Factors influencing the implementation of 'operation rudi nyumbani' project in Nakuru district, Kenya

Kamungi, Glory Kagwiria

Abstract:

The announcement of the disputed presidential election results in Kenya in 2007 sparked a wave of violence in many parts of the country resulting to displacement of over 500,000 people. The government, following the signing of a peace agreement between the Party of National Unity and the main opposition Orange Democratic Movement, embarked on a vigorous exercise of resettling the displaced, dubbed the 'Operation Rudi Nyumbani' project. Through this 'operation, the government would seek to increase physical security, rehabilitate key services, provide the IDPs assistance for the first three months of return and engage in peace and reconciliation activities. The exercise was scheduled to be complete by end of June 2008 during which all displaced people were expected to have returned to their pre-displacement homes. Two years later, many internally displaced persons are still living in camps. Many others resulted to relocate permanently to new areas. The study sought to establish the factors that were influencing the implementation of the 'Operation Rudi Nyumbani' project in Nakuru district. Data upon which this report is based was collected using a mix of methods including interviews with IDPs living in relocation camps within Nakuru district and Key Informants, and review of secondary information. By the end of the survey, a total of 286 respondents had been interviewed, presenting 78% response rate. The key informant interviews were equally successful. The study was conducted in the month of June 2010. Indeed the government has put considerable effort to assist the IDPs: 84% of the IDPs have benefited from the GK start-up funds for IDPs, physical security has been beefed up and structures to promote peace and reconciliation are in place. Despite these efforts, the implementation of the 'Operation Rudi Nyumbani' project has been affected by a combination of political, socio-cultural, economic and logistical factors which stand in the way of return: The IDPs seem to have lost confidence in the government's commitment to protect them and safeguard their rights, Inter-tribal tensions and mistrust remain high, and most of the IDPs are yet to secure sustainable means of livelihood and therefore remain unable to re-establish their lives. The government interventions failed to address the diverse needs of the IDPs, address the root causes of their plight and did not guarantee non-repetition of the displacement and other human rights violations against them. In light of these findings, several recommendations are made: Security be guaranteed to those willing to go back home, the government to compile an accurate register of IDPs based on their diverse needs and incorporate the IDPs in making decisions affecting them, the government to safeguard the rights of the IDPs to own 'and access land, perpetrators of violence against the IDPs be held accountable, and efforts to promote nationhood and reconciliation among communities be scaled up. In summary, to find durable solutions to the problem of internal displacement, there's need to apply a multifaceted approach that addresses the diverse needs and concerns of the IDPs. It is important for the government to take seriously its obligation to address the plight of internally displaced
persons as required by the UNGPID and other regional instruments on internal displacement of which Kenya is a signatory