

The Plight of African Migrants

Ernie J. Burgher and SitiTalkBlog

Endless economic hardship, gross inequality, civil wars, genocide, terrorism, threats to life and lack of opportunities are some of the endless reasons Africans decide to embark on a voyage overseas to mostly Europe and North America for 'greener pastures' or a better future. Ironically, the migration trends in Africa are usually geared towards their once time colonial masters. Citizens from the French speaking African countries like Morocco, Togo, French Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Senegal, migrate in huge numbers to France and Belgium. While citizens from African Countries with English as official language like Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya migrate mainly to England and Germany. During the period of 2000-2005 an estimated 440,000 people per year emigrated from Africa mainly to Europe. Most if not all African migrants face an ordeal one way or the other, legal migrants face the problem of adopting to a new world that is fast paced, where nothing is given for free and a system that most of the time works. Illegal immigrants have unique problems of their own; sougning out their legal status, the struggle of living without adequate documentation and the fact that certain facilities are not available for people of their status. As they all face separate problems, there are the problems common to them; racism, stigmatization, racial profiling and pure bias.

Legal emigration from African can be traced as far back as when slavery existed. It moved on and increased during colonization when colonial masters like France instituted the policy of assimilation; where citizens from their colonies were educated in France and given French citizenship. Today a lot of Africans migrate legally in search of a better education especially to the United States of America (USA). In 2014, there were 31,113 students from Sub-Saharan Africa and they comprised 4% of the 886,052 international students in the US. The top Sub-Saharan African countries of origin are Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Cameroon and Ethiopia. These students easily grow fond of the environment and love to stay back after graduation. Most countries allow them stay back and work after graduation except the United Kingdom (UK) who recently in 2015 stopped the practice; foreign students of whom most are Africans are now forced to go back after graduation.

The Bulk of emigration from Africa has been illegal. Harsh living conditions cause people to migrate by any means possible. Some are fleeing from war like the recent cases of the Somalia civil war and the south Sudan Civil War of 2013; some are fleeing from tribal persecutions and unsecured traditional practices like Female Genital Mutilation; while the bulk are fleeing for economic reasons. Some embark on this journey through false documentations and thank God when they scale through embassy checks, some decide to go by land and when the time comes they cross the Mediterranean Sea, some seek the visa of a neighboring country to an economically powerful country, and struggle to cross borders to the other side; the USA- Mexico border sees a plethora of such cases.

For the illegal migrant, embarking on the journey is not where the plight begins, the harsh experiences driving them to such risky voyage is where it all starts. Most if not all take on this task with little or no finical viability- thus the huddles they meet on the way are endless, the entire trip is an endless nightmare, and all left is hope. Hope that they will one day be in a country and belong to a society where

all humans are treated equally, where they can work and achieve reasonable rewards while staying far away from past troubles. This is what keeps them alive throughout the months or days of this journey.

Upon arrival at separate destinations the task of scaling through the refugee camps is a daunting one. Statements are taken by state migration officials, most countries verify through their embassies to confirm, especially stories depicting societal persecutions, tribal conflicts and wars. If these stories are confirmed the migrant is officially given refugee status through a court or other means. For most economic migrants and those whose stories cannot be confirmed they are given a pill bigger than their throats can swallow; repatriation. Countries that cannot afford repatriation leave the migrants in the camps where life is suffocation and uncomfortable.

The story of the illegal African migrant is a one of courage, most in today's world pass through the treacherous Mediterranean Sea on canoes or makeshift boats. A spot in the boats are expensive; men that can't afford it are left on the shores praying for a miracle to carry them to the other side, while women can trade sex for a spot in it. These boats are filled and tight; the journey begins with every sea wave looking like a murder attempt and when night falls and the sea's treachery peaks, sleep will never be this distant.

Recent reports as of May 2016 show that coast guards from the coast of Lampedusa in Italy are making efforts to save migrants that experience ship wreckages. In current times because of the Syrian civil war, Syrian refugees have overshadowed the African migrant. The continuous flow of Syrian migrants have erupted nationalist sentiments in a lot of developed countries and it is one of the today reasons of The United Kingdom voting to leaving the European Union.

Ernie J. Burgher is a bi-lingual freelance journalist and author, and speaks English and French. Ernie writes for SitiTalkBlog.

Copyright SitiTalkBlog. All rights reserved.

SitiTalkBlog is focused primarily on Africa's socio-economic and political issues, scientific and medical topics, as well as global current issues and news. SitiTalkBlog also highlights positive entertainment as long as it has the potential to cause us to think and take positive actions. The blog is geared towards sensitizing people to take constructive actions and engineer practical solutions

Reprint and Re-distribution Permission: Any and all parts of this original article may be reproduced as long as the author and SitiTalkBlog and References and links are cited and maintained as in the original publication. No part of the original article may be modified or used for commercial purposes, and no additional authors may be added or cited except as indicated "Ernie J. Burgher and SitiTalkBlog" in the original article.

References &links

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20150917132859939>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/foreign-students-will-be-banned-from-working-in-the-uk-and-forced-to-leave-as-soon-as-they-finish-10385232.html>

[*"U.S. drone strike in Somalia targets al-Shabab leader"*](#)

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/hundreds-of-haitian/2823726.html>

http://www.phillytrib.com/metros/villanova-students-document-plight-of-african-immigrants/article_0e716830-2b07-574a-a250-cd5168b358e7.html

<http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/248607-the-plight-of-african-migrants-in-the-mediterranean>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/26/migrant-boat-capsizes-in-mediterranean-italian-coastguard>

<http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/248607-the-plight-of-african-migrants-in-the-mediterranean>

<http://time.com/4031569/migrant-crisis-europe-african-refugees/>

<http://www.france24.com/en/20150902-cinema-mediterranea-plight-african-migrants-rosarno-italy-libya>

<http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/arguments-britain-leaving-eu/#.V36QpjXNda8>