this trend will continue because it terminates child birth. In fact, in twenty years time most advanced economies may re-introduce full blown slavery. Between 2000 and 2015, positive net migration contributed to 42 per cent of the population growth in Northern America and 32 per cent in Oceania. In Europe, the size of the population would have declined during the period 2000-2015 in the absence of positive net migration, whereas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, negative net migration contributed marginally to slowing the pace of population growth.(UN report, 2015). It would be out of place to address the migrants leaving China, India or Africa as negative net migration because these nations do not have work for these 'extra's. It can only be seen as negative because in arithmetic, a minus is negative.

The brain drain from Africa and other developing nations has not yet become a public policy concern of the emerging nations. This is due to widely accepted support for freedom of movement and choice of employment. It is also a reflection of the complex and shifting interplay of "push" and "pull" factors that motivate individuals to leave one country for another. The advanced nations are generally unwilling to discourage Africans or anyone else from seeking critical jobs where demand exceeds supply.

In addition to a strong economy, peaceful political environment, and high standard of living, an important attraction of countries in Europe and North America is career advancement and high ability to improve professionally in ones field of study. More attention is given to human resource policies, supervision, and training. Hospitals and universities have state of the art equipment and well stocked libraries. The private sector offers numerous opportunities for entrepreneurs. Think tanks and non-governmental organizations are numerous. The Internet is widely available. Research funding and scholarships are commonplace. Benefit packages for health care, life insurance, and retirement are routine and often generous. There are generally fewer bureaucratic frustrations in the developed countries.

Immigration policy is another important pull factor. The United States, France and Germany, among others, have put in place visa policies that encourage the brain drain. The United States offers employment-based

immigrant visas that are divided into five preference categories. The program includes persons of extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business and athletics. Applicants must prove they have sustained national or international acclaim and recognition in their field of expertise. Outstanding professors and researchers fall in this category. A second group includes professionals with advanced degrees. Investors who can invest at least a half million dollars constitute another category. In 2007 the United States admitted 162,000 persons under this program worldwide. The largest groups came from India, Philippines, and China. Africans received 4,300 of these immigrant visas. South Africa had the largest number followed in descending order by Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana. The United States admitted several thousand more Africans under other skilled, temporary employment categories (Slovenia, Ljubljana (2008)

Poor Leadership in Africa

Independence of most African nations created an opening for unscrupulous leaders to take over and intensify the extraction that European colonialist presided over (Acemoglu, 2012). Political instability in Africa may owe much of its cause to internal factors, however to-date, almost every country in Africa is still haunted by historical injustices and oppressive structures that were bequeathed to the post-colonial leadership. European colonialism not only threw into reverse nascent economic modernization in part of Western and Southern Africa but also cut off any possibility of indigenous institutional reform (Acemoglu, 2012). This is an aspect which informs the weak institutions of the state, flawed legislative systems and constant struggles for political power to the detriment of the well-being of many nations, which could have moved on a path of development as part of modern societies (Otieno Ong'ayo Antony (2008). It is well documented that stolen wealth from Africa often end up in banks abroad (Africa Focus Bulletin, 2006), be it money stolen by the political elite (the case of Mobutu of Zaire, Abacha of Nigeria, and Moi of Kenya, just to mention a few or the recent Kibaki regime Anglo-leasing scandals in Kenya), they still end up in banks in the western capitals. The African political instability and other related problems is basically a consequence of its leadership problem (Osei Tutu, 2004)

Trump was reportedly quoted to have asked why the U.S. should accept more immigrants from "shithole countries" like Haiti and African nations, according to *The Washington Post*. The president is also said to have followed up the remark by asking why "people from countries like Norway" don't migrate to the U.S. as much.

The Kenyan President applauded that comment and attributed it to poor leadership in Africa. He said African leaders are not strong-"Why we're not strong? Because

we had bad leaders with poor management skills," one person wrote. In reaction others said, "It is authoritarian, dictatorial and despotic leaders like yourself that are an impediment to our continental growth," another said. "The man who you purport to speak frankly comes from a democratic society where people are free to expose their thoughts in every possible way." Museveni has led Uganda since 1986 after helping lead rebellions that toppled former leaders Idi Amin and later Milton Obote (Chantal Da Silva, Newsweek 24/01/2018).

Migration Challenges Beyond Rhetorics.

In a meeting in Morocco in 2006 attended by ministers of over 30 African and European states, they advocate for safer and regular way to supervise migration. The 'Action Plan of Rabat' is a confirmation and a submission that migration or slavery will know no end in Africa. It's unfortunate. The EU vice president Franco Frattini in 2006, recommended once more a quota system of legal immigration. All these recommendations goes to support and reinforce our position that African nations do not value lives. As long as so many African countries are troubled by weak economies, conflict, concerns about security, poor governance, and a lack of individual freedom, migration and the brain drain will continue to have a severe, negative impact on the continent (Slovenia, Ljubljana (2008). The long-term solution to stemming migration and the brain drain is to ameliorate the basic internal problems.

CONCLUSION

Migration policies may seem to be tight on the surface but a lot of factors have made it possible for migrants from less developed countries to still breakthrough. We have argued that most developing economies are unmindful of the dangers associated with traffic across the desert to Europe because of the marginal gains and insensitivity to the souls that die. Again, the resilience of the migrants themselves coupled with the needs of personnel both illiterate and educated in Europe seems to subdue the efforts. It's a tripod case. The population of most European economies are declining and with the attendant gay marriages all over, will witness more declination in ten years to come. This will aggravate the demand for people because of the gaps created. In other words, most emerging economies like Nigeria may soon find alternative to oil- human export. Therefore, except good leaders take over, which are doubtful, years to come will witness an upsurge of South-North migration, notwithstanding the restrictive policies.

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