

ASSESSING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMPONENT OF ECONOMIC MIGRATION: THE 'JAPA' SYNDROME IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Economic migration is an age-long global phenomenon that occasionally results in infringements of the human rights of migrants. The rule of law and universal notions of human rights are essential foundations for a democratic world order and social peace. Conversely, evidence reveals that violations of migrants' human rights are widespread and that they are a defining feature of international migration in the age of globalisation. This exercise, therefore, examined the human rights component of economic migration using Nigeria as a point of departure. It highlighted the push and pull factors that motivate migrants to exit Nigeria to unknown societies in search of better well-being. The work adopted the doctrinal method of academic research which comprises both primary and secondary sources. The work revealed that migration could advance the economy of Nigeria, particularly with the huge external remittances that flow through Nigeria economic migrants and citizens will most likely exit a disorganised society, even when they are not sure of the human rights conditions across the borders because the quest for survival is an existential crisis. The work recommended that economic migration cannot be tamed until the Nigeria government takes the issues of governance seriously by revamping the bedridden internal economy.

Keywords: Economic Migration, Human Rights, Global Inequality, Globalisation

1.0 Introduction

The history of mankind revolves around man's search for a better environment for settlement and habitation; this is as migration has remained a regular feature of human existence. The prehistoric man was nomadic in nature, as he went from one end of the earth to another in search of food, a good climate, better welfare, and where he could fulfill his potential. As man moved, wherever he found a good and habitable environment, prehistoric man would settle, as no one or nation laid claim to any territory. However, when men began to settle permanently, they started developing such areas and claimed ownership of such territories. Part of that development was also the introduction of leadership which saw the development and expansion of kingdoms, empires, and the modern State systems which was introduced by the Treaty of Westphalia.

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The Treaty of Westphalia was introduced after the Thirty Years Roman Empire War, the Treaty as it were, introduced, the principle of sovereignty, which set the foundation for the modern international system. This principle holds that each State (Nation-State) has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the

exclusion of external powers. The Peace of Westphalia is often cited as the beginning of the modern state system and ownership of occupied territories.¹

States subsequently generated the rights of permanent sovereignty over the natural resources in their domains, as was mentioned by Chile in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights² in 1952. The principle was subsequently enhanced through various resolutions and declarations.³ On 21 December 1952, the United Nations General Assembly by Resolution 626 (VII) laid a solid foundation of the principle. The Resolution for the first time recognised that countries had a right to determine the use of their natural resources to ensure the realisation of their economic development.⁴ In 1958, through UN General Assembly Resolution 1314, the principle would be recognised as a basic element of the right to self-determination.

States began to utilise their natural and human resources to develop their domains and territories, against the odds of both the First and Second World Wars, Europe emerged from the frontiers of a shattered economy, prior before the Second World War, America had overcome the Great Depression of 1929 to be able to assist the damaged European and Japanese Economies that were ravaged by the horrors of the war through the introduction of the Marshal Plan. Thus, Africa and parts of Asia Economies were left to be exploited by the advanced economies through the use of their natural resources. As this exploitation continued, the industrialised countries were developing while others were under-developing, a process referred to as the “development of underdevelopment” by dependency theorists.

The citizens of the underdeveloped countries began to move from place to place in search of better opportunities. Therefore, an economic migrant is someone who emigrates from one country to another, including crossing intercontinental borders, seeking an improved standard of living, because the conditions or job opportunities in the migrant's own country are insufficient.⁵

Unfortunately, as these migrants move across the borders, they are constantly denied certain fundamental human rights. The rights which are recognised by the different international legal instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,⁷ International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,⁸ as inherent in every human being irrespective of race, class, or nationality. The idea of human rights, is essentially driven by the inherent dignity of the man, human dignity is thus, the precursor, ancestor, or forerunner of human rights.⁹

¹ Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia ,accessed 9/08/2024

² Hereinafter abbreviated and referred to as "UNCHR"

³ Hyde, J.N, '*Permanent Sovereignty Over Natural Wealth And Resources*', 50 American Journal of International Law (1956), 854–867, at p. 855.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_migrant>, accessed 8/05/2024.

⁶ Hereinafter abbreviated and referred to as “UDHR”

⁷ Hereinafter abbreviated and referred to as “ICCPR”

⁸ Hereinafter abbreviated and referred to as “ICESCR”

⁹ Obiaraeri, N.O, *Fundamental Themes on International Human Rights*, Owerri,(Zubic Infinity Concept, 2015).

This analysis, therefore, explores the factors that contribute to the mass movement of Nigerians out of the country and the human rights violations that unsurprisingly emanate from such movements. This is because human rights issues have become universal and these are rights that are “inhere” in all humans by the mere fact that they belong to the class of humans and, no other qualification.

Conceivably, as a result of the marginalisation of economic migrants, nations of the world were encouraged to rapidly develop their natural resources to enhance the well being of their citizens, thus the right to development became attractive that was it first recognised in 1981 in Article 22 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights as an absolute individual right. The Charter provides that:

‘All peoples shall have the right to their economic, social and cultural development with due regard to their freedom and identity and in **the equal enjoyment of the common heritage of mankind**’¹⁰

The right to development was subsequently adopted as an immutable right in the Declaration on the Right to Development, 1986 by the UN General Assembly resolution.¹¹ The right to development is an all-inclusive right which includes self-determination, full sovereignty over natural resources, popular participation in development, equality of opportunity and the creation of conditions for the enjoyment of all the other forms of human rights.¹²

2.0 The ‘Japa’ Syndrome in Nigeria

‘Japa’ a colloquial term in Yoruba which means “o run, flee or escape” has seemingly taken hold of the Nigerian consciousness like wide fire even as the economy of the State is declining. A survey from the Nigeria Social Cohesion Survey revealed that seven out of 10 Nigerians (particularly the Youths) are willing to relocate to other countries for various reasons, with a good number of them recording success.¹³ In the recent past, the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors revealed that about 50 percent of Nigerian doctors had already found their way out of the country. The University College Hospital, Ibadan, Oyo State, also noted that more than 600 of its clinical workers have resigned from their appointments, while the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital disclosed that more than 150 nurses resigned from their appointments with the tertiary hospital.¹⁴ According to the Pew Research Center,¹⁵ 45% of Nigerians want to leave the country without knowing the condition of where they are going, the number of skilled-work and study visas issued by the UK to Nigerians rose from 19,000 in 2019 to 59,000 in 2021.¹⁶

¹⁰ See *Article 22(1)*, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981.

¹¹ See Resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986 by UN General Assembly.

¹² Obiaraeri, N.O., *Fundamental Themes on International Human Rights*, (Owerri, Zubic Infinity Concept, 2015), 299.

¹³ Ogungbile, O., *Nigerians and the Japa syndrome*, <<https://punchng.com/nigerians-and-the-japa-syndrome/>>, accessed on 9/05/2024

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Osaremen I., *Japa' Syndrome: Legitimacy Crisis, Emigration and Public Discontent in Nigeria*, <<https://oxfordpoliticalreview.com/2023/05/08/japa-syndrome-legitimacy-crisis-emigration-and-public-discontent-in-nigeria/>> , accessed on 9/05/2024

¹⁶ Ibid.

3.0 Push and Pull Factors of Economic Migration

As a result of the changed and changing realities of the international social-political system, people from developing countries like Nigeria are forced to leave their home state in search of better places to improve their economic life and well being, thus economic migrants essentially leave due to the economic conditions in their countries. The term economic migrant may be confused with refugee, the former leave their country essentially due to harsh economic conditions, rather than fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group. Economic migrants are generally not eligible for asylum, except if the economic conditions they may face are severe enough to have caused indiscriminate violence.¹⁷ Migration can bring economic pressure in the countries they leave behind—as working-age people exit the State, the elderly and aging population remains but with less support.¹⁸ Conversely, migration has been seen to improve the economic life of the relatives of the migrants, and the economy of the state of origin of the migrant through remittances, and supports.

Given the above, therefore, the following are the push and pull factors that encourage most persons from developing countries to move outside their states of origin in search of a better situation across the borders:

3.1 Global Inequality

The world today is sharply divided between the rich and poor, 'haves' and 'have not', developed and underdeveloped, Bourgeoisie and the proletariat, etc. These classifications denote man's ability to manipulate and adjust to his environment not just for economic benefits but for the overall well-being of humankind. The classification places Europe, North America, and a few other countries in the developed category, while Africa, Asia, and Latin American countries are classified as either developing or underdeveloped.¹⁹ The level of growth and development is best appreciated when the Gross National Product (GNP) of such a country is further analysed.²⁰

As once observed by Senator Leahy,²¹ America has less than 5 percent of the World's population but Americans use more than 50 percent of the world's resources. The world has enough resources to go around, but several factors sustain poverty, one such factor is that certain countries claim more of their fair share.²² Inequality is synonymous with poverty, particularly relative poverty, which is situation where a people compare themselves with their mates across the world to determine their circumstances. There are instances where certain individuals with good-paying jobs in Nigeria resign to travel abroad for an unknown job.

¹⁷ Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_migrant> , accessed 8/05/2024.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Abia, R.P, *Sociology of the Third World: A Conceptual Approach*, Uyo, (2002, Kingsize Publications),2.

²⁰ Ibid,

²¹ Offiong, D.A, *Globalization: Post-Neo-dependency and Poverty in Africa*, Enugu,(Fourth Dimension, 2001),98.

²² Ibid.

Globalisation has also heightened the rate of economic migration across the world; this is because certain professional bodies train and recruit people online. More so, through print, electronic, and social media, poor people across developing countries are inundated with the lifestyles of people living miles away from them, these were things unimaginable in the past. Globalisation has, therefore, birthed a politically, culturally, and economically interconnected world, whereby distant events influence individuals' local lives, actions, and perceptions.²³

In an unequal world, it makes sense for those in poorer countries with limited options to follow the money to a more developed country, find a low-skilled job, work hard, and then send some money back home.

3.2 Poverty

The World Bank defines poverty simply as "the inability to attain a minimal standard of living,"²⁴ it implies a level of income that imposes real physical suffering on people in hunger, disease, and all forms of deprivation which breeds violence in different forms.

Poverty is a malaise without physical boundaries as it is present or manifest in varying degrees in different climes.²⁵ Poverty can manifest in the form of lack, shortage, indigence, impecuniosity, hardship, destitution, deprivation, or penury. The United Nations World Summit on Social Development²⁶ described poverty as a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information.

Poverty creates a disadvantageous position in interstate affairs and economic negotiations, as poverty benefits the rich countries, developing countries like Nigeria provide a ready pool of low-wage labourers who are available to perform dirty work that people in rich countries are unwilling to perform. Poor countries purchase goods and services that would otherwise be destroyed. Poverty forces poor countries to allow rich countries to dump toxic and hazardous wastes in their countries for very little amount of money, most foreign loans are designed to improve those sectors for which foreign firms or corporations will benefit, while the loan is repaid from the sweat of the indigenous people.²⁷ Nigeria is a poor country from all economic indicators particularly when development indices are measured by the per capita income of the people.

3.3 Insecurity and the Politics of 'Tribe'

Political instability is a major factor that pushes a lot of people out of the country for better conditions

²³ Okunade, K., & Oladotun, E. A., *The Japa Syndrome And The Migration Of Nigerians To The United Kingdom: An Empirical Analysis*, Institute for Future Knowledge, University of Johannesburg, South Africa, 2023.

²⁴ Thomas, A., *The Study of Development*, Paper presented at the DSA Annual Conference, 6 November, Church House, London, (2004).

²⁵ Obiaraeri, N., O, *Human Rights, Poverty and Pandemics in Africa*, Owerri, Zubic Infinity Concept, (2021),222

²⁶ Copenhagen Declaration, 1995.

²⁷ Uwakwe, R.C, *Foreign Aid in Nigeria's Economic Development: A Legal Critique*, (LLM Dissertation, Faculty of Law Imo State University, Owerri, 2024).

elsewhere. Nigeria is an unstable country as insecurity ranging from kidnaping; banditry, terrorism, etc have become the other of the day. These security situations also drive investors out of investing in the country, thereby creating a situation where it is difficult to pull people out of poverty, this is as unemployment, rural-urban migration, and overpopulation have become the order of the day, thereby pushing a lot of Nigerians away from the country.

More so, the issue of tribe/tribalism has remained a cankerworm in the Nigeria social-political landscape that elections in the country are determined by tribes, thus any tribe that her son or daughter wins, means better attraction of government facilities. This, therefore, results in the neglect of the other tribes, hence the reasons for their economic migration for a better future outside the country.

3.4 Education, the Desire to Acquire International Qualification and Dependents' Future 'Security

The drive to study in the country by most economic migrants is stirred by the desire to advance their careers, which the Nigerian space currently denies them. Many believe the overseas, offers a better space for realising their visions and aspirations. Notably, however, although an average Nigerian youth is naturally career-driven with a flair for formal education, the educational system in Nigeria is currently failing due to non-payment of lecturers' salaries/arrears, and poor educational facilities, among others. The Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU is constantly on industrial actions year in, year out, usually these regular industrial actions, all academic activities ceased in public universities, thereby disrupting the academic calendar in all public universities

More so, several economic migrants, left the country apparently because they wanted a better future for their kids, they wanted them to grow up in a sane environment, which Nigeria currently deprives the majority of her citizens. The Nigerian government has no system to secure children' futures, hence, the quest to migrate to a more functional country where the children' education, health, and career are guaranteed. Most of the migrants, who went for additional qualifications or education, had no intention of staying back after their studies initially, but given the quality of education that they see their children exposed to, in comparison with the mess that happens in Nigeria, decided to change their minds

3.5 Currency Difference

In comparison to the currency notes and or legal tenders of other nations in the world; the naira is currently, glaringly depreciating, when pegged in value to the other currency notes of other nations., financial facts and statistics as of the last quarter of the year, 2022; the exchange rate of the Nigerian naira to the South African Rand, that of the Canadian Dollar, and the Swiss Franc, has more monetary value than the Nigerian naira.²⁸

The pathetic, and abysmal "low" to which the value of the Nigerian naira, has 'tumbled down', in

²⁸ Ogbe, P., *The Nigerian Naira Versus Other Currency Notes*, < <https://businessday.ng/opinion/article/the-nigerian-naira-versus-other-currency-notes/> >accessed 23/05/2024.

comparison to the currency notes of other nations in the present world, is alarming and calls for immense concern in the economic and monetary circles in the country. Ironically part of the reasons for the high rate of foreign currencies in Nigeria is because of the massive exodus of Nigerian students that are travelling abroad to study, some for the sole purpose of “scholarly tourism.”²⁹

However, while the country suffers as a result of the declining currency, Nigerian economic migrants are happy that they can use the little resource they get from their hard-earned labour to invest in the country by investing in real properties and other tangible investments. Most Nigerian youths are, therefore, motivated to travel to countries where the exchange rate is higher compared to the naira.

4.0 Human Rights Issues

States in the global economic system are entitled to regulate movement across their borders in line with the principles of sovereignty and territory integrity of the State's system, they must do so by their obligations under international law, including international human rights law, however, the obedience to this principle have continuously been observed in breach, particularly by states that lack basic democratic tenets.

The issue of the violation of the human rights of migration is particularly more identified with illegal migrants, States, often, have addressed irregular migration solely through the planks of sovereignty, border security, or law enforcement, sometimes driven by hostile domestic constituencies, as was observed by High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay and Chair of the Global Migration Group (GMG).³⁰ The number of irregular migrants is unknown but is estimated to be in the tens of millions worldwide. The GMG is usually deeply concerned about the human rights of these children, women, and men who are "more likely to face discrimination, exclusion, exploitation and abuse. Most of these migrants face prolonged detention or ill-treatment and in some cases enslavement, rape, or even murder. They are more likely to be targeted by xenophobes and racists, victimised by unscrupulous employers and sexual predators, and could easily fall prey to criminal traffickers and smugglers."³¹

Human rights are universal –they apply everywhere; indivisible –in the sense that political and civil rights cannot be separated from social and cultural rights; and, inalienable –they cannot be denied to any human being. This is the basis of the concept of "human rights for all" articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under the auspices of the United Nations.³²

4.1 The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

Two major covenants covering the broad definitions of political and civil rights, and economic, social, and cultural rights were adopted in the mid-1960s. Together with the Universal Declaration of Human

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ United Nations, *Landmark Statement on Protecting the Human Rights of Irregular Migrants*, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2010/09/landmark-statement-protecting-human-rights-irregular-migrants>>, accessed 20/5/2024.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Reginald A., *The Human Rights of Migrants*, Offprint of International Migration Vol. 38 (6) Special Issue 3/2000,

Rights, these three critical instruments are often referred to as the “International Bill of Human Rights” universally applicable to all human beings. However, in practice, it became evident that the principles elaborated in the “ill of Rights” instruments were not applied to several important groups such as women, children, migrants, etc. The convention on migrants made elaborate seven points for the acceptance of the 1990 Convention to wit:³³

1. Migrant workers are viewed as more than labourers or economic entities. They are social entities with families and, accordingly, have rights, including that of family reunification.
2. The Convention recognises that migrant workers and members of their families, being non-nationals residing in states of employment or transit, are unprotected. Their rights are often not addressed by the national legislation of receiving states or by their states of origin.
3. It provides, for the first time, an international definition of migrant workers, categories of migrant workers, and members of their families. It also establishes international standards of treatment through the elaboration of the particular human rights of migrant workers and members of their families.
4. Fundamental human rights are extended to all migrant workers, both documented and undocumented, with additional rights being recognised for documented migrant workers and their families, notably equality of treatment with nationals of states of employment in several legal, political, economic, social, and cultural areas.
5. The Convention seeks to play a role in preventing and eliminating the exploitation of all migrants, including an end to their illegal or clandestine movements and to irregular or undocumented situations.
6. It attempts to establish minimum standards of protection for migrant workers and members of their families that are universally acknowledged. It serves as a tool to encourage those States lacking national standards to bring their legislation in closer harmony with recognized international standards.
7. While the Convention specifically addresses migrant workers and members of their families, implementation of its provisions would provide a significant measure of protection for the basic rights of nearly all other migrants in vulnerable situations, notably those who are in irregular situations.

For the benefit of hindsight, The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is a United Nations multilateral treaty governing the protection of migrant workers and families. Signed on 18 December 1990, it entered into force on 1 July 2003 after the threshold of 20 ratifying States was reached in March 2003.³⁴ The main objective of this instrument is to foster respect for migrants' human rights. Migrants are not only workers; they are also human beings who have inherent powers like any other human being. Technically, the Convention does not create new rights for migrants but aims at guaranteeing equality of treatment, and the same working conditions, including in case of temporary work, for migrants and nationals.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, *Migrant Workers Convention*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migrant_Workers_Convention>, accessed 20/05/2024

³⁵ Ibid.

Even with this very important instrument, together with the International Bill of Rights, the human rights of economic migrants have persisted in international political and economic relations, particularly in the following areas:

4.2 Denial of Civil, Political, and Legal rights

Most jurisdictions have delimited certain political rights to different categories of citizenship, for instance in most developed countries including the United States of America, the right to contest for certain offices is the exclusive preserve of citizens by birth, hence economic migrants are completely removed from the equation, this situation plays out even in cases not just the right to be voted for but the right to vote. More so, international law does not expressly criminalise illegal migrants as they are granted rights as a humans, however, they are instances where national states, take the issues of illegal migration as criminal offenses instead of simple of offenses as recognised by the general notion of international law.

In addition, Economic migrants are arbitrarily arrested and kept in detention facilities where basic rights are thrown away or kept in abeyance, most of them tortured, or a lack of due process. For instance, *Article 36* of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations³⁶ provides that the consular officer shall be free to communicate with nationals of the sending State and to have access to them. Foreign nationals who are arrested or detained be given notice without delay of their right to their embassy or consulate notified of that arrest and consular officers shall have the right to visit a national of the sending state who is in prison, custody, or detention, to converse and correspond with him and to arrange for his legal representation. This section of the VCCR is constantly kept aside in the treatment of foreign nationals, the host citing security issues and the protection of national sovereignty as above human rights of migrants.

In Avena and Other Mexican Nationals,³⁷ a case brought by Mexico against the United States seeking relief for Mexicans who were under sentence of death for murder in various U.S States who had not been informed at the time of arrest about access to the consul of Mexico. The ICJ said that the United States was required to grant review and consideration in the cases of these nationals. In this case, the government of Mexico supported its argument for the restoration of the status quo ante by characterizing consular access as a human rights issue. The ICJ responded by questioning whether VCCR identified consular access as a human right, the court said: "Whether or not the Vienna Convention rights are human rights is not a matter this court needs to decide. The court would, however, observe that neither the text nor the object and purpose of the Convention, nor any indication in *travaux préparatoires* supports the conclusion that Mexico draws from its contention in that regard.

³⁶ Hereinafter referred to as the VCCR

³⁷ (MEX v US) 2014 I.C.J 12,60.

Whether the VCCR itself takes consular access as a human right in addition to being a treaty right, other authorities do regard consular access as a human right. A commission constituted by the government of Turkey that investigated the *Gaza Flotilla* matter characterised the denial of consular access to the passengers of the vessels as a due process violation. The rationale is that, for a foreign national, consular access is necessary to ensure the fairness of the proceedings. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights³⁸ addressed consular access not simply as a treaty issue under the VCCR but as a matter of due process. The IACHR was acting on a request for an advisory opinion, filled by the government of Mexico. IACHR thus concluded, from its analysis of consular access as an aspect of due process, that consular participation is necessary to ensure fairness. That means that prejudice of some specific type need not be found before a remedy is required; consular participation is presumed to enhance a foreign national's ability to present an adequate defense to a criminal charge.

4.3 Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

All forms of discrimination are prohibited by the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights under all circumstances, including cases of illegal migration. Under the Covenant, States have an obligation in this matter. However, even though this principle is firmly established in international human rights law, misconceptions about its application to non-nationals obstruct the full implementation of economic, social, and cultural rights. Irregular migrants in particular often face discrimination, even when this is specifically prohibited under the relevant legislation or regulations.³⁹

By law or administrative regulation, many are denied access to public health care, adequate housing and accommodation, education, and essential social security. Economic migrant children may be unable in law or practice to attend school. Migrants, particularly the irregular ones are frequently ineligible to receive adequate health care or decent accommodation, and may not be allowed to exercise their right to freedom of association. Many feel unable to inform the police when they are victims of crime or do not send their children to school, because they are afraid of being deported.⁴⁰

Several migrants face mental health issues that come as a result of the social isolation they experience as a result of being separated from family and social networks, as well as job insecurity, difficult living conditions, and exploitative treatment. Many economic migrants whose documents have expired or are not in existence may experience sexual and gender-based violence, become vulnerable to illness, or lose access to essential health documentation in the course of the often long and precarious journeys they make to reach their countries of destination.⁴¹

³⁸ Hereinafter abbreviated and referred to as "IACHR)

³⁹ Navi, P, *The Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Of Migrants in an Irregular Situation*, Geneva, United Nations Human Rights 2014, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Publications/HR-PUB-14-1_en.pdf, accessed 21/05/2024.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

4.4 Prejudice or xenophobia

Economic migrants are constantly discriminated against based on race and the situation of their country of origin, they are subjected to prejudices not just by the state but by the citizens of the host communities, hence amounting to an affront or infringement of their rights as humans who should be treated with some degree of dignity.

Nigerian economic migrants across the world are subjected to these prejudices not only in developing Western societies but even within Africa, for instance, in 2015, there was a clash between the middle-class citizens of Nigeria and South Africa in what is generally referred to as xenophobia attacks.⁴² The incident led to the destruction of lives and properties of Nigerians living in South Africa. The reason for the attack which has become a constant occurrence in South-Africa-Nigeria relations is that patriotic citizens are quick to assert, nationalistically, that the aliens have come to take over their country, their resources, their jobs, their culture, and their women.⁴³ The Socialist Party of Great Britain puts it thus:

‘Africans living in another country which is not their country of origin are grimly accustomed to invectives like “fucking foreigner” “parasite” “alien” “refugee” etc. But it appears matters have been getting out of hand in recent years. Xenophobia is on the rise, making nonsense of the catching phrase “Africa for Africans.”’⁴⁴

5.0 Recommendations

There is a huge responsibility on the side of Nigerian leaders to revamp the ailing economy to create an enabling environment for businesses and investors to come, thereby reducing the rate of economic migrants. It is no doubt, that development may not necessarily stop migration; however, an improved economy will substantially reduce the rate of escapees.

The Developed Western Societies should sincerely aid the developing countries to move away from this situation of despondency and want. The global resource is enough to go around if not for the greed of many capitalists and nations who use Multinational and Transactional Corporations to control global wealth.

Nigeria cannot retain her sovereignty and dignity while entirely allowing her youthful and skilled citizens to build other countries, while the country remain underdeveloped; the idea of Nigeria’ economic advancement is not attainable without the reliance on Nigerian intellectuals, resources, products, and the thoughts of Nigerians themselves.

6.0 Conclusion

It is fortunate that the leadership of the country with the largest number of black people on the planet earth cannot manage her enormous natural resources for the well-being of her citizens, thus reneging

⁴² Uwakwe, R.C., *The Influence of Personality on Foreign Policy: The Nigeria Experience*, Owerri, Shack Publishers, (2017), 161.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Cited in Uwakwe, Op cit, 162.

from the social contract that exists between the people of Nigeria and the government. This condition has resulted in the mass movement of her citizens across borders in search of greener pastures with the catching colloquial 'Japa' a term that resonates a feeling of disappointment for one' nation for the inability to provide basic needs of human existence. A situation that has exposed a lot of economic migrants to certain human rights deprivations due to their weak status in the countries they migrated to for better opportunities irrespective of the weak status of economic migrants however, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights succinctly and unequivocally espoused that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, thus the situation in which economic migrants may find themselves should not deprive them either of their humanity or their rights as humans.