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The Challenges of Protecting Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) through ICGLR

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In Uganda elections AMANI helped President Museveni and his challenger Begigye to overcome their misunderstanding and to prevent an open conflict within Ugandans.

AMANI have been observing the recent elections in Kenya. Even during the 2002 election, some parliamentarians have been sent by AMANI FORUM in the regions that were suspected to be ready getting in troubles.

During the 2007 post electoral violence, AMANI parliamentarians addressed the political leaders through their partners parliamentarians about the danger of the on-going crises in Kenya.

The recent Kenyan elections were fair and free up to the voting process. Violence started after the results release.

AMANI that was involved during the whole electoral process made a report and recommendations addressed to the leaders in contestation.

The report was also given to Kofi Annan, the facilitator and the compromise found after the negotiations was based on AMANI recommendations. AMANI is therefore help that the peaceful path preached by AMANI before the facilitation Kofi Annan was finally chosen.

From the example of Kenya, it is apparent that failure to election process leads to instability. Great measures are then to be taken to prevent such crises after and during elections.

It will be good to strengthen civic education and democratic values such as understandable and adapted amendments of constitutions before striking like the bad example of Kenya has revealed.

The Challenges of Protecting Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) through ICGLR Jacqueline KLOPP, Columbia University and Prisca KAMUNGI, University of Witwatersand

The Great Lakes region has over 8 million internally displaced persons (IDP), yet only halting progress has occurred in grappling with the enormous policy problem this poses. One bright spot is the Protocol on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and related Project Documents that emerged from the ICGLR.

As the first legally binding regional instrument dealing with IDPs anywhere in the world, the Protocol is a watershed advocacy tool for government reformers, multi-lateral organizations and civil society actors. The central question of this paper is: What are the key challenges to localizing the Protocol and implementing the Projects, and as result, seeing real changes in IDP conditions on the ground?

ICGLR is examined as a political and diplomatic process and how this impacts the potential for the internalization and implementation of the Protocols. The Kenyan situation is also emphasized to look at how IDP advocacy efforts are faring and the opportunities for using the protocol as leverage.

Kenya's recent violence left over 1,500 dead, around 600, 000 freshly displaced and sent reverberations around the Great Lakes Region. Commerce with Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo was disrupted, and Kenya sent refugees into Uganda and Tanzania.

Despite an active civil society, government reformers and UN involvement, barriers exist to localizing the Protocol and using it effectively to impact the situation of IDPs.

These barriers include political dynamics that protect perpetrators of violence, lack of coordination among advocates within civil society, government, regional organizations and the UN, and failure of the ICGLR and its supporters to reach out to such advocates for local support. Regardless, some progress on IDP issues is emerging in Kenya. T

rans-national advocacy coalitions might better "step-down" the ICGLR and ICGLR process itself might be altered to better enhance the protection and assistance needs of IDPs and avoid becoming yet another exercise in diplomacy without any visible impact on conditions on the ground.

The countries of the Great Lakes region have signed numerous pacts, protocols, and conventions in the past. Few of these have made any real difference in people's lives.

The difference this time may be that the IC/GLR has been a more inclusive and participatory process, which represents the views of not only the signatory governments and their respective parliaments, but also of civil society groups such as women's groups, youth, and the private sector. The key will be to keep these actors informed, engaged and empowered.

Overall, much more must be done to raise the profile of the pressing need to prevent further violent displacement and assist and protect the 10 million people (approximately the size of Rwanda!) in the region that are already suffering tragically from displacement.

The Pact with its Protocols can be a valuable tool to affect change and prevent further violence, but to make it work will take tenacious effort both regionally and nationally by a wide number of players including governments.

