

Abstract

The phenomenon of internal displacement dwarfs the refugee crisis world-wide. Forced migration, and more specifically internal displacement, looms as one of the largest and most poorly understood humanitarian challenges currently facing states and the international humanitarian aid community in Africa. This research project aims to increase our understanding of internal displacement by factoring in the discourse of states and the international humanitarian aid community as a key contributing factor to our conceptualization of this phenomenon in Africa. Discourse analysis may demonstrate various “sites of struggle” as important messages and ideas from the various actors compete. The well-established notion of discourse framing and containing the responses of certain actors and institutions is at the heart of this research project. The international humanitarian aid community and Africa states have been described in various documents related to the 2009 Kampala Convention as playing leading roles in the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons. This paper uses the Kampala Convention as its discursive locus, analyzing selected texts (documents) that are related to the production, adoption and ratification processes of the Convention. This research report will include diachronic and synchronic analyses of the ID discourse, in the form of documents, for the purpose of exploring the key messages and ideas, which will then be contextualized with the incorporation of academic literature and information related to the phenomenon of internal and forced displacement in Africa. This research report will attempt to demonstrate the various ways in which the limits of the internal displacement discourse are constructed and negotiated by states and the international humanitarian aid community, in order for us gain a better understanding of the role that is played by this growing platform for international deliberation.