

Pre- and Post-Migration Patterns of Victimisation among Eritrean Refugees in the Netherlands

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Forced migration is one of the major indicators of human insecurity. Throughout its history, Eritrea has seen a recurring cycle of mass political violence and contagious regional armed conflicts. As a result, Eritrea is one of the leading refugee-producing countries in the world. After the country's independence in 1991, Eritrea has seen a major decline in the mass exodus of its population. The trend has completely changed in the aftermath of the 1998–2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict and particularly after 2001 when Eritrea became one of the most repressive regimes in the world. By examining forced migration as one of the major indicators of human insecurity, this paper discusses pre- and post-migration patterns of victimisation among Eritrean refugees in the Netherlands and in so doing analyses the challenge from a victimological and human security perspective. The study is based essentially on narratives of victimisation told by Eritrean refugees in the Netherlands. The data, obtained between April and October 2010, is gathered by open-ended narrative interviews with a number of Eritrean refugees in the Netherlands, a majority of whom have arrived in the country after 2002.