

## **UCAC 30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Special Edition of the

### **CENTRAL AFRICA STUDENTS CHALLENGE (CASC) 2021**

(October – December 2021)

On the Campus of the Catholic University of Central Africa in Yaoundé

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Of the

## **Social and Human Sciences Paper**

Theme

**The Issue of Refugees in Africa:**

**Legal, Political, Humanitarian, Social, Economic and Security Aspects**

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 has taken center stage in the news, the issue of refugees in Africa remains a major problem. ([ONU Info, 2020](#)). In addition to the fact that the crisis has jeopardized their protection, their numbers have increased, particularly with the appearance of new outbreaks in Mozambique with the attack by jihadists ([AfricaNews, 2021](#)), in the DRC due to the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano ([UNHCR, 2021](#)) and in Ethiopia with the conflict in the Tigray ([ONU Info, 2021](#)).

Of the more than 80 million refugees in the world today ([Le Monde, 2020](#)), Afrique hosts 80%, which is disproportionate with regard to her capacities ([Afrique Renouveau, 2016](#)). Of these refugees in the world, more than a third, or about 7 million, are from sub-Saharan Africa ([France Info, 2019](#)). This region of Africa alone records more than 34,000 displaced persons daily ([ONU Info, 2020](#)). Two of the largest refugee camps in the world, Dadaab and Kakuma in Kenya, are in Africa, although their closure has been ordered ([Courrier International, 2021](#)). Also, after Turkey, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia are the countries that host the largest number of refugees in the world ([France Info, 2019](#)). Chad, DRC, Rwanda, South Sudan Tanzania, Cameroon and Nigeria host more than 6.7 million displaced people ([Info Migrants, 2019](#)). Africa thus remains the continent most impacted by the refugee phenomenon (UNHCR, 2006) ([UNHCR, 2006](#)).

While the main causes of the refugee phenomenon such as wars, internal conflicts, terrorism, drought, economic insecurity and natural disasters are well known, the legal, political, humanitarian, social, economic and security aspects remain persistent issues.

On the legal front, the issue of refugee status remains a concern. While in the past, the "Nansen Passport" (1922) and the International Refugee Organization (1946-1952) allowed for a more humane reception of refugees, today, several million of them are stateless, deprived of nationality and the fundamental rights that go with it ([Maurel, 2019](#)), despite international law which defines and protects them ([UNHCR, 2016](#)). Education, health, employment and freedom are some of the rights they are deprived of. It would then be interesting to review the national and international legal instruments on refugees, but also the legal challenges that these refugees sometimes face.

At the political level, African states are simultaneously facing several challenges that constrain their public policy agenda. Financial resources are insufficient while the problems to be solved are complex and numerous. Other internal socio-political problems challenge the effective management of refugees' rights.

At humanitarian level, [Laliberté](#) (2007) shows that regardless of their host countries, refugees, apart from uprooting, face famine, violence, insecurity, disease, extreme poverty, fear and isolation on daily basis. These shortages were further exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis ([ONU Info, 2020](#)). This situation is especially concerning as there are over 22 million refugees in Africa, more than half of whom are under 18 ([UNHCR, 2020](#)). In relation to this situation, it would be crucial to highlight the stakes and the implications of humanitarian issues in relation to the well-being and the future of the refugees, but also to the global situation of the countries involved.

Socially, the influx of refugees is often the source of multiple intercommunity conflicts. Social issues such as education, health, hygiene, sanitation and housing deserve to be examined with a

view to finding lasting solutions to the problems faced by host populations and refugees, taking into account their socio-cultural and political contexts.

Economically, most people who flee their towns or villages due to crises lose their livelihoods ([Olive, 2019](#)). In their host countries or regions, there is also the issue of access to employment and the practice of socioeconomic activities due to their legal status. This raises the issue of their socioeconomic integration, which, according to [Lefébure \(2019\)](#), requires the recognition of their skills and know-how. From this perspective, it would be important to question the inequalities in access to socioeconomic opportunities that refugees suffer, but also to explore the prospects for their integration in their host countries.

In terms of security, refugees are sometimes subjected to new forms of violence, including attacks, rape and harassment, both on departure and on arrival ([UNHCR, 2003](#)). This violence is also psychological, including stigmatization, indifference and rejection by the host populations. There is also the issue of the future, which most refugees perceive as crucial and fundamental ([The New Humanitarian, 2019](#)). And beyond that, their eventual return to their countries of origin is not a guarantee of security and stability ([United Nations, 2019](#)). All of these aspects therefore merit further investigation in order to understand the living conditions of refugees in Africa ([Elmorchid et Hourmat-Allah, 2018](#)).