BUSINESS TRAVAILS IN THE DIASPORA: THE CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE OF SOMALI REFUGEE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN NAIROBI, KENYA

By Kenneth Omeje and John Mwangi*

This research investigates the multiplicity of challenges encountered by the Somali refugee business community in Nairobi amidst their far-reaching business exploits. The challenges are examined from legal, political and social angles. The research further examines the nature of social relations between the Somali refugee business community on the one hand, and the Kenyan stakeholders on the other hand (i.e. the state/law enforcement agencies, host population and competing business groups/communities). This research also analyzes some of the maneuvering strategies that the refugee business community adopts to survive amidst their various structural tribulations.

Dominant research works and narratives on fragile/failed states and the associated incidents of refugeeism, especially within the African continent are almost entirely focused on the negative stereotypes that tend to perceive and construct refugees as poverty-stricken, unwanted parasites that bring undue pressure on meager state resources.[1] Consequently, African refugees on the continent have been mostly perceived as hopeless agents of criminal violence, prostitution, and terrorism [the latter often associated with refugees of Muslim background in the post-9/11 international order].[2] In Kenya in particular, most researches on refugees seem to focus on refugees in government designated camps and until recently, the phenomenon of urban refugees have been largely ignored.[3] Even the few recent works that have focused on urban refugees in Nairobi have essentially approached the subject from the negative slant of seeing refugees as a fundamentally deprived, problem-infested lot that need state protection and international humanitarian support.[4] The prolific economic contributions of urban refugees, such as the three generations of Somali refugees in Nairobi and their enterprising genius, which has led them to

*Professor Kenneth Omeje and John Mwangi are faculty members in the School of Humanities & Social Sciences, United States International University (USIU), Nairobi, Kenya. Please direct all corresopondence to komeje@usiu.ac.ke or mwangi.john@gmail.com. Their mailing address is: P.O. Box 14634 – 00800, Nairobi, Kenya.

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