

International Journal of Advanced Research

Publisher's Name: Jana Publication and Research LLP

www.journalijar.com

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56120

Title: Roles and responsibilities of the IOM and UNHCR in combating illegal immigration in Niger.

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓,		
Techn. Quality		✓,		
Clarity	✓,			
Significance	✓,			

Reviewer Name: Dr Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The manuscript titled "Roles and responsibilities of the IOM and UNHCR in combating illegal immigration in Niger" offers a critical and timely examination of the humanitarian-security nexus in one of the world's most significant migratory transit hubs. The article successfully delineates the complementary yet distinct mandates of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) within the specific geopolitical context of Niger. By focusing on the operational realities in a country that serves as a gateway to the Mediterranean and Europe, the author provides essential insights into how international organizations navigate the delicate balance between state sovereignty, border management, and the protection of vulnerable populations. The study's primary strength lies in its ability to clarify the functional division of labor: the IOM's focus on orderly migration and voluntary return versus the UNHCR's legal mandate regarding asylum and the principle of non-refoulement.

The research employs a qualitative methodological framework that is well-suited for analyzing the complexities of international institutional cooperation. The author's use of descriptive analysis to explore how these organizations provide policy advice to the Nigerien government is particularly enlightening. It highlights the shift in migration management from purely national policing to a multilateral effort supported by international law and sustainable development goals. The findings regarding the search for "sustainable solutions" for refugees and the logistical management of migratory flows provide a robust empirical basis for understanding how global migration governance is localized in transit states. This analysis is crucial for scholars and policymakers who are interested in the "externalization" of border controls and the role of international bodies in managing irregular migration.

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Furthermore, the article provides a thorough investigation into the specialized assistance provided to vulnerable migrants, including victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors. By linking migration management to the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the author elevates the discussion from a mere security issue to one of human rights and inclusive development. The transition described in the text—from viewing Niger as a mere transit point to a space of active international intervention and protection—is a vital contribution to contemporary African migration studies. The author correctly identifies that while international organizations provide critical support, the primary responsibility for rights protection remains with the state, a nuance that adds significant depth to the institutional analysis.

To enhance the manuscript for formal academic publication, a few minor revisions are necessary. First, the author should consider expanding the theoretical section by incorporating the "Migration Management" framework or "Regime Theory" to provide a more rigorous academic lens for the observed institutional interactions. Secondly, while the qualitative data is strong, the inclusion of more recent statistics (2022–2025) regarding the volume of voluntary returns versus asylum applications in Niger would provide more granular context to the "roles and responsibilities" discussed. Finally, an editorial review is needed to ensure that the bibliography is uniformly formatted according to the APA 7th edition style, specifically checking for consistency in the digital object identifiers (DOIs) and the naming conventions for institutional reports.

In conclusion, this article provides a valuable and empathetic analysis of the institutional architecture governing migration in the Sahel. It successfully balances a description of organizational mandates with a critical assessment of the challenges faced on the ground. The transition from irregular flow to managed, rights-based migration documented here is an essential area of study in the current global climate. **Therefore, I recommend this manuscript for publication with minor revisions** to address the technical and theoretical refinements noted above. This work stands as a significant contribution to our understanding of the collaborative efforts required to manage one of the most complex humanitarian challenges of the modern era.