

**THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-REFOULEMENT AND CAMEROON'S EVICTION OF
NIGERIAN REFUGEES (2009-2020)**

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MARCH, 2022

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NIGERIAN REFUGEES (2009-2020)**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN
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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, COLLEGE OF LEADERSHIP AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA, NIGERIA**

MARCH, 2022

ACCEPTANCE

This is to attest that this thesis is accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in International Relations in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership and Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria.

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I, **BETEK CHELSEA MINA (16PAH01427)**, declare that this research was carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. Sheriff F. Folarin and Dr. Moses M. Duruji of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership and Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria. I attest that the thesis has not been presented either wholly or partially for the award of any degree elsewhere. All sources of data and scholarly information used in this thesis are duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this thesis titled “**THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-REFOULEMENT AND CAMEROON'S EVICTION OF NIGERIAN REFUGEES (2009-2020)**” is an original research work carried out by **BETEK, CHELSEA MINA (16PAH01427)** of the International Relations programme in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, College of Leadership Development Studies, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria under the supervision of Prof. Sheriff F. Folarin and Dr. Moses M. Duruji. We have examined the work and found it acceptable for the award of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to He who is able to do exceedingly above ALL THINGS for the enablement, wisdom and strength to accomplish this great feat.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAR	Central African Republic
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USA	United States of America/ United States

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the extent to which the principle of non-refoulement protects Nigerian refugees in Cameroon. Non-refoulement is a principle in international refugee law that brings countries under obligation to accommodate and protect refugees within their jurisdiction and prohibits them from sending refugees back to places where they risk human rights abuses or threats to their lives. However, there have been reports that Cameroon, which was once known to generously open its doors to refugees and displaced persons has been reported to have shut those doors for various reasons. The aforementioned, therefore, necessitated this research, with the specific objectives to explore the extent to which the principle of non-refoulement in Cameroon has protected Nigerian refugees; examine the impacts of Nigerian refugee influx on Cameroon; identify how the refugee and asylum rights of Nigerian refugees have been violated by the government and security officials of Cameroon and ascertain the responses of the Nigerian government and the UNHCR to ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is upheld for Nigerian refugee protection. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design for the attainment of these objectives with thematic analysis of relevant primary and secondary qualitative data. In addition, the theoretical arguments of the push-pull theory and the fiduciary theory of humanitarianism provided frameworks to examine the subject matter. The findings of the study reveal that while the Cameroonian government has made considerable efforts to ratify international legal documents and incorporate the principle of non-refoulement into its national laws, the country is also plagued with its own internal political and economic issues. As a result, the specific refugee and asylum rights of Nigerian refugees are not protected by Cameroon. It is necessary, therefore, for refugee receiving countries to address refugee issues not only as political issues but also as humanitarian issues by committing to protecting refugees, promoting tolerance and refraining from forceful refugee returns. The study, therefore, recommended that states should incorporate and fully implement the principle of non-refoulement not just in theory but also in practice; authorities should both investigate violence against Nigerian refugees and strictly enforce human rights and refugee laws. Also, Cameroon and Nigeria need to uphold the commitment to voluntary repatriation; by enabling the return of Nigerian refugees under conditions that are conducive to voluntary return in safety and with dignity.

Keywords: Displacement, human rights, non-refoulement, refugee, repatriation