

A Study on the Refugee Situation in Niger and the Causes of Diffa Refugee Problem

<Abstract>

Boko Haram has claimed that 'western education is a sin' and objected elections, voting, wearing shirts or pants, and secular education. Since its formation in 2002, Boko Haram has implemented armed struggle, aiming to establish an Islamic State based on Islamic Fundamentalism and legislation of Shariah, especially since 2009. For their rapid struggle, US designated the Boko Haram as 'terrorist-group' in 2013. In 2014, Boko Haram declared a caliphate succeeding Sokoto Caliphate which was founded in northern Nigeria in the 19th century. However, with the crackdown operation by the Nigerian government in 2018, their power has dwindled significantly.

Based in north-eastern Nigeria, Boko Haram has been responsible for many attacks in Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and many other countries for the past decade, causing instability in the entire region beyond Nigeria. In 2015, Boko Haram pledged its loyalty to the IS and claimed the next year, that they are the true leader of the IS in Nigeria. Their terrorist outrage so far claimed about 20,000 lives, while more than 2 million people were driven out of their homeland and became refugees.

Niger has been seeing a considerable influx of refugees from the neighboring Sahel countries, such as Mali, Nigeria, and Chad. This study aims to understand the current status of the refugee issues in Niger, focusing on the Nigerian refugee issue in Diffa, Niger, which is a border city that is 8km from the areas where the Nigerian Boko Haram is active.

Europe has been approaching the recent refugee problem in the perspective of a security threat to their politics and economy, rather than a humanitarian angle. In other words, influx of refugees are now being regarded as a potential risk to expose their country to various threats including terrorism, becoming more reluctant or even outrightly against accepting the refugees.

Even Niger is facing threats in terms of national security and peace due to the inflow of refugees from neighboring states; they are endeavoring to contribute to the security of the region by accepting these refugees. The purpose of this study is to examine how Niger is responding to the refugee inflow from neighboring countries to contribute to the security and peace of the region, with a view to shedding light on one of the possible options for the EU regarding its refugee policies.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Refugees, Refugees Camp, Regional Security, Diffa, Niger, Nigeria