

HISTORICAL MIGRATION IN PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S *SIRAH*; LESSONS AND COMPARISM TO 21ST CENTURY MIGRATION OF AFRICANS TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

As the impetus of globalization continues to gather pace, more and more people leave their home countries in Africa pursuing dreams of a better life for themselves and their families. African immigrants converging on Europe from widely divergent communities scattered the Sub-Saharan Africa cities, representing a great variety of local cultures and traditions. Trans Mediterranean networks form the basis of migration routes and are key factors in the destinations of these migrants and in the overall process of immigration, to this towards Europe. This is the main reason why this research is aiming to investigate some lessons and compare the modern-day journey of Africans to Europe to the historical migration of Prophet Muhammad with his companions from Makkah to Madinah, this paper is going to adopt qualitative method of research, Though migration can be voluntarily and involuntary and can also occur for other variety of different other reasons like environmental and social issues, this paper is ready to shed more lights on these issues, with this research, it is going to be learnt that despite its significance in Islam, *hijra* is rarely invoked by Muslim states today, the promotion of Islamic teachings on refugees and asylum seekers could encourage European states to widen their acceptance and protection of refugees from Africa.

Keywords: Islam, Africa, Migration, Mediterranean, Globalization, Makkah, Madinah, Europe.

FULL PAPER

There is no dispute that Allah, the Almighty made the earth a place for all of his slaves to settle, the good of them and the bad of them (And the earth He has put for the creatures, he said this in suratur- Rahman 55:10). Moreso, he sent provision for all of His slaves, believers and disbelievers alive. (...and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day. As for him who believes, I shall leave him in contentment for a while.... He said this in Suratul Baqarah 2:126). The right is like others of its type; Allah's slaves are entitled to establish order in the land. Man has the God-given right to pursue whatever is in his best interest and to prevent all forms of aggression and injustice. Thus, when the Islamic state, which is established seeking solely the justice of Islamic Law, sets up rules governing immigration to it order to protect the integrity of its civilization, morality, culture and society, according to its interpretation of the sources, and its economic and political capabilities, whatever a country or a state implements of its regulating border traffic according to legitimate Islamic considerations, other countries practice according to considerations of human reasoning and according to their political, economic and social interests. These are often mixed with aggression and personal preference and are motivated by racial prejudice and hatred, which they then enforce by law and protect through their power and influence in the international community. They interpret it a part of their untouchable and inviolable leadership. The point is that is that it is according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad that whoever wants to immigrate to a country will inevitably be restricted by its system and will have to take into consideration the rules and legal procedures regulating the immigration, which they enforce by law. As such, such migrant will

have to enter into a contract of mutual security in which the migrant is protected from them and they protected from him. No one is exempt from this except the refugee fleeing for his life from almost certain death, torture, and fear for his religion, family and property, provided that the place he is presently at is the only place to which he has immigrated.

The first task the Prophet undertook in Madinah was the construction of the mosque which made public the religious practices of Islam. This clearly shows that the mosque is one of the most important facets of an Islamic society. Though the Prophet's mosque was primarily set up for worship it had a number of other functions, such as refuge home, a shelter for the poor, as a special section of the mosque called *as-Suffah* was made for them, a place for educational activities, a place for medical treatment, as in case of those who are injured in time of war, a place to conduct meeting with foreign delegates and dignitaries, a place for military planning, a place for masses to visit their leader. Despite all the worldly means that the prophet and Abu bakr took to ensure their migration was kept as secret as possible, they in no way depended or relied upon the ability of their own efforts; on the contrary, their hearts were firmly reliant upon Allah, hoping for his help and support.

ISLAMIC TEACHINGS REGARDING HOSPITALITY OF MIGRANTS

The first source of guidance for Muslims is the holy Quran, in which Allah says "And if anyone of the idolaters asks protection of thee, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of Allah; then convey him to his place of security. That is because they are people who have no knowledge" (Surah at-Taubah, 9 7) The verse makes it clear that Muslims have a responsibility

to provide protection which is shelter and legal rights to anyone who seeks it, even if they are a polytheist, this injunction is not exclusive to Muslims or theists.

The prophet Muhammad peace be upon him similarly states “Whosoever relieves a Muslim of a burdens of the world, Allah will relieve him of a burden from the burdens on the Day of judgment”. In many instances throughout history such refugees settled in Muslim land and become permanent minorities, their treatment was also often carried out in line with Islamic injunctions. This provides us with the understanding that anyone who helps Muslims in their time of need will be rewarded for it, which is an important aspect for every Muslim migrant to remember in relation to their host country an accept that as a favour rather taking it for granted.

ABYSSINIA: THE FIRST MIGRATION.

The first example of any form of migration within Islamic sources is the migration to Abyssinia. In the early years of the nascent Muslim community, either in the year 7 or 9 before *Hijra* (613/615 CE), a group of companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad migrated to the Christian Kingdom of Akum (part of modern –day Ethiopia and Eritrea) to escape the persecution they were facing at the hand of the Quraysh at Mecca. The king of Aksum, Najashi (Negus), a Christian gave refuge to these early migrants. Despite being visited by an envoy from the Quraysh who requested the return of these immigrants, Najashi refused in the following words.”No by God, I will not surrender them. No people who have sought my protection, settled in my country, and chosen me rather than others shall be betrayed”.... (Ibn Ishaq, *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* (English),1998, P146-151). This shows that the practice of migration and finding

refuge in other lands where necessary is part of Islamic tradition. The Negus provided excellent examples as to how those fleeing their homelands ought to be treated, but the obligations of migrants to their new countries are equally important. Though asylum and migration are integral to Islam, *Hijrah* is rarely invoked by Muslim states today. Worldwide, there are currently over 1.3 billion of Muslims, divided into two main sects. Most Muslim migrant flee from their violent armed conflict or authoritarian regimes in their countries, however, despite their adherence to Islam and Shariah law, Muslim states rarely refer to *hijrah* when dealing with refugees. The original concepts have seldom been applied throughout history. However, in spite of its lack or prior use by states, *hijrah* could provide an important framework for the treatment of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees by Muslim and non Muslim states.

MADINAH: THE SECOND MIGRATION

The *hijra* (migration) of Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Makkah to Madinah, stands as one of the most pivotal moments in Islamic history. This event marked the beginning of a new phase for the Muslim community, transforming Islam from a persecuted belief into a flourishing, organized faith. Beyond its historical impact, the *hijra* provides timeless lessons compare to this 21st century migrations mostly by Africans to European countries, the prophet migration was all about organized faith, perseverance, sacrifice, historical impact, and the importance of unity.

PRE-HIJRA: PERSECUTION IN MAKKAH

In early years of Islam, the small but growing Muslim community in Makkah faced severe persecution, the Quraysh, who held the political and economic power in the city, saw Islam as a threat to their way of life and their influence. Prophet Muhammad and his companions were subjected to physical abuse, social boycotts, and economic hardship. Yet, despite these challenges, the Muslims remained steadfast in their faith. The breaking point came when the Quraysh plotted to kill the Prophet, in the face of this danger, Allah commanded the Prophet to leave Makkah and migrate to a place where Islam could grow freely: *Yathrib*, later known as Madinah.

Migration to Madinah: Significance Lessons

The migration to Madinah was not a simple relocation, it was a monumental journey that required immense faith and trust in Allah. The prophet Muhammad and his closest companion, Abu Bakr embarked on the journey under the cover of night to avoid detection by the Quraysh, They sought refuge in the Cave of Thawr for several days, evading their pursuers. Despite the fear and uncertainty, they placed their full trust in Allah's protection. One of the most profound lessons of the prophet migration is the important of tawakkul, or trust in Allah. Despite the life-threatening circumstances, the Prophet's calm reliance on Allah's plan teaches how to maintain faith, perseverance. Another lesson is the establishment of a unique sense of brotherhood between the emigrants (Muhajirun) and the local inhabitants (Ansar). The local inhabitants welcomed the Muslims with open hearts, offering them homes and resources to start a new life. This unity laid the foundation for the first Muslim community and set an example for solidarity that transcended tribal and cultural differences. Also a lesson learnt is in Madinah, Prophet Muhammad established the first Islamic states, rooted in justice, equality,

and mutual respect. One of his first actions was drafting the constitution of Madinah, which outlined the rights and responsibilities of all citizens, including Muslims, Jews, and other religious groups. This document ensured that all individuals, regardless of their background, were treated fairly Islamic law. Other lesson is the demonstration the importance of justice. Prophet Muhammad ensured that all citizens were treated with respect, regardless of their faith or social status. Today, this teaches us that the significance of fairness, inclusivity, and justice in building a just society in our personal and collective lives. Another lesson is the tremendous sacrifice for the early Muslims. They left behind their homes, families, and possessions, driven by their devotion to God and the message of Islam. Despite the hardships they faced, the Muhajirun made this sacrifice for a higher purpose to establish a society based on the teachings of Islam. More so, the sacrifice of the early Muslims teaches us that success, whether spiritual or worldly, often requires giving up personal comfort for a greater cause. Whether its dedicating time for prayer, contributing to community projects, or standing up for justice, the Hijra reminds us that sacrifice is a key component of achieving success in this life and the hereafter.

MIGRATION OF AFRICANS TO EUROPE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

In recent years, migration of Africans to Europe has become one of the most significant global phenomena, shaping both continents' social, economic, and political landscapes. While the reasons for this migration are diverse and complex, they stem from a mix of dire circumstances, opportunities, and aspirations. Africa, a continent rich in resources and cultural diversity, faces numerous challenges that push many of its citizens to embark on the perilous journey to Europe in search of better life. From war-torn regions to economic instability, the push factors are as varied as the people seeking to escape them. However, migration is not solely driven by

hardship. Europe offers a beacon of hope for many Africans; representing opportunities for improved living standards, education, and career advancement are compelling reasons to leave their home countries. Despite the dangers posed by migration routes, including the treacherous Mediterranean crossings, the dream of a new life often outweighs the risks. As the migration patterns continue to evolve, understanding the driving forces behind this movement is crucial. In this research, we will explore the key reasons why Africans are migrating to Europe, examining economic, political, environmental, and social factors that influence this significant global trend

REASONS FOR AFRICAN MIGRATION TO EUROPE

1- Economic opportunities: One of the most compelling reasons for African migration to Europe is the pursuit of better economic opportunities. Many African countries face significant challenges, including high unemployment rates, limited job prospects, and economic instability. These factors often leave individuals with few options for improving their quality of life, prompting many to seek opportunities abroad, and particular in Europe.

A- Unemployment in Africa: Across Africa, unemployment rates are alarmingly high, particularly among young people. According to the African Development Bank, youth unemployment in many African nations can exceed 30%, creating a cycle of poverty that's difficult to escape. For many young Africans, the prosperity of finding steady work at home is slim, especially in rural areas where economic opportunities are even more scarce. This lack of employment opportunities pushes them to migrate in search of better job prospects and a brighter future.

Europe, with its diverse and robust job markets, becomes an attractive destination for those hoping to secure a livelihood and break free from the cycle of poverty.

B- Economic inequality: The economic inequality is another significant factor fueling migration. Many African countries are marked by a stark divide between the wealthy elite and the vast majority who struggle to make ends meet. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few has left many feeling marginalized and excluded from economic opportunities. This inequality is often compounded by the lack of access to essential services, such as healthcare, education, and social protection. For those at the bottom of the economic ladder, Europe presents an opportunity to earn higher wages, improve living standards, and access better services. Migrants see the potential for upward mobility, especially in countries where the minimum wage or living conditions are far superior to those in their home nations.

C- Remittances: A crucial aspect of African migration to Europe is the financial support migrants often send back home. Remittances play a significant role in many African economies, serving as a lifeline for families and communities. According to the World Bank, remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa have steadily increased over the past decade, with Europe being one of the largest sources of these funds. The money sent back home helps improve the living standards of families, pay for children's education, and support local businesses. In many cases, migrants feel a sense of responsibility to their families, and the economic opportunities in Europe provide a means of lifting their loved ones out of poverty. The ability to support family members and make a positive impact on their communities serves as a strong motivating factor for many Africans to migrate to Europe.

2- Political Instability and Conflict: Political instability and conflict are among the most significant drivers of migration from Africa to Europe. Over the past few decades, numerous African countries have been plagued by civil wars, and political repression. For many Africans, the need to escape violence, persecution, and human right violations is a powerful motivator to seek safety and stability in Europe. Some reasons under this include:

A- Wars and Conflicts: The ongoing armed conflicts in countries such as Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo have caused massive displacement within Africa. These wars often result in loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, and the collapse of governments, making it nearly impossible for people to live normal lives. Refugees and displaced persons flee these conflict zones in search of security and peace. Europe, with its established asylum systems and political stability, becomes a beacon of hope for those escaping war and conflict, many of these migrants view Europe as a place of refuge, where they can rebuild their lives away from the constant threat of violence.

B- Persecution and Human Right Abuses: In addition to direct conflict, political instability in Africa often leads to widespread human right abuses and the persecution of certain groups, ethnic minorities, political dissidents, and those opposing oppressive regimes are often targeted, arrested, tortured, or even killed, in countries like Eritrea, where the government has been accused of severe human rights violations, many individuals choose to flee in search of freedom and safety. The European Union's commitment to human rights and asylum protection makes it an attractive destination for individuals seeking to escape persecution.

C- Civil Unrest and Authoritarianism: Beyond violent conflicts, civil unrest and authoritarian governance also contribute significantly to migration. In many African nations, political instability manifests in widespread protests, civil disobedience, and state violence against civilians, example is the #EndSars protest in Nigeria in the year 2021 where many protesters were killed, arrest and tortured. Governments that crack down on opposition parties, media freedoms, and basic rights often leave citizens feeling powerless and oppressed. In countries like Zimbabwe, Uganda, Nigeria and Cameroon, where political freedoms are severely restricted, citizens may look to Europe not just for economic opportunities but also for the ability to live without fear of repression. The push for democratic governance and respect for human rights also plays a key role in this migration pattern. Africa's struggles with democratic governance lead to authoritarian regimes that create an environment of fear and mistrust. As a result, people fleeing these oppressive regimes seek the political stability and freedoms that Europe promises.

3- Education and Career Opportunities: For many Africans, migration to Europe is driven by pursuit of better education and career advancement. Europe's well-established educational systems, combined with robust job markets, attract individuals seeking personal and professional growth. The appeal of European institutions, both for their academic excellence and their capacity to provide career pathways, play a significant role in driving migration patterns.

4- Environmental Factors and Climate Change: Environmental factors, particular climate change are becoming increasingly significant drivers of migration from African to Europe. Africa is one of the continents most vulnerable to the effect of climate change, with severe environmental

changes exacerbating existing problems such as food insecurity, water shortages, and loss of livelihoods. As climate-related disasters become more frequent and intense, many Africans are forced to migrate in search of safer and more sustainable living conditions, making Europe a potential destination. Among the reasons include: Agricultural factor, agriculture is the backbone of many Africans economies, particularly in rural areas where millions of people depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods, however, climate change has disrupted agricultural patterns, leading to prolonged drought, erratic rainfall and desertification. These changes make farming increasingly difficult, particularly in regions like the Sahel and parts of East Africa, where water scarcity is a growing concern. Crops fail, and pastoralists find it harder to move their herds to area where sufficient grazing land is. As a result, many farmers and rural dwellers face the collapse of their livelihood, leaving them with little choice but to migrate in search of better prospects. The loss of agricultural productivity and the subsequent food insecurity not only threaten individual livelihoods but also contribute to social instability. In some cases, the competition for increasingly scarce resources leads to conflict and violence, which further accelerates migration. For those affected by the dire effects of climate change on agriculture, Europe represents a region where they can find alternative livelihoods, better access to food, security, and greater resilience to environmental challenges.

CONCLUSION

Islamic rules and regulations constitute a valuable source for protection of the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. In addition to contractual responsibilities, they could

serve as a faith-based guarantor of the rights of refugees, particularly women and children. Further exploration of respected Islamic sources could result in new mechanisms in this regard.

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