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Safe for Whom? A Human Security Perspective on Nigeria as a ‘Safe Country of Origin’

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There has been a proliferation of readmission agreements and voluntary return programmes between the EU, its members and third countries, in which non-state actors play an increasing role. Based on the case of return to Nigeria, this article develops a discursive account of human security conditions in Nigeria to identify the changes and continuities over time in the diverse representations of what constitutes conditions suitable for a safe, dignified return. Our study shows that discourses in favour of return to Nigeria, despite nuances and shifts over time, have remained predominantly and persistently focused on economic, political, individual and community security and entirely overlook the growing challenges of food and environmental (in)security—hence failing to fully consider conditions constituting ‘safe return’ or *nonrefoulement*. Our findings challenge what is discursively constructed as ‘safe’ in return policies and practices and suggest that durable policy solutions require paying attention to multidimensional human security conditions.

Keywords: human security, return migration, nonrefoulement, Ireland, Nigeria, International Organization for Migration

Introduction

Return migration has become a central tenet of contemporary global migration governance, or the ‘age of deportation’ (Boehm 2016). The return of irregular migrants and rejected asylum-seekers is an explicit objective in the European

Agenda on Migration, aspiring ‘to increase the rate of returns to countries of origin and transit, with a preference to voluntary return and a focus on reintegration’ (European Commission 2016: 6). Coming from ‘one of the main countries of origin of asylum seekers and migrants residing irregularly in Europe’ (European Commission and Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs n.d.), Nigerians are one of the largest populations within the EU vulnerable to return policies, as evidenced by the approximate 198,955 asylum applications submitted by Nigerian citizens to the EU27 from 2014 to 2020, receiving 133,860 rejections on the first instance (Eurostat 2022a,b). However, the legal principle of *nonrefoulement* limits state’s use of return ‘when there are substantial grounds for believing that the person would be at risk of irreparable harm upon return, including persecution, torture, ill-treatment, or other serious human rights violations’ (High Commissioner for Human Rights 2018: 1).

Researching the deportation of Nigerians and the relationship between Ireland and Nigeria more than a decade ago, White (2009: 70–73) identified the emerging depiction of ‘a new [safe] Nigeria’ by both Nigerian and Western actors as putting to rest the country’s ‘years of corruption and human rights violations’ to be compliant with *nonrefoulement*. However, the extent of this compliance has been continually challenged (Adepoju 2017; Abidde 2021; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021). While the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recently re-examined return as a durable solution where there is not a ‘home’ to return to (op cit. Orlans 2020), it is questionable whether return to Nigeria could offer a durable solution for Nigerians who continue to seek refuge abroad. This article problematizes the representation of Nigeria as a ‘safe country of origin’ (Asylum Information Database 2015) and the (oftentimes questionable) compliance to *nonrefoulement*.

As representations of return shape its governance (Koch 2014; Fine and Walters 2021), this article asks, how have discourses on return to Nigeria changed over time in terms of viewing return as ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’? Seeking to answer this question from a human security perspective advances our understanding of the two key issues central in scholarly and policy debates on return—namely, the diversification of actors involved in return policies, and the main criteria for assessing return policies. Regarding the diversification of actors, within the EU’s migration governance, there are increasing links between readmission agreements and non-migration policies, such as development and trade (Cassarino and Giuffré 2017; Zoomers *et al.* 2018), and the amount of control partner states have over negotiation and implementation of agreements (Adam *et al.* 2020). Both state and non-state actors position migrants as ‘illegal’ or ‘irregular,’ outside legal protection or access to the welfare state (Estrada-Tanck 2013, 2016) and propose return to countries of origin as well-deserved retribution for unauthorized mobility (Dini 2018). Non-state actors’ role in migration governance is also increasing (Lahav 2014; Lavenex 2016), even including media actors (Chouliaraki and Stolic 2017; Fine and Walters 2021). The IOM, for example, a self-interested actor understood as both a governance and media actor (Fine and Walters 2021), reinforces the nation-state perspective through legitimating border control as an

expression of state sovereignty (Geiger and Pécoud 2014; Dini 2018; Pécoud 2018). However, what has not yet been sufficiently scrutinized, and this study aims to do, is look closely at the contradictions between how these actors justify return policies and the very circumstances that people left in search of a life free from want, fear and indignity—the so-called 'safe country of origin' (Asylum Information Database 2015). Second, return and reintegration policies have been interrogated in terms of their goals, scopes, and implementation processes (Leerkes *et al.* 2016; Lietaert *et al.* 2017; Salihi 2021), and the expansion of returns conducted within the grey area between 'forced' and 'voluntary' return (ECRE 2018). However, preoccupations with procedures and outcomes have so far not allowed us to identify and overcome the core of the problem, that is, the disregard of *nonrefoulement* and problematic definitions of 'safe country of origin' in governing return migration.

In this article, we argue that human security presents an invaluable approach to keep *nonrefoulement* at the centre of scholarly and policy debates with its ability to encompass numerous facets of insecurity, irreparable harm, and violations of fundamental human rights. A handful of scholars have already prescribed a focus on basic needs and fundamental human rights in migration research and policy and stressed the benefits of the human security framework (Estrada-Tanck 2013, 2016; Gasper and Sinatti 2016; Bilgic *et al.* 2020) in identifying 'non-conventional' areas and issues that would fall outside of the traditional state-oriented security agenda (Roberts 2005: 3). These non-conventional areas include the (1) economic, (2) food, (3) health, (4) environmental, (5) personal, (6) community, and (7) political domains (UNDP 1994: 24–35), encompassing, for instance, 'freedom from poverty ... access to food ... access to healthcare and protection from disease ... protection from the danger of environmental pollution' (Churruca Muguruza 2007: 21).

Taking these seven dimensions of human security as benchmarks, we look at the representations of Nigeria as a 'safe country' for return. We trace changes over time in its representation by news outlets (Chouliaraki *et al.* 2017; Chouliaraki and Stolic 2017) and the EU-IOM Joint Initiative as a media actor (Fine and Walters 2021). In particular, we analyse the discourse disseminated by mainstream media in Ireland and Nigeria and the EU-IOM regarding practices of return from 2000 to 2020, to capture the context in which governance actors use a rather older policy instrument of return governance (the 2001-dated Agreement on Immigration Matters between Ireland and Nigeria) focusing on the readmission of irregular Nigerian migrants, and more recent supportive instruments, namely Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, operated by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative founded in 2016. In these sources, we observe that starting somewhere in 2016 and onwards, the dominant discourse reinforced state actors' preferences for return migration. Before 2016, we find that public discourse as captured in our sources readily acknowledges health, political, personal and community insecurity in Nigeria, and positions return as an unacceptable policy. Coinciding with the advent of the EU-IOM operations in 2016, return is presented as an adequate policy by framing Nigeria as safe on the dimensions of economic,

political, personal and community security. However, representations of security do not align with conditions in the country of origin in some cases, and in others, ironically legitimate return despite depicting insecurity. Moreover, the dimensions of environmental and food security are neglected entirely and go unacknowledged.

In the remainder of this article, we review the current debates on return and reintegration, the relationship between human security and migration, and human security conditions in Nigeria. Next, we outline our methodology. In our analysis, we identify three discourses on human security conditions in Nigeria and the policy of (non)return. The final section summarizes our main findings, stressing the need for a human security approach in scholarly and policy debates on migration, and specifically return migration governance.

(Un)Safe Returns: From Who and How to Where through Human Security

Numerous studies have identified the processes of return migration governance and the roles of state and non-state actors, in turn shedding light on the interests and purposes behind these programmes. Return migration has been associated with development or reconstruction for post-conflict societies ([van Houte and Davids 2008](#); [Webber 2011](#); [Zoomers et al. 2018](#)). Meanwhile, AVRR programmes have been assessed in terms of what makes a ‘successful’ return and how these programmes can be ‘improved’ upon ([Scalettaris and Gubert 2019](#)), how governments can increase their use through ‘soft’ coercion ([Leerkes et al. 2016](#)), or repeatedly questioned whether these programmes are ‘voluntary’ ([Lietaert et al. 2017](#); [Salihi 2021](#)) and whether their developmental-promise matches what happens upon return ([Webber 2011](#); [Sacchetti 2016](#)). Despite [Cassarino’s](#) (2008: 99) early acknowledgement that dominant approaches towards understanding, depicting, and governing return neglect to discuss ‘conditions in countries of origin after “return”’, we see this oversight as ongoing, even in studies critical towards return policy implementation. Elsewhere, the IOM serves as an intergovernmental organization tasked with operating return programmes and is perceived as an expert for anything related to migration ([Bradley 2021](#)). Since the IOM ‘sits on both chairs, it claims to be useful to both sides’ ([Pécoud 2018](#): 1627), but its actual operations have been increasingly criticized for their pseudo-neutrality and favouring of (Western) state interests ([Ashutosh and Mountz 2011](#); [Dini 2018](#); [Frowd 2018](#)), facilitating AVRR programmes ([Sacchetti 2016](#)) while lacking a formal legal mandate to adhere to human rights frameworks—despite operating as part of the UN system ([Bradley 2021](#)). The IOM serves as ‘both an agent of migration governance and a media actor whose production of images and narratives shapes the perceptions of migration’, specifically framing the process of ‘voluntary’ return as ‘an experience of homecoming and reunion’ ([Fine and Walters 2021](#): 3). This is combined with disseminating a discourse that portrays non-European ‘mobility (...) [as a] threat to public order and to the culture, identity and welfare institutions of European recipient countries’ ([Rossi](#)

2019: 273), leading to conclusions that its 'neutrality' acts as a guise for providing 'a technical product in service of a thoroughly political goal' (Frowd 2018: 1665).

Migrants have been situated at the centre of migration governance through the framework of human security (Estrada-Tanck 2013; Gasper and Sinatti 2016; Bilgic *et al.* 2020). This is especially relevant within the governance of asylum, as refugee law (Behrman 2019: 58) has historically developed to restrict the movement of non-European asylum-seekers and co-opts the language of humanitarianism as it upholds the 'illusion of balancing the rights of states and asylum seekers, [while it] actually privileges the former over the latter'. The *Asylum Information Database* (2015: 5) revealed the EU's 'arguably questionable—indicators of safety' for allowing return. While *nonrefoulement* has been viewed as 'an essential protection under international human rights, refugee, humanitarian and customary law' (High Commissioner for Human Rights 2018: 1), it has not always been upheld in practice and returnees may find themselves in conditions of higher vulnerability and destitution than before their departure (cf. Crisp 2001; von Lersner *et al.* 2008; Zimmermann 2012; ECRE 2018; Scalettaris and Gubert 2019). Drawing attention to conditions upon return, we suggest human security allows for understanding and challenging existing policies' ability to uphold or skirt *nonrefoulement* compliance. Our understanding is that conditions of return are complex and dynamic, and human security is sensitive to such an experience while simultaneously articulating structural vulnerabilities (Estrada-Tanck 2013, 2016; Gasper and Sinatti 2016) that assesses the durability of return as a policy objective. Moreover, human (in)security as *nonrefoulement* reorients the focus of refugee law towards the migrant rather than the state, something that has been sorely missing in practice (Behrman 2019).

The scholarly reception of the human security perspective has been quite mixed. There seems to be some hesitations to acknowledge the framework's capability to enact a noteworthy 're-framing of migration' due to the reliance on 'highly selective operations' which may exclude certain regions, remains within a state-centric framework, and links together security, migration, and development (Huysmans and Squire 2009: 6). 'Third World Anxieties' (Upadhyaya 2004: 91) around human security position it as another concept to further legitimate Western-led interventions. Even scholars in favour of human security remain hesitant due to conceptual incoherence leading to divergent interpretations and applications (Gasper 2005; Olajide *et al.* 2018). Nonetheless, the need to further involve the framework of human security is acknowledged by many scholars who stress its potential to complement a human rights framework, to draw attention to what it means to live as a *human* rather than an individual, liberal, rights-bearing *citizen* (Estrada-Tanck 2013, 2016; Gasper and Sinatti 2016; Bilgic *et al.* 2020). Legally speaking, Estrada-Tanck (2013: 167) argues that human security 'may have the potential to act as a catalyst for the realization of human rights in the contemporary world'. Within migration studies, human security fulfils the gap for an 'ontology . . . which better grounds the work of explanation, evaluation and policy analysis' (Gasper and Sinatti 2016: 5).

Within the realm of return migration specifically, we argue that human (in)security's potential can be seen in articulating the conditions of return, the day-to-day human life and community to which people return, hence offering a crucial lens for assessing and drafting return migration policy compliant to *nonrefoulement*. The next section unpacks the human security conditions in Nigeria as it concerns conditions encountered by returnees before we move onto our analysis of the discourse on return to Nigeria in the last two decades.

Human (in)Security in Nigeria: Understanding Migration and Reluctance to Return

Due to the colonial imposition of borders in Africa, the nation and state building processes of Nigeria have an extensive history of conflict along 'ethnic, regional, and religious divisions' (Aguwa 1997: 335), related to contemporary 'problems and challenges' (Abidde 2021: 1; see also Awe 1999; Adam *et al.* 2020). In this context, displacement within Africa has changed in nature 'from individual persecutory to non-persecutory reasons' in the form of various insecurities, inclusive of and beyond violent conflict (for a list of factors, see Chhangani and Chhangani 2011: 33–34) and manifested in considerable numbers of Nigerians relying on migration as a livelihood strategy (Adepoju 2017; Obi *et al.* 2020). Nigerians cited 'ethnic and religious conflict' as their reason to qualify for humanitarian protection yet were oftentimes rejected (de Haas 2006: 4–5). Despite these rejections, White (2009: 70) posits that '[f]or Nigerians, asylum becomes the most viable means of gaining access to opportunities in Ireland'. Concurrently, within the Irish asylum system and public debate, there is an overlapping categorization and stigmatization of Nigerian migrants who report feeling represented as 'greedy-yet-undeserving' asylum-seekers or 'illegals' (Komolafe 2008; White 2009; Adepoju 2017), with a similar stigmatization occurring upon return to Nigeria (de Haas 2006; Abidde 2021).

Indeed, understanding insecurity in Nigeria is not a simple matter of 'ethnic' conflict (Heerten and Moses 2014), terrorism from Boko Haram (Ekhomu 2019; Nnam *et al.* 2020; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021) or the state (Olajide and Ojatorotu 2020) which has a trend for its administrations to be 'found culpable in gross human rights abuses against its citizens' (Adeyeri and Aluede 2021: 142; see also White 2009; Adepoju 2017). Likewise, environmental security is problematic (Onuoha 2009; Okwechime 2013; Alumona and Onwuanabile 2019; Olajide and Ojatorotu 2020) as is food security (Simmons and Flowers 2017; Obi *et al.* 2020). Adopting a human security framework to articulate the living conditions within Nigeria (cf. Onuoha 2009; Ololube *et al.* 2013; Olajide *et al.* 2018; Alumona and Onwuanabile 2019; Nnam *et al.* 2020) acknowledges the complex and multidimensional forms of insecurity which threaten both the Nigerian state and its people.

The Human (in)Security Index developed by Creed (2021) for Nigeria from 2000 to 2020 (see Tables 1–3), further supports these points made by scholars on human insecurity in Nigeria. Werthes *et al.* argue that a threshold, index approach

towards human security demonstrates the 'practical relevance of human security' as well as responds to the need for 'an instrument to assess the actual threats to human beings' (2011: 16; see also [Hastings 2011](#)). Quantifiable thresholds function to distinguish between 'security issues' and 'security threats' ([Werthes et al. 2011](#): 12), and in turn identify when intervention might be necessary (on prioritization see also [Upadhyaya 2004](#); [Gasper 2010](#): 3–4). According to [Werthes et al. \(2011\)](#), an index measures security threats within each dimension of human security (for practical reasons, consolidating personal and community security into one dimension), and scores these dimensions compared to the performance of other countries in accordance with the thresholds of security, relative security, relative insecurity, and insecurity (see [Table 2](#)). Inspired by [Werthes et al. \(2011\)](#), [Creed \(2021\)](#) draws on various reputable data published by the World Bank, Political Terror Scale Project, the WHO and UNICEF, to measure security threats in Nigeria in the last two decades (see [Table 3](#)). We agree that such a quantification process is neither unproblematic ([Davis et al. 2012](#); [Merry 2021](#)) nor representative of the day-to-day life or sudden changes in human security conditions or

Table 1

H(I)S for Nigeria from 2000 to 2020 ([Creed 2021](#): 25, Recolored by Authors)

	Economic	Food	Health	Environmental	Personal & community	Political	Overall H(I)S
2000	N/A	N/A	86	40	50	44	55
2001	N/A	N/A	78	40	75	40	58
2002	N/A	N/A	77	41	75	59	63
2003	N/A	59	77	41	63	51	58
2004	N/A	N/A	76	42	75	42	59
2005	N/A	N/A	76	42	75	49	60
2006	35	N/A	76	43	75	51	56
2007	N/A	N/A	76	43	63	52	58
2008	41	N/A	76	44	75	54	58
2009	N/A	N/A	75	45	75	42	59
2010	35	N/A	89	45	88	29	57
2011	N/A	62	80	46	75	31	59
2012	35	N/A	82	47	75	56	59
2013	N/A	N/A	83	48	75	53	65
2014	35	6	84	48	83	56	52
2015	N/A	51	92	50	75	69	67
2016	35	98	88	51	75	70	70
2017	N/A	N/A	90	53	92	67	76
2018	35	52	91	55	63	64	60
2019	N/A	N/A	96	57	58	64	69
2020	35	100	N/A	59	N/A	N/A	65

Colors: Level 1 (0–25): White. Level 2 (26–50): Light pink. Level 3 (51–75): Light red. Level 4 (76–100): Red.

Table 2

Thresholds for H(I)S, as Outlined by Werthes et al. (2011: 28) and Adapted from Creed (2021: 26), Recolored by Authors

1	Level of human security	0–25	No systematic and sustainable threat to life/survival
2	Level of relative human security	26–50	Some factors and contexts threaten life/survival but individuals and groups usually have strategies, means, behavioural options, or aid/help at their disposal to cope with these threats
3	Level of relative human insecurity	51–75	Some factors and contexts threaten life/survival and individuals and groups have only limited or inadequate strategies, means, behavioural options, or aid/help at their disposal to cope with these threats
4	Level of human insecurity	76–100	Some factors and contexts threaten life/survival and individuals and groups have no adequate strategies, means, behavioural options, or aid/help at their disposal to cope with these threats

Colors: Level 1 (0–25): White. Level 2 (26–50): Light pink. Level 3 (51–75): Light red. Level 4 (76–100): Red.

changes across regions. However, in addition to the important work of other scholars to illustrate human security in Nigeria (cf. [Olajide et al. 2018](#); [Nnam et al. 2020](#); [Obi et al. 2020](#)), we think such an approach with a focus on change over time and across dimensions helps us better understand the multidimensional security concerns of the Nigerian context.

According to [Table 1](#), the overall score for Nigeria places the territory in the threshold of ‘relative human insecurity’ for the span of 2000 to 2020—crossing over into threshold of ‘human insecurity’ in 2017. The dimension of economic security ranks at the threshold of ‘relative human security’. However, it is important to note that even the ‘relative security’ threshold should not be misread, as [Werthes et al. \(2011: 28\)](#) underline, ‘even the category of relative human security might imply a problematic level for an adequate life’. While food security does not have valid data for each year, the dimension is oftentimes in the ‘relative human security’ threshold, with presumably an outlier in 2014 for ‘human security’, and two spikes into ‘human insecurity’ for 2016 and 2020. The dimension of health security stays within the threshold of ‘human insecurity’, only lowering in 2009 to the top constraint of ‘relative human insecurity’. Environmental security begins in the threshold of ‘relative human security’ but worsens overtime, crossing into the ‘relative human insecurity’ level from 2016 onwards. Personal and community

Table 3

Indicators, Sources, and Associated Dimension of Human (In)Security (Creed 2021: 18)		
Indicator	Source	Human security dimension
Bertelsmann Transformation Index (Combination of two indicators: Social Safety Nets and Equal Opportunity)	Bertelsmann Foundation	Economic
Number of children under 5 underweighted for age (%)	WHO	Food
Cause of death, by communicable diseases and maternal, prenatal and nutrition conditions (% of total)	World Bank	Health
Child deaths per 1000 live births	UN Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UN DESA Population Division)	Health
Combined mean: Proportion of population using improved sanitation facilities and Proportion of population using at least basic drinking water services	WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring	Environmental
Political Terror Scale	Political Terror Scale Project	Personal & Community
Index of 4 Personal Security (Indicators: Disappearance, Extrajudicial Killing, Political Imprisonment, Torture)	Human Rights Data Project	Political
Combined mean: Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism and Voice and Accountability	Worldwide Governance Indicators	Political

security dimensions stay mostly in the high end of 'relative human insecurity', sitting at the top of 'relative human security' threshold in 2000, and crossing into 'human insecurity' in 2010, 2014, 2017. The dimension of political security is mostly reported in the 'relative human insecurity' threshold but ranks in the 'relative human security' threshold from 2000 to 2001, 2004 to 2005, and 2009 to 2011. These scores confirm the findings of previous studies on Nigeria and indicate that it is hard to claim that Nigeria is a safe country for return from a multidimensional human security perspective.

Methodology

To achieve the main research objective, that is, to explain how discourses on return to Nigeria changed over time despite the conditions of insecurity in Nigeria, we conducted a discourse analysis (Jäger 2011: 20–21), specifically Critical Discourse Analysis (Wodak 2011; van Dijk 2015), which helped locating how inequality and social reality can be created and legitimated or resisted. This process involved closely reading selected sources grouped by year of publication, coding them in accordance with the governance actors active within the text, their usage of the dimensions of human security to describe the situation in Nigeria, and their views on suitability for return. These codes were used to identify recurring themes and patterns regarding the suitability of return to Nigeria, as well as whether Nigeria was viewed as an (un)safe place. Particular attention was paid to which dimension(s) of human security were used to legitimate these understandings. As a result, we identified three different discourses with some overlaps regarding the time span, dimensions and actors.

Two data sources were used to capture the shifting discourses on return. One is the promotional videos containing narratives of Nigerian returnees produced by the EU-IOM Joint Initiative. This allowed to capture the migration agency as a media actor capable of choreographing narratives (Fine and Walters 2021) and to locate the migrants' understanding of human security conditions in Nigeria. Three videos were selected based on featuring migrants who returned to Nigeria and shared their experience of departure, transit, and return. These videos were transcribed and analysed as speech or text (Wodak 2011). Importantly, the closed-captioning provided by the EU-IOMs differed at times from the actual words said by the interviewed migrants. For instance, the EU-IOM added additional information for the viewer, adding the clarification 'Agadez, Niger' when one migrant referred solely to 'Agadez' (EU-IOM Joint Initiative 2017) and changing the spoken 'the UN came and promised us to *take us back to Nigeria*' to captioned 'the UN came and informed us that they will *assist us to go back home*' (EU-IOM Joint Initiative 2020). We took these differences as significant textual features for analysis, insofar they reveal the voice and perspective of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative as it is distinct from the migrants' narratives. These differences informed our understanding of the EU-IOM's intended representation.

The second source of data came from news outlets to understand how return is represented by other media actors. They were selected using Nexis Uni (a Lexis Nexis research database with over 17,000 news, business, and legal sources catalogued), using the keywords 'Nigeria* migrant Ireland', with the additional constraints of news from 2000 to 2020 in the English language. These filters helped exclude articles with irrelevant content ('Football' and 'FA Cup'). *The Irish Times* and *The Nation*, from Ireland and Nigeria respectively, provided the most articles, thus making them the most abundant source of relevant articles. Moreover, both news outlets position themselves as reputable sources to their respective national community, intending to provide neutral, informative reporting which is relevant for the formation of public opinion and the discursive construction of security.

The terms 'deport', 'voluntary', 'asylum', 'IOM', and 'return' were cycled through one at a time to constrain the total number of articles and reflect the evolving terminology for migration governance and possible framings of the practice (i.e. the difference between 'deportation' to 'voluntary return'). A cursory reading of headlines and featured previews was done to remove irrelevant articles. In total, 257 articles were selected for analysis, of which 177 came from *The Irish Times* and 80 from *The Nation*. Unavailability of *The Nation* in the database prior to 2014 is a shortcoming with no substantive affect to our analysis, as Ireland and the EU are the main contexts in which return decision is taken.¹ Next, our aim was to capture the changing discursive construction of (in)security in Nigeria.

Regarding data we highlight the following limitations. First, it does not capture the public view of all the governance actors involved in the facilitation or representation of return to Nigeria—such as UNHCR, Irish and Nigerian NGOs and other media outlets, or refugee and other migrant advocacy groups. Secondly, we relied solely on sources available and accessible online and in the English language. Thirdly, we surveyed publications by calendar year, and have discussed 'Nigeria' as a uniform whole. While this structured allowed analytical clarity to some extent and helped structuring our analysis temporally and spatially, it removed the possibility to identify sudden changes to human security conditions as well as regional differences (Okwechime 2013; Olorube *et al.* 2013). Finally, we relied on 'migrant' voices as derived from secondary sources, being aware that these voices can be genuine expressions and/or choreographed by other actors, especially ones with power over their representation (as shown by the EU-IOM closed-captioning). To minimize limitations on (mis)representations, we gave a critical reading of how migrants' voices and understanding of return and safety are presented, and by whom. Due to the different viewpoints held by returnees (Cassarino 2008), when relevant we use migrants (*The Irish Times*), migrants (*The Nation*), and migrants (EU-IOM) to indicate the source from which the understanding comes. This is not intended to present migrants in these sources as homogenous, but to denote the differences between the presentation of migrant views from the respective organization.

Safe for Whom: State or Human?

Our findings show that over time, return has been presented as a suitable policy solution in all media covered here, sometimes acknowledging and sometimes ignoring the insecure conditions of Nigeria. We identified three main discourses shifting over time, from understanding Nigeria as unsafe and not suitable for return from 2000 to 2016, thereafter considering Nigeria as both safe and suitable for return, and unsafe yet suitable for return. In either case, these discourses completely disregarded two important issues, namely food and environmental security. Such omissions indicate that the complexity of the structural problems and the conditions migrants are likely to face upon return are overlooked even when migrants' best interest are considered.

Point of No Return: Nigeria is Unsafe

In the early 2000s until somewhere in 2016, Nigeria has been predominantly described as an unsafe place where migrants should not be sent back. In particular, news articles published in Ireland in this period touch upon worries about the health, political, personal and community insecurity waiting for migrants should they be forced to return. Indeed, as shown in [Table 1](#), the period between 2000 and 2016 was marked by considerable insecurity, making dubious claims that Nigeria was compliant to *nonrefoulement*. The health dimension was in the most severe ‘human insecurity’ threshold (except for in 2009, when it was at the top range of ‘relative human insecurity’), with a similar yet less severe trend in personal and community security which was often in the ‘relative human insecurity’, crossing the ‘human insecurity’ threshold in 2010 and 2014. Likewise, the political dimension was often in ‘relative human insecurity’, although from 2000 to 2001, 2004 to 2005, and 2009 to 2011 it was in ‘relative human security’ (for regional differences in the Niger Delta within personal and community security, see [Ololube et al. 2013](#); for a timeline of Boko Haram attacks and damage to personal, community and political security from 2009 to 2012, see [Nnam et al. 2020](#): 10–11).

In that period, Nigerian migrants featured in news stories have shared their experience of fleeing their country of origin, and rejoiced in their newfound Irish homes, with *The Irish Times* providing coverage of violence or instability in Nigeria. For instance, news coverage depicting insecurity referred to riots that had a death toll of over 300 and ‘more than 1,000 buildings (...) burned’ ([The Irish Times 2000a](#)), interviewed a migrant who fled from a ‘secret cult’ that practices ‘human sacrifice’ ([The Irish Times 2004](#)), and widespread reports of a society with inadequate healthcare ([The Irish Times 2007](#)). Exemplary of the culmination of personal, community and health insecurity, *The Irish Times* closely follows the story of a mother of a child on the autism spectrum, who with her two children was deported. The mother’s ‘fears [of return] (...) were realized when they arrived in Lagos’ with passer-by’s striking and accosting her child for behaving abnormally in the new environment ([The Irish Times 2010b](#)). In both journalistic reportage and opinion pieces, Nigeria is discussed as a place of insecurity, through the migrants and politicians quoted as well as the interpretation and analysis of journalists. For instance, one journalist writes that the Irish government ‘sees Nigeria as a democracy, rather than a country at war with itself. It sees all Nigerians as a one-stop package, requiring a one-stop response’ ([The Irish Times 2001b](#)), and one dissenting politician interviewed positions the government as it has been complicit in arranging a readmission agreement with ‘the most corrupt regime in Africa in order to speed up deportations’ ([The Irish Times 2001a](#); see also [White 2009](#)). In these representations, the focus is mainly on how return to Nigeria violates *nonrefoulement* and would lead to irreparable harm upon return, with clear links made to the specific dimensions of human security, namely the dimension of health by referring to the inadequate medical facilities and hostile approach towards mental health, to the political dimension when they stress violence and persecution from an unstable, corrupt state

structure, personal and community dimensions by recalling hostile or even violent beliefs and practices as well as expressing sentiments akin to there being 'no home to go back to'.

Importantly, the insecurity of Nigeria is oftentimes referred to in relation to the security of Ireland. One migrant describes the possibility of receiving a deportation order as 'a death sentence over your head' (*The Irish Times* 2010a), while another confirmed 'that Nigeria is an extremely dangerous and corrupt country' (*The Irish Times* 2005), a sentiment that a Nigerian lawyer based in Ireland later attests to: '[t]he chances of having your fundamental human rights violated are much higher in Nigeria than any EU country' (*The Irish Times* 2013). In this way, this discourse presents security threats awaiting in Nigeria to stress return as unthinkable due to the security enjoyed in Ireland which makes migrants (*The Irish Times*) reach the 'point of no return', thus understanding any return as a violation of *nonrefoulement*.

However, from 2016, the Irish public discourse on violation of *nonrefoulement*, as far as it is represented in *The Irish Times*, reaches its end. Instead, articles began to focus solely on the lives Nigerians have built in Ireland, which they should not be uprooted from due to their contributions to the Irish community rather than their fear of return and violation of *nonrefoulement*. Consequently, the two discourses outlined in the preceding sections come to dominate the discursive arena. This first discourse utilized the human (in)security dimensions of health, political, personal and community to demonstrate how return to Nigeria violates *nonrefoulement*. Recalling a variety of authors' finding on environmental and food security in Nigeria (cf: Okwechime 2013; Olajide *et al.* 2018; Alumona and Onwuanabile 2019; Obi *et al.* 2020; Olajide and Ojajorotu 2020; Sabo 2020), and, as shown in Table 1 with environmental security in the 'relative human security' crossing in 2016 to 'relative human insecurity' threshold and food security often in the threshold of 'relative human insecurity', it is striking that environmental and food security-related problems, albeit being drivers of migration were never mentioned to substantiate *nonrefoulement* in the Irish media (regarding migration to combat food insecurity via remittances, see Obi *et al.* 2020; regarding environmental conflict and migration, see Okwechime 2013; Sabo 2020). This shows that even to the most critical audience, *nonrefoulement* is considered from a rather narrow perspective.

Return to Sender: Nigeria is Safe

During the time that 'Nigeria is unsafe' discourse was still prevalent in Irish public media, a competing understanding of conditions in Nigeria has come to the public scene legitimizing the facilitation of returns to Nigeria, stressing mainly economic, political, personal or community security. Both the multiplicity of actors involved in disseminating this discourse, as well as the high-level position which the actors occupy within the governing process coincide with the considerable shift in the policy field, as noted in the studies on AVVR and IOM-led support to the (European) state interests which emerged around the same time (for example

Koch 2014; Sacchetti 2016; Dini 2018). We observe a tentative shift from ‘Nigeria is unsafe’ to ‘Nigeria is safe’ accompanied by the encompassing shift from ‘no returns’ to ‘return possible’, coalescing around the year 2016 despite no considerable improvement in the human security conditions.

Already beginning in 2005, Nigeria is portrayed as a territory of security, listing Nigeria as one of the ‘safe countries’ of origin (*The Irish Times* 2005), consequently making a policy of return legally possible (see also White 2009). This perspective has been retained, when in 2018 the Irish government again stresses in public that ‘Nigeria . . . [is still] not acknowledged [as a] conflict zone’ (*The Irish Times* 2018d), thus rendering asylum applications as unwarranted. This representation however stands in stark contrast with the political, personal and community insecurity of Nigeria as documented by human security scholars (Olajide *et al.* 2018; Nnam *et al.* 2020; Obi *et al.* 2020; see also Adeyeri and Aluede 2021). Concurrently, we see in the Nigerian media that the Nigerian government and migrants agreeing with this representation present Nigeria as safe in its own right at the present as well as developing towards becoming even safer. In 2014, the Nigerian news outlet presented a concise analysis of the security situation, concluding the situation is not that dire and further solutions are easily implementable, for instance ‘a complete overhaul of the traditional method of Quaranic education’, bolstering the military, and international cooperation (*The Nation* 2014)—certainly responding to the well documented insecurities brought by Boko Haram (Ekhomu 2019; Nnam *et al.* 2020; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021). This trend continues when *The Nation* (2018b) details the ways in which the administration is fighting Boko Haram, and the ‘strengthening of Nigeria’s national security’. In this way, the Nigerian government welcomes migrants back to their home, one official stating that returnees ‘have another opportunity to make a new start of posterity and abundance. (...) The best option is to live a dignified life, make their families happy and make the country proud by contributing their own quotas’ (*The Nation* 2018a).

Similar to the representation in Irish and Nigerian media, in 2017 the EU and the IOM began to produce video testimonies of Nigerian migrants for promotional use. These materials support the ‘Nigeria is safe’ discourse, which, as Fine and Walters (2021) argue, contributes to the political imaginary and interpretation of deportation. Using the narratives of returnees, the videos promote a vision of Nigeria as a country of economic opportunities and prosperity, of welcoming communities and families eagerly awaiting their return (EU-IOM Joint Initiative 2017). In this way, the IOM’s representation of return as an experience aligns more closely with the one imagined by the state, than migrants (*The Irish Times*) and, as shown in the next section, those who have reported feeling stigmatized upon their return (de Haas 2006; White 2009; Adepoju 2017). Upon return to Nigeria, one returnee received business training and in 1 month of operations, reports already having ‘a lot of profit’ (EU-IOM Joint Initiative 2018). Likewise, one video tells the story of a trio opening a business, recounting how two Nigerians met in a detention facility in a country of transit, and were later (re)united with a third returnee at an IOM training, opened a business together

after realizing that they all 'came from the same side, using the same language' and could work together back at their 'home' (EU-IOM Joint Initiative 2020)—importantly, it was this video in which the closed-caption substituted one migrant's words on returning to 'Nigeria' with 'home'. The first of these examples stresses the economic security of Nigeria, whereas the second adds a sense of community and individual security—there are business partners, good people who can get along and improve their situation through collaboration, and a welcoming community eagerly awaiting their return.

When contrasted to other scholars' analyses concerning Nigeria in terms of economic security, political security, personal and community security (Onuoha 2009; Ololube *et al.* 2013; Nnam *et al.* 2020), this discourse's claims of security appear either inadequately substantiated or downright false. Also shown in Table 1, from 2016 onwards, personal and community and political security are at the level of either 'human insecurity' (in 2017 for the personal and community dimension as well as overall) or 'relative human insecurity', whereas economic security remains steady within the 'relative human security'. With the country reaching the 'human insecurity' threshold overall in 2017 and 'relative human insecurity' threshold from 2016, 2018–2020, it remains questionable to what extent returns were categorically compliant with *nonrefoulement*.

In light of this, return as upheld by this discourse confirms previous studies showing that IOM's primary considerations are the economies in countries of origin and the interests of states (Geiger and Pécoud 2014; Rossi 2019). However, there is also ground for being sceptical about the extent of economic security, due to the reported issue of prolonged poverty (Onuoha 2009; Adepoju 2017) and remarks on possible disruptions within 'secure' thresholds (Werthes *et al.* 2011). In this way, this stance selectively focuses on certain dimensions of human security to construct Nigeria as compliant with *nonrefoulement*, albeit a hollowed-out interpretation. From this, we see a discursive reaffirmation of the Nigerian state's capacity to provide economic, political, individual and community security for those returned, totally disregarding the question of ensuring health, food, or environmental security. As Table 1 shows, if we were to answer that unasked question and incorporate the unacknowledged dimensions of health, food and environment, returns from 2016 onwards were likely not compliant with *nonrefoulement* as Nigerians were returned to situations which posed serious threat to their food, health, environment, political, personal and community security (Okwechime 2013; Olajide *et al.* 2018; Obi *et al.* 2020; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021). Reflecting on the impact of Boko Haram on life in Nigeria, Nnam *et al.* (2020: 18) write, '[i]n general, the political, economic, religious, cultural, and social lives of the people are increasingly becoming miserable and adversely affected by the incessant attacks of this terrorist group'. This discourse focuses on depicting Nigeria in the present and future as a site of security, but in reality, concerns arise regarding the stability of such conditions for returnees.

A House on Fire is Still a Home: Unsafe but Returnable

The last discourse identified views Nigeria as unsafe, but this insecurity is permissible in the facilitation of return migration. This view touches upon health, political, personal and community dimensions of human (in)security with the caveat that, for some migrants, insecure conditions are acceptable if it means returning home (as upheld by the Nigerian government and *The Nation* from 2015 onwards), or as retribution for unauthorized mobility (as upheld in the early 2000s by the Irish government, and from 2017 onwards joined by the EU-IOM). Here, we can see the limits of quantification on social data (Merry 2021), insofar as Table 1 reports considerable personal and community insecurity but cannot capture the sense of ‘home’ felt by returnees expressed either ambivalently by migrants featured in *The Nation*, and excitedly by migrants selected for EU-IOM videos. Notwithstanding this limitation and incongruence to *nonrefoulement*, this discourse is in alignment with reality as it acknowledges the health, political, personal and community insecurity depicted in Table 1 and elsewhere in the literature (Okwechime 2013; Olajide *et al.* 2018; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021).

The Irish government, as covered in *The Irish Times*, occasionally acknowledges that Nigeria is insecure yet denies that insecurity is widespread, despite being well-documented as a prominent, long-lasting structural feature of Nigerian life due to governmental corruption, colonial legacies, or Boko Haram to name a few (Ekhomu 2019; Nnam *et al.* 2020; Olajide and Ojajorotu 2020; Adeyeri and Aluede 2021). For example, Irish government officials acknowledged that ‘in the case of a Nigerian woman arrested and raped in [Nigerian police] custody, the authority found that, though “this must have been a dreadful ordeal”, the rape was merely “a criminal act perpetrated by the guards”’ (*The Irish Times* 2000b) and does not consider contributing systemic issues, like corruption. In response to pleas for nonreturn which cite the lethal lack of healthcare in Nigeria, the Irish government acknowledged that the healthcare system is insufficient to provide life-saving care, but not a reason for humanitarian stays. In general, as reported in *The Irish Times* (2008), the Irish government considers ‘that state protection does exist, albeit in an imperfect manner’ and bolstered by the work of the IOM, hence a suitable place for return. In this way, the Irish government understands that insecurity in Nigeria still allows for compliance with *nonrefoulement*, and the rightful exertion of sovereignty to remove unauthorized foreigners. Similarly, the Nigerian government explicitly acknowledges its insecurity and inability to provide protection. In a 2002 interview with *The Irish Times*, the Nigerian President assures the (presumably Irish) readers that, ‘Nigerians (...) love their homes. When situations improve at home you will be surprised how those people will come back home’ (*The Irish Times* 2002). Yet, in 2019, the Nigerian state continues to assure the (presumably Nigerian) readers that they are working towards realizing ‘a conducive environment for young Nigerians (...) to curb the scourge of irregular migrations’ (*The Nation* 2019b). This discourse of unsafe-but-safe reproduces the confusion around ‘refugee’, ‘illegal migrant’ and ‘Nigerian migrant’ in the Irish public sphere (Komolafe 2008; White 2009) and contributes

to the stigma on migrants who departed outside of the traditional legal channels and are then returned to Nigeria as 'cowards' or 'deserters' since the situation was not 'bad enough' to flee (de Haas 2006; White 2009; Adepoju 2017). Moreover, this discourse reveals how both states benefit in some way from the framing of Nigeria as compliant with *nonrefoulement* requisites, through the expansion of development aid to Nigeria (White 2009; Idrissa 2019) and the capacity to discipline mobility and exert national sovereignty in the interest of Western states (Dini 2018), despite possible harm awaiting upon return (see Table 1).

While not sharing the same preoccupation with legality, migrants' appearing in *The Nation* share that Nigeria is unsafe but returnable, exhibiting 'mixed feelings' in the face of the Nigerian administration's celebration of their return (*The Nation* 2016) and regarding any state-backed support for returnees, report that 'there was no such gesture from any government official' (*The Nation* 2020). Despite the 'homecoming' potential of return migration promoted by the IOM (Fine and Walters 2021), migrants report encountering 'rejection and stigmatization from family, friends, and the society' (*The Nation* 2018c). Like Abidde's (2021: 10) findings in the context of returnees reporting 'long-term mental and physical health as well as suffering social stigma' the migrants, portrayed in *The Nation*, say that they have 'learnt to keep to myself [and themselves]' and not speak about their experience (*The Nation* 2021). In one extensive exposé, one migrant describes their experience of migration and return, imploring the reader as follows:

Let us be fair to ourselves. If conditions at home deteriorated to such an extent that you could no longer guarantee to yourself and family the basic necessities of life (...) Now who, under these conditions, would have resisted the urge to seek greener pastures (...) since the homeland (Ekiti) I once constructed as a site of neglect is getting better, can I go back home? (...) I am stuck in-between, exhausted with no place of refuge. (*The Nation* 2019b)

In this way, the returnee indicates their understanding of Nigeria as unsafe, shunned at the personal and community level, yet longs for their return home when compared to their experiences within countries of transit or settlement. Elsewhere, migrants affirm that 'Nigeria is far better than that country [Libya]' (*The Nation* 2019a) or other experiences of (irregular) transit, such as waking up to find 'five dead bodies in the well' from which they had drunk the night before (*The Nation* 2021). Nigeria has security not only in the comparative sense to Ireland or countries of transit, but also in an innate sense—home. As the migrant concluded in their exposé, 'Home, it goes without saying, offers a condition of stability, which migrancy cannot afford, let alone offer' (*The Nation* 2019b). This portrayal of home being unsafe but returnable persists in the way migrant narratives were presented to the Nigerian public, despite acknowledgements of political insecurity in the failings of the Nigerian state to make conducive conditions for return, of personal and community insecurity in the sense of stigmatization and ostracization from family and friends upon their return, of health insecurity in the form of a healthcare system which cannot always provide life-saving care.

In these accounts, the psychological dimension of personal and community security (the closest to capturing ‘home’) tends to carry a baseline of security despite other forms of insecurity; a house that is on fire will always be a home. Indeed, return emerges as a preferred solution for migrants who still hold their country of origin as ‘home’ (van Houte and Davids 2008; Orlans 2020), but this distinction is not given any consideration within contemporary return and re-admission arrangements, nor, following Merry (2021), can it be ever captured in attempts to quantify social data. As shown by the disparate feelings expressed by returnees, Nigeria is not always viewed as home. Building on scholars who argue for the centrality of the migrant’s perspective on return (Cassarino 2004; Zimmermann 2012; Scalettaris and Gubert 2019), through the framework of human security, we highlight the need to challenge who decides where someone’s home is, and how secure it might be. Moreover, such a framework allows for understanding security in both a subjective and objective manner, one which equips governance actors to assess conditions in destinations of return in both a material and experiential sense.

Concluding Remarks: A Human Security Megaphone for Nefarious Silences in the Governance of Return Migration

To capture the complex and multidimensional nature of return (Cassarino 2008; van Houte and Davids 2008; Webber 2011; Zimmermann 2012), this article utilized the human security framework to examine how public representations of return match conditions of return in Nigeria. To lay bare the complexity of (in-)security in Nigeria, we drew on both existing studies on human security in Nigeria, including an index developed by Creed (2021) presenting human (in)security conditions in Nigeria from 2000 to 2020. Looking at representations of return at that time in Irish and Nigerian media as well as IOM’s campaigns, we found that there has been a noticeable shift, around 2016, towards discourses favouring return, irrespective of (in)secure conditions, which have generally worsened in this period especially in terms of health, environmental, food, and personal and community insecurity. Prior, the public representation of return in Irish media from 2000 to 2016 challenged the depiction of Nigeria as a ‘safe country of origin’ and drew attention to migrants’ experiences of insecurity in Nigeria, recounting aspects of health, political, personal and community insecurity. Shifting considerably in 2016, another strand of discourse, disseminated by Nigerian and Irish media as well as the EU-IOM, has positioned Nigeria as a safe country, suitable for returns, by highlighting (or misrepresenting) economic, political, personal or community security while not considering issues of health, environment, food (in)security. Synchronously to this second discourse, a third discursive representation in Nigeria began to present Nigeria as unsafe but shared the policy solution of return and engages the dimensions of health, political, personal and community (in)security. The discourses that we have identified here show how some of the key dimensions of human security are repeatedly neglected. A case in point can be found in the EU-IOM promotional videos which focus on promoting the viable

economic and social conditions for business in Nigeria, compared to migrants featured in *The Irish Times* expressing their fears of being returned to inadequate healthcare and violent cultural practices. None of the discourses take any note of food or environmental (in)security. Hence, echoing [Fine and Walters' \(2021\)](#) analysis of the IOM's depiction of return as a celebratory homecoming rather than a harmful deportation, we also found little to no care given to the complexity of insecurities encountered upon return in the public narratives around return migration from Ireland to Nigeria, which hollows out the notion of *nonrefoulement*. The considerable shift in discourse in 2016 also shows that EU-IOM Joint Initiative, found in 2016, have been clearly contributing to the EU's policy goal set in the same year, that is, increasing the rate of returns to countries of origin.

Based on evidence of the insecurity conditions of Nigeria, we contend that the multidimensional approach of human security serves as an apt way to conceptualize and analyse compliance with the principle of *nonrefoulement*. The human security perspective not only requires policies that emphasize the *human* in human rights compliance and align with the complex experience of return itself. It also allows observing the silences in the dominant discourse on return to Nigeria, for key concerns that await returnees, namely food and environmental insecurity. These silences are alarming due to increasing food and environmental insecurity of Nigeria (see [Table 1](#); [Simmons and Flowers 2017](#); [Olajide et al. 2018](#)). In this light, the discourses promoting return to Nigeria are incomplete, and ignore burgeoning security threats, which have been well-documented to impede enjoying a life in Nigeria free from want and fear and stimulate continued use of migration as an adaptive livelihood strategy for Nigerians ([Obi et al. 2020](#)). Hence, it is hard to argue that current arrangements for return are likely to be 'durable solutions' in the long run.

Finally, being able to articulate silences around overlooked aspects of the conditions of return supports the argument of [Gasper and Sinatti \(2016\)](#) who view human security as an innovative tool for migration research to generate novel insights for future migration policies. In this manner, we would like to conclude that food and environmental (in)security come closest to articulating the human-centric everyday basic level of security, and to acknowledge this would confront policymakers with their violation of any meaningful application of *nonrefoulement*, especially as it concerns irreparable harm encountered upon return at a mundane level: of empty stomachs, of thirsty mouths, of a deteriorating environment, of lacking access to sanitation facilities. We view the 'silencing' as intentional, as evidenced by the disappearance of preoccupations regarding health insecurity after 2016 in public discourses, coinciding with the IOM bolstering the process of return and safeguarding the interests of states through their selective discursive framing and representation of 'homecoming' which has been found to be influential on the perception of return ([Fine and Walters 2021](#)). Moreover, environmental insecurity occurs at a slower, less headline-catching scale than other forms of insecurity, such as the political, personal and community insecurity wrought by Boko Haram. In other words, it may not be within the interests of Western policymakers and their international counterparts to address the

dimensions of food or environmental security within the facilitation of return and readmission, despite the proliferation of non-migration related agreements arranged in the process of governing return migration (Cassarino and Giuffr  2017; Zoomers *et al.* 2018). Likely, to do so would require acknowledging and altering non-migration-related global arrangements, for instance concerning the West's unequal historic contributions to processes of climate change and emissions (den Elzen *et al.* 2005; Evans 2021) or healthcare inequality that has been explored in conversations around a Global Health Fund with affluent countries assisting countries which cannot afford expensive medicines (Brugha and Walt 2001; Heymann *et al.* 2015; van de Pas 2016), rather than continually investing in developing migration control mechanisms which seek to inhibit South-North migration (Zoomers *et al.* 2018; Behrman 2019). Hence, we concur that human security provides an invaluable and innovative framework for approaching humanitarian migration governance, which centre on ensuring a dignified, human life for those who move, stay or return. Any policy assessment, critique, or resistance to practices of return would similarly be incomplete if they neglect food and environmental insecurity, equally and perhaps more alarming dimensions of insecurity in the long run.

ENDNOTES

1. To compensate for fewer possible articles, *The Nation* includes articles up to 2021.

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